User Centered Design
Syllabus

HCDE 518 | Autumn 2021 | Sections B, F, & J

- Lecture: Mondays, 6:00-6:50 p.m.
- Studios: Mondays, 7:00-9:50 p.m.
- Class Location: [Communications Building - CMU 326](#)
- Credit Hours: 4

Class Canvas Site
The class Canvas site will be your main stop for the most up-to-date information on the course schedule, assignment descriptions, and links to important resources. Canvas site is located at: https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1479505

Co-Instructors

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Course Description
This course explores the user-centered design paradigm from a broad perspective, emphasizing how user research and prototype assessment can be integrated into different phases of the design process. Students learn to think like a user-centered designer and carry out activities that are key to user-centered design.

This is a required, 4-credit, foundation course in the MS degree and UCD certificate programs in HCDE.

Course Overview

HCDE 518 is an introduction to the user-centered design process and is oriented toward practical methods for approaching a design problem.

Design is a unique form of inquiry. We design whenever we change some existing situation into a preferred one. The difficulty, of course, is how to envision a preferred situation and arrive at it. In this class, we will develop an appreciation for the nature of design, and we will develop specific skills for studying and designing interactive systems.

You will find the concepts and methods covered in this class to be widely applicable. You will be able to use them when designing organizations of people, when designing information structures, and when designing a business plan. But in this class we will focus on the design of interactive systems, on human-centeredness, and on usability.

The major question is: how do we design interactive systems that are useful, usable, and enjoyable?

Objectives

The general aims of this course are to:
- Develop an appreciation for the theory and sensibilities of design.
- Develop skills in the use and application of a variety of design methods, specifically applicable to user-centered design.
- Improve individual and collaborative skills in design-based problem solving.

Upon the successful completion of this course, you should be able to:
1. Given a problem setting, critically discuss the appropriateness of potential design methodologies such as contextual design, scenario-based design, participatory, etc.
2. Describe the issues and challenges to achieving a human-centered design process.
3. Gather useful information about users and activities through observation or systematic inquiry.
4. Use, adapt and extend classic design standards, guidelines, and patterns.
5. Employ selected design methods at a basic level of competence: affinity diagrams, card sorting, scenarios of use, personas, storyboarding, sketching, and usability evaluation.
6. Create a prototype for a small system and plan and perform a usability evaluation.
7. Document and effectively communicate a UCD design solution to multiple stakeholders

Books & Materials

You are required to keep a *sketchbook* for various exercises in this course. A bound, paper-based one is preferred, but a digital one is acceptable if you use a drawing app.

We recommend a number of useful books for this course, and the practice of human centered design in general, but all course readings will be provided on canvas, so you are not required

to purchase these titles. If a link is broken, please use the "ask 3 before me" approach by looking for it through Google, the UW library, a peer, etc. before asking the teaching team.

- RECOMMENDED: Buxton, B. (2007) Sketching User Experiences. San Francisco: Morgan Kaufmann.
- RECOMMENDED: Moggridge, B. (2007) Designing Interactions. Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press.
- SUPPLEMENTAL: Courage, C. and K. Baxter. (2005) Understanding Your Users. Elsevier.
- SUPPLEMENTAL: Norman, D.A. (1988) The Design of Everyday Things. New York: Basic Books.
- SUPPLEMENTAL: Greenberg, S., Carpendale, S., Marquardt, N., & Buxton, W. (2012). Sketching User Experiences: The Workbook. Amsterdam: Elsevier/Morgan Kaufmann.

Mailing List

We will have a class mailing list, which you can reach via multi_hcde518b_au21@uw.edu. Feel free to post links relevant to class or questions about assignments that may pertain to the whole class. Please note that your UW email is automatically added to this list and is the only authorized email that can post, so please ensure you have access to your UW email for this purpose.

Slack Channel

Students and instructors from all four sections will be invited to a Slack channel for the class that can be used for more efficient and convenient communication with each other and to ask questions of the instructors and share announcements and resources with the class. All important announcements for class will also be communicated through Canvas and/or the mailing list.

