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| --- | --- | --- |
| Course Description  Users are not a generic group, but rather are specific individuals with particular needs and preferences. To be successful, information professionals must be able to understand users, the activities they perform, and the context in which activities are being performed. This course focuses on various user experience research methodologies for learning about users, use, and context. It prepares future information professionals on how to determine the most appropriate approach to gather and report data on the needs of users as part of a design process.  Learning Objectives  Success in this course will be measured based on your ability to:  •Identify the strength and weaknesses of various methodologies typically used for gathering information from a diverse range of users with different needs and abilities  •Articulate the strengths and weaknesses of the methodologies  •Determine which methodology is most suitable for specific types of data collection needs  •Summarize and apply research findings to real-world problems  Required Resources  ○ Course website: www.elms.umd.edu (<http://www.elms.umd.edu>)  ○ Readings, videos, tutorials, and other resources are referenced in the syllabus, which is posted on ELMS, and will be linked and posted in ELMS as appropriate throughout the semester. You will need to maintain access to appropriate technology to access this information for the duration of the course.  **Class Structure**  This course is offered entirely online via the University’s Enterprise Learning Management System (ELMS), asynchronously. ELMS is user-friendly and very easy to use! Teaching and learning in ELMS will be a rich and rewarding experience. It gives us the ability for online discussions and communications in a number of forums, described below. If you have problems with ELMS, please go to <https://umd.service-now.com/itsc>. If you have other questions or problems, please let me know.  **Readings**  Relevant readings will be assigned from books, journals, trade publications, newspapers, edited books, conference proceedings, etc. as necessary. Book chapters are listed weekly in each module of the syllabus; additional optional assigned readings are linked or available through our class ELMS site (under “Files”). Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any trouble locating assigned readings at any point in the semester.  **Course Readings:**  Goodman, E., Kuniavski, M. and Moed, A. (2012). Observing the user experience: A practitioner’s guidePlan to user research. San Francisco, CA: Morgan Kaufman.  Travis, D. and Hodgson, P. (2019). Think Like a UX Researcher: How to Observe Users, Influence Design, and Shape Business Strategy. CRC Press; 1st edition  **Online communication**  Throughout the semester, I will use the *Announcements* tool to disseminate information each week prior to class, including information about the readings, course schedule and assignments. I will also e-mail the class from time to time, and occasionally messages are disseminated in both e-mail and via the *Announcements* tool. **I will respond to emails on weekdays (Monday-Friday) typically within 24-48 hours.**  **Modules**: Each week in the semester will be associated with an online module. This module will be posted on ELMS on Fridays by 11:59 PM via the *Announcements* tool. The module will include all of the required readings for the week and the associated assignments. The modules will also include directions and/or a link to each week’s discussion board post (which will be graded for class participation). The modules will have detailed information on your other assessments for this course, such as your writing assignments, midterm, and final exam. Carefully review all of the materials in each module to ensure you meet all of the requirements for class this semester. |  | **Dr. Chad Doran**  [cdoran2@umd.edu](mailto:cdoran2@umd.edu)  **Class Meets**  Online Asynchronously  **Office Hours**  By appointment  **Teaching Assistants**  N/A  **Prerequisites**  N/A  **Course Communication**  I will send time-sensitive information to students via ELMS. Please utilize ELMS messaging to contact me to discuss questions, absences, or accommodations. Below is helpful guidance on writing professional emails ([ter.ps/email](http://ter.ps/email)). |

# Campus Policies

It is our shared responsibility to know and abide by the University of Maryland’s policies that relate to all courses, which include topics like:

* Academic integrity
* Student and instructor conduct
* Accessibility and accommodations
* Attendance and excused absences
* Grades and appeals
* Copyright and intellectual property

Please visit [www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html](http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html) for the Office of Undergraduate Studies’ full list of campus-wide policies and follow up with me if you have questions.

**University of Maryland Code of Academic Integrity**

The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity (https://www.president.umd.edu/sites/president.umd.edu/files/documents/policies/III-100A.pdf), administered by the Student Honor Council (<http://shc.umd.edu/SHC/Default.aspx>). This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student, you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism.

