

HCDD 364W, Section 001: METHOD USERS (22411--UP---P-HCDD----364W-----001-)

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HCDD 364W: Methods for Studying Users

Term: Spring 2024

Meeting Time: Tuesday and Thursday 4:35-5:50PM

Location: Westgate Bldg E202

Teaching Team

Instructor: Andy Hunsucker, Assistant Teaching Professor

Email: Canvas Inbox

Office Hours: Monday 2-3:30 - Online - <https://psu.zoom.us/j/99312135460?pwd=SjlraUZPS1BwcTc4MU1sR2tpZ3l0Zz09> ➡
(<https://psu.zoom.us/j/99312135460?pwd=SjlraUZPS1BwcTc4MU1sR2tpZ3l0Zz09>)

Other Times Available by Appointment

Teaching Assistant: Natalie Flores

Natalie is your main point of contact when you have any questions about assignments

Email: Canvas Inbox

Office Hours: Mondays 3-4pm outside 2nd floor Westgate at the tables or by appointment

<https://psu.zoom.us/j/8082625694> ➡ (<https://psu.zoom.us/j/8082625694>)

Course Description

This course focuses on concepts, methods, and techniques for studying users and evaluating technology in the real-world settings. It will provide students with tools they can use to incorporate knowledge of users and their settings into the design and evaluation of interactive systems. These methods will include both qualitative and quantitative techniques, as well as how to combine and sequence multiple techniques to gain a more holistic understanding. This is a hands-on, practical course designed for HCDD undergraduate students, and others as an elective.

The concepts, methods, and techniques are widely applicable. Students will be able to use them when designing service, information system, product, and business plan. This class will help students get started on answering the question: how do we design things that are useful, usable, and enjoyable?

Learning Objectives

By taking this course, students will be able to


- Explain the rationale and importance of incorporating user research into application and other system development projects.
- Design and conduct user research using a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods such as contextual inquiry, card sorting, surveys, focus groups, and others
- Select appropriate user research methods for evaluating technologies.

- Explain the importance of multi-method user research (triangulation).
- Select and use appropriate user research data analysis methods.
- Explain the central challenges to effective technology evaluation.
- Write and present good user research/evaluation reports.

Readings

The course aims to provide an in-depth coverage of core user research and user experience (UX) evaluation methods. Thus, most weeks have a set of assigned readings, available on Canvas. Some readings are required; some readings are optional. Students are encouraged to read these readings to learn more about the methods beyond what our lectures afford to cover.

It is not possible to cover all user research and evaluation methodologies in the time range of one semester. The best researchers I know all study research methods and collect them, regardless of whether or not they might ever use them. So we will be using the Expanded and Revised edition of *Universal Methods of Design* to explore additional methods that we won't have time to use in class. This book is available at Amazon here:

<https://www.amazon.com/Universal-Methods-Design-Expanded-Revised/dp/1631597485/>  https://www.amazon.com/Universal-Methods-Design-Expanded-Revised/dp/1631597485/ref=sr_1_1?crid=RVWSB4I1ET6D&keywords=universal+methods+of+design&qid=1702312385&srefix=universal+methods+of+design%2Caps%2C90&sr=8-1

Course Assignments and Evaluations

There will be individual assignments and group project deliverables for this course. The work is cumulative, so you cannot afford to fall behind! However, there will be no mid and final exams; the group presentation counts as the final. Yay! Also, there will be in-class time for you to work on the group project with your teammates.

Items		Percentage
Individual Assignments	A1. Brief Observation (5%)	50%
	A2. Contextual Inquiry Reading Assignment (5%)	
	A3. Design a Questionnaire (5%)	
	A4. Unmoderated Usability Testing (10%)	
	A5. Moderated Usability Testing (20%)	
	A6. Research Method Presentation (5%)	
Group Project Deliverables	G1. Team Contract and Project Proposal	1%
	G2. Comprehensive User Research Report	10%
	G3. High-Fi Prototype	8%
	G4. Comprehensive Usability Testing Report	15%
	G5. Prototype Modification	3%
	G6. Final Presentation	10%

Instructor Discretion	Instructor Discretion (Based on attendance, in-class participation and peer review)	3%
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Individual Assignments (50%) – There will six individual assignments to help you practice and master specific user research and evaluation methods. All assignments should be conducted independently unless otherwise stated by the instructor. Detailed assignment descriptions and rubrics will be posted on Canvas. You will be given sufficient time for assignment completion. Some of the individual assignments will feed into your group deliverables.

Group Project Deliverables (47%) – The course will provide hands-on experience. Students will form teams (4-5 students per team). Teams will be asked to select a domain of design, conduct a variety of user research, design a high-fi prototype, conduct user experience evaluation activities on the prototype, and revise the prototype based on the evaluation insights.

