

ENTW 5180.001

Web Spinning: Developing Information Architecture and Content for the Web

Dr. Gail Lippincott

Fall 2003: Wed 6:30-9:20
Aud. Bldg. 317 and TW Lab 307

Contact Information

Office: Aud. Bldg. 316

Office hours:

T & Th 9-9:30, 11-11:30 am,
Wed 5-6:30 pm
and by appointment

Phone: 940-565-4386

Email: gail@unt.edu

NOTE: Please start your email subject line with 5180 so that I will be sure to read your messages ASAP.

Course Description

This course will help you understand the process for developing the architecture and writing the content for informational websites. Proceeding from a rhetorical standpoint that emphasizes audience, purpose, and context, you will investigate and apply recent audience research, proven usability principles, and traditional design guidelines to critique as well as to design effective websites.

You will learn a number of interaction design methodologies such as heuristics, scenarios, paper prototypes, wireframes, and usability tests. You will learn to use tools such as Dreamweaver MX, Word, Acrobat, and PowerPoint to critique sites, test navigation, and develop or revise useful, readable content for Web audiences.

The class projects include individual and collaborative components: three short analysis papers, a major research paper with presentation, and a client-based site design. Class time will incorporate lectures, workshops, guest presenters, usability testing, and client interviews or presentations.

Course Objectives

In this course you will learn to

- analyze and develop accessible Web-based information for target audiences
- design and employ interaction design techniques
- devise and conduct usability testing
- communicate effectively with clients, subject matter experts, and team members from various disciplinary backgrounds
- strengthen your project management and collaboration skills
- expand your research, writing, and presentation expertise.

Texts

Farkas, David K., and Jean B. Farkas. *Principles of Web Design*. Longman, 2002.

Price, Jonathan and Lisa. *Hot Text! Web Writing that Works*. New Riders, 2002.

Technical Communication 47.3 (August 2000). Special Issue on Heuristics for Web Communication. Articles online at www.techcomm-online.org/. Register as guest (if not STC member) to access articles.

Additional Resources

Lynch, Patrick J., and Sarah Horton. *Web Style Guide: Basic Design Principles for Creating Web Sites*. 2nd ed. Yale University Press, 2002. Online at info.med.yale.edu/caim/manual/contents.html

Nielsen, Jakob. www.useit.com/

Society for Technical Communication (STC) Special Interest Groups (SIGs):

- Accessibility SIG articles www.stcsig.org/sn/articles.shtml
- Information Design SIG www.stcsig.org/id/index.html
- Usability SIG www.stcsig.org/usability/index.html

Course Projects and Grading

The final course grade will encompass these components:

Three short analysis papers	20%
Group project website for UNT client	40%
Persona and scenario for group project	10%
Proposal for individual project	5%
Individual project	25%

I use the following grading scale:

A = 90–100
B = 80–89
C = 70–79
D = 60–69
F = Below 60

Policies

Attendance

You learn best from sharing knowledge with your colleagues. You will use your individual analysis papers to guide the collaborative design and testing of a client project. Thus, your class attendance is vital not only to your learning but to that of the other class members.

The following policies apply to your attendance:

- You may miss one class without a health care provider's note or for religious or University-related purposes.
- For each additional unexcused absence I will deduct five points from your final grade.
- After your third unexcused absence I may drop you from the course.
- Consistent tardiness may be considered an absence.
- I will be more than willing to work with you in emergencies.

If you must miss class, please notify me as soon as possible (in person or via email or phone call). You are responsible for information presented in any class you miss. In-class exercises cannot be made up.

Assignment Requirements

Part of being an effective professional in any field is the ability to complete work on time. All assignments are due at the beginning of class, except for in-class exercises, which will be due at the end of that class. **Late assignments will not be accepted without prior approval.** Other requirements include the following:

- All major assignments must be completed in order to pass the course.
- Approved late assignments will be subject to a letter grade penalty for each calendar day late; late assignments without prior approval will earn a zero.
- All assignments must present a professional appearance.
- The major individual and group projects cannot double as the major assignment for other technical writing courses offered by the University of North Texas.

Academic Dishonesty

As recent publicized events prove, plagiarism can destroy careers. The UNT Code of Student Conduct and Discipline defines plagiarism to include "the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment" (www.unt.edu/catalogs/2003-04/ntg99-101.pdf).

Plagiarism and/or academic dishonesty are grounds for expulsion from UNT. I will give an F to any student guilty of serious misconduct, such as copying sections from another student's paper, plagiarizing from another source, or interfering with another student's work; further action within the context of university guidelines may be considered.

Disability Accommodation

In the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504, Rehabilitation Act, I will work with UNT's Office of Disability Accommodation to make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you have such a disability, please present your written request to me on or before the second class day.

Syllabus (subject to slight revision, with advance notice)

DATE	TOPICS	WHAT'S DUE
Aug 27	Overview of class and projects	Enquiring minds! Send email intro after class
Sep 3	Developing heuristics	Reading: Farkas ² Chs 1-2; TC pp 301-325 Bring to class: #2 p. 22
Sep 10	Designing and building projects	Reading: Farkas ² Chs 3-4; TC pp 383-396 Turn in: 1st analysis paper
Sep 17	Accessibility issues; UNT guidelines Guest speaker Kenn Moffit, University Communications and Marketing	Reading: Farkas ² Chs 5 & 10; Articles from Nielsen and STC SIGs Bring to class: questions
Sep 24	Dreamweaver MX orientation	Reading: various websites Turn in: 2nd analysis paper Bring to class: questions
Oct 1	Client interview for group project; Developing personas and scenarios	Reading: TC pp 327-340; Price ² Chs 1-4
Oct 8	Planning site design and maintainability	Reading: Farkas ² Chs 6-7 Turn in: 3rd analysis paper
Oct 15	Usability testing and prototyping; discussing final research topics	Reading: Farkas ² Chs 8-9; Price ² Chs 5-7
Oct 22	Conducting usability testing	
Oct 29	Writing content; guest speaker for international site	Reading: Price ² Chs 8-10
Nov 5	Fine-tuning style	Reading: Farkas ² Ch 11; Price ² Chs 11-12 Turn in: Proposal for final research project
Nov 12	Preparing client report and presentation	

DATE	TOPICS	WHAT'S DUE
Nov 19	Group presentations to UNT client	Turn in: Client report
Nov 26	Thanksgiving – no class meeting	
Dec 3	Research project presentations	Turn in: Research project
Dec 10	Exam time: post mortem	