COURSE OVERVIEW

The purpose of this course is to develop students’ ability to design and build engaging, relevant and functional websites. Technical exercises, content organization, audience analysis, design prototypes, user testing, writing assignments and class critiques will be used to learn aspects of designing within an online context and put this knowledge into practice.

Various forms of media play an ever increasing role in the ways in which we communicate. The design considerations within such environments are shaping our complex relationships with technology, information and each other. It is important that communication designers develop an understanding of how these technologies work in order to explore their potential as well as prepare for the ways in which they will change in the future. This course begins with the fundamentals of web design and web development and moves through more complex technical themes as they become appropriate to the course. Throughout this course students will research, plan, design, build and test fully functioning websites that emphasize various conceptual, theoretical, practical and technical aspects of designing for the web.

To do this, students will be required to write some code by hand as well as use software tools that aid in the process. Recommended texts, in-class technical demonstrations, and online resources will assist in learning the technical aspects of web development.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Develop solutions informed by an understanding of unique aspects of designing for an online environment.
- Demonstrate effective design research and working process relevant to designing for the web.
- Develop an understanding of common professional phases in the design and development of websites.
- Demonstrate the ability to consider the role of the user within the design and development of a web project.
- Explore trouble shooting techniques as an essential part of technical learning and project development.
- Demonstrate technical knowledge of web development fundamentals and basic, accepted professional standards.
- Investigate current conventions of the medium and explore different ways of thinking about communication, expression and representation within an online environment.

PROCESS

How you’ve arrived at your solution to a project is as valuable as the final project itself. Being able to review, analyze and reflect on your process in progress as well as upon completion of the project provides a great deal of opportunity to learn what you did throughout the project. Identifying what worked well and what didn’t throughout your process can help identify strengths and weaknesses in your own practice. Once identified, you can begin to work on these areas in future projects.

For this course, you will be asked to be thoughtful and creative in how you approach the projects. You will also be asked to demonstrate how you arrived at your final submission. To do this, you will need to document, collect and organize your process through each major project. This process documentation will be submitted with each of the final projects and be assigned a portion of the points for that project. Process documentation will be graded on thoroughness of the investigation, creativity in approach, and diversity in the exploration. It will contain things like design sketches, grid structures, navigation storyboards, site maps, information architecture, user experience maps, annotated design iterations and also design, audience, and content research. Everything should be included with intent. This means that things like images and texts that you’ve collected include notes and analysis.

CRITIQUE

Critique is a crucial part of the learning environment. The dialog that you have with your fellow students about your work helps you grow and learn as a designer. The discussions that you have about their work helps you build your skills to analyze and communicate about the work of others. It is in your best interest to attend every critique and be entirely prepared. Class critiques cannot be made up should you be absent.

In this class there will be one on one desk critiques, small group critiques and full class critiques at key points within the project. It is expected that during small group and full class critiques everyone involved will participate for the entire time. These will be identified on the schedule for each project.

Individual critiques may also be arranged at any time during my office hours.

During the critique of your work, you will be given a lot of feedback and information in a very short amount of time. It is up to you to determine a method for capturing this information that works best for you. The discussions that occur during a critique or presentation are nearly impossible to recall or recreate. It is recommended that if you do not already have a strategy for this you should develop one. At a minimum you should be taking notes. You might also consider partnering up with someone and taking notes for each other in addition to taking notes for yourself. Sometimes a second point of view form a viewer who isn’t also facing the pressures of presenting will hear or see things that you didn’t.
**EXPECTATIONS**

In order to maintain a healthy and productive working environment within the classroom, there are a few things that are expected of you throughout the semester.

- Be on time (or better yet, be a little early).
- On work in class days, please set mobile devices to vibrate.
- On critique, lecture and presentation days, please turn mobile devices off.
- In-class work time is to be used only for work pertaining to this course.
- Submit projects in a neat and orderly manor and be certain that your name, course number and project number are included on every single file that you submit.
- Digital craft will be stressed throughout the semester. This includes image quality, file organization, and overall presentation for anything submitted (KeyNote, PDF, etc).

