

Week 1: Course Introduction

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Overview

This week we will introduce ourselves and learn about the course and expectation for it. We will also go over what web development is briefly and discuss the evaluation of websites. Students will be given one homework assignment and 4 participation questions to answer.

What's Due

- Participation Questions (4)
- Reflection/Website Evaluations (HW)

Course Introduction

Who am I?

Hello students! My name is Christopher Velez, I will be your instructor for this course. I am a graduate of the University at Albany and have a Bachelor of Arts degree in Information Science (2013) in addition to a Master of Science degree in Information Science (Information Systems & Technology – 2015). Aside from that, I have worked as a Computer Systems Programmer for New York State for about 6 years. I have also taught CINF 201/362 multiple times during that period.

What will we be learning?

This class at its core is a web design/development course. We will be examining and utilizing front-end technologies to create high quality websites capable of functioning across various devices/platforms. Specifically, we will work with the following technologies:

- HTML
- CSS
- JavaScript/JQuery

HTML/CSS are the front-end technologies that allow our website to have a look/feel to them. Think of the support beams, walls, wood, paint, and other aesthetics which make up a house. JavaScript is a programming language that gives our website functionality. Think of light switches, air conditioning, and other appliances which add to the comfort and ease-of-use in your home.

How will we learn it?

One of the best ways to learn to build websites is through hands-on activities. Throughout the course of the semester, you will be given tasks to fix or build various components of web pages. In completing these exercises, you will learn best practices for building websites and how to implement them into your work. These tasks aren't designed to be overly strenuous or tedious but will require effort and your active participation for you to succeed.

In addition to weekly exercises, there will be participation and in-class activities to test your course content knowledge and research abilities. Research and discussion allow us to obtain more knowledge through the sharing of new information and debating of existing ideas.

Lastly, we will have a final project consisting of multiple parts due at the end of the semester. The overall project will be for you to build a website based on a topic of your choice. The purpose of this project is to demonstrate the web development/design skills you'll have picked up throughout the course of the semester. Each week, we will learn new things to aid you in the completion of the project, so weekly participation is very important if you want to be able to finish it.

Course Expectations

This course will require a good deal of effort if you want to succeed. Each topic builds upon the previous one and missing work can result in you falling behind quickly. To do well, please try to stay on top of your work and contribute to the class regularly via participation and by submitting assignments on time. All assignments will be done through Blackboard.

Each week, I will release lecture notes, assignments, and participation questions right before class. Assignments may be due by the end of class or before the start of the next class meeting. You can submit assignments whenever you'd like but know that late submissions will lose the ability to be resubmitted for additional credit. Participation questions are due by the end of class each Thursday.

I expect all work to be original and not from previous semesters. If you use online resources, you **must** cite them in your posts or as a comment in your HTML, CSS, etc. A simple link to the resource on your page or in a comment of some sort is enough for the purposes of write-ups or your web pages.

In return for your effort, I will do my best to respond to your questions/concerns in a timely manner. My general policy is to respond within 24 hours but sometimes life gets in the way of that so please be patient with me. I will try to grade things quickly and provide you with feedback to help you improve. If you feel my feedback is vague or there isn't enough, let me

know and I'll try to give you better feedback. Also, if you have concerns, email me at any time or post to the help forum on Blackboard.

Office hours as of right now will be on Monday from 7-9PM via Zoom. The link for this is available on Blackboard under "Course Information." Otherwise, you will need to email me and make an appointment for office hours outside of that time. If you're struggling with the course material, please come to me as soon as possible, I am always willing to help.

Additional Expectations

- Refer to me as "Professor Velez" or "Chris"
- Respect each other
- Avoid talking loudly over me
- Show up to class on time
- Ask for help before you need it

Grade Breakdown

40% - Assignments

Each week, there will be an assignment or two to complete by the end of class or before class the following week. These assignments will be based on the material learned that week or in previous weeks. Make sure you read all materials/look through example code, so you have the best chances at finishing the work.

