INFO/CS 1300: Final Group Project Overview

The final project in this class is a group project. This project is a chance for you to get some real-world experience in designing and building a website in a team environment. Your job is to find your own client and create an innovative, interactive, and interesting website for them. This is your chance to be creative and use both programming and design to put together a quality web site.

Final Project Groups

You will be working on teams of about four members. Your teams will be assigned by the TAs based on input from you about your skills, interests, work styles, and available meeting times.

You are expected to work as a team. No one person should carrying the weight of the team. In fact, you should never carry the weight of another member of the team, this only rewards their negligent behavior. **If a team member does not contribute, then it is an academic integrity violation for you to put the delinquent team member's name on your submission.**

Working on a team is a difficult skill learn. You should follow the teamwork principles outlined in lecture on October 11th. You should also plan a regular group meeting time outside of class in order to keep up communication between you and your group members.

Client

Your team must find a client for whom you will build a website. You are strongly encouraged to have your client identified as soon as possible. You may wish to discuss this with TA staff well before the initial requirements from your client are due in Milestone 1.

Your client may be any organization, on campus or off, that needs a website. Campus clubs, local businesses, Ithaca-area farms, etc. are all fair game. If those options aren't appealing, you may choose to create a personal site for another person as long as 1) it has a target audience, 2) a developed information architecture, and 3) opportunity for interactive elements. Note that although we generally discourage personal websites, they are acceptable if they are elaborate and include all other project requirements.

Client Restrictions:

- You can't be your own client.
- No team member may be a member of the organization for which you are making a website.
- No team member may have a close personal relationship with the client.

These restrictions are in place to help you practice working with and communicating with external clients.

Notes on Clients

If you have a client in mind but you can't work with them, pitch it to other groups and/or post it to Piazza as a new note titled "Client: Name of Client" with the "available-client" tag and info about the project and client contact; another group may be happy to pick it up.

If your client already has a working website, you must design a new site that is substantially different from the original site. It is OK to take some of the same ideas/content that their current website uses and build on that, as long as you put in as much new work as other teams making a site from scratch. Note that, if your group is re-designing or improving upon an already-existing site, you must provide evidence of the original site to document the improvements you have made. Using screenshots of the before-and-after sites is one way of doing this.

It is important that you choose a client that will be available for meetings as you will need to meet several times to work out requirements, generate content, and get feedback.

You will be required to meet with your client at least three times – first to talk about requirements and design ideas, second to show them a mock-up and get feedback, and finally to show the final version and create a plan for deploying the website. More meetings may be useful for staying coordinated and getting buy-in. Emphasize to your prospective client the importance of these meetings and make sure they are on board.

Be sure to keep track of what happens during client meetings (i.e., keep meeting minutes) as it will help your team remember important points and help you with project write-ups.

Website Requirements

Your site design and implementation must directly reflect the material we have learned this semester, which means the site must:

- Follow the standards, conventions and expectations for web site development used in this class.
- Use valid HTML5 & CSS3.
- Use CSS for positioning and style.
- Include readable, well-documented code.
- Structure the code and files in separate folders in the project properly.
- Have effective information organization and navigation structures.
- Use design principles well, and have an engaging, pleasing design.
- Have interactive elements using both client side (e.g., jQuery/Javascript) and server-side (e.g., PHP) technologies that meet client needs.
- Work on different screen sizes and display reasonably well across different browsers.
- Follow the rules of good usability from the user's perspective.
- Designed and implemented effectively for the target audience of the site.
- Fulfill the stated needs of the client to the extent possible with the skills you have.

There will be about 4 people per group working on this site, and you have about six weeks to work on it. This means we are looking for a site that is substantially bigger than your previous projects. You will get feedback from the TAs to help you calibrate this and make sure your design is neither too small nor too big.

As with other projects, you will submit written documentation along with coded deliverables to help us understand your context and thinking. Details about these parts of the design journey map, along with more detailed rubrics, will be released with each milestone.

Content Requirements

The content of your site comes primarily from the specifications you get from your client and from your creativity. If your client already has a website, you may study their current website to find ways to improve it. Questions to think about include:

- What kinds of content do they want that isn't there?
- What content do they have that is not needed?
- How can you make the site easier to navigate?
- How can you improve the visual design?
- How can you make the site appropriately interactive?
- What new things can you bring to your client's site?
- (Other questions that are client/domain-specific, or that you think of.)