The understanding is that in order to complete the assignments well, you will need to spend at least as much time outside of class working as the class is scheduled for in a week. There will be in-class time devoted to working in order to get help with trouble shooting but this will not be enough time to complete the assignments in a satisfactory manor.

Back up your digital work.

With the current size and affordability of storage devices, there is no excuse for losing digital files. Get in the habit of doing regular back-ups. There are many systems out there that make this easy and require little effort beyond the initial set up. Time Machine is a good option for anyone on a Mac.

**ATTENDANCE**

Attendance at each class meeting is mandatory. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class meeting. Students will remain in class for the entire scheduled period or until dismissed by the instructor. Each student is allowed 2 un-excused absences for the semester after which, 20 points will be deducted from the final grade for each absence. Arriving after the scheduled class start time is tardy. 3 tardies will be considered the equivalent of 1 absence.

Group critiques, presentations, demos and lectures cannot be made up after an absence. Should you miss class, it is your responsibility to find out what was discussed and assigned from a classmate.

**REQUIREMENTS**

**Personal website**

In this course you will need to have your own website that you can post your projects and exercises to throughout the semester. As outlined in the project submission section, all of your exercises and final projects will be posted as hyperlinks to the online class group for reviews, critiques and grading.

There are 2 ways that you can accomplish this. The preferred way is to register hosting space and a domain name through a hosting provider like 1and1.com or identitywebhost.com. The 1and1 “Unlimited” plan is a very good option and includes a free domain name. These are professional hosting providers with little down time and robust server capabilities for the use of things like blogs, forums, databases, and other more advanced programming explorations.

While it is not clear how long this option will be available, the second option is to set up and use the public space that Iowa State has made available on their AFS server. To set this up if you haven’t already, start at this page ([https://weblogin.iastate.edu/cgi-bin/index.cgi](https://weblogin.iastate.edu/cgi-bin/index.cgi)), select “Manage AFS Files” at the very bottom of the list and then proceed through the registration process. Your domain name will be your_net_ID.public.iastate.edu. Using the iastate AFS server is a fine option for the basics of this course but the server has very limited capabilities. If you are interested in pursuing more intermediate or advanced technologies in this course (php, hosting your own WordPress, etc), it is recommended that you register a website hosted somewhere else.

We will talk more about this during the first class session and I can answer any questions you might have. Whichever option you select, you will need to have everything created by the end of week 1 so that everything is ready to use by the beginning of week 2.

**Flickr account**

For this class you will need to register a free account on Flickr if you do not have one already. A class group has been created and this is the place where site architecture documents, wireframes, design files and links will be exchanged for review and critique. For design critique, you will add JPGs of your designs to the group image pool. For exercise assignments, in progress reviews and final website critiques, you will post links to your projects within the appropriate discussion thread. More information about the specifics of this will be made available as each deadline approaches. It does not matter if you use an existing account or create one specifically for this course. Have your account created and join the class group before the start of the 2nd class.

Flickr class group: [https://www.flickr.com/groups/2719240@N23](https://www.flickr.com/groups/2719240@N23)

**WEEK 1 CHECK LIST**

- [ ] Setup / register a personal website
- [ ] Create a Flickr account
- [ ] Join Flickr group
- [ ] Post URL of personal website to Flickr group
## RESOURCES

### [Software]
From the Adobe Creative Suite we’ll primarily be using:
- Adobe Dreamweaver
- Adobe Photoshop
- Adobe Illustrator

Optional software that can be used in the course includes:
- Transmit [http://panic.com/transmit](http://panic.com/transmit)
- Cyber Duck [http://cyberduck.ch](http://cyberduck.ch)

### [Online training resources]
- W3schools [http://www.w3schools.com](http://www.w3schools.com)
- 30 days to learn HTML & CSS [http://learncss.tutsplus.com](http://learncss.tutsplus.com)

### [Website hosting]
- 1and1 [http://www.1and1.com](http://www.1and1.com) Purchasing a year of their “1&1 Unlimited” plan includes a free domain and is a really good deal.
- Media Temple [http://mediatemple.net/](http://mediatemple.net/) Professional grade but worth it if you are doing more advanced work or creating projects for clients.

