COMS 359: Interactive Media Production I

Fall Semester 2017

Location: DuSable Hall 218
Time: MW 3:30-4:45pm
Instructor: Dr. David J. Gunkel
Department: Communication
Office: Reavis 112
Office Hours: MW 2:00-3:15 & by appointment
Email: dgunkel@niu.edu
Social Media: Facebook Group

Course Description

This undergraduate, media production seminar introduces students to the basic technologies and techniques of web programming and design. The course focuses on the core technologies of web content development: hypertext markup language (HTML) and Cascading Style Sheets (CSS). It also develops facility with interactive media design strategies for effective communication, provides instruction in web graphics and industry-standard graphics manipulation software like Adobe PhotoShop and GIMP (GNU Image Manipulation Program), and cultivates practical skills with project planning and management. Instruction is organized around three web projects--a personal site, a web-based information or training application, and e-commerce. In the process of completing these projects, students plan and develop actual working websites suitable for a professional portfolio, learn how to write and style content for web delivery, and achieve proficiency with web programming languages, Internet technology, and interactive media design practices.

Texts & Materials

- Jon Duckett. *HTML & CSS: Design and Build Websites*. Indianapolis, IN: John Wiley & Sons. ISBN: 978-1-118-00818-8.
- Brian Miller. *Above the Fold: Understanding the Principles of Successful Web Site Design*. Cincinnati, OH: How Books. ISBN: 978-1-4403-0842-0.

These two texts are required and **must** be procured by all students enrolled in the course. In addition to these print publications, there are also a number of on-line resources and programming tools that students may want to consult or use in their web programming work.

Application Programs

Code Editors

Graphics Editors & Applications

CSS Frameworks & Code Libraries

Web Programming Info

- Hexidecimal Color Codes
- HTML Cheatsheet
- CSS Guide
- Special Characters
- W3C HTML Resource
- Concept Map: Evolution of the Web

Objectives

Students will learn and become proficient with the following interactive media skills:

- *Web Programming* - Students will learn and demonstrate facility with the two core technologies for constructing web pages and web applications: *Hypertext Markup Language (HTML)*, which describes the semantics and structure of web content, and *Cascading Style Sheets (CSS)*, which specifies the layout and rendering of HTML documents.
- *Interactive Media Design* - Students will learn and demonstrate proficiency with page layout, different methods of developing data architecture and user interfaces, options for navigation control and interactivity, basic color and visual communication strategies, and design approaches that not only communicate but are concordant with and compliment content.
- *Project Management & Collaboration* - Students will learn practical skills for working with and translating the ideas of content providers. Students will work with content experts to plan, design, and produce original websites and web applications that meet specific objectives.
- *Software & Hardware* - Students will learn to operate and employ industry-standard tools for web programming and design (i.e. HTML editors, web browsers, image processing tools, presentation software, etc.)
- *Critical Thinking & Problem Solving* - In the development of projects, students will cultivate critical thinking and problem solving skills. Each project will require students to devise a specific approach to the presentation of content. This approach will require careful analysis of the problem, articulation of project objectives, and the creation of a product that responds to and fulfills the requirements dictated by the content to be communicated.

Responsibilities

Preparation - Students are responsible for reading and preparing all assigned class materials in accordance with the course calendar. Because the readings are aimed at developing practical skills with HTML and web page design, students are encouraged to try to execute instructions provided in the text prior to class meetings. Consequently, reading in this course

does not consist in accessing and comprehending information but in learning how to apply concrete skills to specific web programming and design problems.

Course Structure - This class is not a lecture-course. It is a *practicum*. Therefore, the responsibility for working through the material and structuring an effective learning environment falls to each member of the course.

Attendance - Because the environment of the course is interactive and collaborative, it is necessary that students attend and participate in every class meeting. Attendance is, therefore, mandatory. Students are permitted two (2) unexcused absences. After that, the final grade will be reduced by 10 points per additional absence. This guideline is not inflexible and is subject to change due to individual circumstances. This alteration, however, must be confirmed with the instructor. When possible, this should be accomplished before the additional absence(s). In the case of any absence, it is the student's responsibility to make-up the missed work by obtaining notes from classmates or reading the assigned material. The instructor will not provide individual instruction or lecture notes for students who have missed a regularly scheduled class meeting.

