Course Syllabus

EECS3461 3.0 “User Interfaces”   
Section M, Term W (Winter 2021, AY2020-21)

v.2

# Acknowledgement of Indigenous Peoples and Traditional Territories

We acknowledge our presence on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. The area known as Tkaronto has been care taken by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Huron-Wendat, and the Métis. It is now home to many Indigenous Peoples. We acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. This territory is subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region.

# About this document

This document is a course syllabus. This document provides course information and also sets out the course policies.

In the case of petitions, the syllabus is used in the adjudication process as the definitive source of information about a course and its policies.

This document expands on the ‘course outline’, which is a different document that is often provided to students at the beginning of the academic year.

# Course Description (Registrar’ Office)

Introduces user interfaces and the tools and mechanisms to create and prototype them. Students work in small groups and learn how to design user interfaces, how to realize them and how to evaluate the end result.

Prerequisite: cumulative GPA of 4.50 or better over all major EECS courses (without second digit "5"); LE/EECS 2030 3.00 or LE/EECS 1030 3.00.

Course credit exclusions: AP/ITEC 3230 3.00. Previously offered as: LE/CSE 3461 3.00. PRIOR TO SUMMER 2013: SC/CSE 3461 3.00.

# Expanded Course Description, Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

After successful completion of the course, students are expected to be able to:

* CLO#1: Explain and apply conceptual models that are employed of the human user and of human-computer interaction
* CLO#2: Describe and critically evaluate typical human-computer interaction (HCI) models, styles, and paradigms (contemporary and historic)
* CLO#3: Apply a human-centered design (HCD) process to the design of interactive systems
* CLO#4: Describe and apply standards and guidelines from user interaction design and research.
* CLO#5: Identify, distinguish among, and critically reflect on users and stakeholders of extant interactive systems and in the design process.
* CLO#6: Analyze, discuss and critically evaluate HCI issues in different contexts of interactive systems use

# Course Director

Professor Melanie Baljko  
Office: LAS 2028  
mb@cse.yorku.ca

## Teaching Assistants (TAs)

This course has several TAs. Their names and contact information will be listed on the course website.

# Time and Location

This course is a fully remote synchronous course.

## Location

Fully remote means that there is no in person contact and all course activities take place on-line.

## Time

Synchronous means that certain class activities will take place at scheduled times. **This is not an asynchronous course**.

Section M: TR 14:30-16:00 EST (UTC-5). Note that Daylight Savings Time EDT (UTC-4) begins during the term, on Mar 14 2021.

## Time Zone Differences

It is acknowledged that not all students in the course will be in the EST time zone. The professor will try to be understanding of some of the challenges this may present, but students taking this course should understand that this course is synchronous and that taking this course means attending class activities, even if they take place at inconvenient times due to time zone differences.

# Course Communications and Office Hours

## Course Communications: Website

The primary mode of communication will be via the course website, which students can access via eClass. Students, once officially enrolled, are automatically granted access to the course website. The course website will appear under “Your courses on moodle@yorku” in the eClass Dashboard.

## Course Communications: Announcements

Announcements are routinely issued via ‘Course Announcements’, which is a **forced subscription** forum on the course website.

## Office Hours

Students are warmly invited to attend the course director’s office hours. Office hours will be posted on a weekly basis to the course website. Office hours will take place via zoom. As well, students are also invited to post to the course forum and to email the course director. Please be mindful of the course email policy.

# Materials

This course makes use of several sources for course materials, which will be made available on the course eClass site.

The course often makes use of this textbook. You do not need to buy this textbook, as it is available online from the York library.

Sharp, H., Preece, J., & Rogers, Y. (2019). Interaction design : Beyond human-computer interaction. ProQuest Ebook Central <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>

Available via York Library (PPY Authentication required)

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/york/detail.action?docID=5746446>

Additional materials will be required and will be provided on the course website.

# Course Management and Organization

### Class Format

* This course makes use of the ‘flipped classroom’ mode.
* You should expect to spend approx. 9 hours per week on this course, typically. This number includes the 3 hours of in-class time.
* Class meetings will be conducted by the Course Director (or occasionally by a substitute).

### Sprints

* This course makes use of a ‘sprints’ format, which means short bursts of intense activity.
  + Each sprint will focus on master of competencies and learning outcomes connected to the course learning outcomes.
  + Graded course activities take place within each sprint.
  + Class time is used for in-class student activities connected to the sprints, interspersed with short mini-lectures and other class activities.
  + Students are expected to attend all class meetings. Attendance is NOT optional.
* The course will begin and end with intro and outro classes.
* The sprint schedule will be posted on the course website.