### [Books] [HTML / CSS]
- CSS for Print Designers [available as an e-book from google books / kindle]
  - by J. D. Graffam
  - ISBN: 0321765885
- HTML and CSS: Design and Build Websites
  - By Jon Duckett
  - ISBN: 1118008189

### [Books] [Web Programming]
- Learning jQuery, Third Edition [available from the ISU library]
  - by J Chaffer & K Swedberg
  - ISBN: 1849516545
- jQuery 1.4 Animation Techniques: Beginners Guide
  - By Dan Wellman
  - ISBN: 1849513309
- PHP for the Web: Visual QuickStart Guide
  - By Larry Ullman
  - ISBN: 0321733452

### [Books] [Social / cultural / theoretical / media]
- Who Owns the Future
  - by Jaron Lanier
  - ISBN: 1451654960
- You are not a Gadget
  - by Jaron Lanier
  - ISBN: 0307389979
- Program or be Programmed: Ten Commands for a Digital Age
  - by Douglas Rushkoff
  - ISBN: 1935928155
- Present Shock: When Everything Happens Now
  - by Douglas Rushkoff
  - ISBN: 1617230103
- Screen: Essays on Graphic Design, New Media, and Visual Culture
  - by Jessica Helfland
  - ISBN: 1568983107
- The Language of New Media
  - By Lev Manovich
  - ISBN: 0262632551
- Shaping Things
  - By Bruce Sterling
  - ISBN: 0262693267

## SCHEDULE (tentative)
Schedule subject to change with plenty of advance notice.
A detailed and updated schedule will be maintained throughout the semester on the course website at: [www.alexbraidwood.com/web](http://www.alexbraidwood.com/web)

| Week 1 | M 8/25  | Course intro / website setup
|        | W 8/27  | “WTF is the internet?”
|        | W 8/27  | Demo - Project 1A - work in class
|        | W 9/1   | NO CLASS – LABOR DAY
|        | W 9/3   | Demo - Project 1C - work in class
|        |         | Kickoff Project 2
| Week 2 | M 9/8   | Project 1A-C Due
|        | W 9/10  | Project 2 Proposal Due
|        |         | 584 Progress check-in
| Week 3 | M 9/15  | Project 2 Site arch & wireframes due
|        | W 9/17  | Work in class / desk crits
| Week 4 | M 9/22  | Project 2 - Full class design crit
|        | W 9/24  | Present 2 different design directions
|        | W 9/29  | Work in class / desk crits
| Week 5 | M 10/6  | Work in class / desk crits
|        |         | Project 2 - Small group in-progress build review
|        | W 10/1  | 584 Research Presentations
| Week 6 | M 10/10 | Work in class / desk crits
|        |         | Project 2 - Full class final crit
| Week 7 | M 10/13 | Project 2 - Final due
|        | W 10/15 | The web is full of eff’d up things
| Week 8 | M 10/20 | Kickoff Project 3
|        | W 10/22 | work on eff’d up things
| Week 9 | M 10/27 | Project 3 Written Proposal Due
|        | W 10/29 | Research and collection
| Week 10| M 11/3  | Sketch critique
|        | W 11/5  | Work in class / desk crits
| Week 11| M 11/10 | Project 3 - Full class design crit
|        | W 11/12 | Work in class / desk crits
| Week 12| M 11/17 | Work in class / desk crits
|        | W 11/19 | Small group in-progress build review
|        |         | 11/23 – 11/27 Thanksgiving Break
| Week 13| M 12/1  | User testing
|        | W 12/3  | Work in class / desk crits
| Week 14| M 12/8  | Project 3 - Full class final crit
|        | W 12/10 | Work in class / desk crits
| Week 15|         | Final class meeting TBD - Project 3 - Final DUE
|        |         | Alex Braidwood | (313) 595 - 3155 | abr@iastate.edu | Office 276 Design
|        |         | Fall 2014 Office Hours: M/W 1-2:00pm & by appointment
PROJECT SUBMISSION

It is expected that projects be submitted in an organized and professional manor. This is a digital course which means you will submit your files electronically. The files and folders that make up your projects must be named in a neat and orderly manor. Throughout this course, your file structure and naming is considered as part of your digital craft grade for each project.