Activities - Students will be responsible for developing and producing three web projects: a personal site, a site for web-based education or information, and a design for e-commerce.

General Requirements

- Projects must be turned in on time. Due dates, as indicated in the calendar, are final.
- Projects may be delivered either on fixed media (e.g. USB jump drive) or over the Internet. If submitting fixed media, the media must be labeled with the title of the project, the designer's name and email address, and the name of the initial page. If submitting online, students should turn-in a piece of paper indicating the designer's name, the project title, and the site's URL. Online projects must be complete and fully functional by the scheduled due date.
- Projects must be written in a code editor, like NotePad++ on the Windows platform or TextWrangler on the Mac OS. Students may not use commercially available website builders (i.e. Abobe Muse, WIX.com, Bubble, WordPress, etc.). Students may use CSS frameworks (i.e. Pure.css, Bootstrap, etc.) and html/css libraries for the final project. Use of these features must be clearly indicated in the file's source code.
- Projects will be presented to the seminar in accordance with the due dates published in the course calendar. These presentations should be approximately 5 minutes in length. They should introduce the project, demonstrate the design approach, and provide an overview of the content. The presentations are an opportunity for course participants to view and learn from the experiences of each other.

Project One - The first project consists of a personal site. In this project, you will employ and demonstrate your facility with basic HTML and web design strategies to present professional information about yourself (i.e. education, awards, work experience, internships, career aspirations, examples of your work, etc.). The finished product should be comprised of no less than five (5) interlinked pages.

- Matt Mroz - Homepage
- Ben Gatrel - Homepage
- Ilona Meagher - Homepage

Project Two - For the second project, students will create a site for education or information delivery. The content for the second project must come from a third party client. The client will provide you with the content for the project. Clients may be corporations, small businesses, non-profit organizations, or community/campus groups. You will work with the client to identify specific project objectives, to gather and develop site content, and to employ web program and design skills to create an effective web site that accomplishes the client's goals and meets their expectations. This approach provides practical "on-the-job training" and results in actual web programming examples that students can include in their portfolio. In terms of size, the project should be no less than 6 and no more than 10 pages.

- Kiwanis of Addison, Illinois
- Davenport Central High School Band
- Kapper Physical Therapy

Project Three - The third project will be a site for e-commerce. E-commerce is the use of a web to sell a product or a service either to consumers or to other businesses (what is often called business-to-business e-commerce or b2b). For this reason, an e-commerce site should provide basic company information, detailed product/service data, customer support options, and the ability for users to order and/or purchase products and services on-line. As in project two, this project will require that you work with a client, who will provide the product/service to promote and sell. The length of the project will be dictated by its content. However, as a rule of thumb, the third project should be no less than 8 and no more than 12 pages.

- Architectural Renderings
- Nippon No Rock
- Circle of Friends Artisans

Grading - Student projects will be evaluated following standard evaluation forms. The forms are divided into five categories: content, structure, design, HTML, and presentation. Because each project introduces new design challenges, HTML tags, and interactive features, each project has its own evaluation form. Although the basic structure is the same, the three forms incorporate different variables that address and reflect project specific issues and parameters. Students are encouraged to use the evaluation forms to guide their work and to check their designs prior to formal evaluation by the instructor.


Project One


Project Two


Project Three

Evaluation Distribution

Project One = 100 points
Project Two = 100 points
Project Three = 100 points

Grade Scale

A = 280-300
A- = 270-279
B+ = 260-269
B = 250-259
B- = 240-249
C+ = 230-239
C = 210-229
D = 180-209

Policies

Academic Integrity - Good academic work must be based on honesty. The attempt of any student to present as his or her own work that which he or she has not produced is regarded by the faculty and administration as a serious offense. Students are considered to have cheated if they copy the work of another during an examination or turn in a paper or an assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else. Students are responsible for plagiarism, intentional or not, if they copy material from books, magazines, or other sources without identifying and acknowledging those sources or if they paraphrase ideas from such sources without acknowledging them. Students responsible for, or assisting others in, either cheating or plagiarism on an assignment, quiz, or examination may receive a grade of F for the course involved and may be suspended or dismissed from the university.

