ADES 4528 | “Final Portfolio in User Experience Design” | Course Syllabus

Course Description
This three-semester-credit-hour undergraduate course will transpire over a 16-week span of time and is designed to build upon all of the knowledge and understandings students enrolled in it have constructed during their prior enrollments 1) in the array of courses that precede it in the BFA in Communication Design: User Experience Design Track (ADES CDES: UXDT) degree plan sequence, and 2) any and all of the other courses that they have enrolled in during the undergraduate experiences at UNT and elsewhere. Additionally, all students enrolled in this course are strongly encouraged to draw from/utilize their individualized experiences of “living life in the 21st century” to inform their design decision-making as the coursework that constitutes this course evolves.

This course is designed to be taken during the final semester of the fourth year of enrollment in the curriculum that facilitates the BFA CDES: UXDT degree plan within UNT CVAD’s Department of Design, and has been designed to prepare those enrolled in it to effectively enter the ever-evolving professional discipline now commonly known as User Experience Design. In short, as expressed in a simple phrase, the primary intent of this course is to prepare the students enrolled in it to “transition from campus to career.”

The primary goals, expressed as student learning outcomes, of the learning experiences that constitute ADES 4528 “Final Portfolio in User Experience Design” are to allow each individual BFA CDES: UXDT candidate enrolled in it to:

1. engage in the processes necessary to prepare an effective array of self-promotional materials, including but not limited to an online portfolio, across a diverse array of media, platforms and mediums, that will effectively position each BFA CDES: UXDT candidate/4528 student as someone who has amassed the necessary skills and bases of knowledge to make a viable, sustainable contribution to a varied amalgam of organizations that engage in the professional practices—please note the plural—of user experience design;

2. critically engage in the decision-making methodologies and methods necessary to formulate and operationalize a “career instigation strategy” that locates each 4528 student in one or more of the following “UXD-related career path areas:”

   · UX Designer
   · Lead UI/UX Designer “Rockstar”
   · UX/ID Designer
   · User Experience/UX Designer
   · UX Architect
   · Digital UX Architect (this has gotten “hot” since the onset of the pandemic… requires use of softwares like Miro, Mural and Figma to facilitate UX design decision-making across digitally synchronized but geographically remote networks)
   · UX Designer/Researcher
   · UX Researcher (bear in mind the difference between “user research” and “usability testing” with regard to doing this)
   · Experience Designer
   · Service Designer
   · Product Designer

1. I’m sourcing these UXD-related job titles from listings that have appeared on the IDA (Interaction Design Association) and UXPA (User Experience Professionals Association) web postings for employment opportunities between January 6, 2020 and January 6, 2021. Many of these titles are also articulated on p. 36 of Lisa Murnan’s book (one of your textbooks for this course) “How to Get a UX Design Job.”

2. Two essential reads that cover this exploding opportunity area for UX Designers: “Good Services: How to Design Services That Work” by Lou Downe, and “This is Service Design Thinking” by Marc Stickdorn

3. The essential meaning of this term is much expanded than it was ten years ago, or—GULP!—35 years ago when I began my professional design career under this job title in Chicago. In the realm of UXD, this now means someone who is (mostly) brought into/onto an EXTANT project, or “product,” with the express intent of improving it, most often by engaging in user research, followed by some immersion in the usability testing-cum-prototyping cycle.
3. identify, frame, develop and design—please bear in mind that each of these phases will be crucial as design
decision-making processes evolve—a project that yields a product, service or experience that improves a
specific “problematic situation” on behalf of a particular target audience or group of users; this project will
constitute a semester-long endeavor, and should be undertaken as a means to showcase an area of interest
and/or function as a “showcase project” that will help propel the student who undertakes it into the type
of initial, professional UX Design experience that he/she/they desires to initiate his/her/their career.
4. critically assess the contents of his/her/their personal UX Design portfolios to determine which projects
presented within it at the beginning of the semester must be either replaced or re-imagined and then
re-designed to ensure that each student's portfolio is as devoid of "poorly considered" projects as possible.

Credits and Prerequisites
All students enrolled in this course must have already taken and successfully passed (i.e., earned a final course
grade of "C" or better): the following courses: ADES 1500, ADES 1513, ADES 1543, ADES 2513, ADES 2518,
and ADES 2523, ADES 3513, ADES 3548, and ADES 4523 is a three-credit hour, undergraduate course that is
required for all UNT CVAD Communication Design majors seeking a B.F.A. in Communication Design with a
concentration in User-Experience Design.