Keep in mind that often clients do not understand the needs of their website users. This is an opportunity for you to utilize your user-centered programming and design skills and convey to the client aspects of the site that could better cater to those needs.

Interactivity Requirements

In order to demonstrate your knowledge from this course, your site must include some original piece of both client-side interactivity using jQuery/Javascript and server-side interactivity using PHP. This cannot be a straight-up email contact form. Examples from previous semesters include:

- Dynamically changing content based on context such as the time, day, or location of access. For instance, a restaurant homepage might automatically show the current day's specials based on the day of the week; a team's website might automatically show the results of the previous game and the next upcoming game.
- Letting people search and/or sort content such as products, members of an organization, events, or other data relevant to the client.

Your team must develop (i.e., you can't just copy and paste something you found) at least one interactive component that uses PHP and one that uses jQuery/Javascript. However, you can feel free to cite and include code from other sources to help with this, and you are welcome to have multiple interactive elements. Just make

sure that any external material you use has an appropriate license that is compatible with the rest of your project.

Note: If your client wants a static website, you will still need to use PHP for course goals, but can remove these feature(s) from the version you give them.

Late Work/Slip Days

Late work on the final group project is <u>not</u> permitted; you may not use your slip days on the final group project. We have given you 6+ weeks notice for the deadlines on this project. Plan ahead and make sure your group submits on time. Do not wait till the last minute to submit to CMS.

Late work for the final project receives a 0. You will receive a 0 even if you couldn't make the deadline because of some CMS issue. You may resubmit your work to CMS as many times as you like before the deadline. Consider submitting earlier drafts to CMS just in case you fail to upload your final version right before the deadline.

Why no slip days?

As a web developer, when you are working with an actual client you will be expected to deliver your work on time. This group project will help you develop your planning skills to prepare you for life after college.

Additionally, although not the primary reason, CMS does not support slip days for groups.

Milestones

Your first objective is to find a good client and learn about their and their users' needs and requirements, as well as start having design ideas (Milestone 1). You will then use milestones 2 and 3 to draft a site, perform user testing, and iterate toward your final version. In the last lab of the semester your team will give a 3-minute demo about the project and the other teams will give feedback on your project (Milestone 4).

The final project represents 30% of the course grade. Individual grades on it may be weighted up or down based on peer evaluations.

Detailed requirements will be provided for each milestone. An overview of the milestones and how they will lead to the final project is as follows:

Milestone 1: Team contract, client description and requirements, personas, initial ideas, and project planning

Assigned: Wed. October 18th.

Due: Tues. October 31st @ 17:00.

Grade: 20 points via written feedback

- Team contract.
- Who is your client? What do they need and want from the site?
- Who are the personas? How will the design of the site meet their needs? How will you organize your work on the site?
- Description of information architecture and design.
- Sketches and storyboards of the overall look and feel of your site and information architecture.
- Plan on how to successfully execute the project (roles, deadlines, tasks, etc.).

Milestone 2: Revise site design, information architecture, and create draft version of the site

Assigned: Wed. November 1st

Due: Tues. November 14th @ 17:00

Grade: 30 points via rubric

Submission: 10MB

- Revisiting and tweaking the information architecture and the design plan, and other elements of the design journey map for M1.
- Full draft of the site, with all design and organization, most content, but not necessarily the interactive components.
- Team member evaluations and reflection.

Milestone 3: User testing, almost complete website, more testing with report

Assigned: Wed. November 15th

Due: Tues. November 28th @ 17:00

Grade: 40 points via rubric

Submission: 10MB

- Develop a user testing protocol.
- Test your website with users.
- Document user feedback, changes made with reasons, and update the site based on what you've learned in the design journey map.

Milestone 4: In-lab demos

Assigned: Wed. November 19th

Due: Fri. December 1st during your registered lab section

Grade: 10 points via feedback

- 3-minute introduction to your client, their problem and a demo of your website.
- The class will provide feedback that you may incorporate into your final submission.

Final Submission: Final site, final design journey map, final peer evaluations

Due: Tues. December 5th @ 17:00.

Grade: 100 points via rubric

Submission: 10MB

- Entire site uploaded on the course server. No changes may be made to the site after the submission deadline.
- Final Design Journey Map: This should combine all aspects of the site covered in the previous milestone and reflect the changes you made to your site in response to feedback from client, user tests, grading critiques and your own experiences. The should also include a deployment plan, indicating a hosting and domain name provider.
- Team member evaluations.