

Unit 1

FINAL PROJECT PREP: CHOOSE YOUR TOPIC

There are 4 options for final projects to choose from! Please read through the options and select one of the final projects you would like to work on. You'll be working on this for the next 6 weeks. Be sure you pick something you're genuinely interested in!

- Option 1:** Many people use online resources to support their travel, yet online travel sites, from booking to hotel finding, is imperfect. Through user interviews you will identify a problem users have with sites supporting their travel. In this course, you will identify a product (on a web or mobile platform) that would improve their experience.
- Option 2:** Families and people are increasingly living all over a single country or even all over the world. Through user interviews, you will identify a problem people face with staying connected across time zones and geographical boundaries. In this course, you will identify a product (on the web or mobile platform) that would improve their experience.
- Option 3:** Our homes are becoming more connected. Sometimes there are many demands on people in and outside the home that need to be managed (Imagine a young busy family, two working parents, with a child and another one on the way). What kind of connected home site or app could dramatically improve the everyday experience of a young family? In this course, you will identify a product (on the web or mobile platform) that would improve their experience.
- Option 4:** Choose an area you would like to research, identify a problem, and during this course, you will design a solution to it. There are a few parameters for this option:
- The topic should be general enough that when you interview someone about the topic you can gain insights into your proposed project.
 - It should not be so general though that there are countless ways someone could interpret it.
 - Too general: Applying to college.
 - Better: The organizational problem high school students face when submitting multiple college applications.

Great Advice from the d.School

Many topics will work well, but not *any* topic.

1. Pick a topic in which there is a lot to learn by talking to someone -- where you learn about the person you talk to and the overall topic. What juicy issues will your topic prompt?
2. Define the territory, not the treasure. Scope by giving bounds to the area to explore, not by dictating the solution space. Create design challenges that contain intriguing issues to learn more about. Think about redesigning experiences (verbs) not solutions (nouns).
3. Find a product or service design challenge, not a strategy- or system-level challenge. Select a project that you can imagine being satisfyingly solved with singular products, services, experiences, or campaigns. While design thinking can certainly be used for systems-level issues, start with a simpler challenge. The test for this is to ask yourself if the essence of solutions could be communicated in a single concept. If you imagine solutions to the

challenge would require a blueprint, strategy, report, or list of principles to sufficiently communicate the basic idea, then it is likely not a good challenge.

4. Make it exciting. Create a challenge that is engaging and meaningful. (source: [Guidelines](#))

Setting Up Your Google Drive

Set up your Google Drive folder for this course. Title the folder with your name and the start date of the course. (If you've never used Google Drive, [here](#) is a helpful tutorial)

1. Share the folder with your mentor.
2. Within this folder, create a folder for each one of the 6 units.
3. During the week, as you complete assignments, save your work to the appropriate unit folder so that you can review your work for that week with your mentor.
4. We recommend going through the work with your mentor in the order in which you completed it.

Parting Advice

1. During the week, we also recommend that you write down all the questions you have for your mentor (so that you don't forget them!)
2. The day before you are scheduled to meet with your mentor, it is good practice to send them all the questions you have so that they can review them and be prepared to answer them.

Good luck! Remember, design can be a messy explorative process on the way to building beautiful and intuitive design. Failure is a critical part of the design process, so know that even when you hit a setback, that might be the moment when you pivot, think outside the box, and find success. Let's begin!