Course Content
This course will be comprised of the following immersive, largely project- and process-based learning experiences
that must each be addressed by individual students in a way or ways that are tailored to meeting the individual
needs and aspirations of those students.

- Each student must complete ONE major, semester-long user experience design-rooted project either on an
  individual basis OR as part of a two- to three-ADES 4528 student team. This project must yield an outcome
  that manifests itself as a service, experience or a product (there can be some “overlap” between these) that
effectively addresses a situation or set of circumstances that is now or is fast becoming what a given group
of people qualify/describe as “problematic,” or “less-than-desirable.” This situation or set of circumstances must
be framed by well-defined social, technological, economic, environmental, political, values-based, aesthetic
or ethical concerns, factors and/or conditions, and the results of this project must be effectively documented
as a primary portion of an individual ADES 4528 student’s portfolio by 11:00 am CDT on April 28, 2021.
- Each student must develop, design and execute a version of his, her or their user experience design-rooted
  portfolio as a functional web presence/website using whatever website construction and implementation
  means/methods they deem most appropriate and effective to showcase at least five of his, her, or their
  UX-rooted and other types of projects (such as examples of writing, graphic design or illustration work,
  photography, videography, documentation of volunteer work, etc.). This website must visually communicate not
  only who each student is as a UX designer by showcasing his, her or their array of work, but must also “tell the
  developmental stories” of at least three of the five projects described in the previous bulleted item.
Each student must "re-visit and re-design" at least two of his, her or their extant projects that have been completed during the span of time that began with their enrollment in our ADES 2513 "Digital Typography" course and culminated with their enrollment in our ADES 4523 "Advanced User Experience Design campaigns/projects," OR that have been completed as freelance projects during this same span of time.

Each student must ensure that the "story" of his, her or their design decision-making is effectively evident in support of at least three of the projects that constitute his, her or their user experience design-rooted portfolio. This means that, in support of at least three projects, a target user of a given student’s website would be able to clearly ascertain the following aspects of the user experience design research-to-framing-to-development-to-execution-of-design process:

- initial problem identification and framing;
- empathy mapping;
- a brief synopsis of what the student's empathically framed user research revealed;
- the presentation of at least two key personas;
- the presentation of information architecture;
- the presentation of low- and mid-fidelity wireframes;
- the presentation of low-fidelity prototypes;
- the presentation of mid-fidelity prototypes;
- the presentation of a high-fidelity prototype(s).

## Course Objectives

Through the completion of course assignments, students will **acquire** competency in the following areas:

- the construction of knowledge that informs how individuals entering the User Experience Design profession must comport themselves and present their oeuvres of work to engage effectively in the processes of job identification, application, interviewing and negotiating
- a set of core skills and a knowledge base necessary to effectively plan and guide the development of a UX Design job hunting strategy that is "right for them"
- the development of a UX Design-rooted, online portfolio that will help *tell the story of why they are who they are* as an emerging UX Designer, Researcher, Information Architect, Product Designer, Experience Designer, Service Designer, UX Architect, or UI Designer, or some combination of these
- the abilities necessary to self-promote not only their work, but themselves as professional individuals who have the skills and bases of knowledge necessary to viably contribute to the work projects and processes that must transpire effectively within a professional User Experience Design environment
- the abilities necessary to design a resumé that will be effectively cognized and sorted by a potential employer’s Applicant Tracking System (ATS) software

Through the completion of course assignments, students will **develop** competency in the following areas:

- the ability to effectively design, evolve and disseminate self-promotional materials, including an online web presence, an “ATS-friendly resumé,” a business card, and some type of leave-behind
- the ability write an effective cover letter or introductory e-mail that highlights the student’s personality as effectively as it communicates his, her or their potential, and that accounts for a given employer’s purview
the ability to account for the social, cultural, economic and political biases among those who might employ them, either on a full-time or a freelance basis, so that they can tailor their approaches to these individuals and groups as they plan and navigate their respective career paths

- the ability to develop his, her or their LinkedIn and social media presence so that these effectively promotes his, her or their essential competencies and skills, as well as his or their personalities

- the ability to cultivate the strategic and tactical knowledge necessary to communicate effectively with recruiters, hiring managers and potential UX Design teammates

- The ability to logistically plan the evolution of a complex information design project so that the manner in which it evolves can account for criticism offered by whatever stakeholders and/or project collaborators are involved in attempting to realize this project to good effect

- The ability to design-and-write, or write-and-design, effectively communicative and emotionally engaging introduction, main content area, and conclusion copy/text, and the imagery to support this, in ways that effectively inform the decision-making of a specific target audience or user group