Assessment

Grades will be determined according to the following distribution. Specific assignments, descriptions, and details may be found in the Assignments section of canvas. This table shows the breakdown of Assignment Categories.

Grade Distribution

Component	Worth
Participation	0%
Assignments (Individual)	20%
Project Process (Group)	40%
Reading Reflections	20%
Communication (Group)	20%

Class Policies

Respect

If there were only one policy allowed in a course syllabus, we would choose the word respect to represent our goals for a healthy and engaging educational environment. Treating each other respectfully, in the broadest sense and in all ways, is a necessary and probably sufficient condition for a successful experience together. But since we are not limited to one policy, some other, more specific ones, can be stated.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The diversity of our students, who come from all backgrounds and who have different perspectives, is a resource and strength to this class and is the heart of a university education. Therefore, our classroom environment should be mutually respectful and inclusive of all students. The classroom is an environment with no discrimination, where we intend for everyone to be comfortable and at liberty to contribute to and benefit from the entire learning experience. It is our goal to create a classroom environment in which everyone feels comfortable sharing thoughts, opinions, and writing so that we can learn from one another.

Any suggestions to improve the inclusiveness of class interactions or any concerns are encouraged and appreciated and should be brought to the instructor's attention. Your interactions with your peers in class are a good way to adopt this attitude of inclusion and enhance positive interactions of the class.

Students in this class are expected to:

- respect individual differences which may include, but are not limited to: age, cultural background, disability, ethnicity, family status, gender presentation, immigration status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and veteran status.
- engage respectfully in discussion of diverse worldviews and ideologies embedded in course readings, presentations, and artifacts, including those course materials that are at odds with personal beliefs and values.

Hybrid Format

This class is conducted in a hybrid format, which will include a mix of in-person (studio sections) and remote instruction (joint section lectures). Students are expected to participate in class to fully benefit from course activities and meet the course's learning objectives. Students should only register for this class if they are able to attend the in-person studio sections unless they have an approved accommodation from the Disability Resources for Students (DRS) office. To the extent possible, we will provide Panopto recordings of studio sessions and/or provide opportunities to make-up studio work in the event that you are sick or would need to quarantine. However, these should not be relied upon except in extenuating circumstances.

COVID-19 Safety Precautions

This class will follow UW's Face Covering Policy. As of September 29th, this means all individuals must wear a face covering regardless of vaccination status. Students should supply their own masks. In addition, all students, faculty, and staff are required to be vaccinated or

have an approved medical or religious exemption. To the extent possible, we will keep the windows in the classroom open to improve airflow, so please bring a jacket or sweater if you tend to get cold.

To protect their fellow students, faculty, and staff, students who feel ill or exhibit possible COVID symptoms should not come to class. If you have tested positive for COVID-19 or are a close contact of someone who is, please contact UW's Environmental Health & Safety office to report, who will provide guidance and contact tracing. You are also encouraged to sign up for UW's Husky Testing program.

When absent, it is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor in advance (or as close to the class period as possible in the case of an unexpected absence), and to request appropriate make-up work as per policies established in the syllabus. What make-up work is possible, or how assignments or course grading might be modified to accommodate missed work, is the prerogative of the instructor. For chronic absences, the instructor may negotiate an incomplete grade after the 8th week, or recommend the student contact their academic adviser to consider a hardship withdrawal (known as a Registrar Drop).

In the event that the instructors need to quarantine, are ill, or have a lapse in childcare, it is possible we may temporarily pivot the course to a remote format. We will inform you via email and/or Slack if this happens.

Student Mental Health and Safety

Being a graduate student can be a stressful experience. While this course has high expectations for student work quality, we have explicitly included features of the course to reduce stress and encourage self-care where we can. This includes 3 free no-questions-asked late days to account for the unexpected, and complete/incomplete grading for the majority of the assignments.