### Breakout Rooms

* During class meeting times, all students will convene in the main meeting room of Zoom. Breakout rooms will be used frequently for in-class activities. We will switch between the main room and the breakout rooms depending on the class activity.

### Prep Work

* Any weekly readings and/or pre-class activities that are assigned must be completed prior to the class activities. Students are expected to arrive at each class meeting having already completed the prep work (assigned readings/pre-class activities).
  + The schedule of prep work and class activities will be posted on the course eClass site.
  + The prep work will be posted a minimum of one week in advance.

### In-Class Activities

* The in-class student activities are designed to build upon the work already completed by the students from the class prep. Many of these student activities, upon completion, will be submitted for grading.
* Submission deadlines for in-class activities will depend on the scope of the activity.
  + Small activities typically can be completed within class time; a small amount of additional buffer may be provided.
  + Medium-sized activities may require a little bit of additional work (less than 1 hour), and are typically due within **24 hours after the end of class**.
  + Larger activities can be started during the class time and may require more substantial follow-up and will be **due at the end of the sprint**.

### Learning Pods

* All students will be placed in a specific learning pod, which will consist of 10-15 students (depending on enrollment).
* Most sprint in-class activities will be completed within the learning pod context.

### Types of in-class student activities

* **Individual**: e.g., on-line tests, exercise sets
* **Individual but within a pod context**: e.g., collaborative annotations to course material
* **Small group** (pod divides into groups of 2-3): e.g., exercise set, peer assessment activities, project components
* **Whole pod** (whole pod completes activities and one submission made by the entire pod): e.g., exercise set (each pod member completes their own component), peer assessment activities requiring discussion and consensus

### Recordings

* Class meetings will be recorded as per the outline below. The recordings will be placed on the course eClass website.

### What will be recorded:

* information and announcements provided to the class during scheduled class time (may be provided in written form as an alternative)
* mini-lectures given during scheduled class time
* Q&A sessions that take place during scheduled class time

### What will NOT be recorded:

* In-class student activities

# Course Evaluation

## Final Grade

The grading scheme for final grades in this course conforms to the “**Common Grading Scheme for Undergraduate Faculties”** which is a 9-point system based on letter grades issued by the Senate of York University. See detailed description in corresponding Senate policy: <http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/document.php?document=87>

## Derivation of Final Grade

The course final grade will be derived as follows:

1. each course component will be graded numerically (e.g., on a 100-pt scale or variant)
2. the weighted mean of course components will be derived
3. the weighted average will be mapped into York's 9-Point Grading Scheme to determine the final letter grade.

The course components are as follows:\*

Sprint 01: 10 %

Sprint 02: 10 %

Sprint 03: 10 %

Sprint 04: 10 %

Sprint 05: 10 %

Sprint 06: 10 %

Sprint 07: 10 %

Sprint 08: 10 %

Sprint 09: 10 %

Sprint 10: 10 %

**Total: 100 %**

\*Minor adjustments to the sprint weights may be made at the discretion of the course director and will be announced via the course website.

Each sprint’s activities will be posted on the course website at the start of the sprint. Sprint activities may include:

* exercise sets (individual and group based)
* on-line quizzes
* project components

The scheduling and the grading scheme for the sprint activities can be found on the course schedule.

# Course Policies

The course syllabus will contain all the course policies; selected course policies are provided here (in alphabetic order).

## Absences: Class Meetings

Even though attendance at class meetings is required as a policy, from time to time a student may miss class due to illness or other unavoidable reason. If a student misses classes, then it is the student’s own responsibility to catch up on the missed class, by consulting the course’s website and their peers. In the case of absences longer than one class, then please speak to the course director as soon as possible.

## Absences: In-Class Tests

If a student is absent for a test that is scheduled to take place during a class meeting, then this will be treated as a missed deadline. In the case of absences longer than one class, then please speak to the course director as soon as possible.

## Academic Honesty

York students are subject to policies regarding academic honesty as set out by the Senate of York University and by the Lassonde School of Engineering. All students must read the Faculty’s Policies at:  
<http://lassonde.yorku.ca/academic-integrity>.

Please also refer to the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty:  
<http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/document.php?document=69>

## Accessibility of the Course and Academic Accommodation

York University provides a formal mechanism for students to access academic accommodations. This is typically accomplished by a formal letter of accommodation provided by Counseling and Disability Services (CDS), and all such accommodations requests must be respected by all course staff. Any student who has a formal letter of accommodation is asked to please submit it to the Course Director when possible.