Through the completion of course assignments, students will continue to develop competency in the following areas:

- The ability to glean useful and usable information gleaned from human-centered design research about the biases, needs and aspirations of a specific target audience or user group, and then engage in the design decision-making necessary to develop, design and implement effective services, products and experiences for that audience or user group

- The ability to articulate key rationales for making particular design decisions within the context of an interdisciplinary design team so these can be openly and critically discussed by project stakeholders and collaborators, as well as their instructor

- The abilities necessary to engage in various types of digital products and systems programming necessary to facilitate usable, useful and delightful interactions between the systems they design and those target audiences or user groups on whose behalfs these products and systems were designed

Course Structure
This course is offered in a design studiolab format, and will meet for two, 170-minute class sessions per week. Course content and studiolab etiquette during critically dialectic exchanges between fellow-students and students and faculty are all consistent with the requirements of pursuing a career in professional User Experience and Interaction Design environments. Under the guidance of the instructor, each BFA CDES: UXDT student enrolled in ADES 4528 will spend specified amounts of time—to be determined by each individual student enrolled in this course—engaged in developing and designing the projects and materials that support that student’s endeavors to enter the professional UX Design marketplace and sustain a viable career path within it that are described in the “Course Content” section of this document.

In light of our efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19:
Each of you is required to be physically present in room 284 on either a Monday OR a Wednesday morning this semester from 11:00 am until 1:50 pm—NOT BOTH DAYS—with myself and a select group of your peers until and unless we are
at some point mandated by the university to switch to a so-called “completely remote, synchronous” teaching and learning modality. On the day you are scheduled to be physically present with me in our classroom, you must physically present whatever work the daily course schedule calls for. This may mean using small magnets to attach sketches you’ve drawn to a section of the whiteboards in the room designated ONLY for your individual use (you’ll each need to purchase some of these for your own use: https://www.magcraft.com/magcraft-nsn0732 OR https://www.officedepot.com/a/products/351910/Fashion-Magnets-Assorted-Shapes-Assorted-Colors/;jsessionid=0000kFl-hmhHZN7fCws9Q81d-BuQ:17h4h7cou). Additionally, this may mean that you will be required to use your personal computing rig to 1) access work you will have created outside of class using Adobe InDesign, Illustrator, Photoshop, Figma, Mural, Miro and XD software, and then 2) present this work to the instructor and your peers using a combination of the in-classroom computing facilities and some form of external digital storage (this will likely be Dropbox or Google One remote storage). It will be necessary to use Zoom, and—specifically—Zoom’s “screen sharing” feature to facilitate critical discussion of the work being presented by each student or each student team during our class sessions. On occasion, we may also make use of an online-facilitated, digital collaboration tool + portal known as “Mural” (https://www.mural.co/; how extensively we’ll use this will depend literally on how much access I can obtain for us as a group for NO MONEY).

Course Components
Each of the user-experience-based, design problems that will evolve as this course progresses will necessarily involve a good deal of in-class critical analysis and discussion. Because of this, these activities will constitute the primary “course component” of ADES 4528. Specifically, this means engaging in critical, broadly informed analysis of human-centered, user-experience-based design decision making. Each student will be required to actively contribute to the critical dialogues that will transpire in our classroom during almost every class session of the semester. Each of the assigned, user-experience-based, design opportunities that will be addressed by individual students or student teams will be assessed for grading once they have been turned in.

An Overview of How Students Enrolled in This Course Will Be Graded Combined with the Project Schedule
Each of the course projects that will evolve over the course of the semester schedule will be formulated, developed and designed by the individual students, or students working in teams of two to three peers each. How effectively each student is assessed to have addressed specific “per project” criteria will be recorded on an assessment document that each student will receive one to two weeks after the culmination of each of the three to six projects that will comprise the coursework for ADES 4528. Each individual student’s UX Design portfolio and “major project” must be completed by the exam date and time for this course (Wednesday, April 28, 2021 at 11:00 am). There is no final exam for this course, as the final major project and portfolio will serve in lieu of this.

Please note: projects that fail to be turned in prior to the deadlines specified in the Daily Class Schedule will not be graded (they will earn final project grades of “0”; this is worse than earning a final project grade of “F”).
- Each student’s personal, UX Design-rooted online portfolio will constitute a quarter of that student’s final course grade
- Each student’s major course project will constitute a quarter of that student’s final course grade
- Each student’s designed revisions to his, her or their two to three “re-visited projects” or “added anew projects will constitute a quarter of that student’s final course grade
Each student’s creation of “job hunting support materials”—resumé, social media presence, business card, leave-behind, etc., will be constitute a quarter of that student’s final course grade.