All exercises and final projects will be posted on your website AND submitted to me via CyBox. When submitting your projects via CyBox, make a single folder labeled with your name, the course number and the project/exercise number. Put your final project along with all relevant process (sized appropriately for uploading) in clearly labeled folders inside of your main project folder. Zip this folder into a single archive and follow the instructions for submitting it to the correct CyBox location. File names of main project folders and submitted zip files should look like this: alexb_484_web_proj1.zip. If a project is submitted that does not contain this basic information I will not accept it and you will have to re-submit it – running the risk of making your project late.

Example of a properly submitted final project:

![Diagram of project structure]

DUE DATES

Each project will have a series of due dates associated with different phases of the process. The specific requirements for each due date are outlined on the calendar of each project. Due means finished, submitted and ready to present at the beginning of class. Submission specifics for each project will be outlined on the project sheet. For major projects this means that projects will be posted to your online server and a link will be added to the appropriate discussion in the class Flickr group.

Late projects will be graded down one full grade for each class session they are late.

Late projects will not be accepted beyond one class period after the original due date.

Project sheets will identify key due dates as well as details about project specific submission expectations.
PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is the representation of all or part of another person’s work as one’s own. A charge of plagiarism is justified when most observers conclude that a work is copied from or is substantially based on another work. In the case of visual work, slight changes in design, color, and detail cannot protect a person from a charge of plagiarism if observers see the outcome as essentially looking the same. There is not rule of thumb, or measurable means, which would allow you to make changes to an existing work and claim it as your own. The line between inspiration and derivation is often unclear but the best policy is originality.

Upon request, the student must be able to provide the source materials, thumbnails, and preliminary designs for submitted projects. It is assumed that all work submitted to instructors is original, unless indicated otherwise by appropriate documentation. As an added precaution, use of existing work in part or whole must receive prior approval of your instructor.

For further discussion of plagiarism, see the Iowa State University policy on plagiarism [http://www.public.iastate.edu/~catalog/2009-2011/geninfo/dishonesty.html]. This policy states that a student found guilty of plagiarism, which is one of several forms of academic dishonesty, is "subject to appropriate academic penalty, to be determined by the instructor of the course, as well as to penalty under the university conduct regulations." The means by which plagiarism, or charges of plagiarism are handled, as well as appeal processes and types of sanctions, are university policies.

DISABILITY

Please address any special needs or special accommodations with me at the beginning of the semester or as soon as you become aware of your needs. Those seeking accommodations based on disabilities should obtain a Student Academic Accommodation Request (SAAR) form from the Disability Resources (DR) office (515-294-7220). DR is located on the main floor of the Students Services Building, Room 1076.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The informal cooperative nature of many assignments notwithstanding, the classroom is a working environment. Consequently, our individual and collective conduct should be of the same mature, responsible level that is expected in a professional setting.

To provide an atmosphere conducive to productive interaction, all members of the College of Design community—faculty, students, and staff—should refrain from activities, actions, words, or displays with a sexual content that others may find offensive or that may hinder their ability to work. When such behavior occurs, it is considered sexual harassment and contrary to both college and university policy.

If you experience or witness such behavior, speak with the harasser. If you feel uncomfortable or are unable to do so, contact one of the following: your instructor, or Debra Satterfield, Interim Chair, Graphic Design. University policy regarding discrimination and harassment are defined at [http://policy.iastate.edu/policy/discrimination/#Defined](http://policy.iastate.edu/policy/discrimination/#Defined)

COLLEGE OF DESIGN STUDIO RESPONSIBILITY POLICY

Studios in all buildings of the College of Design at Iowa State University including the Rome campus and all satellite facilities are shared spaces for creative inquiry and production that support the development of both individual and collaborative work.

