# Course Description

This course provides a **foundational introduction** to web authoring, blending **technical skills** with **critical inquiry** into digital culture. Students will explore **HTML, CSS, and basic JavaScript** to create and structure web content while considering **design principles**, **accessibility**, and **user experience**. Through **hands-on projects**, students will develop functional and aesthetically engaging websites while examining the broader implications of **digital authorship** in contemporary society. **No prior coding experience is required.** By the end of the course, students will have a strong foundation in **web design** and an understanding of how digital platforms shape **communication**, **creativity**, and **public discourse**.

This is an introductory course, but it is designed for students interested in computers and working thoughtfully and creatively in digital environments.

Prerequisites & Concurrent Enrollment

There are no prerequisites for this class.

# Required Textbook

There are no required textbooks for this class. All required readings and resources will be available for free in D2L and/or the course website: https://tcu-dcda.github.io/MLA60970/

# Teaching Methodology

The majority of the course will focus on 1) learning the basics of HTML, CSS, and JS and 2) a sequence of “labs” or minor assignments. The rest of the class will focus on applying those web development skills to web applications relevant to work in the Humanities and Social Sciences. My role will be to provide a blend of video lectures and programming demonstrations, guided activities, and one-on-one support.

# Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are the driving forces of this course: they are the focusing themes that inform everything we do. The learning outcomes listed below are the goals we are working toward that you should meet by the end of the term.

## Course Learning Outcomes

These two outcomes, particular to this course, shape the work we’ll do this semester:

1. Students will use their skill in web development as an exploratory research tool designed to address, but not always answer, important cultural questions.
2. Students will reflect on the limitations of multimodal communication common to the Digital Humanities. Course Assignments & Final Grade

## Assignments & Projects

Throughout the semester, the majority of your evaluated work will consist of **four (4) Projects, four (4) peer review exchanges, three (3) Self Reflections,** and **three (3) Threaded Discussions**. Some of these will engage with the reading done for class, typically not just checking to see if you read, but asking you to think further on a given topic, concept, or concern. Most of these will be used as “scaffolding”: building the skills necessary for the final semester project. Some will be technological: for example, developing or revising simple computer scripts written in HTML, CSS, and/or JavaScript.

## Grading Philosophy and Policy

In this class, **I won’t be grading individual assignments or calculating points/percentages**. Instead, I’ll offer lots of feedback without any points or letter associated with it—but along the way we will indicate if you are meeting expectations. In addition to our written feedback, I will indicate if your work on the assignment **Exceeds**, **Meets**, or **Fails to Meet** Expectations. Throughout the semester, you will write **three self-reflection essays** (about a page each) on your development as a learner. On the second and third of these essays, you will indicate the grade you believe you have earned to date in the course. For Reflections 2 and 3, you will be asked to assess yourself in terms of your growth in the following areas:

**Coding Competency in HTML, CSS, and JS**

**Audience Engagement, Accessibility, and User Experience (UX)**

**Project Design and Planning**

**Collaboration**

The grades you argue for your midterm and final semester grades should be expressed as traditional letter grades (A, A-, B+, B, B- and so on). I reserve the right to change your grade, but in general I defer to you as the best judge of your learning.

For more information on the rationale behind this system, I recommend these short, approachable blog posts by Dr. Jesse Stommel: "[**Why I Don't Grade**](https://www.jessestommel.com/why-i-dont-grade/)" and "[**How to Ungrade**](https://www.jessestommel.com/how-to-ungrade/)." I are more than willing to supply more detailed pedagogical scholarship on this rationale at your request. The online self-reflection essay documents provide detailed descriptions of how to successfully argue for a grade.

For your reference, the [faculty definition of grades](https://undergraduate.catalog.tcu.edu/policies/academic/list#grading), and the letter/percentage system designed to indicate quality of work in this class, is as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Work Quality** | **Letter Grade** | **Semester Grade Points (GPA)** |
| Excellent | A | 4.00 |
|  | A- | 3.67 |
|  | B+ | 3.33 |
| Good | B | 3.00 |
|  | B- | 2.67 |
|  | C+ | 2.33 |
| Satisfactory | C | 2.00 |
|  | C- | 1.67 |
|  | D+ | 1.33 |
| Poor | D | 1.00 |
|  | D- | 0.67 |
| Failing | F | 0.00 |

Listed below is a breakdown of course components that will shape and determine your final semester grade, presented in the sequence of appearance in the course:

| Course components |
| --- |
| Peer Reviews (4) |
| Threaded Discussions (3) |
| Self-Reflection Essays (3) |
| Weekly Projects (4) |

## Attendance

In keeping with the "un-grading" policy of the course (see above), I will not take official attendance nor deduct points for missed classes or late arrivals. The class will move quickly, however, so it's your responsibility to check in with both of us should you miss any course content or instruction. More than most other courses, what I study and practice on a Monday will be essential for what I'll study on Wednesday, etc. (imagine learning multiplication without knowing first how to add). Missing class equals missing important steps in the learning process. A pattern of absences may also affect the case you build for your semester grade.

