

WRA 210 - Introduction to Web Authoring

Monday and Wednesday: 5:00 P.M. - 6:20 P.M.

218 Ernst Bessey Hall

Michigan State University

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Instructor: Dr. Christie L. Daniels
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Office Hours: T 12-4 P.M. and additionally by appointment.

Required Materials/Resources

A dependable computer with reliable Internet and email access

A thumb drive for portable file storage

Course Objectives:

Students will:

- learn and practice the design genres crucial to building useful and usable websites.
- learn and practice the basic web authoring skills needed to put good design into practice.
- learn and practice principles of user-centered design.
- design and build a working version of their professional portfolios.
- be able to frame web authoring as a rhetorical practice and a vital professional writing skill.
- be sufficiently prepared to advance to WRA 410 (Advanced Web Authoring).

Attendance and Participation

Discussion and collaboration are essential parts of this course, as are in-class tutorials and workshops. Attendance in class is essential, so you are expected to attend class regularly and have completed any necessary preparation.

Because there are often legitimate reasons to miss class, you are allowed 3 unexcused absences (university-excused absences are defined by the Ombudsman here). Every unexcused absence beyond 3 will result in a half-point deduction from your final grade (see Grades and Grading Scale). If you know in advance that you will have to miss class, please notify the instructor and make alternate arrangements for assignments, readings, or tutorials for those days. Even if an absence is excused, students are expected to complete all work.

Assignments and Grading

You must complete all major assignments in order to pass this class. Scoring guides for each assignment will be provided well in advance of their due dates so that students are well informed of the instructor's expectations. Course work should be submitted according to guidelines and on time; late work will only be accepted at the discretion of the instructor. Lateness is considered to be any time after 8pm on the day the course work is due.

Major Assignments and Projects

Personal Course Site: 200 points. Create a site that will serve as your home base for this course and as a course portfolio. The site must include at least one page designed for this course that includes basic contact information, links to assignment submissions, and other materials that are relevant to the class. An initial version is due the first week of class as part of your first module grade. You'll use it throughout the semester to collect and present all of the work you do for this course (particularly your modules) in one, easy-to-use view.

Modules: 200 Points. A series of 13 short exercises designed to introduce you to key concepts and to give hands-on practice with important tools and techniques throughout the semester. Your work for each module will be posted to your personal course site. You must complete at least 10 of the modules to earn a passing grade for this semester-long project, but completing all of them will earn you extra credit.

Portfolio Design Documents: 200 Points. The major semester-long project will be designing your professional portfolio that you'll maintain throughout your academic career. Before you build anything for that project, you will develop a series of design documents that will guide that project, serving as a blueprint for the site you eventually build. This will require you to learn key genres in web design. Specifically, you will learn about and make sitemaps, wireframes, and design comps for your portfolio.

Professional Writing Portfolio: 400 Points. Over the course of the semester, you will design and build a portfolio website. This will be a starting point for your professional portfolio, something that you can maintain throughout your degree and develop further in either WRA 410 (Advanced Web Authoring) or WRA 455 (Portfolio Seminar). You will research what characteristics define an effective portfolio and develop initial designs that will be reviewed by your peers and then revised. You will then build a functional version of your design over the course of several weeks after a series of tutorials and hands-on workshops. Your final grade for this project will be based on the functional HTML and CSS you produce, how well what you built adheres to your designs, and a reflection in which you discuss your work on the project.

Revising Assignments

Revision is an important part of the writing (and coding) process. To that end, you will be allowed to revise any of your projects for a higher grade. Consult with the instructor if you wish to revise; revisions will not be accepted if the policy is abused to extend deadlines. All revisions must include an additional description of the changes made, as well as the original and revised versions.

All revisions are due by the last regular day of class.

Grades and Grading Scale

Course projects will generate 1000 total points over the semester. Based on a 1000-point scale, the following table describes how final grades will be assigned.

Points	Grade
1000-950	4.0
949-875	3.5
874-800	3.0
799-750	2.5
749-700	2.0
699-650	1.5
649-600	1.0
599-below	0.0

Remember that any unexcused absence over your allowed 3 will result in a half-point drop in your final grade (meaning each is a 50-point hit on your total points).