All students must work together to maintain an ordered, respectful and productive studio environment free of spatial, visual and sonic impediments; as well as environmental and personal hazards.

Materials and projects must be stored so that they do not impinge on the workspaces of others, restrict free movement or block a designated egress passage. Waste should be regularly removed and disposed of properly. Some materials, tools and conduct are restricted or prohibited: [http://www.design.iastate.edu/Resources/studioresponsibilities.php](http://www.design.iastate.edu/Resources/studioresponsibilities.php)

Equipment and furniture are not transferable between studios. Removal of an item from a studio with which a student is not affiliated may be considered an act of theft.

When participating in reviews, pin-ups or other group exhibition activities, students must follow procedures established by their instructor with regard to use of the review or exhibition space. At the completion of any such event, the space must be left clean and any equipment used must be returned to its proper location in good working order.

At the end of every semester, students are required to participate in a studio clean-up session scheduled by their instructor of record. At that time all leftover materials and projects must be removed. Failure to attend and fully participate may affect student grades and incur other penalties.

Each College of Design department is ultimately responsible for costs associated with any required additional cleaning or repairs.
**DAY 1 EXERCISE**

"WTF IS THE INTERNET?"

- Jason Mewes, *Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back*

The internet is not easy to define or explain. It has had real, major, philosophical ramifications on how we understand information and interactions with each other. It has fundamentally changed how we relate to the world, the types of jobs that exist, the ways we think about currency, the ways we interact with products, methods of consumption, media distribution, information access, political activism, and the list goes on.

The internet is not simply a bunch of websites. It is not a collection of isolated experiences. So why would we design this way? We need to be thinking about the internet as a media landscape rich with new potential.

For this exercise, start by writing 2 paragraphs addressing the question, "WTF is the internet?" This should be thoughtful and push your understanding of what the internet is or does. You’ll have 20 minutes.

1) Select 4 phrases or sentences that you find to be of particular interest.
2) Write (or print) two of them largely on a sheet of paper.
3) Represent two of them in the form of a drawing or image that you find online.

We will then divide into two teams and each team will create a collage based on your individual interpretations to build one larger meaning. Build each collage up making connections from one piece to another. Connect things. Continue to draw. Add new ideas as you think of them. Make each collage a radiating visual conversation.

After 20 minutes or so, each group will discuss their piece.

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**PROJECT 1**

**LOCAL INFORMATION, REMOTE ACCESS**

For project one, begin by identifying something locally that you want to quickly learn more about. This could be something related to the arts, music, food, farming, transportation, a historical building, a series of historical events, &c.

**Project 1A - Finished for Wednesday 8/27**

Find 3 or 4 paragraphs of content relating to your selected subject matter. Also find 2 images that support this content. You will collect this before the second day of class and use it to explore what was covered in the day 1 technical demo.

**Project 1B - Finished for Wednesday 9/3**

Further your research your subject and collect as much information as you can find about it. From this, and using the information covered in the day 2 technical demo, design a single screen piece in HTML and CSS that presents your content in meaningful and engaging way. Forget about websites. Forget about apps. Forget about webpages and browsers. Make a hot piece of graphic design that just happens to be shown in a browser. Think of it more as a poster if that helps.

**You MUST have your site registered and available by Wednesday 9/3.**

Once you finish the registration process, it can take up to 48 hours for your site to actually be available, so please plan accordingly.

**Project 1C - Finished for Monday 9/8**

Using a copy of you 1B project, 1C will incorporate in-page interaction to activate certain pieces of content and specific areas of your design. This internal interaction will continue to develop the narrative themes that you started in 1B but allow you to push them forward in a way that builds new and interesting relationships between the content and the end user.

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**FINAL SUBMISSION**

**PROJECT 1A-C DUE MONDAY 9/8**

All phases must be zipped and submitted via CyBox with your zip files named as outlined in the syllabus. The link to your project must be posted to the appropriate discussion thread in the class Flickr group prior to the start of class on Monday 9/8.