

Web Design and Architecture

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

The University of Western Ontario

Course: LIS 9723, "Web Design and Architecture"

Lecturer: Mark Rayner

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

Time: Lecture: Tuesday, 9-10 am

Lab: Tuesday, 10-noon

Location: Lecture: FNB 2230

Labs: Lab (FNB 3010)

Office hours: Tuesday, 12:30-2:30 pm, NFB 4063, 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, HTML5 and CSS, to create basic websites. This specific hands-on work 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 typography for the web
- ◆ how to learn new software
- ◆ principles of ethical, user-centered design
- ◆ basic syntax of HTML5 and CSS
- ◆ understanding of file structures
- ◆ colour theory & Gestalt design principles.

Evaluation

Grades will be based on participation (10%) lab work (5%), a File Structure Test (10%) 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 (10%) 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. 27 (in class)

Lab work (5%) will be based on the number of lab exercises you have completed --

note, tutorials are not graded, only the exercises, listed at the class website under the “exercises” section. 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. 27 (5 pm)

Assignments:

Portfolio (15%)

Use WordPress (or similar) blogging or portfolio software to create a portfolio/resume website for yourself. You can have as many sections as you like for the site, but there does need to be:

- Navigation (a menu that your audience can use to use the site). The navigation can lead to blank sections for now, but think through how you would like to present your work: do you want to break it down thematically, by category, by anchor media, etc.
- Content for the home page
- Links to your social media
- A resume or CV that is a web page (i.e., not a link to a PDF, but you can have a PDF in addition). Note: you can make this private if you would like.
- Three work samples (from other classes or previous work is acceptable)

Remember to link to your portfolio from your exercises homepage, an address I'll know.

Due date: Feb. 6 (5 pm)

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, colour, 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 is okay)
- ◆ 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, SWOT analyses, brainstorming, scenarios, etc.

Please submit as a hard (paper) copy. You may refer to a web page for color palettes, images, etc.

Due date: Feb. 27 (9 am)

Website Production (40%)

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 static html files) and a maximum of 30 pages (you can build a bigger site, but I'll stop reading at 30 pages). There should be a minimum of 100 words per page (on average.) When your site is completed, email the URL to me at: 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 (**NB: NO verbatim content from other sources!**)
- ◆ 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. 10 (5 pm)

Lateness penalties and bonus marks:

If you need some extra time to complete assignments, that's usually not a problem, but please ask me well before the due date. Assignments that are late will be penalized at 5% per day. For Website Production, there will be a lateness penalty of 5% if the site is not ready by 5 pm on the 10th, 10% if it is not ready by 9 am on the 11th, and 15% if it is not ready by 5 pm on the 12th. Sites will not be accepted after the 13th.

There is a 10% bonus if you can submit your site by March 27th at 5 pm.

Texts & Readings:

Please check the class website for the reading schedule. The textbooks are on reserve in the GRC.

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

And I've asked the GRC to find this for us too. I haven't had time to review it yet, but it comes well recommended if you want some help with HTML5:

HTML5: Up and Running
By: Mark Pilgrim
O'Reilly Media; ISBN:978-0-596-80602-6 | ISBN 10:0-596-80602-7

Tentative Schedule (this is subject to change)

Week:	Class/Lab	Assignments Due
Jan. 9	Introductions, Elements of Web Design Lab: site critiques	
Jan. 16	HTML, CSS & Other Nerdy Things Lab: bad sites, file structure, html Exercise 1: Your home page	
Jan. 23	Usability & CMS Lab: Wordpress Tutorial & Linking Exercise 2: Linking in HTML	
Jan. 30	Conceptual Design Lab: site management, basics, Dreamweaver, images Exercise 3: Using CSS	
Feb. 6	Writing for the Web Lab: Typography Exercise 4: Rewrite	Portfolio (5 pm)
Feb. 13	Color, Graphic Types Lab: Photoshop – basic tutorial Exercise 5: Compressing images and creating a new web page for them	
Feb. 20	Slack Week	
Feb. 27	Perception & Gestalt Principles of Design Lab: Dreamweaver, css positioning Exercise 6: CSS Layout	Web Proposal (9 am)
Mar. 6	Navigation & Accessibility Lab: Multiple CSS linking styles Exercise 7: Toaster Industries	
Mar. 13	Search Engine, Medatada, and the Ethics of Both Lab: Dreamweaver templates Exercise 8: Templates & Mini-Site (1 point)	
Mar. 20	Promoting Your Site – A Primer Work Period (Recommended: FTP Test run-through)	
Mar. 27	FTP Test Work Period	Exercises Bonus Mark - Site
Apr. 3	Work Period	
Apr. 10	Work Period	Site Due (5 pm)

Note: please consult the class website for readings, videos & self-help tutorials

Notes from the Dean's Office of the

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/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

Additionally,

A) If written work will be assigned in the course and plagiarism-checking software might be used, the following statement to this effect must be included in the course outline:

“All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism-detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).”

B) If computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams will be given, and software might be used to check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating, the following statement must be added to course outlines:

“Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.”

Support Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.