

s26 | ADES 1543

FOUNDATIONS OF USER-
EXPERIENCE DESIGN (UXD)
M/W 3:00 - 5:50 | 01.12.26-05.06.26
CVAD BUILDING, ROOM 284

the syllabus >> planning and taking your first steps in UX design >>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Three (3) semester credit hours. This class will introduce students enrolled in it to some of the basic thinking and skills that inform and frame UX design, research and practice. Students will also hone the independent thinking, **time management** and critique skills necessary to succeed as they advance through the UXD track.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Demonstrate a broadly informed understanding of basic UX principles and methods.
2. Demonstrate the ability to apply basic UX design principles/approaches and methods.
3. Demonstrate the ability to **iteratively** generate viable solutions to basic UX problems and challenges.
4. Demonstrate the ability to manage personal time to guide **effective** on-time, on-deadline task completion.

REQUIRED BOOKS

UX For Beginners: A Crash Course in 100 Short Lessons, by Joel Marsh
(O'Reilly Media, 2016)
ISBN-10: 1491912685

100 Things Every Designer Needs to Know About People, Second Edition, by Susan Weinschenk
(New Riders Press, 2020)
ISBN-10: 0136746918

COURSE STRUCTURE

This class will be conducted from 3:00 until 5:50 pm each Monday and Wednesday afternoon in room 284 of the CVAD Building Complex at UNT Denton. **It will be extremely demanding in terms of the mental focus and commitment necessary.** 50-60% of our class time will be spent in critique and in discussion of work you will be asked to complete **outside** of class. The remaining 40-50% will be spent in lecture.

GRADING CRITERIA

Students will be graded on assigned work (exercises 1-6 and a final project), class participation, and attendance.

GRADE PERCENTAGES

- **Exercises 1-6 > 8% per each of these, accumulating to a total 48% of the final course grade**
- **Final Project > 30% of the final course grade**
- **Class participation (constructive attitude, productive engagement) > 22% of the final course grade**
- **The three gradable issues listed above will accumulate to form a total of 100% of the final course grade**

RISK FACTOR

Risk Factor: 1. Students enrolled in s24 ADES 1543.501 will not be exposed to any materials, tools or environments that pose a risk while in class. However, as they strive to complete projects in their own living or working spaces, students may expose themselves to personal risks of their own accord.

DISABILITIES

ACCOMMODATION (PART 1)

The College of Visual Arts and Design is committed to providing full academic access for all qualified students, including those with disabilities. In keeping with this commitment and in order to facilitate equality of educational access, faculty members in the College will make **reasonable accommodations** for qualified students with a disability, such as appropriate adjustments to the classroom environment and the teaching, testing, or learning methodologies when doing so does not fundamentally alter the course. **If you have a disability, it is your responsibility to obtain verifying information from the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) and to inform me of your need for an accommodation. Requests for accommodation must be given to me no later than the end of the first week of classes for students registered with the ODA as of the beginning of the current semester.** If you register with the ODA after the first week of classes, your accommodation requests will be considered after this deadline. **Grades assigned before an accommodation is provided will not be changed.** Information about how to obtain academic accommodations can be found in unt Policy 18.1.14, at www.unt.edu/oda, and by visiting the ODA in Suite 167 in Sage Hall. You also may call the ODA at 940.565.4323, or email their office at Apply.ODA@unt.edu.

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DISABILITIES

ACCOMMODATION (PART 2)

In all Communication Design studio-based courses—and ADES 1543 is indeed one of these—almost all of the teaching and learning occurs in the classroom. The work and learning are experiential and iterative. These courses do not make heavy use of formal textbooks, and even when they do assign textbooks their content is primarily supplemental and for reference (as is the case in ADES 1543). Our studio-based courses rely on in-class lectures and critical dialogues, many or most of which are impromptu—responding to what comes up in classroom discussion and in response to student questions. This means there are and will be no course notes or PowerPoint (or similar) presentations to share with a student who has missed a class.