You can find each deliverable's guidelines in its description on Canvas.

A grading rubric will be provided for all the individual assignments and group project deliverables. Note that, the following group project deliverables have special requirements in terms of format:

- G2. Comprehensive User Research Report
- G4. Comprehensive Usability Testing Report
- G6. Final Presentation

These three reports should be produced using industry-standard software such as Microsoft PowerPoint, Google Slides, or Apple Keynote. You will need to submit your reports to Canvas (Please convert your slides to Pdf when submitting, otherwise Canvas may mess up your slides' fonts and design layouts). Detailed instruction and examples will be explained in class and posted on Canvas for you.

The final presentation consists of a report and an in-class oral presentation on the report.

Your final presentation will be graded on the following criteria:

- Structure & Organization
- Story & Flow
- Methods Mastery
- Design & Professionalism

Detailed rubrics are provided for all the assignments. The descriptions for each grade range, along with the feedback, should give you a clear understanding of your grade and provide you with valuable feedback.

Instructor Discretion (3%) – The instructor reserves 3% of the grade to be assigned at their discretion based on: i) reviews from other group members, and ii) their perception of a student engagement and learning effort over the course (attendance+in-class participation).

Regarding i) reviews from other group members, we expect that all group members participate equally in each deliverable. At the end of the semester, you will be asked to provide a textual description of your teammates' contributions to the project. For each of your team members, you can highlight things such as whether the communication has been smooth, whether the individual tasks have been performed on time, whether the quality of their contribution met team needs, etc. Still, learning how to work effectively as a group is one of the learning objectives, and it is your shared responsibility to make sure that everyone does their fair share of work.

Extra Credits (1pt in Total)

There will be one opportunity to earn extra credit by providing peer feedback on other peer groups' final presentations. Students which provide detailed, well-written, professional thought feedback will receive full, extra credit (1.0 pt or 1%); Students who complete a response but do so in a manner that lacks detail and insightful thought will receive partial credit (0.5 pt); Students who do not post a response will receive no credit (0.0 pt).

Course Grade:

- A: 100% - 93%
- A-: 92% - 90%
- B+: 89% - 87%
- B: 86% - 83%
- B-: 82% - 80%

- C+: 79% - 77%
- C: 76% - 70%
- D: 69% - 60%
- F: 59% - 0%

The cutoff point for each grade is the lower number without rounding (e.g., 89.9% will result in B+).

Course Design Credit

Some course materials are adapted from those instructors of similar courses at the University of California, Irvine, including Blake DiCosola and Gillian R. Hayes.

Course Schedule

Details are subject to change, and this schedule will be updated accordingly to reflect some necessary changes. You will be notified in advance if there will be any change. Please check regularly.

	Week	Date	Content	Related Assignments
Part 1: User Research	1	1/9	Course Introduction: Introduction to User Experience (UX)	
		1/11	Observation	A1
	2	1/16	Form Groups; Project declaration	G1
		1/18	Interview and Focus Groups	
	3	1/23	KJ Technique/Affinity Diagramming	
		1/25	Contextual Inquiry	A3
	4	1/30	In Class Activity: Please use this time slot to discuss the contextual inquiry plan with your teammates. Then each of you should lead and conduct one contextual inquiry based on the team plan that you all agree upon. Please finish transcribing the data before the 2/13 class.	G2
		2/1	affinity diagram and a quick recap of task analysis	G2

5	2/6	Survey	A4
	2/8	Lab session: analyze your contextual inquiry data	G2
6	2/13	Lab session: Group Work Time for Group Project Deliverable 2.	G2
	2/15	Diary Studies	
7	2/20	Lab session: Design Studio (research, sketch, present, critique, repeat) for user research report assignment Part 4.	G2
	2/22	1. Other User Research Methods: Existing Data Analysis (e.g., User forums, App reviews) and IDEO Methods 2. How to Triangulate Your User Research Findings	
8	2/27	Lab session: Group Work Time for Group Project Deliverable 2	G2
	2/29	Lab session: Group Work Time for Group Project Deliverable 2	
SPRING BREAK NO CLASSES			
9	3/12	Unmoderated Usability Testing	
	3/14	Lab session: Group Project Deliverable 3	A5; G3
10	3/19	Moderated Usability Testing	A6; G4
	3/21	We understand that it can be difficult to find a convenient time to conduct moderated usability tests with your teammates. Therefore, we've decided not to require you to come to the classroom for this particular task. Instead, we encourage you to use this opportunity to carry out the tests with your teammates. Note: Each team member should participate in at least two testing sessions: 1. should moderate one testing session with another team member (s) as the notetaker (s), and 2.	

