

TECM 4400: Advanced Information Design (UX and front-end development)

University of North Texas
Technical Communication
Fall 2017

Instructor and Course Information

Time:	Monday/Wednesday 3:30- 4:50 p.m.
Place:	Auditorium 302
Instructor:	Dr. Chris Lam
Office:	Auditorium 316
Email:	Christopher.lam@unt.edu
Website:	http://tecm4400.herokuapp.com

Course Description

In this class you will learn how to design, develop, and write information for electronic media. This includes designing and developing for mobile and desktop interfaces.

By the end of this course you should be able to

- Design and develop web applications that solves a tangible problem for a specific user group using a UX process
- Conduct UX research and construct actionable profiles based on your research.
- Build web applications using Ruby on Rails and understand how the model-view-controller framework functions
- Work effectively in teams and use GitHub to manage your application
- Test the functionality of your application using formal and informal testing methodologies.

Course Materials

- [Required] UX Research: Practical Techniques for Designing Better Products 1st Edition
- [Free] Ruby on Rails Tutorial, Hartl at <https://www.railstutorial.org/book>
- [Free] Lynda.com Subscription (Free with UNT login)
- [Required] UX for Beginners: A Crash Course in 100 Short Lessons

Course Assignments

Note: See detailed descriptions with grading criteria and on the course website.

Individual Project - Build an App using Video Tutorial - 20%

This is the only major individual project of the semester and really relies on self-learning. You'll follow the some basic video tutorials to create a simple todo list app. Walking through this exercise will allow you to understand how the Rails framework works and how to manage a development project using Git and Heroku.

Once you've created the app following the tutorial, you'll have 2 options:

Front-End Designer's Track

If you take the front-end designer's track, you'll complete update the user interface using bootstrap CSS. The app must be mobile friendly.

Back-end Development Track

For the development track, you'll have to add new, significant functionality to the app. This could include things like user management (see Devise gem for help), categorization of todo items, or something completely different. You'll use internet research (and help from me) to develop the app.

Project 1 - Lightning Round Presentation – 10%

After you conduct user research, you'll pitch your app idea to a panel of investors in a lightning round presentation (4 minutes maximum). The investors will decide whether your app idea is worth investing in, which will be reflected in your grade for this project. If your idea is not worth investing, you'll have to revise and re-pitch a new idea exactly 1 week after the due date for this project.

Project 2 - UX Process Deliverables (Personas and User Stories) – 10%

Once you've passed the lightning round, you'll continue UX research to create 2 common UX deliverables: personas and user stories. You'll utilize both qualitative and quantitative methods to produce these two deliverables. This is a project that will require collaboration among all 3 components of your team (development, front-end design, and content/marketing).

Project 3 (Front-end designers)- Wireframes and MVP - 10%

This project is for the front-end/UI designer(s) on the team. Using the personas and user stories, you'll create a set of wireframes for the first iteration of the App. Using the wireframes, you'll create a minimum viable product that is testable. The MVP could be created using a series of wireframes.

Project 3 (Content/Marketing): Front page content and landscape analysis - 10%

This project is for the content/marketing person(s) on the team. You'll come up with the general content and story for your app's front page. You'll also conduct a landscape analysis in which you'll analyze front-pages of competitors. You'll use your analysis to direct your front page content. Make sure to connect your deliverables to the personas and user stories.

Project 3 (Developers): Database Map - 10%

This project is for the developer(s) on the team. You'll create a database map depicting associated

models. Each model should have the specific variables and datatypes associated with them. This database map will be created based on the functionality necessary as described in your team's user stories.

Project 4 - Guerilla Usability Testing – 10%

Throughout the semester, you'll be required to test at least 10 users during at least 3 phases of development. You'll employ a guerilla usability model and recruit users in places of high traffic (e.g., union, coffee shops, dorms, etc.)

Project 5 - Final Web Application -25%

In the end, you'll have to deliver a final web application that is fully functional. The site must be more than an informational site (i.e., it must require some user interaction and allow a user to do something beyond read).

Homework and Other Assignments – 15%

In addition to the major assignments, you will complete a series of short homework assignments and in-class activities as well as announced and unannounced quizzes on the course's content. These assignments are often given as part of your class participation and attendance.

Course Schedule

For an up-to-date schedule of course activities, please visit <http://tecm5191.herokuapp.com>

Grading

The grading criteria serve as general guidelines for all course assignments.

"A" (90-100%): A manager would be very impressed and would remember the work when a promotion is discussed. In this course, that means work that is a pleasure to read, with excellent content, grammar, sentence structure, mechanics, and visual design. In addition, work is thorough, complete, coherent, well organized, supported sufficiently, and demonstrates a superior understanding of audience, purpose, and rationale.