If you need support or are feeling overly stressed, you are welcome to reach out to us at any time. We will do my best to listen and support you, but you should also realize that we are not trained professionals in counseling (though Dr. Kientz does have training in Mental Health First Aid). The UW Mental Health website (https://wellbeing.uw.edu/topic/mental-health/) provides a number of options for receiving support, including self-help, workshops, remote therapy, and short-term and long-term counseling. If you are experiencing a crisis situation after hours and cannot wait until the UW Counseling Center is open, please call the Crisis Clinic at (206) 461-3222 or toll-free at 1-866-427-4747. If you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency, dial 911. If you feel unsafe, please contact UW Safe Campus at (206) 523-7233 (SAFE).

In addition, these are some resources available to you at UW.

- HCDE Emergency Support Fund
- UW Food Pantry
- UW Short-Term Loan Program

Access and Accommodations

Your experience in this class is important to us. If you have already established accommodations with Disability Resources for Students (DRS), please communicate your

approved accommodations to us at your earliest convenience so we can discuss your needs in this course.

If you have not yet established services through DRS, but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but not limited to; mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), you are welcome to contact DRS at 206-543-8924 or uwdrs@uw.edu or disability.uw.edu. DRS offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and/or temporary health conditions. If there is anything that we can do to help make class more accessible for you that is not stated on your DRS accommodations, please reach out and we will do what we can to accommodate as long as it does not negatively impact your classmates.

Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, your instructor(s), and DRS. It is the policy and practice of the University of Washington to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law.

Religious Accommodations

Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at Religious Accommodations Policy: https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/

Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the Religious Accommodations Request form: https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/

Grading

In this course, learning comes primarily from practicing the skills and from qualitative and constructive feedback from the instructors and peers, and the skills that you learn from both of these will benefit you much more than any numeric grade in this course. Thus, grading on the mini project deliverables and the final project deliverables will be done as complete / incomplete so long as the student has completed all of the assignment requirements and the instructors perceive that the student is putting in their best effort and is engaging in the learning process.

The UW standards for grading are used to convert the final percentage score to the 4.0 scale. Detailed explanations of these standards may be found on the UW website for graduate students: https://grad.uw.edu/policies-procedures/graduate-school-memoranda/memo-19-grading-system-for-graduate-students/

Assignments for any group projects will be assessed and graded based on the entire team's work. Each member of the project team will receive the same grade for those assignments. However, in the event of continuing evidence of a team member not fully contributing to the team effort, being a disruptive influence on group dynamics, or otherwise negatively affecting

team efforts, we reserve the right to selectively lower that team member's grade on group assignments, or to consider this in the overall participation grade for the course.

For graduate students, 1.7 is the minimum passing grade. Grades between that and 4.0 are scaled linearly. Note that even though a grade of 1.7 is considered passing, a minimum grade of 2.7 is required for the course to be counted toward a graduate degree.

Academic Integrity

The essence of academic life revolves around respect not only for the ideas of others, but also their rights to those ideas and their promulgation. It is therefore essential that all of us engaged in the life of the mind take the utmost care that the ideas and expressions of ideas of other people always be appropriately handled, and, where necessary, cited. For writing assignments, when ideas or materials of others are used, they must be cited. The format is not that important as long as it is consistent, the source material can be located, and the citation can be verified. In any situation, if you have a question, please feel free to ask the instructor or teaching assistant. Such attention to ideas and acknowledgment of their sources is central not only to academic life, but life in general.

Please acquaint yourself with the [University of Washington's resources on academic honesty](#).

Copyright

All of the expressions of ideas in this class that are fixed in any tangible medium such as digital and physical documents are protected by copyright law as embodied in title 17 of the United States Code. These expressions include the work product of both: (1) your student colleagues (e.g., any assignments published here in the course environment or statements committed to text in a discussion forum); and, (2) your instructors (e.g., the syllabus, assignments, reading lists, and lectures). Within the constraints of "fair use," you may download or copy slides, recordings or notes for your personal intellectual use in support of your education as part of your HCDE education. All of these examples are copyrighted expressions, and fair use by you does not include further distribution by any means of copying, performance, or presentation beyond the circle of your student colleagues in this class. If you have any questions regarding whether a use to which you wish to put one of these expressions violates the creator's copyright interests, please feel free to ask the instructor for guidance.