The Course Director embraces the opportunity to contribute to an equitable and inclusive environment, to identify and to mitigate/minimize barriers to learning, and to improve the process of academic accommodation. All students are invited to schedule a private appointment with the course director to discuss academic accommodations that could be helpful and that are outside of this formal mechanism.

## Communication with the Course Director

Students with questions should post them on the course Q&A forum.

## Discord Server

A Discord server may be provided. It will be provided in order to support communication among the students in the course.

Any content on the Discord server should not be considered 'official'. The 'official' information is on the course website.

Students should expect communication from other students primarily, but from time to time the course instructor or TAs may participate. Students should not ask important, time-sensitive questions that require authoritative answers, since they might not get answered in a timely fashion or at all.

As per Discord’s Terms of Service, all DM Advertisers and Spammers are banned. As well, the server cannot be used for anything that is contrary to the Academic Integrity policy or the Student Code of Rights & Responsibilities.

## Email communication with the Course Director

Students are welcome to send email to the Course Director, to ask questions or to provide feedback. You must use the keyword ‘3461’ in the subject line. Please be advised that responses may take 24-48 hours due to the large volume of emails received.

Students are asked to apply the following checklist.

### Checklist for Email

* If you are asking a question, has it already been answered in the course materials and/or course webpage?
* Will this email be eaten by the course director’s spam filter? To make sure this doesn’t happen, do the following:
  1. include “3461” in the subject line. Otherwise, the email may be eaten by a spam filter.
  2. Try to send your email from a York domain email account (cse.yorku.ca, eecs.yorku.ca, yorku.ca, or the like) to send the email. Otherwise, the email may be eaten by a spam filter, especially if you forget the keyword 3461.
* Is my email too sloppy or unprofessional? Am I employing the etiquette of professional correspondence? Here are some pointers:
  + Use a proper salutation (e.g., “Dear Professor”, not “Hey!” or "dear miss")
  + Use a proper closing (e.g., sign your name; include your student number if relevant)
  + Use grammatical English. Do not use SMS-style talk (e.g., “r u gonna return the tests tmr?”) or other shorthand or slang.
  + Ensure all spelling is correct.
  + Proof-read your email. Does it make sense? Is it coherent? Has the purpose of your communication been clearly conveyed? If not, revise until you can say yes.

## Intellectual Property Notice

All course materials are protected by Canadian and international copyright laws. Reproduction and distribution of the presentation without the written permission of the copyright holder is prohibited.

Course materials are designed for use as part of this course at York University are the intellectual property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third party copyrighted materials (such as book chapters, journal articles, music, videos, etc) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian Copyright law.

Copying this material for distribution (e.g., uploading material to a commercial third-party website) may lead to a charge of misconduct under York’s Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities and the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty and/or legal consequences for violation of copyright law if copyright law has been violated.

## Invigilation Policy

This course does not use Proctortrack or other similar software. The Policy on Academic Honesty is in force and will be enforced.

## Missed Deadlines

Deadlines are firm. Submissions may not be made after the deadline. Opportunities for make-up graded activities will not be provided. Exceptions will be made only in cases of **academic accommodation** (see section 11.4) or **extraordinary circumstances** (see section 11.11).

## Missed Coursework due to Extraordinary Circumstances

An unforeseen, extraordinary circumstances is a major illness or injury, an emergency surgery, a family crisis, or other such event. In case of deadlines missed due to this type of circumstance, requests for a special arrangement may be made.

* The request must be made in writing and in a timely manner.
* The requests must be made on the basis of one of the following: (i) family/personal emergency, or (ii) major medical reason.
  + family/personal emergency: please describe the circumstance and accompany with documentation
  + medical reason: submit a signed Attending Physician’s Statement (APS). The missed deadline must fall within the period of incapacitation on the APS.
* The Course Director will decide whether to grant a special arrangement on the basis of the submitted request.
* If a special arrangement is granted, then the Course Director **will transfer the weight from the missed course components to other course components, in a way to be determined by the course director and at the course director’s discretion**.

## Lateness Penalties

Course work must be submitted on time. No late work is accepted. (However, see section 11.8)

## Mitigating Risk

Life holds many surprises. Students should mitigate risk by leaving an adequate time buffer for coursework. You may find yourself without enough time in the days leading up to a deadline (for many possible reasons). Plan ahead and be prepared.

## Recordings

Permission is required for any recordings of lectures. Permission must be requested in advance.

