Documentation

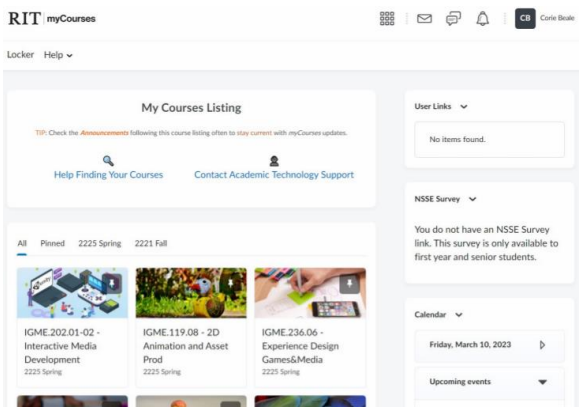
Project Description

The myCourses calendar has an inefficient way to provide data and navigation. I have proposed changes for students who would like to see the information they want while maintaining the calendar-style view. The calendar view is not customizable; there is no filter for the calendar widget. There is a filter feature for a list view, but not across all views. Some content is also hard to view on the daily or weekly views. Many assignments are typically due on the weekends at midnight, so this time slot becomes cluttered with assignments. At a glance, this is unreadable. I have proposed an expandable widget that works in a similar way to expandable text boxes on forms so that more content can be viewed if the screen space allows.

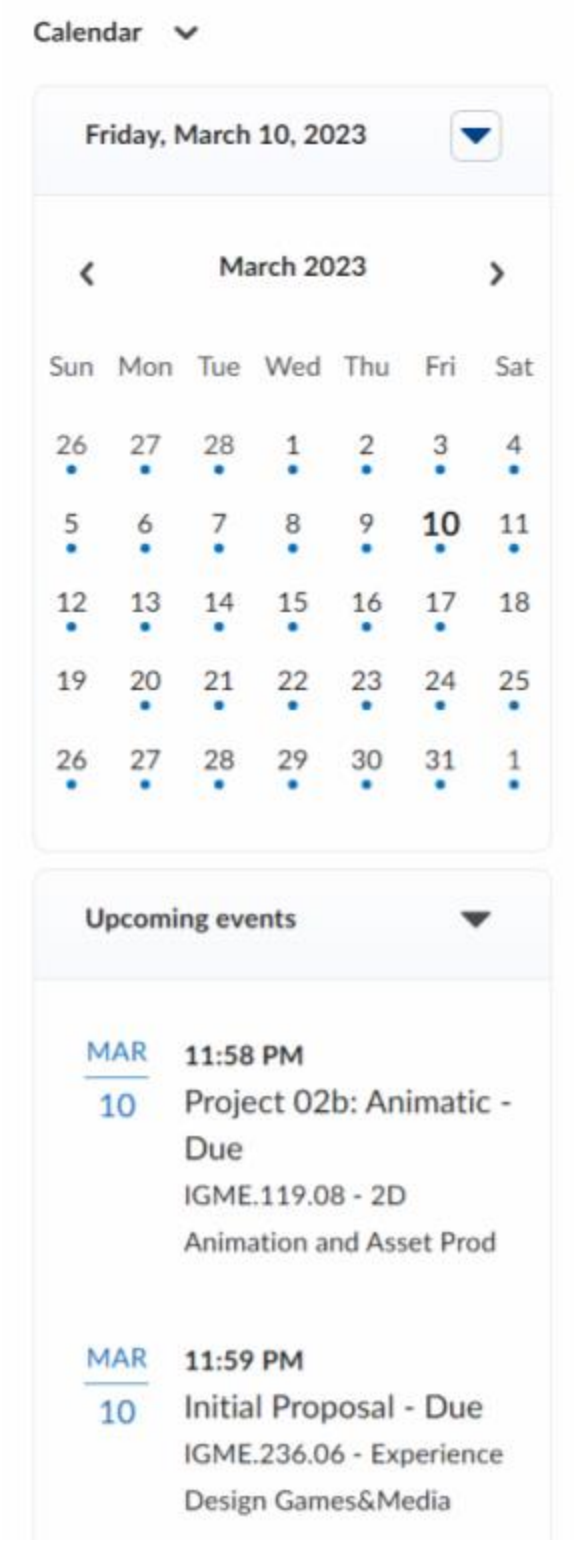
Justification

I initially selected this problem because I had problems using it when I was introduced to it. I tried to look for more functionality but was not successful. I instead opted to constantly check in on the content for each course. I eventually created my own tasks on my personal calendar as assignments were assigned so I knew what I had left to do for the week on a calendar I knew how to use. This way, I had complete control over what I wanted to see. The myCourses calendar has no filter on the daily and weekly views, so I created my own type of calendar using a third-party. While researching, I found this calendar had the capability to be subscribed to for a third-party calendar but was a disabled feature by default. With many people having the same problem, I decided this was worth adding to my prototype.

