

# Web Design and Architecture

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

The University of Western Ontario

Course: LIS 9723b, "Web Design and Architecture"

Lecturer: Mark Rayner

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Website: <http://instruct.uwo.ca/fim-lis/9723/>

Time: Section 1: Friday, 9-11:45 am

Location: NCB 295 (9-10 am); IMC, NCB 120 (10-11:45 am)

Office hours: Thursday, 11:30-1:30, NCB 232, or by appointment.

## Description

Any website is a combination of content, graphic design, interactivity, technology, and usability; this course will discuss – through theory and practice – how to combine these components to create well-designed sites. We will focus on usability, navigation and information architecture – elements that are often neglected when it comes to design. Your training in library and information science will be particularly useful in the area of information architecture. We will use tools such as Dreamweaver and Photoshop, HTML and CSS, to create basic websites – specific hands-on work, which will further illuminate the deeper principles of web design.

## Objectives:

Web Design and Architecture has several objectives, apart from the important goal of helping you acquire the basic skills you will need to produce a good website. You will learn:

- ◆ information architecture
- ◆ communications planning
- ◆ navigation and searching systems
- ◆ usability & accessibility
- ◆ writing and editing for the web
- ◆ how to learn new software
- ◆ principles of ethical, user-centered design
- ◆ basic syntax of HTML and CSS
- ◆ understanding of file structures.

## Evaluation

Grades will be based on participation (10%) lab work (8%), a File Structure Test (7%) and assignments (75%). Please note that your final project must be **an original work** -- you cannot use content from other websites to populate your site. See the website for full details about the final project.

*Participation* (10%) will be based on your contributions during labs and lectures.

**File Structure/FTP Test (7%)** This is an in-lab test that will show you understand how file structure works and that you are capable of using the file transfer protocol to publish your files and folders to the web server. **Due date: Mar. 23**

**Lab work (8%)** will be based on the number of lab exercises you have completed -- note, tutorials are not graded, only the labs. These are pass/fail exercises (if you complete the exercise — even partially and imperfectly — you get the points). However, they must be posted at your webpage by the deadline or you will not receive the points. So I urge you to double-check to ensure that you can see the exercise on the web after you've completed and published the exercise. **Due date: Mar. 23**

## Assignments:

### *Critique (25%)*

Research and write a short (500-word) informal critique of the website at <http://www.jbizmech.ca>. What are the site's communications goals? Examine how the site is structured, how the navigation works, and how easy it is to use. Does it violate Krug's primary rule of usability and make you think? Is it easy to find the information you want? Is the appropriate level of technology applied? Is it aesthetically pleasing? Are there interactive elements? Does it commit any of the 10 usability sins? How well does it do with the "trunk test"? In short, explain what is wrong with this website. **Due date: Feb. 3**

### *Website Proposal (20%)*

Write a communications plan to address how you will reach your audience for a subject of your choosing. Design the architectural blueprints for the website, and create a detailed content map – what information needs to be available at what point on the site. Include the file structure with this map. Also, make some wireframes or mock-ups to show what you believe the site will look like. What design elements will best communicate your ideas? Consider the overall tone, color, and layout. This is your best chance to get the site right – it should be fully planned before you begin creating it. Keep form and content in mind.

Required elements:

- ◆ communications plan (one page, minimum)
- ◆ architectural blueprint
- ◆ detailed content map, including file structure
- ◆ wireframes

To get a higher mark:

- ◆ other relevant materials such as content, mock-ups, graphic elements, palette, etc.

**Due date: Mar. 2**

### *Website Production (30%)*

Produce the site that you have envisioned, proposed and designed. Keep everything that we have discussed in class in mind, but remember that we are focusing on creating original sites that are easy to use in this class. The site will be a minimum of 18 web pages in size (separate html files) and a maximum of 30 pages (you can build a bigger site, but I'll stop

marking at 30 pages). There should be a minimum of 50-100 words per page (averaged.) When your site is completed, email the URL to me at: [marayner@uwo.ca](mailto:marayner@uwo.ca). A complete marking criteria will be provided on the class website, but the following factors will weigh heavily in the final mark:

- ◆ originality and effectiveness of content
- ◆ content that is written for the web
- ◆ download times
- ◆ ease of use
- ◆ browser compatibility
- ◆ persistent navigation & local navigation
- ◆ basic accessibility (alt tags) and good page title information
- ◆ sensible file structure.