Course Risk Factor
ADES 4528 has been classified as a course that carries a UNT Policy Risk Factor of Category Two (2). Students enrolled in this course may be exposed to some significant hazards, but these are not likely to cause serious bodily injury. In this course, those risks are related to X-Acto knife usage, and exposure to adhesives and the fumes they generate, as well as repetitive stress injuries related to extended computer usage. Students enrolled in ADES 4528 will be informed of any potential health hazards or potential for bodily injury connected with the use of any materials and/or processes they may encounter during their enrollment in this course, and will be instructed as necessary regarding how to proceed without endangering themselves or others.

Required Texts

Recommended Texts

An enactment of measures designed to prevent the spread of COVID-19
Please DO NOT physically come to class with the instructor and your classmates in room 284 of the CVAD Building Complex if you are feeling ill, or are exhibiting symptoms of illness (i.e., you have a fever of 100° or higher, you are actively and consistently coughing or sneezing, you have shortness of breath, you are experiencing nausea and/or headaches, you are experiencing diarrhea). Each student enrolled in ADES 4528 must wear a non-ventilated face mask to our class sessions held in room 284 of the CVAD Building Complex, and continue to wear it through the duration of a given day’s class session (and for the entirety of the time the student is INSIDE ANY OF UNT’S BUILT ENVIROMENTS!). More information about the types of masks that have been approved for on-campus wear at UNT during the pandemic, please visit: https://www.untsystem.edu/covid-response-guidelines#toc-3, and then please scroll down to the subhead that reads: “Face coverings and PPE.”

On days students are specified by the schedule articulated on pages 2 and 3 of this document to come to class in room 284, these students MUST clean and sanitize the chair and the desk they will use throughout the class session as roll is being taken that day. Each student must also do this just prior to leaving each class session at about 1:45 pm or so each afternoon of the semester.

Each student MUST occupy his/her/their specified chair and desk area for the entirety of the class session EXCEPT when he/she/they must get up to use lavatory facilities OR when he/she/they will hang work drawn or printed on paper WITH HIS/HER/THEIR own magnets on his/her/their designated section of whiteboard (https://www.magcraft.com/magcraft-nsn0732 OR https://www.officedepot.com/a/products/351910/Fashion-Magnets-Assorted-Shapes-Assorted-Colors/jsessionid=0000kfI-hmhHZN7fCws9QB1dBuQ:17h4h7cou). Students MAY NOT SHARE their magnets with each other at any time during the semester.
Required Supplies

- well-equipped personal computers loaded with the Adobe CC Creative Suite,
- access to and working knowledge of Figma, Balsamiq, Axure, Sketch, or XD prototyping softwares
- An inexpensive-yet-workable-with-their-smartphone cardboard page scanner, like the one listed below:
  "Scanner Bin - The Clever Document Scanning Solution:"
  https://www.amazon.com/Scanner-Bin-Document-Scanning-Solution/dp/B00XM7LKZM/
- at least one, preferably two, external hard drive(s) with at least 1TB capacity to facilitate the “hard storage” of the various types of files you will create as you complete you assigned coursework
- at least 200 Post-It Notes™ in at least five different low chroma colors
- a 25’ to 50’ roll of inexpensive, white butcher paper that is 36” wide
- a “cheap” box of eight (8) Crayola, washable markers
- one (1) Bienfang brand, 100-sheet “Parchment 100 Tracing Paper” pad (9” x 12”)
- one (1) Bienfang brand, 50-sheet “Graphics 360” pad (9” x 12”)
- At least four (4) Sharpie brand “Fine Point” black markers
- At least four (4) Sharpie brand “Ultra-Fine Point” black markers
- At least four dry erase markers (these are the ONLY types that can be used on the whiteboards in room 284)

ADES 4528 Attendance Policy

Good attendance and punctuality are expected for this class and will strongly affect your grades. Roll will be taken at the beginning of each class session. A student will be considered late/tardy if he/she/they arrives after roll has been taken. If a student is late/tardy, it is his/her responsibility during that class session to make sure the instructor knows that he/she/they is present before he/she/they leaves that particular class session. Each student will receive two (2) “free tardies” over the course of the semester. After the first two tardies, every two (2) tardies will equal one (1) unexcused absence. Only two (2) unexcused absences over the course of the will be accepted. The third unexcused absence will lower a student’s final course grade by one letter grade. The fourth unexcused absence will lower a student's final course grade by two letter grades. The fifth unexcused absence will lower a student's final course grade by three letter grades. A total of six absences, excused or unexcused, will result in the student receiving a final course grade of “F,” which will result in a flunking of ADES 4528 during the spring semester of 2021. Students who sleep during class will be counted absent.