Students are *required* to produce work (conceptual work, diagrams, dozens to hundreds of sketches of various kinds of prototypes, dozens of revisions of these, then even more revisions as mid- to high-fidelity prototypes, and then final, working models of these as systems) outside of class in ADES 1543 and in every course in the User Experience Design, or “UXD,” curriculum. While they’re enrolled in all of the classes that constitute this set of learning experiences, students must post their homework on classroom walls or on their own or the instructor’s computers *during each class session*, and then learn from the critiques of their own work, as well as that produced by their peers. This process of learning by making and doing and critically analyzing is what is known as the iterative process of design, and students who are not in class or cannot produce the work the course schedule calls for in a timely fashion will not learn what they need to learn in ADES 1543 much less the other courses that constitute the UXD curriculum.

Further: if a student in ADES 1543, or any other UXD course, misses a class session, they are then required to assess what they’ve created/designed that was due for critical discussion during that class session *on their own and without the guidance of their professor, as well as without what they would’ve learned from the critiques of the work of their peers*. Missing a class session, much less a few of these, puts the student in the position to have to decide on their own whether what they’ve created/designed is worthy of further pursuit/iteration. Especially at the 1000- and 2000-levels of study in our UXD program, the majority of students do not have the experience or the knowledge and understandings necessary to make appropriate progress toward realizing each their assigned projects to good effect without being in class every day. Allowing *any student* to miss sessions of a UXD course “here and there” as a given semester progresses causes them to suffer consequences that become negatively cumulative.

For all of these reasons, the UXD program in CVAD’s Department of Design strongly discourages the willful sanctioning any UXD student’s ability to miss class sessions in any course in its curriculum, including ADES 1543. Simply put, missed UXD classes prove to be highly detrimental to any student seeking this degree, and tend to result in ineffective student work outcomes, learning, and a squandering of tuition money.

IF AN EMERGENCY OCCURS...

In case of an emergency (an alarm will sound), please follow the building evacuation plans posted on each floor of the CVAD Building Complex and proceed to the nearest parking lot. In case of a tornado (campus sirens will sound) or other weather-related threat, please go to the nearest hallway or room on your floor without exterior windows (rooms 267 and 219 are the nearest weather-safe rooms to us) and remain there until an all-clear signal is sounded. Follow the instructions of your instructors and act accordingly.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Good attendance and punctuality are expected throughout the duration of the schedule for this course. Roll will be taken at the outset of every class. You may accrue 2 absences—excused or unexcused—over the course of the semester without penalty. **Every unexcused absence after the accrual of two (2) will reduce your final course grade by one (1) full letter grade**, at the instructor’s discretion. **Accruing more than five (5) absences OF ANY KIND over the course of the semester will result in a failing grade for the course.** Every three (3) tardies accrued as the semester progresses will be counted as 1 absence.

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Students who sleep during our class sessions will be counted as absent. Bottom line: understand that poor attendance WILL adversely affect your final course grade.

If you are absent, you are responsible for contacting a class member in order to get any information or assignments that were given in class. The instructor will NOT use any class time to repeat missed lectures or assignments.

ZOOM PROTOCOLS

(IF NECESSARY)

During online course times, you will be required to (unless a prior arrangement has been made):

1. Attend and actively participate **during the entire class period;**
2. Mute your microphone unless speaking or otherwise involved in class discussion;
3. Have your camera on unless asked you are unable to do this due to poor internet connectivity;
4. Be respectful of your classmates and instructor during the entirety of a Zoom-facilitated class session.

GRADING POLICY

All projects and exercises are due on the day and time given for their completions as articulated in the schedule for this course that begins of page 07 of this document. **No late projects will be accepted for grading for any reason(s). You are responsible for turning work in on time regardless of attendance.**

PLAGIARISM

The University of North Texas promotes the integrity of learning and embraces the core values of trust and honesty. Academic integrity is based on educational principles and procedures that protect the rights of all participants in the educational process and validate the legitimacy of degrees awarded by the University. In the investigation and resolution of allegations of student academic dishonesty, the University's actions are intended to be corrective, educationally sound, fundamentally fair, and based on reliable evidence. More information about UNT's policies regarding academic integrity can be found online at: https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/06.003%20Student%20Academic%20Integrity_0.pdf

According to UNT Policy 06.003, "Student Academic Integrity," academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

Plagiarism is literary or artistic theft. It is the false assumption of authorship, the wrongful act of taking the product of another person's mind and presenting it as one's own. Copying someone else's writing, design or art work, intact or with inconsequential changes, and adding one's name to the result constitutes plagiarism. If the instructor suspects a given student of an incidence of plagiarism, he/she/they will notify this student of this concern within 72 hours of the suspicion being raised. Plagiarism may result in disciplinary probation, suspension from the university, expulsion (permanent), or the revocation of your degree, and it will cause you to flunk this course!