Part 2: Evaluating Designs with Users			participate in a second testing session as a notetaker. Please coordinate with your team members to allocate roles.	
	11	3/26	A/B testing + Lab session	
		3/28	How to Report Your Evaluation Results; Ethical and Legal Considerations	G4
		4/2	Lab session: Group Work Time for Group Project Deliverable 4	
	12			
		4/4	Lab session: Group Work Time for Group Project Deliverable 4	
	13	4/9	Lab session: Group Work Time for Group Project Deliverable 4	
		4/11	Lab session: Group Work Time for Group Project Deliverable 5	G5
	15	4/16	No Class: Group Work Time for Final Presentation	G6
		4/18	No Class: Group Work Time for Final Presentation	
16		4/23	Presentation Day	
		4/25	Presentation Day	

Course Policy

Grading Policy

It is important to understand that **your** final letter grades reflect academic **achievement and not effort**. A plus or minus further delineates rankings within these grade ranges.

To have work re-graded, you must **submit a Re-grade Request within one week** of when your work was returned. The request must be a single page, printed on paper or sent by e-mail to both the TA and instructor. It should contain the following information:

- Re-grade Request

- The information contained on the standard cover sheet, including your name, PSU ID, assignment no.
- An explanation for why you believe you deserve a higher grade.

The instructor and TA will consider your request. If the instructor and TA are convinced by your argument, your work will be re-graded. If not, the instructor and/or TA will send you an e-mail explaining why. No re-grades will be considered for late work. **Keep in mind that a review of the grading might also bring to light that the work was originally graded too generously; therefore, the grade could conceivably be lowered.** No grades will be lowered, however, simply because you challenged them.

Mistakes in the arithmetic computation of grades and grade recording errors will always be corrected. In all other situations, final letter **grades are not negotiable and challenges to final letter grades are not entertained.**


Late-Assignments

It is your responsibility to turn in all requirements by the specified due dates and times in the Course Calendar. Ten percentage-points will be deducted for every day you are late with an assignment or project (e.g., if the total score for the assignment is 20 points, 2 point will be deducted for each day it is late). Assignments submitted two days after the deadline will NOT be graded.

Canvas for Course Management Tool

This course uses Canvas as a main course management tool. Announcements and course materials will be posted in the Canvas course site. All of your assignments will be submitted on the Canvas course site as well. You are also responsible for keeping track of your grades via the gradebook on the main course site and for informing your instructor and TA in case there are any discrepancies.

Communication Policy

Canvas email feature should be your official tool for communication with the instructor and TA. When sending emails, make sure you write politely and professionally and include the instructor and TA as recipients. *Instructor, and TA will get it back to you within 24 hours during only weekdays (between 9am-5pm EST, Monday through Friday).* However, **we will not respond to your email if it's about grade grubbing** (see: <https://marktomforde.com/academic/undergraduates/GradeGrubbing.html>  <https://marktomforde.com/academic/undergraduates/GradeGrubbing.html>).

Attendance

- **Recording Attendance:** Attendance will be recorded from the second week onward at every class session.
- **Importance of Attendance:** Consistent attendance is vital to grasp and build upon the skills and knowledge imparted during the course. Active participation enhances understanding and is integral to academic success.
- **Grading:** Attendance and in-class participation are valuable components of your grade. The instructor will assign grades for these aspects at their discretion.
- **Absences Due to Illness:** If you are unable to attend due to illness, please email both the instructor and the teaching assistant with a doctor's note as soon as possible.
- **Checking In:** Should you miss a class, the instructor or teaching assistant may reach out to ensure your well-being and to provide any missed information.

Remember, being present and engaged not only benefits your academic progress but also enriches the learning environment for all.

Collegial Courtesy/Technology Policy

Electronic devices brought to class which are used for purposes other than engaging with the course can distract both the instructor and your classmates. Imagine how you would feel if you had worked very hard on a presentation and your audience looked as though they weren't paying attention because they had their heads down looking at an electronic device; or, imagine coming to me during office hours and I was texting while you were asking for my assistance. Research in neurobiology indicates that people cannot multi-task or learn well while trying to do so.

Thus, we ask that when class is in session, you show courtesy to your classmates and instructor by not using the electronic devices unless it is part of the course content for the day. Doing your email, going on Facebook, playing games, or any other non-class-related activity is disrespectful of your classmates and the instructor. We will explicitly ask you to close your computers and put away your phones. Also, please put your mobile phone in your bags. If you absolutely must use your phone, please take it into the hallway.

University Policy

Copyright Statement

Some of the materials in this course are possibly copyrighted. They are intended for use only by students registered and enrolled in this course and only for instructional activities associated with, and for the duration of, the course. They may not be retained in another medium or disseminated further. They are provided in compliance with the provisions of the Technology, Education, And Copyright Harmonization (TEACH) Act (refer to the 3/7/2001 TEACH Act at www.copyright.gov/legislation/archive/ (Links to an external site.) [\(http://www.copyright.gov/legislation/archive/\)](http://www.copyright.gov/legislation/archive/)).

