



# USER EXPERIENCE DESIGN SYLLABUS

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## COURSE OVERVIEW

In this 10-week part-time course, you'll learn a wide range of UX methods and concepts that will help broaden your career skill set. You'll be able to use this UX "toolkit" to design impactful products that both delight and solve real problems for users.

By the end of this course, you'll be able to:

- Understand your target audience and meet a need they are facing, and document it with deliverables such as sitemaps, wireframes, and prototypes.
- Apply a goal-oriented design process to guide your design decisions, help you communicate with teammates and stakeholders more effectively, and validate your results.
- Kick off your UX portfolio by creating a case study designed to showcase your process by walking people through what you did, why you did it, and what your decisions were based upon.

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## GRADING

In order to pass the User Experience Design course at GA, you must:

- Complete at least 80% of assigned homework.
- Maintain consistent attendance (miss no more than 3 classes) and actively participate in class (see "participation" below.).
- Complete and submit the course final project, earning a satisfactory grade by completing all functional and technical requirements, including delivering a presentation.

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## PARTICIPATION

The majority of the course's in-class activities are designed to be highly interactive. Your final evaluation will take into account your active participation.

Please plan to silence your mobile devices, and close email, Messages, gChat, Twitter, Facebook, etc. on your laptop during class time.

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## COMMUNICATION

Schoology will be the hub for all course communications and announcements.

If you have questions about the assignment or anything we talked about in class, or an interesting link or reference, please use Schoology to share it with the entire class.

If it's something personal (i.e., need to miss a class / leave early, etc.), please contact your instructors directly via Schoology private messaging.

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## FINAL PROJECT

There is one overarching project for this course: you will be creating a case study based on a real problem that you've identified.

You will create a portfolio piece and presentation deck that you can use to showcase your design process.

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## WEEKLY HOMEWORK

Each week's homework assignment will relate to the final project and build on the week before, so it's critical that you keep up with the assignments or it will be easy to fall behind.

Homework will be assigned on Wednesday nights, due the following Monday. Plan to spend at least 1-2 hours outside of class each week on your homework assignment.

Homework must be uploaded to Schoology by the posted deadline each week so your instructors can track everyone's progress and provide feedback.

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## WEEKLY ONLINE PREWORK

To get the most out of our face-to-face time, there will be weekly online pre-work assigned to get you up to speed on the topic of the following week. Pre-work is directly related to the upcoming week's in-class activities and should not be skipped.

Pre-work will be assigned on Wednesday nights, due the following Monday. Plan to spend about an hour on the pre-work each week.



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## UNIT 1: DESIGN PROCESS

### WEEK 1 PRE-WORK OBJECTIVES

- › Create a Schoology login and join your class Schoology page.
- › Describe what UX Design is and how it relates to other design disciplines.
- › Identify the different roles within UX Design.
- › Define the basic differences between lean and agile methods.

LESSON #	TOPIC	LESSON OBJECTIVES
1	Intro to UX & Design Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Explain course expectations in terms of pre-work, homework, projects, office hours, Schoology, etc.</li><li>› Define the elements of User Experience Design.</li><li>› Develop basic skills in creative problem solving, innovation, and human-centered design through a fast-paced design thinking activity.</li><li>› Sketch out potential design solutions to the problem you have defined.</li></ul>
2	Prototypes, Feedback, & Critiques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Practice adapting to rapidly changing stakeholder requirements.</li><li>› Create a paper prototype of your proposed solution.</li><li>› Present designs and justify design decisions.</li></ul>

### WEEK 1 HOMEWORK

- › Explore a potential area (or areas) of focus that you are interested in. For each area of focus, define a potential problem in that area.

## UNIT 2: RAPID PROTOTYPE

### WEEK 2 PRE-WORK OBJECTIVES

- › Describe the techniques and best practices for conducting user research, specifically user interviews and qualitative research methods.
- › Explore how research is used for capturing data and identifying trends and patterns.
- › Explain techniques for conducting market research and competitive analysis.