Individual s26 ADES 1543 students are hereby encouraged—rather than discouraged—from using the array of generative, artificial intelligence softwares listed under the "Required Supplies" heading of this document to aid and abet their efforts to engage in the ideation/brainstorming/prototyping processes that will constitute necessary aspects of their learning experiences during the evolution of this course. Generative AI may also be used to generate various portions of the text/copy that will be required to appear on/across all four of the assigned projects that comprise the coursework of s26 ADES 1543. With all of this stated: students enrolled in this course will likely find—at least at this stage of much of the development of generative AI—that there will be instances when "well-prompted" AI endeavors will yield MUCH MORE useful and usable results, AND THAT THERE WILL ALSO BE INSTANCES when even "well-prompted" AI endeavors yield results that, to use polite language, will be less-than-useful, usable, or desirable.

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USING AI/GEN AI

Individual s26 ADES 1543 students are hereby encouraged—rather than discouraged—from using the array of generative, artificial intelligence softwares listed under the “Required Supplies” heading of this document to aid and abet their efforts to engage in the ideation/brainstorming/prototyping processes that will constitute necessary aspects of their learning experiences during the evolution of this course. Generative AI may also be used to generate various portions of the text/copy that will be required to appear on/across all six of the assigned projects that comprise the coursework of s26 ADES 1543. With all of this stated: students enrolled in this course will likely find—at least at this stage of much of the development of generative AI—that there will be instances when “well-prompted” AI endeavors will yield MUCH MORE useful and usable results, AND THAT THERE WILL ALSO BE INSTANCES when even “well-prompted” AI endeavors yield results that, to use polite language, will be less-than-useful, usable, or desirable. Each University of North Texas student is entitled to certain rights associated with higher education institutions. See www.unt.edu/csrr for further information.

RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to continue to receive financial aid. Students must maintain a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA in addition to successfully completing a required number of credit hours based on total registered hours per term. Students cannot exceed attempted credit hours above 150% of their required degree plan. If a student does not maintain the required standards, the student may lose their financial aid eligibility.

FINANCIAL AID

If at any point you consider dropping this or any other course, please be advised that the decision to do so may have the potential to affect your current and future financial aid eligibility. Please visit <http://financialaid.unt.edu/satisfactory-academic-progress-requirements> for more information about financial aid Satisfactory Academic Progress. It may be wise for you to schedule a meeting with an academic advisor in your college or visit the Student Financial Aid and Scholarships office to discuss dropping a course being doing so.

COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

As stated in the attendance policy articulated above, students are expected to attend class meetings regularly and to abide by the attendance policy established for this course. Please inform the course instructor if you are unable to attend class meetings because you are ill. Please do NOT come to class if you are ill with flu or Covid or any other easily transmissible sickness. It is and will continue to be crucial for you to be mindful about the health and safety of everyone in our educational community. **If you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>), please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center located at 1800 Chestnut Street in Denton (940.565.2333, or ask SHWC@unt.edu), or your health care provider PRIOR to coming to campus.** UNT also requires you to contact the UNT COVID Team at COVID@unt.edu for guidance on actions to take due to experiencing symptoms, pending or positive test results, or potential exposure.

REGARDING CIVILITY

As members of the UNT community, we have all made a commitment to be part of an institution that respects and values the identities of the students and employees with whom we interact. UNT does not tolerate identity-based discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, so we will work as a class to collaborate in ways that encourage inclusivity without discouraging the types of critical dialogue, or *dialectic*, that is necessary to fuel and guide effective design decision-making. We will routinely discuss our classroom’s habits of engagement as the semester progresses, and I also encourage you to review UNT’s student code of conduct so that we can all start with the same baseline understanding of what is necessary to initiate and sustain civil discourse (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>). **Finally, please bear the following in mind as we engage in the coursework of ADES 1543.501 as the spring semester of 2026 progresses: although disagreements and debates are encouraged in a course**

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like this, personal attacks and hate speech, hate writing, and hate-inspired visual communications are unacceptable and will not be tolerated in our learning environment.