10% - Participation

Multiple-choice/open-ended questions will be provided each week. Your job is to answer these questions to the best of your ability. You must complete the questions before the end of class as we will go over them at the beginning of the following class.

50% - Final Project

Your final project is to build a website based on a topic of your choice. This project will be broken up into several parts with each one being worth a different amount. Please see the breakdown below. Details on the Final Project will be released after the first week of class.

Project Proposal – 10%

Midterm – 15%

Final Project Review – 5%

Final Project Submission – 20%

Important Grading Policies

I believe that students should be able to learn from their mistakes and improve the quality of their work, but time management is also important. In this course, you are allowed unlimited resubmissions to improve your work and earn up to half of the points lost.

However, this only applies if you submit the work by the initially stated deadline. If you submit an assignment late, you will not lose any points but the grade you earn is final (unless there is an extenuating circumstance).

If you feel that you can't submit an assignment on time, please reach out to me at least 48 hours in advance to request an extension. This will allow you to have more time and submit higher quality work. Also, you won't lose the ability to resubmit your work for extra credit.

If the work you submit is on time, but contains a broken link/inaccessible files, I will give you a zero and ask for a resubmission. Please note, the zero is just a temporary placeholder until I receive a new resubmission. Once I get your new work, I'll grade it again, and you can still resubmit it for additional credit (since it was on time).

Introduce Yourself (Class Activity)

Tell the class a bit about yourself. You can say as little or as much as you'd like, but at the very least, you should say the following:

- Name
- Major/Minor
- Why are you taking this class?

Feel like mentioning more stuff? You can use any of the topics below for your introduction.

- Where are you from?
- What are your hobbies?
- What are some of your dreams/fears?
- What motivates you to succeed?
- 3 greatest strengths/weaknesses?
- What teaching styles do you prefer?

What is Web Development? (Lecture)

Web development revolves around the creation of websites which are generally publicly available. To build a website, you need to at least use Hypertext Markup Language (HTML). However, for more robust websites, other technologies such as Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) and JavaScript (JS) may be required. These technologies are considered "client-side" and are what we will primarily work with this semester. CINF 362 is geared more toward the "server-side" technologies which allow us to utilize databases and build more advanced features for our website such as user accounts, payment systems, etc.

What makes a website good vs bad?

Before determining whether a website is "good" or "bad", it's important to note that opinions on a website can vary widely from one person to the next. One user may think a website is incredible, while another user finds it to be lackluster. Therefore, it becomes important to distinguish between subjective and objective criteria used to evaluate websites. Our goal is to try and be objective to ensure that our websites are functional above

However, there are general things we can look at which are necessary for a website to function properly and be useful. Firstly, we must consider the purpose of the website. Once we've established its purpose, we can use some of the following criteria for our evaluation. This list isn't exhaustive, but it's a good place to start.

- Ease of use

- Navigable
- Readable
- Understandable
- Information hierarchy
- Load times
- Aesthetics
- Quality of content
 - Published by website
 - Published by users on website
- Available features
- Responsiveness (mobile-friendly)
- Personalization

Website Features Discussion (Class Activity)

Visit any two websites of your choosing. If you can't think of any, feel free to use some from the list below. Your task for the next few minutes is to go through a few pages of each website and document what you're seeing. Consider the different criteria mentioned above and write down some quick information on your websites.

Specifically, what types of content are present on the website? How is the information organized? Where is the main navigation placed? Where is the contact information located? Can you tell the purpose of the website right away? What are common features on these websites? Do these websites work well on mobile devices?

Links for Discussion

- <https://omh.ny.gov/>
- <https://www.cnn.com/>
- <https://pinchofyum.com/>
- <https://www.amazon.com/>
- <https://www.etsy.com/>

For this exercise, all you need to do is quickly jot down some pieces of information, and then we'll go over our findings together as a class.