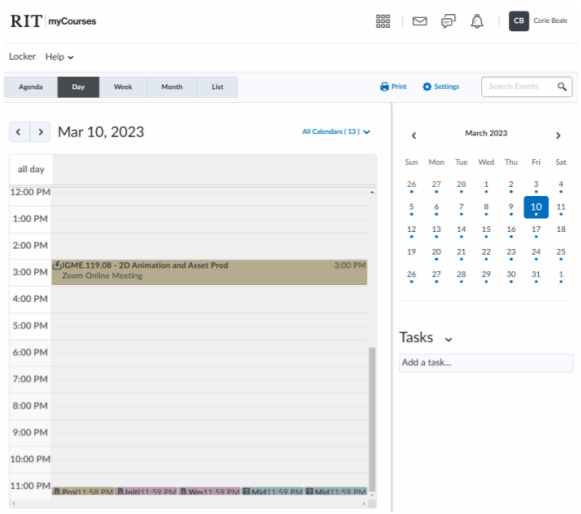
Task Flow



The user logs into myCourses and is brought to the home page.

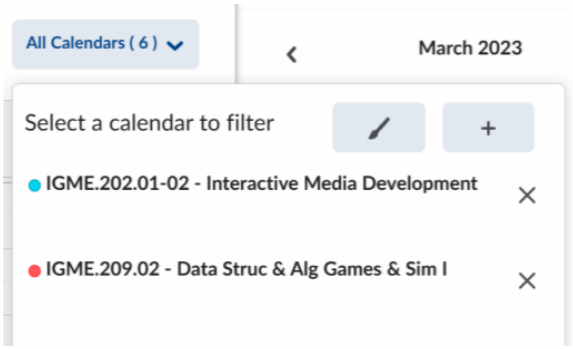


The user scrolls down the page to see the calendar widget on the right side of the page. The name “Calendar” at the top of this widget can be clicked on.



The user clicks on “Calendar” and is brought to the Calendar daily view. This calendar is unfiltered as seen with blue dots on every day of the calendar. There are also several assignments on the bottom of this day at the same time. They are very small, trying to indicate they are due at 11:59pm without being too small to see.

On the revised product, the bottom right will feature an expandable icon so the user can resize the calendar on the left side of the screen however they would like, as long as screen size permits. This will give the user a chance to see what is at the bottom of the screen



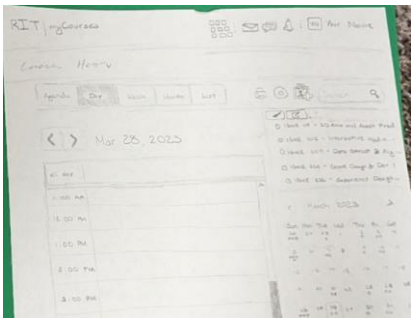
The user clicks on the blue “All Calendars (##)” to filter overall calendars, not type of content. In the revised product, there will be added functionality to filter the type of content each class will display

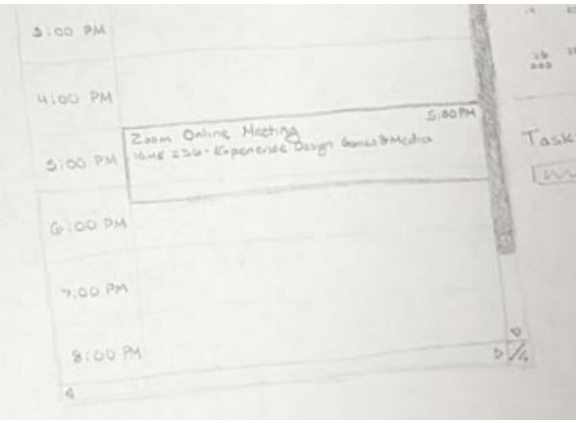
Lo-Fi Prototype

Source: Initial Proposal, Week 9 Writeup, and Lo-Fi Prototype

Describe the changes to the initial task flow that you implemented in your lo-fi prototype. Include screenshots or photos of your prototype to show the changes.

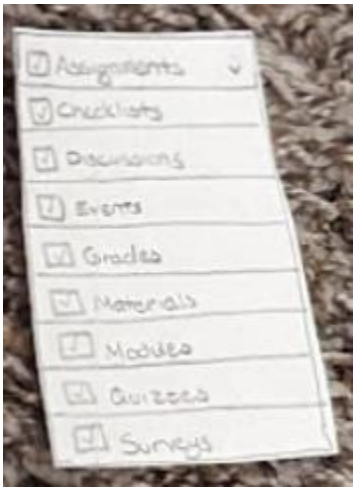
In addition to keeping a subscribe button on the calendar page by default, I removed the names for the buttons to add readability to the rest of the page. The functions are simple enough to be understood without needing text to further explain. There is also a persistent color key for each active course on the calendar.





The resizable calendar was implemented in the lo-fi prototype with an icon that is seen on many other websites that offer the same functionality.