FOR THOSE WHO ARE

EASILY BORED

To quote from Gloria Steinhem, “Those [people] who are ‘boring’ have a high tendency to be easily ‘bored;’ those [people] who are ‘easily bored’ have a high tendency to be ‘boring.’” Whether a given student has chosen the Graphic Design or the User Experience Design track within it, Communication Design is a major area of study that leads to entry into a professional discipline that demands a broadly informed, deeply examined sense-of-self. Those who practice it well enough to sustain careers and fulfill life paths cultivate knowledge and understandings from diverse sources, are well and broadly read, and are good at formulating probative questions that interrogate status quos across extant social, technological, economic, environmental and political spectras. They listen as well as they speak, and develop the ability to engage in working processes that do not usually yield predictable outcomes. They learn to be quite comfortable being uncomfortable as a means to invent and innovate, and to identify, frame, and resolve complex problems.

If your primary daily operating modalities in college and life involve “going with the flow,” “not sticking out too much,” and “waiting to see how everyone else is acting before you act,” User Experience Design is not the major for you. This is also not the major for you if you can't figure out how to disconnect from social media and other e-based modes of communication for the extended periods of time necessary to construct the kinds of knowledge you'll need to succeed in this demanding but richly rewarding major and career. If you can't “go dark” for the few hours necessary almost every day to “get thoughtful work planned and done,” you won't make it in Com Design in general and UX design in particular. You also won't make it if you haven't matured enough to treat your collegiate experience as something beyond “13th grade.”

Finally: as a reward for the first among you who has thoroughly and deeply read all the way through this syllabus to this point in its narrative, \$50.00 in cash awaits you in a plain, white envelope that is stored in CVAD Building Complex locker #3001, which has a combination number of 39-7-25. (FYI: the official U.S. Postal Mailing Address of the CVAD Building Complex is 1201 West Mulberry Street, Denton, TX, USA 76203.) Locker #3001 is located in the southmost hallway of the third floor of the CVAD Building Complex, approximately 25 yards east of the southwest stairwell.

CHANGES TO THE SYLLABUS

The instructor reserves the right to make adjustments/changes to the course syllabus and schedule with or without notice to the students at any time over the course of the spring semester of 2026.

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the contract >> complete it, digitize it, and email it to michael.gibson@unt.edu by 5 pm
01.16.26 >>

I acknowledge that I have read the course syllabus. I understand the course structure, grading, and attendance policies, as well as the risk factor rating. I hereby agree to the syllabus and its provisions.

NAME (PRINT)

SIGNATURE

DATE

Please fill in your contact information below:

YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS (PLEASE SPECIFY YOUR UNT-AFFILIATED E-MAIL ADDRESS)

YOUR PERMANENT ADDRESS

YOUR PHONE NUMBER (OPTIONAL)

YOUR CELL PHONE NUMBER (OPTIONAL)

May we include your e-mail address on the UNT CVAD Communication Design List Serve?

PLEASE CHECK: **YES** **NO**

May I include your e-mail address on a class email list for distribution to the rest of the class (it may be necessary to include a phone number if we are forced to teach some portion of this course remotely/via Zoomchat)?

PLEASE CHECK: **YES** **NO**

“I agree to the terms and conditions outlined in the *Permission to Use Student Work* contract, as articulated on the webpages that are located here: <https://digitalstrategy.unt.edu/clear/policies-procedures/use-student-work.html>, and that I may publicly credited as the creator of that work.”

YOUR PRINTED NAME

YOUR SIGNATURE

DATE

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the schedule >> fifteen weeks of UX “learnin’ through doin’” >>

WEEK 1 :: J 12-14

M Opening test; Class policies
Chapter 1 (derived from your textbook by Marsh and the Interaction Design Foundation, or IDF): *What is UX design? What is interaction design?*

W
IN CLASS: Quiz and discussion: Chapter 1

WEEK 2 :: J 19-21

M
NO CLASS: PLEASE CELEBRATE THE LIFE AND LEGACY DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

W
LECTURE +
ACTIVITY: Chapter 2: Aligning Goals

WEEK 3 :: J 26-28

M
LECTURE +
ACTIVITY: Chapter 3: UX Behavior Basics

W
IN CLASS: Quiz and discussion: Chapters 2 & 3

WEEK 4 :: F 02-04

M
LECTURE +
ACTIVITY: Chapter 4: User Research
ASSIGN: Exercise 1 > Develop 1 example of a viable persona (informed by *interviewing...*)