Privacy

To support an academic environment of rigorous discussion and open expression of personal thoughts and feelings, we, as members of the academic community, must be committed to the inviolate right of privacy of our student and instructor colleagues. As a result, we must forego sharing personally identifiable information about any member of our community including information about the ideas they express, their families, lifestyles, and their political and social affiliations. If you have any questions regarding whether a disclosure you wish to make regarding anyone in this course violates that person's privacy interests, please feel free to ask the instructor for guidance.

Knowing violations of these principles of academic conduct, privacy, or copyright may result in University disciplinary action under the Student Code of Conduct.

Student Code of Conduct
Good student conduct is important for maintaining a healthy course environment. Please familiarize yourself with the [University of Washington's Student Code of Conduct](#).

Quality of Written Assignments
As a graduate student in a field that requires excellent communication skills, this course has high expectations on the written quality and presentation of completed assignments and reports. Reports should be well organized, be thoroughly proofread, and free from grammatical errors. The use of appropriate, clear titles, figure captions, and headings is also important. Each assignment will have "quality of written assignment" as a graded component worth at least 10%. You can use whichever format you would like for your assignments, but please adhere to the recommended word counts (e.g., 400-600 words). If English is not your first language, I recommend you check out the UW Writing Center at Odegaard Library: http://depts.washington.edu/owrc/

In addition to the above recommendations, all assignments should include your full name and email address.

Attendance
Students are expected to attend class regularly. Although attendance is not specifically graded, missing a significant number of classes will likely have a negative impact on your learning and opportunities to earn distinction, especially given the studio format of the class. If you must miss a class, due to an illness or other extenuating circumstance, please send an email to the instructors as soon as possible to make arrangements for a makeup of in-class activities.

Late Assignments
1. Each student is allotted 3 free "late days" to account for the unexpected. This automatically gives you 24 hours to complete for each late day you expend. You do not have to request these in advance nor give a reason for using them. Remaining late days will be automatically tracked via Canvas.
2. Once your 3 late days are expended, late work will be deducted by 10% per day the assignment is turned in late (always rounding up to the next day for partial days). If you have already used up your late days and need additional help due to extenuating circumstances, please contact the instructors to discuss the possibility of further extensions.

Contacting the Instructors
You are welcome to give the instructional team feedback about the course, to ask a question about an assignment, to share an interesting article or resource, to report that you will be absent from a class/lab, to request additional time for an assignment (because of significant health, personal, or educational matter), or similar communication. Please note the following guidelines:
- Slack, email, or speaking to the instructor or TAs before/after class are the preferred and most reliable methods of contact
- Whenever appropriate, please copy the class mailing list or use a public Slack channel with your question or comment if it is about an assignment, since you are likely not the only one having that question.

- Email concerning assignments might not be replied to if sent within 36 hours of an assignment due date.
- As per university policy, please email the instructors using your uw.edu email address for any grading or registration related questions. Casual questions and comments are free to come from a non-uw.edu email address.
- The instructors receive a lot of email from students – in your email, please be sure to mention the course number and give appropriate context for your question (e.g., question about HCDE 518 Assignment #2).
- If your question concerns your grade, please follow the re-grading policy (see below).
- Email or Slack messages that are sent on Friday afternoon or over the weekend is not likely to be replied to until Monday or Tuesday of the following week.
- If you do not receive a reply within 2 days, please resend your email or ask about it during class.

Re-Grading Policy

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 sent by email. It should contain the following information:

- Re-grade Request
- Full name and email address
- Assignment name
- An explanation for why you believe you deserve a higher grade.

The instructors will consider your request. If the instructors agree with your explanation, your work will be re-graded. If not, the instructors will send you an email explaining why your grade was not changed. No re-grades will be considered for late work.

Permission to Share Your Submitted Work in Future Courses

Unless you notify us otherwise in writing via email, the instructional team assumes that you are willing to allow us to use samples from your work in this course in future instructional settings (e.g., excerpts or examples in presentations). Any work shared would be attributed to you where appropriate unless you specifically request your name to be removed.

Right to Revise

The instructors reserve the right to revise this syllabus.