University Academic Honesty Policy

Academic Honesty-Article 2.3.3 of Academic Freedom Report states: “the student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards.” In addition, the College of Arts and Letters adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in General Student Regulation, 1.0, Protection of Scholarships and Grades, which are included in Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide. Students who commit an act of academic dishonesty may receive a 0.0 on the assignment or in the course. For additional information, see MSU’s ombudsman’s website.

Be advised: copying code, particularly as a programmer, is common practice. For the purpose of course assignments where you are asked to demonstrate your understanding of the structure and syntax, you will be expected to compose your own and to document your work through comments.

Students with Disabilities

To receive any accommodation for any disability, students must first register with the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities. The RCPD will request appropriate documentation and make a determination regarding the nature of the accommodation to which a student is entitled. The RCPD will then give the student a “visa” that specifies the kind of accommodation that may be provided. It is then the responsibility of the student seeking accommodation to present the visa to his/her instructor.

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Projects/Activities
1	Mon 1/6	Introduction to course and syllabus
	Wed 1/8	Access AFS space via FTP, intro to basic markup Reading Assignment: Chapters 4-5
2	Mon 1/13	Intro to Portfolio Project; develop interviewee questions Reading Assignment: Chapters: 1-3 Assignment: Module 1 due
	Wed 1/15	Design Principles (CRAP) Reading Assignment: Chapter 6 Assignment: Module 2 due (in-class exercise)
3	Mon 1/20	NO CLASS! MLK DAY!
	Wed 1/22	Portfolio Interview Debriefing, Best Practice Guide Preparation Reading Assignment: Chapters 7-8 Assignment: Module 3 due
4	Mon 1/27	Introduction to Information Architecture Reading Assignment: Chapter 20 Assignment: Module 4 due (in-class exercise)
	Wed 1/29	Wireframes: intro to concepts, examples, demonstrate tools Reading Assignment: Chapter 17 Assignment: Sitemap drafts; Module 5 (in-class exercise)
5	Mon 2/3	Design Comps: intro to concepts, examples, tools; selecting color and type Assignment: Wireframe drafts; begin Module 6
	Wed 2/5	Begin full design comp Assignment: Color and Type Design Cards
6	Mon 2/10	Design comp drafts; Usability testing design docs; workshop Assignment: Module 6 due
	Wed 2/12	Introduction to HTML; file structure, basic markup , file/folder linking Reading Assignment: Chapter 9 Assignment: Portfolio Designs; Module 7; Module 8 (in-class activity)
7	Mon 2/17	Working with Images Assignment: Module 9 (in-class exercise)
	Wed 2/19	HTML: lists, tables, metadata, comments Reading Assignment: Chapters 12, 13
8	Mon 2/24	CSS Basics: Separation of content and style; 3 methods of CSS Reading Assignment: Chapter 10
	Wed 2/26	CSS box model; HTML for structure; DIV and SPAN Reading Assignment: Chapter 14

9	Mon 3/3	SPRING BREAK!!! YAY!
	Wed 3/5	SPRING BREAK!!! YAY!
10	Mon 3/10	HTML 5 layouts; developing structural markup Reading Assignment: Chapters 15-16 Assignment: Basic sketches for structure for landing pages
	Wed 3/12	CSS positioning and sizing; using float to size and position objects Read Assignment: Chapter 17 Assignment: Fully-built structural markup
11	Mon 3/17	CSS colors, backgrounds, images, fonts; workshop Reading Assignment: Chapters 18, 19
	Wed 3/19	CSS: selectors and pseudo-classes; CSS3 features; workshop kickoff; intro to SCRUM Assignment: Rough versions of landing page; assessment of remaining work; workshop plan
12	Mon 3/24	Portfolio Workshops
	Wed 3/26	Portfolio Workshops
13	Mon 3/31	Portfolio Workshops Assignment: Module 10 (report)
	Wed 4/2	Databases and Content Management Systems Reading Assignment: Chapters 21, 22 Assignment: Module 11 (report); Module 12 (in-class exercise)
14	Mon 4/7	Portfolio Workshops
	Wed 4/9	Portfolio Workshops
15	Mon 4/14	Portfolio Workshops
	Wed 4/16	Portfolio Workshops
16	Mon 4/21	Portfolio Presentations
	Wed 4/23	Portfolio Presentations
17	FINALS WEEK	Portfolio Presentations Portfolios due; Personal Course Sites finalized This class's final exam is: Monday, April 28th from 5:45 – 7:45 P.M.