W
IN CLASS: Quiz and discussion: Chapter 4
CRITIQUE: Example Personas > Turn in all examples (via uploading them to the course Dropbox folder)

WEEK 5 :: F 09-11

M
LECTURE +
ACTIVITY: Chapter 5: Mental Attributes
WATCH: Ted Talk: Dan Ariely: Decisions and Control
https://www.ted.com/talks/dan_ariely_are_we_in_control_of_our_own_decisions#t-1012948

W
IN CLASS: Quiz and discussion: Chapter 5

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WEEK 6 :: F 16-18

M

LECTURE +

ACTIVITY: Chapter 6: Information Architecture

ASSIGN: Exercise 2 > Create a site map of the top two levels of small website

W

IN CLASS: Quiz and Discussion: Chapter 6

CRITIQUE: Exercise 2 > Site maps > Turn in all examples (DropBox upload)

WEEK 7 :: F 23-25

M

LECTURE +

ACTIVITY:: Chapter 7: Designing User Behavior

W

IN CLASS: Quiz and Discussion: Chapter 7

WEEK 8 :: M 02-04

M

LECTURE +

ACTIVITY: Chapter 8: UX Visual Design Principles

ASSIGNMENT: Exercise 3 > Redesign the UI (user interface) for the landing page and one sub-page of a poorly executed website

W

IN CLASS: Quiz and discussion: Chapter 8

CRITIQUE: Exercise 3 > Redesigned website UIs : Turn in all redesigns (DropBox upload)

WEEK 9 :: M 16-18

M

LECTURE +

ACTIVITY: Chapter 9: Wireframes and Prototypes

ASSIGNMENT: Exercise 4 > Develop a wireframe that articulates userflows across/through three levels of content

W

IN CLASS: Quiz and discussion: Chapter 9

CRITIQUE: Exercise 4 > three-level wireframes > Turn in all wireframes (DropBox upload)

WEEK 10 :: M 23-25

M

LECTURE +

ACTIVITY: Chapter 10: The Psychology of UX Design

ASSIGNMENT: Exercise 5 > Heuristic Redesign

W

IN CLASS: Quiz and discussion: Chapter 10

CRITIQUE: Exercise 5 > Heuristic Redesign > Turn in all Heuristic Redesigns (DropBox upload)

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WEEK 11 :: M 30-A 01

M

LECTURE +

ACTIVITY: Chapter 11: Copywriting and Persuasion

ASSIGNMENT: Exercise 6 > Rewrite 5 ineffective headlines and/or copy points

W

CRITIQUE: Exercise 6 > Copy rewrites > turn in all headline + copy rewrites (DropBox upload)

IN CLASS: Quiz and Discussion: Chapter 11

.....
WEEK 12 :: A 06-08

M

LECTURE +

ACTIVITY: Chapter 13: Data Interpretation

W

IN CLASS: Quiz and discussion: Chapter 13

ASSIGN: Class Project: Design or Redesign a compact user experience (digital or analogue)
Develop a per-individual design and production schedule

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WEEK 13 :: A 13-15

M

CRITIQUE: Ongoing work: Final Project (each student must present his/her re-design project's primary goals and production schedule in class TODAY)

ASSIGN: Ongoing work: Final Project

W

CRITIQUE: Ongoing work: Final Project: students will work in critique teams of four

ASSIGN: Ongoing work: Final Project: students will work in critique teams of four

.....
WEEK 14 :: A 20-22

M

CRITIQUE: Ongoing work: Final Project: students will work in critique teams of four

ASSIGN: Ongoing work: Final Project: students will work in critique teams of four

W

CRITIQUE: Ongoing work: Final Project: students will work in critique teams of four

ASSIGN: Ongoing work: Final Project: students will work in critique teams of four

.....
WEEK 15 :: A 27-29

M

CRITIQUE: Final review of all work re: each student's final project and "turn-in" discussion

W

DUE: **Final Project (DropBox upload by 3:00 PM or a grade of "0 coursepoints" will be earned; this project counts as the final exam in this course)**

IN CLASS: Class review and assessment form (i.e. UNT SPOT) completion; *please note that the possibility may exist for the Final Project to be turned in by 3:00 pm on Wednesday, May 06. This determination will be made the week beginning Monday, April 20.*

iFin!