**Due date: Apr. 13, noon**

#### **Lateness penalties and bonus marks:**

Assignments must be handed in to me by the end of the class (10 am) on the due dates. A lateness penalty of 5% will be applied per day afterwards, including the weekends. For Website Production, there will be a lateness penalty of 5% if the site is not ready by noon on the 13th, 10% if it is not ready by 9 am on the 14th, and 15% if it is not ready by 5 pm on the 14<sup>th</sup>. Sites will not be accepted after the 15<sup>th</sup>. There is a 7.5% bonus on the assignment, if you can get the site to me **by 10 am on April 2nd (Monday)**.

#### **Statement on Academic Offences**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_grad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf)

**Texts:** The textbooks are on reserve in the GRC, and copies are available at the Campus Book Store.

Don't Make Me Think: Common Sense Approach to Web Usability, 3/e (Think)

By: Steve Krug, Roger Black  
New Riders; ISBN: 0321344758

Information Architecture for the World Wide Web, 3/e (IA)

By Louis Rosenfeld, Peter Morville  
O'Reilly & Associates; ISBN: 0596000359

Adobe Dreamweaver CS5 Classroom in a Book

Adobe Creative Team  
Adobe Press; ISBN: 9780321701770

Adobe Photoshop CS5 Classroom in a Book

Adobe Creative Team  
Adobe Press; ISBN: 9780321701763

#### **Web Design and Architecture**

Lecturer: Mark Rayner



## Tentative Schedule (this is subject to change)

Date:	Class/Lab	Readings for next class
Jan. 13	Introductions. Elements of Web Design. Lab: hands-on critiques	<i>Think</i> , chap. 1-4 <i>IA</i> , chap. 3
Jan. 20	Usability Lab: bad sites, file structure, html	<i>Think</i> , chap. 5 <i>IA.</i> , chap. 5*
Jan. 27	Writing for the web Lab: Dreamweaver overview Exercise 1: Rewrite	<i>Think</i> , chap. 6 <i>IA</i> , chap. 7-8
Feb. 3 <b>(critique due)</b>	Navigation & searching systems Lab: site management, basics, Dreamweaver, images Exercise 2: CSS 1	<i>IA.</i> , chap. 10, 11
Feb. 10	Research & Strategy Lab: Dreamweaver, css positioning Exercise 3: CSS 2	<i>IA</i> , chap. 12
Feb. 17	Conceptual design, content mapping Lab: Multiple CSS linking styles Exercise 4: CSS 3	<i>Think</i> , chap. 7,* chap. 8*
<i>Feb. 24</i>	<i>Reading Week</i>	
Mar. 2 <b>(proposal due)</b>	No lecture -- straight to the lab! Lab: Dreamweaver templates Lab: CSS linking styles Exercise 5 & 6: Templates (2 points)	Web reading: <i>tba</i> (see class website)
Mar. 9	Color, graphics, design Lab: Photoshop – basic tutorial	-none-
Mar. 16	Search engines & Social Media Photoshop: Optimizing GIFs & JPGs Exercise 7: Optimizing (worth 2 points)	<i>IA</i> , chap. 15, 16, 17
Mar. 23 <b>(FTP Test)</b> <b>(Exercises)</b>	Home Page & Project Management Lab: Test/Work Period	Web reading: a history of accessibility (see class website)
Mar. 30 Work period	Accessibility & Standards	
Apr. 6	No class (Good Friday)	
Apr. 13 <b>(site due:</b> <b>Apr. 13, noon)</b>	Work Period	

\* = to get ahead on the reading