There are no excused absences for anything other than a verifiable death in the immediate family (obituary, funeral home notice or death certificate must be presented), or a verifiable illness suffered by the student accompanied by printed and signed doctor’s note provided on his/her stationery with a telephone number. The doctor’s note must be presented during the class immediately after the one that was missed. A receipt from the doctor’s office is not acceptable. A dental appointment—unless it was necessitated by an emergency—does not count as an excused absence.
Because this course meets twice per week, a student will be counted absent—and this absence will be unexcused—if he/she/they comes to a given class session more than 30 minutes late. A student who exhibits a pattern of not bringing any or bringing only incomplete work to a series of three or more class sessions may earn additional unexcused absences at the discretion of the professor. **If a student comes to a class session without his/her assigned work for that day, that student will be counted absent.** If a student is absent from a given class session, that student is responsible for contacting a class member in order to get any information or assignments that were given during the class session that was missed. **INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS MAY NOT CONTACT THE INSTRUCTOR TO GAIN INFORMATION ABOUT “WHAT THEY MISSED DURING A GIVEN CLASS SESSION,” NOR CAN “WHAT THEY MISSED” BE MADE UP DURING AN OFFICE HOURS SESSION WITH THE INSTRUCTOR.** The instructor will not use any class time to repeat missed lectures or assignments. Do not—for any reason—call the main office or the Department of Design office of UNT CVAD to leave the instructor a message that you will be missing a given class session of ADES 3513. Under no circumstances should you leave a project with anyone in either of these offices for the instructor to “retrieve later.” Neither of these offices will accept student projects.

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**Personal Computer and Smartphone Use Policy**

All smart phones, tablets, and phablets must be turned off/switched into “airplane mode” as soon as class begins, but they may, out of necessity with regard to engaging in the coursework of ADES 4528, be switched on again as a given class session progresses. Laptops should only be opened to engage in class work. No social media, checking email or text messaging will be allowed for any reason during class time. Failure to comply with this policy may result in point deductions on the “Main Project” grade for whichever of these the student was working toward when a given “failure to comply with this policy” occurred. Let your instructor know in advance if you have an extenuating circumstance with regard to abiding by any of these policies (if you have a need to “check your device” due to these types of circumstances, please step outside the classroom space and into the hallway to do this).

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**Plagiarism**

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.

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**Accommodations for Students with Special Needs or Disabilities**

Please notify the instructor if you have a disability that requires accommodation. It is also required that you register with the UNT Office of Disability Access, Sage Hall, Room 167 or Room 202. The College of Visual Arts and Design policy on accommodation is available upon request in the CVAD Dean’s offices, (these occupy the “101 suite” on the first floor of the CVAD Building Complex in its southwest corner). Further questions and problems on accommodation may be addressed to Erin Donahoe-Rankin, UNT CVAD’s Director of Advising, Art Building, Student Advising, Room 345D (940.565.2216; artadviseasst@unt.edu).
Dealing with Fire and Weather-Related Emergencies

In case of an emergency (an alarm will sound), please follow the building evacuation plans posted on each floor of your building—in this case, the Art Building—and proceed to the nearest parking lot (due to construction near the Art Building, please gather in the parking lot immediately west of Curry Hall). 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 and remain there until an all clear signal is sounded. Follow the instructions of your instructor(s) and act accordingly.

Changes to the ADES 4528 Course Syllabus

The instructor reserves the right to make adjustments/changes to the course syllabus with or without notice as he/she/they sees fit/deems necessary as the semester progresses. The daily course schedule for ADES 523501 begins two pages hence.

A Brief Note on the Danger to Com Design, UX Track Majors Who Are Easily Bored, or Who Are Simply Not Particularly Interesting People

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.” Com Design is a major 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.

If one of your primary goals in college and life is to “go with flow,” “not stick out too much,” “wait to see how everyone else is acting before you act,” Com 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 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. You also won’t make it if you haven’t matured enough to treat your collegiate experience as something beyond “13th grade.”

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students’ opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student’s conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University’s expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. Visit UNT’s Code of Student Conduct (https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct) to learn more.