The filter option is accessible near the key on the top right of the page. The user may filter each class by all the customizability seen currently in the List view on myCourses. This filter saves across all occurrences of calendars on myCourses and updates the blue dots on the calendar widgets found on the website accordingly.



To create the lo-fi prototype, I used pencil and paper. My only challenge was communicating menus in an understandable fashion. I was worried dropdowns and checkboxes would be problematic, but they proved to not be. I stayed true to my initial proposal and did not make any changes while creating this prototype.

Initial User Testing Results

Source: Lo-Fi Prototype Writeup

This can be taken directly from your Lo-Fi Prototype write-up.

User test results offered changes for menu navigation and appearance. The edit icon for the filter button is unclear. While it worked for some tests, a more popular icon would be easier to understand at a glance. Next, the filter and color change buttons are separated for their differences in functions. These buttons don't do much on their own, however, and require a fair amount of clicking for the user to do many tasks at once.

Final Prototype Plans

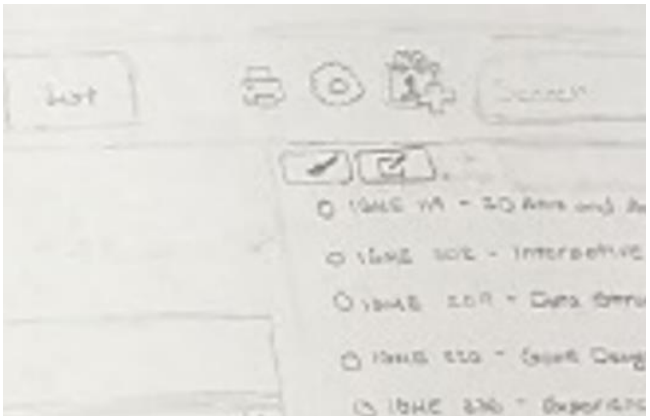
Based on your lo-fi prototype testing, what changes do you plan to implement in your final prototype, and why?

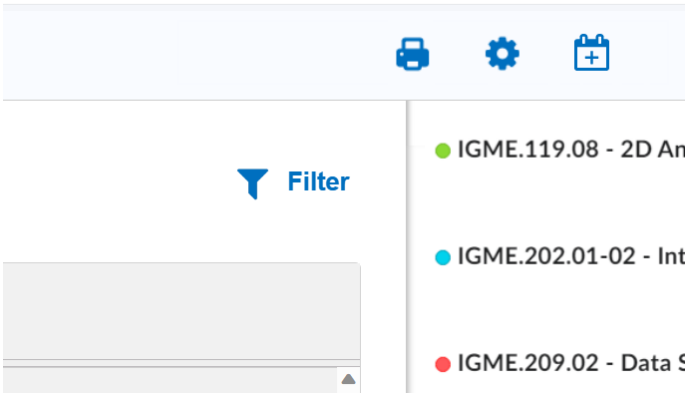
To resolve the edit button's problem, I will choose a filter icon that can be recognized at a glance. To fix the filter and color change buttons, I will find a way to merge the two buttons or add one of the two to the settings button.

Final Documentation Additions

Final Prototype Implementation & User Testing

From my lo-fi prototype, I removed the two buttons above the added persistent color key. Instead of two buttons, one for filtering and one for changing the color of classes, I put a filter button with both functionalities built into the same button. This change was made to keep less buttons next to each other so that the space felt clean, but also to use the empty space that used to be "Calendars".





Peer Feedback

Summarize the feedback you received from your peers. What did you learn from their comments? Based on their feedback, what would need to be changed in a subsequent version of the prototype?

Almost all of the feedback from peer testing I received told of the lack of visual feedback for the color-changing task. In this task, users change the color of a course. This color can be any color, so the user had a lot of freedom with this task. However, visual feedback was not implemented, such as moving the slider to change the color, or selecting from a gradient. This caused users to be confused and unsure about whether they were doing the task. They did succeed in the end, but it was not a smooth completion. In the future, the prototype would need to be updated to change the cursor, at least, of the marker on the gradient so that the user knows they are interacting with the interface. One user commented on the new subscribe icon: the calendar with a plus on it. This user was confused and thought it meant creating a new calendar, not subscribing to the myCourses calendar. I believe more user tests would need to be conducted to see if this is worth implementing since a majority of users in this round of testing did not experience the same difficulty.

Post-Mortem

In the process of planning and creating this prototype, I was able to strengthen my understanding of Axure and learn more about the functionality of myCourses. Axure was the program I used to develop the hi-fi prototype, so using it again refreshed my understanding of it. I learned the ways myCourses uses colors and icons to tell the user what parts of the website can do what actions. I am sure I will notice similar things for other websites after exploring the same for myCourses. I also learned the variety users will have in their answers for testing. Of course, no one is the same. Not all my users had the same process to complete tasks. This made me realize the importance of testing and creating the best user interface and user experience that users can be given. Overall, I feel the final prototype successfully addresses the problem I identified. I am confident that with further testing and implementation, students will be happy with the results.