**Policy on Academic Misconduct**

Cases of academic misconduct will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct (<https://www.studentconduct.umd.edu/>) irrespective of scope and circumstances, as required by university rules and regulations. It is crucial to understand that the instructors do not have a choice of following other courses of actions in handling these cases. There are severe consequences for academic misconduct, some of which are permanent and reflected on the student’s transcript. For details about procedures governing such referrals and possible consequences for the student, see: https://www.president.umd.edu/sites/president.umd.edu/files/documents/policies/III-100A.pdf

It is very important that you complete your own course assignments, and do not share any work. The best course of action to take if you are having problems with an assignment for a class is to contact the instructor.

**Accessibility and Accommodations**

Students with disabilities should inform the instructor of their needs at the beginning of the semester. Please also contact the Accessibility & Disability Service (ADS) Office (<https://www.counseling.umd.edu/ads/>; 301-314-7682). ADS will make arrangements with the student and the instructor to determine and implement appropriate academic accommodations. Students encountering psychological problems that hamper their course work are referred to the Counseling Center (<http://www.counseling.umd.edu/>; 301-314-7651) for expert help.

# Activities, Learning Assessments, & Expectations for Students

○ This is a upper-level graduate course in which the conversation and interaction among students is critical to

learning.

○ Each week will online discussions and activities so that you can further experience, unpack, and tease apart the

concepts we have covered during the week.

○ All readings are listed and linked in the syllabus. Please refer to this syllabus for all reading assignments. It is

**your responsibility** to complete each reading **before** the listed due date.

**Engagement**

This course is online and asynchronous. You are expected to familiarize yourself with the course website, readings, syllabus, and other materials. If you have questions, please email me AFTER checking the website and syllabus for an answer to your question. Although INST 610 is not a self-paced course, the flexible nature of this class means that you will need to take greater responsibility in the learning process. Students that achieve high attainment in this course submit polished work, maintain an active presence, engage regularly with the course material, collaborate with groupmates on work and activities, and communicate with the instructor when difficulties or questions arise.

# Tips for Success

# Participate: Log in to Canvas ELMS several times a week to view announcements, discussion posts and replies to your posts. You may need to log in multiple times a day when group submissions are due. Discussions and group work are a critical part of the course. You can learn a great deal from discussing ideas and perspectives with your peers and professor. Participation can also help you articulate your thoughts and develop critical thinking skills.

Manage your time: Make time for your online learning and participation in discussions each week. Give yourself plenty of time to complete assignments including extra time to handle any technology related problems. This class moves at a quick pace and each week builds on the previous. It will be hard to keep up with the course content if you fall behind in the pre-work or post-work.

Stay organized: UMD College Park provides students with access to Google Suite, which consists of a host of productivity applications such as Drive, Calendar, Tasks, Jamboard, Keep and more. Although UMD controls and sets GSuite privacy settings for the university, make certain to customize your own Google privacy settings. Also, utilize the Canvas ELMS settings to ensure you receive timely notifications in your email or via text. Be sure to enable announcements to be sent instantly or daily.

# Course-Specific Policies

***Class Participation:*** Students are expected to actively participate in online discussions and forums – this will require that you **finish all assigned readings on a weekly basis**.

***Missed Deadlines:* If you know you will not be able to meet an assignment deadline**, contact me **before** the due date to explain why you will need to submit the assignment late; these requests will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis

***Late Assignments:*** A 10% penalty will be deducted for each day or part of a day that an assignment is late (but you must first seek approval to submit an assignment late, otherwise you will still receive a zero for an assignment you’ve submitted late). Please prepare in advance so that you will not encounter technical difficulties that will result in your work receiving a late penalty. **Technical difficulties are not an excuse for late assignments — if you are having trouble submitting an assignment on Canvas, e-mail it to me before the deadline** to avoid a penalty**.** If you have a conflict with the due date, assignments can always be submitted early.

***Syllabus Change Policy:*** This syllabus is subject to change with advance notice. If a change becomes necessary, I will post an announcement on our Canvas site. The version posted on Canvas will always be the most up-to-date.

***Guidelines for Written Assignments:*** All written assignments should be submitted via ELMS, by the date and time indicated on the syllabus. Please remember to include your name on all of your work. Written work should be proofread and revised as necessary before you submit it. Use Times New Roman 12-point font and one-inch margins. All documents should be single-spaced. Be sure to organize your papers, using section and subsection headings to identify portions of your work. Use APA Style for in-text citations and reference lists. Many resources about APA style are available on the Internet   
[e.g., <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>; <http://www.apastyle.org/learn/faqs/index.aspx>].

For this course, your assignments will be collected via [Turnitin](https://umd.service-now.com/itsc?id=kb_article&sys_id=c0116d8f0f7ef2007f232ca8b1050e63) on our course ELMS page.  I have chosen to use this tool because it can help you improve your scholarly writing and help me verify the integrity of student work.