LESSON #	TOPIC	LESSON OBJECTIVES
3	User Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Describe the skills required to conduct and recruit for an effective user interview.</li><li>› Define contextual inquiry and articulate its benefits.</li><li>› Prepare unbiased interview questions.</li><li>› Conduct an effective user interview.</li><li>› Draft a research plan and write a discussion guide for final project interviews.</li></ul>
4	Competitive Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Compare products in the same space or in adjacent industries, including competitive reviews and task analyses.</li><li>› Conduct competitive research to help inform your final project concept.</li><li>› Explore how surveys and task analysis inform research.</li></ul>

### WEEK 2 HOMEWORK

- › Complete at least four user interviews for your final project.
- › Perform a competitive analysis of your for your final project.

### WEEK 3 PRE-WORK OBJECTIVES

- › Describe the predominant method for synthesizing UX research to find trends (Affinity Mapping).
- › Explain how research is used to identify problems and create user personas.
- › Explain how to identify your primary user goals and describe how to create user flows that support them.

LESSON #	TOPIC	LESSON OBJECTIVES
5	Synthesizing Research & Creating Personas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Use research to create an affinity map that identifies trends and insights within your research findings.</li><li>› Articulate the benefits and shortcomings of personas as a design tool.</li><li>› Use research to create personas that reflect the target audience.</li></ul>
6	Defining User Goals & User Flows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Effectively synthesize research into a problem statement and design direction that reflects the primary need of your target audience.</li><li>› Apply sketching techniques to ideate through solutions.</li><li>› Explore examples of how to map the flow of a specific product or experience.</li><li>› Construct a first draft of the user flow for the primary user goal for your final project.</li></ul>



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## WEEK 3 HOMEWORK

- › Finish the persona(s) for your final project that you began working on in class.
- › Create a user flow that defines what the persona's primary goal is.
- › Revise your problem statement.

## WEEK 4 PRE-WORK OBJECTIVES

- › Explain why low-fi prototyping and usability testing is crucial to the UX process.
- › Set up an InVision account.
- › Use InVision to create a lo-fi prototype using the provided paper sketches.
- › Describe how primary user goals break down into user stories that eventually become features.
- › Discuss the importance of determining project requirements and prioritizing features before designing.

LESSON #	TOPIC	LESSON OBJECTIVES
7	Paper Prototyping & Usability Testing Basics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Articulate the value of testing early in the design process.</li><li>› Apply paper prototyping techniques to iterate on your design concept.</li><li>› Practice formulating task scenarios and running usability tests.</li></ul>
8	User Stories and Feature Prioritization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Break down your user goals into more granular user stories.</li><li>› Use a common framework to prioritize features that align with your vision.</li><li>› Discuss struggles with feature prioritization and vision alignment and how to address them.</li></ul>

## WEEK 4 HOMEWORK

- › Finish your testable paper prototype for your final project.
- › Prioritize a list of features that will create the minimum value to users.
- › Create a proposal that will outline your personal vision for your final project.

## WEEK 5 PRE-WORK OBJECTIVES

- › Define the field of Information Architecture and explain when its techniques are used in a project.
- › Explain the difference between designing for a native mobile vs. web-based platform, and the pros and cons of each.
- › Gain exposure to the concept of mobile design patterns.

LESSON #	TOPIC	LESSON OBJECTIVES
9	Information Architecture & Navigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Define the field of Information Architecture and explain when its techniques are used in a project.</li><li>› Explore methods for organizing complex and diverse types of content.</li><li>› Apply card-sorting techniques to structure and validate your proposed information architecture.</li><li>› Use card-sorting results to construct a sitemap that will then become navigation.</li></ul>
10	Responsive / Native Design & Design Patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Describe the respective technical capabilities of responsive sites and native mobile apps.</li><li>› Evaluate options and choose what format is most advantageous to your final project.</li><li>› Gain exposure to design patterns.</li></ul>

## WEEK 5 HOMEWORK

- › Use card-sorting techniques and results to construct a sitemap that will then become the main navigation for your final project.
- › Sketch key screens that reflect your user flows and sitemap.

## UNIT 3: HI-FIDELITY PROTOTYPE



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## WEEK 6 PRE-WORK OBJECTIVES

- › Introduce the concept of wireframes and their use cases.
- › Articulate the value of annotating wireframes.
- › Download and set up Sketch.
- › Turn wireframing assets from Sketch into clickable prototypes using InVision.
- › Explain visual design principles critical to UX including typography and visual hierarchies.