If for some reason you anticipate being absent, arriving late, or leaving early during a class period, **please let us know beforehand**!

(*Note:* I do not take attendance, but for the record: because it is considered an infringement on student privacy for faculty to have access to student medical records, faculty cannot accept medical documentation to justify absences. If you have a legitimate reason for your absence and want to provide verification, please access the Absence Documentation Form [here](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?TexasChristianUniv&layout_id=8).)

**Excused Absences or Official University Absences** are absences described in the Official University Absence Policy and include the following: Title IX related issues, military leave, holy days, and university related absences. As faculty I may not penalize students for these absences and must allow for the completion of assignments and exams within a reasonable amount of time after the absences. Beyond these, faculty retain all discretion for consideration of a student’s absence, including absences verified by the Dean of Students’ Office.

## Class Enrichment (i.e Participation and Engagement))

*I cannot emphasize this enough*: learning any new skill requires an active engagement on the part of the learner. Therefore, class participation is a critical component of the course. While some lecture will be necessary to establish necessary contexts and to propose reading strategies, most of the learning needs to come from lively discussion and a certain degree of daring and play. Get involved early and often. The class will surpass expectations if you do; it will be miserable if you don’t.

## Late Work

I don’t like to allow late work because it can pile up quickly, and it limits our ability as instructors to provide timely feedback. However, I also don’t deduct any points for late work. Please contact us before the assignment is due if you would like an extension. I're typically happy to give you one. **Understand, though, that a pattern of late or unsubmitted work will compromise the case you build for your semester grade.** Students who expect, for example, an A in the course should receive “Exceeds Expectations” on the majority of the assignments and have no late or missing assignments (unless arrangements are made for an extension).

## Safe Zone

Our goal is for each student to feel comfortable and able to connect with course content and classroom discussion. Please know that I welcome, affirm, and celebrate persons in the LGBTQIA communities of Texas Christian University. (LGBTQIA stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, Ally). I will not allow homophobic comments in class and will strive to use inclusive language. Please visit <http://www.allies.tcu.edu/training.asp> for more information.

## System Requirements

Throughout the semester, you will be doing a lot of coding in HTML, CSS, and JavaScript. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the necessary hardware to do this. If you have any technical difficulties, contact your professor or IT at least a week before the assignment is due.

**Computer:** You must have access to a reliable computer and internet connection to take this course, a machine that meets the TCU Online minimum requirements.

**TCU Online** is required for this class.

**Virtual Studio Code** is the free tool I’ll use to write and edit our code for class.

**Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)** technology (Google Gemini, ChatGPT, etc.) is permitted—and encouraged—for your use in this class provided that you **document**, in detail, any and all uses of the technology through **descriptive notes (# comments)**.

*Note:* The inappropriate or unauthorized use of AI-generated content may be academic misconduct and/or a violation of discipline-specific professional ethics. Such misuse will be handled according to TCU’s Academic Conduct Policy or other relevant policies and may result in sanctions, including failing the course, program dismissal, suspension, or expulsion.

**Email:** *Only* the official TCU student email address will be used for all course notifications. It is your responsibility to check your TCU email on a regular basis: you should check it daily.

## Class Norms & Recordings

I consider our classroom a safe space for people to learn, and I have an obligation to ensure it remains intact. All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in person and in all email messages, discussions, or any exchanges on a digital platform related to this class.

Our class sessions are not available for public consumption or circulation beyond the intended uses for this class. Audio, video, or screen recording (including screen shots, snips, grabs, etc.) is prohibited and can result in a failing grade for this course and suspension of access to University Computing Resources. TCU students are prohibited from sharing any portion of course materials (including videos, PowerPoint slides, assignments, or notes) with others, including on social media, without written permission by the course instructors. Be sure to read [the full TCU policy](https://security.tcu.edu/polproc/).

Of course, if you have accommodations that allow you to make audio recordings, however, please review [Student Access and Accommodation](https://cte.tcu.edu/tcu-syllabus-policies/#access) and contact me immediately. You can, of course, take good notes. If you cannot attend a class for any reason, you’re welcome to contact another classmate to find out what you missed, and you can always set up a one-on-one conference with me if you have questions about the material.

## Center for Digital Expression (Scharbauer 2003)

The CDEx is available to students working on new media and digital humanities assignments. The staff is available to help you with your projects. I will refer to the resource sections in the CDEx website ([**cdex.tcu.edu**](https://cdex.tcu.edu/)) throughout the course, but you can also view the [**weekly schedule**](https://cdex.tcu.edu/services/consultations/) for consultations.