Classroom Conduct - This course encourages students to form, express, and defend their own ideas. In order to ensure a fair and equitable environment for the open discussion of these ideas, students agree to be respectful and civil in their interactions with each other and with the instructor. Debate and criticism will be directed to ideas and the mode of their expression and not to the individual person who articulates it.

Accessibility - Northern Illinois University is committed to providing an accessible educational environment in collaboration with the Disability Resource Center (DRC). Any student requiring an academic accommodation due to a disability should let his or her faculty member know as soon as possible. Students who need academic accommodations based on the impact of a disability will be encouraged to contact the DRC if they have not done so already. The DRC is located on the 4th floor of the Health Services Building, and can be reached at 815-753-1303 or drc@niu.edu.

Terms & Conditions - The policies, procedures, and responsibilities articulated on this website are considered binding and in full force and effect for the entire academic semester during which a student is enrolled in the course. By registering for the course, students consent to these stipulations and affirm that they have read, understood, and agree to abide by everything contained herein. Only students who officially drop the course or withdraw from the university will be considered to be released of these responsibilities prior to the recording of final grades. Additionally, exceptions to and/or alterations in the policies, procedures, and

responsibilities listed on this website will only be considered in situations of extreme hardship, documented learning disability, or medical emergency. In all cases, the instructor will be considered to be the final arbiter of any request for exception.

Calendar

Introduction

28 August Introduction	Duckett - Intro (1-10)

Project One

30 August HTML Basics	Duckett - ch. 1 (12-38)
4 September Labor Day	University Closed
6 September Text & Lists	Duckett - ch. 2 (41-60) Duckett - ch. 3 (62-72)
11 September Links & Images	Duckett - ch. 4 (74-92) Duckett - ch. 5 (94-124)
13 September Tables	Duckett - ch. 6 (126-142)
18 September Web Design	Miller - ch. 1-4 (1-117)
20 September Workshop	Work on Project #1
25 September Project One Critique	Project #1 Due

Project Two

27 September Project Management	Miller - ch. 6 (151-171) Duckett - ch. 18 (452-474)
2 October Multimedia	Duckett - ch. 9 (200-224)
4 October Multimedia	Duckett - ch. 9 (200-224)
9 October Images & Graphics	Idiot's Guide to PhotoShop Sitemap and Wireframe
11 October Conference - Turkey	No Class Meeting
16 October Conference - Turkey	No Class Meeting
18 October CSS	Duckett - ch. 10 (226-244) Duckett - ch. 13 (300-328)

23 October CSS	Duckett - ch. 13 (300-328) Duckett - ch. 15 (359-405)
25 October Workshop	Work on Project #2
30 October Project Two Critique	Project #2 Due
1 November Conference - Milwaukee	No Class Meeting

Project Three

6 November Forms	Duckett - ch. 7 (144-174)
8 November Lecture - Chicago	No Class Meeting
13 November Forms	Duckett - ch. 7 (144-174) Duckett - ch. 14 (330-356)
15 November CSS Color & Images	Duckett - ch. 11 (246-262) Duckett - ch. 16 (406-426)
20 November HTML5 Layout	Miller - ch. 5 (89-200) Duckett - ch. 17 (428-450) Sitemap and Wireframe
22 November Thanksgiving	University Closed
27 November Meta-Info & SEO	Duckett - ch. 8 (176-198) Duckett - ch. 19 (476-492) Miller - ch. 8 (200-217) Miller - ch. 10 (248-255) Google - SEO Starter Guide
29 November Workshop	Work on Project #3
4 December Career Opportunities	dice.com ComputerJobs.com JustTechJobs CareerBuilder BigShoesNetwork
6 December Project Three Critique	Project #3 Due
13 December - 4pm Final Meeting	Return Project #3