## Religious Observance Days

York University is committed to respecting the religious beliefs and practices of all members of the community and to making accommodations for observances of special significance to adherents. Should any of the dates specified in this syllabus for in-class test or examination pose such a conflict for you, contact the Course Director within the first three weeks of class. Please note that to arrange an alternative date or time for an examination scheduled in the formal examination period (December), students must petition for Deferred Standing at the Registrar’s Office. Please see:  
<http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/exams/deferred/index.htm>   
and   
<https://w2prod.sis.yorku.ca/Apps/WebObjects/cdm.woa/wa/regobs>).

## ‘Shadowing’ the Course

Occasionally, students may wish to enroll in the course but cannot do so due to space limitations and instead are placed on waitlist. In this department, enrollment delay is not acceptable grounds to receive a grading accommodation. Thus, it is the student's responsibility to keep up with coursework, even before being formally enrolled. This is called 'shadowing'. A downside of shadowing is that the while student can complete the coursework, they cannot submit it for grading nor receive grades via moodle.

The instructor will facilitate shadowing in the following ways: (i) create a manual enrollment entry in moodle to allow the student access to the course website; (ii) place the student in a learning pod and enable groupwork; and (iii) set up provisions for coursework to be undertaken and submitted (so that it can be graded once the formal enrollment is put into effect.

## Student Conduct

Students and instructors are expected to maintain a professional relationship characterized by courtesy and mutual respect and to refrain from actions disruptive to such a relationship. Moreover, it is the responsibility of the instructor to maintain an appropriate academic atmosphere in the classroom, and the responsibility of the student to cooperate in that endeavour. Further, the instructor is the best person to decide, in the first instance, whether such an atmosphere is present in the class.

The Student Rights and Responsibilities documents can be found at the following link:  
<http://oscr.students.uit.yorku.ca/student-conduct>.

## Supplemental Course Policies

Due to the unusual circumstance of remote delivery during the Covid-19 pandemic, there may be the need to establish additional course policies as the need arises. These additional course policies will be listed on the course website (and identified as such). These policies will be put into force upon their publication (even if they are not included here), provided they are not in contravention of the rules of Senate and of the Lassonde School of Engineering.

## Technology Failure and Technology Problems

This course relies heavily on the eClass platform.

**During scheduled class meetings:** if the eClass platform is not able to host our class meetings, the course instructor will attempt to run the class if possible via alternative means. The instructor will attempt to send a broadcast email to all students in the class to advise of the alternative, if possible (depending on the nature of the technology problem). In the event that an email cannot be issued, you should assume the class is postponed and we will meet when possible at the next scheduled meeting.

**Right before Submission Deadlines:** if any problems occur with the eClass platform (as acknowledged officially by UIT) right before a submission deadline, then the course instructor will make an announcement of the disruption. Depending on the nature of the disruption, the course instructor may extend the submission deadline (by an amount of time roughly commensurate with the duration of the disruption).

**During a timed course quiz:** if any problems occur with the eClass platform (as acknowledged officially by UIT) during a timed class quiz, then the course instructor will make an announcement of the disruption and will make provisions to offset the disruption.

Before starting a one-attempt timed course quiz, take steps to ensure a stable network connection (e.g., don’t start the quiz under conditions where it is foreseeable that the network connection may drop).

If, after taking reasonable steps, a network drop still does occur before completing the quiz and, upon re-establishing the connection, moodle does not allow you to continue with the quiz (e.g., you receive a notification that you have already used your attempt), you may have recourse provided you adhere to the following procedure: email the professor immediately with the subject line ‘network drop during the quiz’. The professor will examine the submitted quiz and the moodle logs. Barring any suspicious evidence, the professor will manually enable you to have a subsequent attempt. If the quiz contained questions chosen at random from the question bank, it is possible that you will receive a different version of the quiz on a subsequent attempt. The email must be received in a timely manner.

**Idiosyncratic Disruption:** Students in the course might experience a disruption of service (or other technical problem) on an individual based, such as right before a submission deadline or the start of a class meeting. As well, the responsivity of eClass may temporarily slow immediately before a submission deadline due to system load. No allowance will be made for this. It is strongly suggested that students mitigate risk by making partial, incremental submissions right up to the submission deadline and that students provision to make their submissions earlier than the possible last moment before the submission deadline.

### Version History

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| --- | --- |
| v.1 | released at the start of the course (within the first two weeks of the course) |
| v.2 | Added paragraph to section “11.19. Technology Failure and Technology Problems” to explain the course policy concerning the case of network drop during quizzes. |