"B" (80-89%): A manager would be satisfied with the job, but not especially impressed. This means that papers are well written and well produced, and demonstrate a substantial addition to the learning process. Work is sufficiently developed, organized, and supported, and demonstrates a solid understanding of audience, purpose, and rationale.

"C" (70-79%): A manager would be disappointed and ask you to revise or rewrite sections before allowing clients and others to see the work. In other words, the paper may have clear, but underdeveloped ideas, or the paper might not engage or affect the reader. The paper may contain some errors in grammar, mechanics, or logic.

"D" (60-69%): A manager would be troubled by the poor quality of work. This level of work forces the reader to work too hard to understand the main ideas. The paper may contain incomplete information, have serious grammar and mechanical problems, lack clear organization, or be

conceptually unclear.

"F" (0-59%): A manager would start looking for someone to replace you. In particular, work fails to address the tasks of the assignment, is so underdeveloped as to demonstrate incompetence, and is mechanically and grammatically incomprehensible. This grade will also be assigned for any evidence of plagiarism.

ATTENDANCE AND TARDINESS

Attendance in this course is NOT optional. You are expected to attend every class period. Each unexcused absence will result in the deduction of 5% off of your final grade. You will automatically be DROPPED from the course if you've missed 5 classes.

I understand that unforeseen circumstances often happen and you will be allowed 2 unexcused absences as long as you email me at least 3 hours prior to the course meeting time.

Excused absences are allowed but MUST be backed up written documentation, including sickness. Absences cannot be excused without proper documentation. No exceptions.

If you are more than 15 minutes late, you will not be allowed to sign the attendance sheet and will be counted as absent.

LATE WORK

Late work is not accepted for homework, quizzes, or any other non-major assignment. In-class work cannot be made up.

MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

If you are absent the day an assignment is due, I will not accept any work via email. You must make arrangements with me to submit work before the deadline or put your work in my department mailbox, located on the third floor of the Auditorium building. You will lose one letter grade (or 10%) per calendar day late for major assignments. If extenuating circumstances apply, your work will be due the day after your return from your athletic event or the day after you attend the emergency appointment or funeral.

You may not use program templates (e.g., Word templates) to format any of your documents — these don't encourage you to learn the programs and generally result in dull, unpersuasive documents.

EMAIL REQUIREMENT

All students must have a valid UNT email address. I will use MyUNT to send mass emails to the class. I often use email to send class emails, including quizzes, notices, updates, and advisories. It is your responsibility to check email regularly. Not receiving an email is not a valid excuse for late or missing work. You will also need your UNT email address to check your grade throughout the semester.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

This course takes place in a computer lab. However, when I am lecturing, your computer monitor should not be on. Further, no cell phone usage will be permitted during class. Students who choose to check email and surf the Internet will be asked to leave class and will receive an absent grade for the day.

ADA

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504, Rehabilitation Act, I will work with the Office of Disability Accommodation to help reasonably qualified students with disabilities. If you have such a disability, please advise me in writing of your needs no later than the second week of class.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

In accordance with State law, students absent due to the observance of a religious holiday may take examinations or complete assignments scheduled for the day missed within a reasonable time after the absence. Travel time required for religious observances shall also be excused. Please see the UNT Student Handbook for information on which holidays or holy days are covered by this policy. State law also requires that students notify their teachers at the beginning of the semester if they expect to miss class on a religious holyday during the semester but want to make up the work missed. Students will be allowed to make up the work provided they have informed their teachers in writing within the first 15 days of the semester. Once again, all assignments and scheduled work must be turned in before the date of the excused absence. University policy requires that students provide their teachers with an official notification card issued by the university if they want to make up any in-class work they missed while they were involved in a university authorized activity.

ACADEMIC HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

Copying open source and available HTML or CSS code is permitted in this course. However, if more than 30% of your site is copied from template code, you must be able to provide a written and/or oral defense of your decision. You must also be able to clearly articulate how every line of code that you copied is functioning.

It is your responsibility to become familiar with UNT's Policy of Academic Dishonesty.

This policy defines the following forms of academic dishonesty:

- Cheating intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit or hours.
- Plagiarism the deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas, words, or statements of another person as one's own without acknowledgement.
- Fabrication intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or

citation in an academic exercise.

- Facilitating academic dishonesty intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of the institutional code of academic integrity. If any course material is submitted that violates this policy of academic dishonesty, the assignment will receive a grade of "F" and appropriate judicial action will be filed. This action includes a report of academic misconduct to your college Dean and possible dismissal from The University of North Texas. There are no first-offense warnings regarding plagiarism.
- It is expected that plagiarism and the correct use (citation) of other's ideas (including print, digital, images and other media) are fully understood. Contact me if you're ever confused about what constitutes academic dishonesty. Misunderstandings, miscommunication, oversights, or lack of comprehension as to what constitutes academic dishonesty is not accepted.