Reflection/Website Evaluations (HW)

This assignment contains two parts. Please follow the instructions for each part.

Part 1 (Reflection) Instructions:

- <https://deathtobullshit.com/>
- <https://vimeo.com/63437853>

Visit the links above and watch the video for "Death to Bullshit" by Brad Frost. Write at least two paragraphs with your reactions to the video. Your write-up should include your reflections and views on what Brad Frost discussed as opposed to a summary of what he says. If you're

unsure of where to start, feel free to use the questions below for starting points. Keep in mind that this video was released in 2013.

- Do you agree with what Brad Frost mentions?
- How have the statistics he mentions changed since the video was released?
 - Browser usage, technologies, amounts of data produced, etc.
- Are the issues he talks about still relevant? Have you experienced them?
- What are some problems arising from the widespread adoption of the internet and related technologies? What are some benefits?
- What changes would you make to modern websites?

In your write-up, you should also include a link to some related research that adds to your reflection. It can refute or agree with what the speaker was discussing, or it can introduce a new relevant topic entirely. For citation purposes, include a link to your source below the write-up so I can view it.

Part 2 (Website Evaluations) Instructions:

- <https://www.darkpatterns.org/types-of-dark-pattern>
- <https://www.w3.org/WAI/perspective-videos/>
- <https://www.ideasonpurpose.com/on/7-qualities-great-website/>
- <https://html-online.com/articles/avoid-html-website-features/>

Visit the links above which cover dark patterns, how users with disabilities work with the web, and general practices for website development. Based on the information provided and the criteria for good/bad websites discussed earlier in class, your task will be to evaluate three websites. One website will be your choice, but the other two must be from the list below.

- http://www.goetzskyvu.com/GOETZ_THEATRE/GOETZ_SHOW_&_TIMES.html
- <http://themagicofbaltimore.blogspot.com/>
- <https://www.art.yale.edu/>
- <https://www.felixhieronimus.com/>
- <https://www.reddit.com/>

In your evaluation, you should provide a link to the websites you're using for this assignment. Besides this, you should discuss what aspects of the website make it "good" versus "bad." In your evaluation, you must mention some specific criteria and make a clear argument for your decision.

These write-ups are **due Thursday, September 2nd at 6pm**. Each one should be grammatically correct and represent your own personal thoughts. To submit the work for this assignment, visit Blackboard → Course Materials → Lectures Notes for this week's class. You can also go into the "Assignments" folder and the submission area will be titled "Reflections/Website Evaluations." The file should be submitted individually as a Word document or something else I can open. The work submitted will be evaluated based on the rubric explained below.

Reflection/Website Evaluations Rubric – 10pts

- Death to Bullshit Reflection: 4pts
 - Length of writeup: 1pts
 - Quality of writeup: 2pts
 - Cited source: 1pt
- Website Evaluations: 6pts
 - Each Evaluation: 3pts
 - Website link included: .5pt
 - Evaluation is thorough: 2.5pts
 - Stated whether website is “good” or “bad”
 - Provided specific reasons as to why

To submit it, go to Blackboard → Course Materials → Lecture Notes for this week’s class. You can also visit the Assignments folder directly from the Course Materials folder.

Participation Questions 8/26

To receive credit for participation in today’s class, please answer all the questions in the Google Form linked below. If you don’t want to answer the final question (fun), simply put N/A (not applicable) for your answer and that will count.

<https://forms.gle/VgsZxP5rMUNtmRv56>

Next Week

In next week’s class, we will learn about the website building process. Specifically, we’ll cover wireframes, style tiles, and conducting needs assessments. The links below aren’t required reading but will offer a helpful glimpse into wireframes and style tiles.

- <https://www.experienceux.co.uk/faqs/what-is-wireframing/>
- <https://balsamiq.com/learn/resources/articles/what-are-wireframes/>
- <http://styletil.es/>