# Get Some Help!



Taking personal responsibility for your own learning means acknowledging when your performance does not match your goals and doing something about it. I hope you will come talk to me so that I can help you find the right approach to success in this course, and I encourage you to visit [tutoring.umd.edu](http://tutoring.umd.edu) to learn more about the wide range of campus resources available to you. In particular, everyone can use some help sharpen their communication skills (and improving their grade) by visiting [ter.ps/writing](http://ter.ps/writing) and schedule an appointment with the campus Writing Center. You should also know there are a wide range of resources to support you with whatever you might need (see [go.umd.edu/assistance](http://go.umd.edu/assistance)), and if you just need someone to talk to, visit [counseling.umd.edu](http://www.counseling.umd.edu/) or [one of the many other resources on campus](https://tltc.umd.edu/supporting-whole-student).

Most services free because you have already paid for it, and **everyone needs help**… all you have to do is ask for it.

**Emergency Preparedness**

Please see the University’s Emergency Preparedness Website (https://prepare.umd.edu/) for information about the current status of the campus. If a class session needs to be rescheduled, I will e-mail you as soon as possible.

**Basic Needs Security**

If you have difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or lack a safe and stable place to live and believe this may affect your performance in this course, please visit [go.umd.edu/basic-needs](http://go.umd.edu/basic-needs) for information about resources the campus offers you and let me know if I can help in any way.

**Learning Assessments**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Learning Assessments** | **#** | **Percent** |
|  |  |  |
| **Participation**: attendance, professionalism and active involvement in discussions | 13 | 25% |
| **Written Assignment**: information needs and seeking paper | 1 | 25% |
| **Student-Led Modules:** student-led presentations and discussions | 1 | 25% |
| **Final Project:** project proposal and report on a specificuser study | 1 | 25% |

1. **Participation (25%)**

You are expected to actively participate in our online class discussion boards in ELMS. Each student must make a **minimum of** **two (1-2 paragraph length) posts on our ELMS discussion board every week (one original post and one response to a classmate’s post)**. The topic for each week’s discussion will be posted on **ELMS by 11:59 PM Friday** each week to allow you enough time to make a meaningful contribution. Discussion posts regarding weekly readings or other related course topics are **due by 11:59 PM on the Wednesday of each week**. Late discussion or response posts will not be accepted.

Participation is an integral part of your own learning experience, as well as that of your classmates. Your participation in online discussions will count for 30% of your final grade. Course participation grades will take into account both the quantity and quality of your contributions to online discussions; however, the quality of your contributions (whether questions, viewpoints, responses to others’ questions, etc.) to a meaningful, ongoing discussion will be much more heavily weighted. All discussions should remain professional and respectful at all times.

1. **Information Needs and Seeking Pair Assignment (25%)**

Humans often search for information in order to fulfill some type of need. Although we all search for information as part of our daily lives, we don’t often reflect upon the process itself. This assignment will help you answer these questions for yourself and others. It will force you to see the world as an “informationist” does. This will, in turn help you to improve your own search behaviors, as well as understand how to design effective information systems and information management practices. The assignment will also give you practice in interviewing, synthesizing

ideas, writing, and applying theory to real-world experience.

Instructions:

This is an assignment where you may interview a person of your choosing (this may be a family member, friend, classmate, or colleague) that has a complex information need that they have very recently faced. For example, finding a place to live, choosing a graduate school to attend, locating a good doctor, purchasing a new computer, fixing a broken dryer, etc. Next, you will conduct an interview (taking detailed notes of the encounter) to find out how they tried to meet their information needs. Questions to consider in the interview include (but are not limited to): How and why did they search for information? What sources did they use? What biases did they have? When did they know when to stop searching? How did they feel during the process? What strategies did they utilize? How did interactions with others influence their search? What role did technology play in their search? Take your time, ask general and detailed questions, and repeat back your understanding to make sure it is correct. Your interview may take up to an hour and should certainly take more than 30 minutes.