Sexual Harassment Policy

It is the policy of the University that its employees and students neither commit nor condone sexual harassment in any form. <https://policy.psu.edu/policies/ad85> (Links to an external site.) [\(https://policy.psu.edu/policies/ad85\)](https://policy.psu.edu/policies/ad85)

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a basic guiding principle for all academic activity at the Pennsylvania State University, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle. Consistent with this expectation, the University's Code of Conduct states that all students should act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts. Academic integrity includes a commitment by all members of the University community not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty violate the fundamental ethical principles of the University community and compromise the worth of work completed by others. https://ist.psu.edu/students/academic_integrity (Links to an external site.) [\(https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/conduct\)](https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/conduct)

An Invitation to Students with Disabilities

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. Every Penn State campus has an office for students with disabilities. Student Disability Resources (SDR) website provides contact information for every Penn State campus (<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/disability-coordinator> (Links to an external site.) [\(http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/disability-coordinator\)](http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/disability-coordinator)). For further information, please visit Student Disability Resources website

(<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/> (Links to an external site.) [\(http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/\)](http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/)). In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: See documentation guidelines (<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/guidelines> (Links to an external site.) [\(http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/guidelines\)](http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/guidelines)). If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus disability services office will provide you with an accommodation letter. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early as possible. You must follow this process for every semester that you request accommodations.

Counseling and psychological services

Many students at Penn State face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academic progress, social development, or emotional wellbeing. The university offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times, including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients' cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation.

Counseling and Psychological Services at University Park (CAPS)

(<http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/> (Links to an external site.) [\(https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/health-wellness\)](https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/health-wellness)): 814-863-0395

Counseling and Psychological Services at Commonwealth Campuses

(<http://senate.psu.edu/faculty/counseling-services-at-commonwealth-campuses/> (Links to an external site.) [\(http://senate.psu.edu/faculty/counseling-services-at-commonwealth-campuses/\)](http://senate.psu.edu/faculty/counseling-services-at-commonwealth-campuses/))

Penn State Crisis Line (24 hours/7 days/week): 877-229-6400

Crisis Text Line (24hours/7 days/week): Text LIONS to 741741

Educational Equity/Report Bias

Consistent with University Policy AD29, students who believe they have experienced or observed a hate crime, an act of intolerance, discrimination, or harassment that occurs at Penn State are urged to report these incidents as outlined on the University's Report Bias



webpage (<http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias/>)  (<http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias/>)

Subject to Change

This syllabus is subject to change based on the needs of the class. Please check it regularly. Updated Aug 21 , 2023

Course Summary:

Date	Details	Due
Fri Dec 15, 2023	 Peer Evaluation (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2313029/assignments/15662148)	due by 11:59pm
Sun Jan 21, 2024	 Individual Assignment 1: Brief Observation (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2313029/assignments/15662142)	due by 11:59pm
Mon Jan 22, 2024	 Group Project Deliverable 1: Team Contract and Project Proposal (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2313029/assignments/15662136)	due by 11:59pm
Tue Jan 30, 2024	 Individual Assignment 2: Contextual Inquiry Plan (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2313029/assignments/15662143)	due by 3:59pm
Tue Feb 13, 2024	 Individual Assignment 3: Design a Questionnaire (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2313029/assignments/15662144)	due by 3:59pm
Fri Mar 1, 2024	 Group Project Deliverable 2: User Research Report (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2313029/assignments/15662137)	due by 11:59pm
Mon Mar 18, 2024	 Group Project Deliverable 3: High-Fi Prototype (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2313029/assignments/15662138)	due by 3:59pm
	 Individual Assignment 4: Unmoderated Usability Testing Script (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2313029/assignments/15662145)	due by 3:59pm
Fri Apr 5, 2024	 Individual Assignment 5: Conducting Moderated Usability Testing (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2313029/assignments/15662146)	due by 3:59pm
Fri Apr 12, 2024	 Group Project Deliverable 4: Usability Testing Report (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2313029/assignments/15662139)	due by 11:59pm
Mon Apr 15, 2024	 Group Project Deliverable 5: Prototype Modification (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2313029/assignments/15662140)	due by 11:59pm
Mon Apr 22, 2024	 Group Project Deliverable 6: Final Presentation (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2313029/assignments/15662141)	due by 3:59pm
Fri Apr 26, 2024	 Research Method Case Study (https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2313029/assignments/15948719)	due by 11:59pm
Fri May 3, 2024	 Extra Credit: Commenting on Other Groups' Final Presentations	due by 11:59pm

Date	Details	Due
	https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2313029/assignments/15662135	
	 Instructor Discretion https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2313029/assignments/15662147	due by 11:59pm
	 Roll Call Attendance https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2313029/assignments/15662149	