LESSON #	TOPIC	LESSON OBJECTIVES
11	Wireframing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Define best practices for wireframing and annotating.</li><li>› Use industry standard tools (Sketch) to create high-fidelity wireframes.</li><li>› Download UI kits and discuss their role.</li><li>› Explain the difference between human interface guidelines, design principles, pattern libraries, and style guides.</li></ul>
12	Visual Design Basics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Explore principles of design and how they relate to digital interfaces.</li><li>› Learn to apply fundamentals of visual hierarchy, grid systems, and typography to give your final project UI more structure and clarity.</li><li>› Make visual hierarchy and typographic choices that enhance the appeal and clarity of your content.</li></ul>

## WEEK 6 HOMEWORK

- › Complete high fidelity wireframes for several main screens of your final project.
- › Use the visual design checklist to refine your wireframes.

## WEEK 7 PRE-WORK OBJECTIVES

- › Compare the different types of prototypes (paper, low-fidelity, high-fidelity) and the purposes of each type.
- › Describe advanced methods of prototyping, such as motion-based prototyping, live-code/live-data versions of prototyping.
- › Identify and describe tools for prototyping, advanced drawing, and creating clickable prototypes.
- › Review the concept of usability testing, and explore different industry examples of usability testing in practice.

LESSON #	TOPIC	LESSON OBJECTIVES
13	High Fidelity Prototyping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Identify and describe the different categories of tools for prototyping.</li><li>› Create clickable prototypes using InVision that will support usability testing goals.</li><li>› Discuss gestures and motion how they are commonly applied.</li></ul>
14	Advanced Usability Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Prepare a discussion guide to test your final project.</li><li>› Run three usability tests using best practices.</li><li>› Synthesize your testing results and identify major takeaways from testing.</li><li>› Outline 3-5 improvements that you will make to your work.</li></ul>

## WEEK 7 HOMEWORK

- › Complete a clickable prototype of your final project.
- › Conduct two more usability tests for your prototype.
- › Synthesize the research from the four usability tests and outline any action items you have.
- › Iterate on your wireframes/prototypes based on feedback.



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## UNIT 4: REFINE

### WEEK 8 PRE-WORK OBJECTIVES

- › Distinguish between three types of onboarding experiences and find an example of each.
- › Discuss the paradox of choice — people say they want many options, but many options render it more difficult for them to choose one.

LESSON #	TOPIC	LESSON OBJECTIVES
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15	Onboarding & Behavior Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Describe what makes a great onboarding/first-time-use experience.</li><li>› Practice designing an onboarding experience that communicates the value of your product to potential users.</li><li>› Learn about Nir Eyal's Hooked model of habit formation and how it may be applied to the final project.</li><li>› Practice applying different types of variable rewards to final project concepts to create experiences that will keep users wanting more.</li></ul>
16	Final Project Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Receive instructional team feedback on your final project.</li><li>› Turn your project into a stakeholder presentation.</li></ul>

### WEEK 8 HOMEWORK

- › Finish your onboarding and sign-up screens and add them to your prototype.
- › Prepare for your final presentation.

## UNIT 5: PRESENTATIONS & NEXT STEPS

### WEEK 9 PRE-WORK OBJECTIVES

- › No pre-work this week.

LESSON #	TOPIC	LESSON OBJECTIVES
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17	UX Mini-Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Practice going through real industry UX design problems from beginning to end.</li><li>› Work in teams or independently to develop design solutions for the industry design problem.</li><li>› Present your design solution.</li></ul>
18	Presentation Day 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Effectively communicate your design solution for your final project.</li><li>› Critique and provide feedback for classmates.</li></ul>

### WEEK 9 HOMEWORK

- › Continue to iterate on your final project.

### WEEK 10 PRE-WORK OBJECTIVES

- › Explore tools for portfolio creation and job interview preparation.
- › Explain best practices regarding stakeholder and client management.
- › Identify what UX hiring managers look for in a UX designer.
- › Gain exposure to UX job resources.

LESSON #	TOPIC	LESSON OBJECTIVES
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19	Presentation Day 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Effectively communicate your design solution in final project.</li><li>› Critique and provide feedback for classmates.</li></ul>
20	Portfolios & Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Explore examples of good UX portfolios, and discuss the story aspect of portfolio building.</li><li>› Write the five most valuable takeaways from your project.</li><li>› Practice telling your personal story to different types of stakeholders.</li><li>› Identify next steps and receive project rubrics and grades.</li></ul>