Finally, you will need to write up your analysis in a 6-8 page, double spaced paper. Carefully describe the individual’s underlying information need. Use the rest of the paper to analyze that information need. Make sure and use concepts from the readings we have covered so far and reference them appropriately. The bulk of the paper should be on the analysis rather than just describing what your interviewee did. Your paper must include the following sections (be sure to put headings for each section: (1) introduction (reference general theories or content about how users access information and user needs) (2.5 points), (2) Methods (describe details of the interview method and analysis, citing the course readings/literature) (5 points) (2) interview findings (description of your interview and the specific information need) (5 points), (3) discussion (analyze and present your findings using frameworks in and citing course readings) (10 points) and (4) conclusions and recommendations (2.5 points).

Assessment: This assignment is graded based on evidence that you have read the required readings and accurately described concepts relevant to this assignment; evidence of critical thinking; connections among/ between readings are original, clearly stated and relevant adherence to the length, formatting, and citation requirements; and clarity and precision of thought in your writing.

**III. Student-Led Modules (25%)**

For this component of your grade, in a team of 5-6 students, you will chose to lead a module during the semester by preparing a recorded presentation with narration for your slides. This can most easily done through Zoom or Panapto (please use real-time transcription or captions for accessibility purposes).

The module consists of preparing a presentation summarizing the readings (approximately 20-25 slides in length) and leading the online discussion via ELMS by posting 2-3 question prompts to stimulate class discussion and moderating the discussion throughout the week. Your summary and discussion prompts must be posted in the designated folder on ELMS by the Friday prior to the week in which you are signed up.  Your slides should: (1) Provide a summary of key points in the reading/ readings (15-20 slides of 3-5 bullet points each), (2) Describe one or more connections among the readings for the week or between this week's readings and past weeks’ readings (3-5 slides of 3-5 bullet points each), (4) Conclude with 1 slide of 2-3 thought provoking questions to stimulate discussion for the upcoming week.

When you co-lead a class discussion for the week, you will help steer the conversation on the discussion boards. Your group will do this by asking insightful questions that help relate the posts to overall theme of the readings and nudging the conversation toward particular topics worth highlighting that week. You can bring in current events and recent developments in the field to help inform the conversation. When leading discussion, you should be active on the discussion boards every day during the week.

**Assessment:** This assignment is graded based on evidence that you have read the required readings and accurately described concepts relevant to this assignment; evidence of critical thinking; connections among/ between readings are original, clearly stated and relevant adherence to the length, formatting, and citation requirements; and clarity and precision of thought in your writing.

1. **Project (25%)**

Details on these two group assignments will be provided later in the semester. Early in the semester we will create groups of 5-6 classmates (this group is the same as your module group). Each group will work on a project throughout the semester. Groups will choose a collection of people in a particular context (e.g., call center operators, Starbuck’s regulars, iPhone or Facebook users, janitors,…). They need to be people that you will have easy access to, since you will be “studying” them using some of the methods we will discuss in class (e.g., interviews, focus groups, user studies,…). You will study their work (or play) practices in order to understand some of their underlying information needs, and then come up with some recommendations on how to better meet those needs. I will meet with each group early on, in order to scope out and define appropriate projects.

The first assignment you will have as a group is to choose a set of users to study. Next, you will create a proposal that will outline what you plan on doing, what the purpose of your study will be, and how you will accomplish your goals. After doing the work, you will write up a report based on your findings. It will include an introduction, brief literature review, purpose of the study, description of what you did (i.e., data collection and analysis methods), findings, recommendations, and conclusions. You will also give a presentation to your classmates based on the project.

The Group Project Proposal will make up 5 points of your final grade, while the Group Project Report will make up 20 points.

**Assessment:** You will be graded based on evidence that you have read the required readings and understand the central concepts relevant to this assignment; evidence of critical thinking; adherence to the length, formatting, and citation requirements; and clarity and precision of thought in your writing.

Grades are not given, but earned. Your grade is determined by your performance on the learning assessments in the course and is assigned individually (not curved). If earning a particular grade is important to you, please speak with me at the beginning of the semester so that I can offer some helpful suggestions for achieving your goal. All assessment scores will be posted on the course ELMS page. If you would like to review any of your grades

(including the exams), or have questions about how something was scored, please email me your concerns or

questions. I am happy to discuss your grades with you, and if I have made a mistake I will immediately correct it.

Final letter grades are assigned based on the total points earned. To be fair to everyone I have to establish clear,

consistent standards, so please understand that being close to a cutoff is not the same as making the cut (89.99

vs. 90.00). It would be unethical to make exceptions for some and not others. I do not round grades up. **I will not**

**respond to email requests for a grade bump at the end of the semester.** The cutoffs are as follows:

Final letter grades are assigned based on the percentage of total assessment points earned. To be fair to everyone, I have to establish clear standards and apply them consistently, so please understand that being close to a cutoff is not the same this as making the cut (89.99 ≠ 90.00). It would be unethical to make exceptions for some and not others.

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| **Final Grade Cutoffs** | | | | | | | | | |
| + | 97.00% | + | 87.00% | + | 77.00% | + | 67.00% |  |  |
| A | 94.00% | B | 84.00% | C | 74.00% | D | 64.00% | F | <60.0% |
| - | 90.00% | - | 80.00% | - | 70.00% | - | 60.00% |  |  |

# Course Schedule

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** |  | **Topic** | **Readings** | **Activities / Assignments** |
| Week 1 & 2 | | Course Overview; Introduction | Review syllabus  Travis & Hodgson Chapter 1  Goodman Chapters 1 and 2 | **Class Bio Post due by Friday**  **1/27 by 11:59**  **PM**  **Signup for Student-led class Presentations Discussions by Monday**  **1/27 by 11:59 PM**  **Discussion Forum Posts due Wednesday 2/1 at 11:59 PM**  **Optional Zoom Q&A Session on Monday 1/30 at 1:00 PM** |
| Week 3 & 4 | | Planning UX Research | Travis & Hodgson Chapter 2  Goodman Chapters 3-4 | **Module 2 Group Slides due Friday 2/3 at 1:00 PM**  **Discussion Forum Posts due Wednesday 2/8 at 11:59 PM**  **Discussion Forum Posts due Wednesday 2/15 at 11:59 PM** |
| Week 5 & 6 | | Methods for understanding users (Part 1) | Travis & Hodgson Chapter 3  Goodman Chapters 5-8 | **Module 3 Group Slides due Friday 2/17 at 1:00 PM**  **Optional Zoom Q&A Session on Monday 1/20 at 1:00 PM**  **Discussion Forum Posts due Wednesday 2/22 at 11:59 PM**  **Information Needs and Seeking Paper, due Monday 2/27 at 11:59 PM**  **Discussion Forum Posts due Wednesday 3/1 at 11:59 PM** |
| Week 7 & 8 | | Methods for understanding users (Part 2) | Travis & Hodgson Chapter 3  Goodman Chapters 9-12 | **Module 4 Group Slides due Friday 3/3 at 1:00 PM**  **Optional Zoom Q&A Session on Monday 3/6 at 1:00 PM**  **Discussion Forum Posts due Wednesday 3/8 at 11:59 PM**  **Project Proposal**  **due Monday 3/13 at 11:59 PM** |
| Week 9 | | **Spring Break** | | |
| Weeks 10-11 | | Analyzing Information; Automated Data Collection | Travis & Hodgson Chapter 4  Goodman Chapter 15 and 16 | **Module 5 Group Slides due Monday 3/27 at 1:00 PM**  **Optional Zoom Q&A Session on Monday 3/27 at 1:00 PM**  **Discussion Forum Posts due Wednesday 3/29 at 11:59 PM**  **Discussion Forum Posts due Wednesday 4/5 at 11:59 PM** |
| Weeks 12 & 13 | | Representing, Reporting and Presenting Findings | Goodman Chapters 17 and 18 | **Module 6 Group Slides due Friday 4/7 at 1:00 PM**  **Optional Zoom Q&A Session on Monday 4/10 at 1:00 PM**  **Discussion Forum Posts due Wednesday 4/12 11:59 PM**  **Discussion Forum Posts due Wednesday 4/19 11:59 PM** |
| Weeks 14 and 15 | | Practical Applications; New Developments | Travis & Hodgson Chapter 5  Goodman Chapter 13-14 | **Module 7 Group Slides due Friday 4/21 at 1:00 PM**  **Optional Zoom Q&A Session on Monday 4/24 at 1:00 PM**  **Discussion Forum Posts due Wednesday 4/26 at 11:59 PM**  **Discussion Forum Posts due Wednesday 5/3 at 11:59 PM** |
| Week 16 | | Course Conclusion | Course synthesis and discussion | **Optional Zoom Q&A Session on Monday 5/7 at 1:00 PM**    **Final Project**  **due Thursday 5/11 at 11:59 PM** |

Note: This is a tentative schedule, and subject to change as necessary – monitor the course ELMS page for current deadlines. In the unlikely event of a prolonged university closing, or an extended absence from the university, adjustments to the course schedule, deadlines, and assignments will be made based on the duration of the closing and the specific dates missed.