

Coursera: A Redesign

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This screenshot shows the original Coursera website's course search interface. It features a sidebar on the left with filters for categories like On-Demand, Verified Certificates, and All Languages. The main area displays a grid of course cards with titles, logos, and brief descriptions. At the bottom, there are additional course cards and a footer with links to Courses, Specializations, Institutions, About, and a user profile.

A hand-drawn wireframe illustrating a redesign of the Coursera interface. The top section shows a header with 'COURSES' and 'SPECIALIZATIONS' buttons, a search bar, and a user profile. Below is a 'FILTER BY' section with checkboxes for 'Learn at your own pace', 'Verified courses', and 'All languages'. The main content area is divided into three columns: 'Courses', 'Specializations', and 'University'. Each column contains a grid of course cards with titles, logos, and descriptions. The bottom section shows a footer with a 'COURSES' button, a 'SPECIALIZATIONS' button, and a 'FILTER BY' section.

This screenshot shows the redesigned Coursera website. The layout is cleaner and more modern. The top navigation includes 'coursera', a search bar, and links for 'Courses', 'Specializations', and 'Institutions'. A user profile for 'John Doe' is visible. The main content area is titled 'Computer Science: Artificial Intelligence' and features a large image of a robot. It lists several courses under this specialization, each with a thumbnail, title, description, and duration. To the right, there are sections for 'Machine Learning' and 'Digital Signal Processing'. A 'DATA MINING SPECIALIZATION' section is also present. The bottom of the page has a footer with a 'COURSES' button, a 'SPECIALIZATIONS' button, and a 'FILTER BY' section.

COURSERA

Search Coursera

Courses Institutions John Doe ▾

Dashboard

- Quiz: Tonal Analysis due at 12.00 am, 24th January
Quiz 2 of 5 in Introduction to Music Theory
- Support Vector Machines at 11.00 am, 24th January
Lecture 3 of 9 in Machine Learning
- Assignment 4 released for Interaction Design
Due at 5.30 pm, 30th January

YOUR COURSES

CURRENT PAST UPCOMING

Course Image	Course Name	Instructor	Start Date	End Date	Status	Action
	Machine Learning	Andrew Ng, Stanford University	Module 3 out of 9	28th January - 4th April	VERIFIED COURSE	RESUME
	Introduction to Music Theory	Talya Berger, Joe Cadigan, Berklee School of Music	Learn at your own pace			RESUME
	Interaction Design	Scott Klemmer, University of California, San Diego	Module 1 out of 12	13th January - 26th March	A PART OF THE HUMAN-COMPUTER INTERACTION SPECIALIZATION	RESUME
	Visual Design for the Web	Ge Wang, Stanford University	1st February - 1st April	8 weeks long		

UPDATES

Andrew Ng to start course on Deep Learning and Neural Networks.
[READ MORE](#) [BROWSE CLASSES](#)

Classes from Harvard University now available on Coursera
[READ MORE](#) [BROWSE CLASSES](#)

Coursera introduces Specializations: A sequences of courses to master a skill
[READ MORE](#)

RECOMMENDED FOR YOU

Course Image	Course Name	Instructor	Start Date	End Date	Status	Action
	Software Design for Music	Ge Wang, Stanford University	1st February - 1st April	8 weeks long	VERIFIED CERTIFICATE	
	Visual Design for the Web	Ge Wang, Stanford University	1st February - 1st April	8 weeks long	VERIFIED CERTIFICATE	

COURSERA

Search Coursera

Courses Institutions John Doe ▾

YOUR COURSES

CURRENT PAST UPCOMING

Looks like you aren't enrolled in any courses yet.

BROWSE COURSES

Or, take pick them up from our list of **Featured Courses** below, or from the **Recommended for you** list on the right.

UPDATES

Andrew Ng to start course on Deep Learning and Neural Networks.
[READ MORE](#)

Classes from Harvard University now available on Coursera
[READ MORE](#) [BROWSE CLASSES](#)

Coursera introduces Specializations: A sequences of courses to master a skill
[READ MORE](#)

FEATURED COURSES

Course Image	Course Name	Instructor	Start Date	End Date	Status	Action
	Machine Learning	with Andrew Ng, Stanford University	1st February - 1st April	8 weeks long	VERIFIED CERTIFICATE	
	Digital Signal Processing	with Perry Cook, Princeton University	15th January - 1st April	10 weeks long	VERIFIED CERTIFICATE	
	Introduction to Music Theory	with Jane Doe, Berklee School of Music	1st February - 1st April	8 weeks long	MODERN MUSIC SPECIALIZATION	
	Mining Massive Data Sets	with Jure Leskovec, Anand Rajaraman & Jeff Ullman, Stanford University	25th January - 25th March	8 weeks long	DATA MINING SPECIALIZATION VERIFIED CERTIFICATE	
	Visual Design for the Web	Ge Wang, Stanford University	1st February - 1st April	8 weeks long	VERIFIED CERTIFICATE	

RECOMMENDED FOR YOU

Course Image	Course Name	Instructor	Start Date	End Date	Status	Action
	Software Design for Music	with Ge Wang, Stanford University	1st February - 1st April	8 weeks long	VERIFIED CERTIFICATE	
	Visual Design for the Web	Ge Wang, Stanford University	1st February - 1st April	8 weeks long	VERIFIED CERTIFICATE	

COURSERA

Search Coursera

Courses Institutions John Doe ▾

COURSES **SPECIALIZATIONS**

Computer Science: Artificial Intelligence

Show all courses (12)

FILTER BY

Show all courses (12)

Learn at your own pace (23)

Verified Certificates (42)

All Languages (159)

Course Image	Course Name	Instructor	Start Date	End Date	Status	Action
	Machine Learning	with Andrew Ng, Stanford University	1st February - 1st April	8 weeks long	VERIFIED CERTIFICATE	
	Digital Signal Processing	with Perry Cook, Princeton University	15th January - 1st April	10 weeks long	VERIFIED CERTIFICATE	
	Text Mining and Analytics	with Cheng Xiang Zhai, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	1st February - 1st March	4 weeks long	DATA MINING SPECIALIZATION	
	Mining Massive Data Sets	with Jure Leskovec, Anand Rajaraman & Jeff Ullman, Stanford University	25th January - 25th March	8 weeks long	DATA MINING SPECIALIZATION VERIFIED CERTIFICATE	
	Music, Film and Sound				Show all courses (26)	

COURSERA

Search Coursera

Courses Institutions John Doe ▾

COURSES **SPECIALIZATIONS**

DATA MINING

Show all courses (12)

FILTER BY

Show all courses (12)

Learn at your own pace (4)

Verified Certificates (18)

All Languages (24)

Course Image	Course Name	Instructor	Start Date	End Date	Status	Action
	Data Mining	University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign				
	Entrepreneurship: Launching an Innovative Business	University of Maryland, College Park				
	Human Computer Interaction: User Experience and User Interface Design					
	Modern Music	Berklee School of Music				

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Introduction

Coursera's mission is to provide universal access to the world's best education. But if it lacks an effective interface for content discovery and consumption, it wouldn't matter whether or not it has a brilliant curation of courses. And that's a problem.

This redesign of Coursera focuses on content discovery and consumption of the web product, attempting to provide a better first-page experience for the user, and a simpler and more intuitive way of finding new and relevant courses.

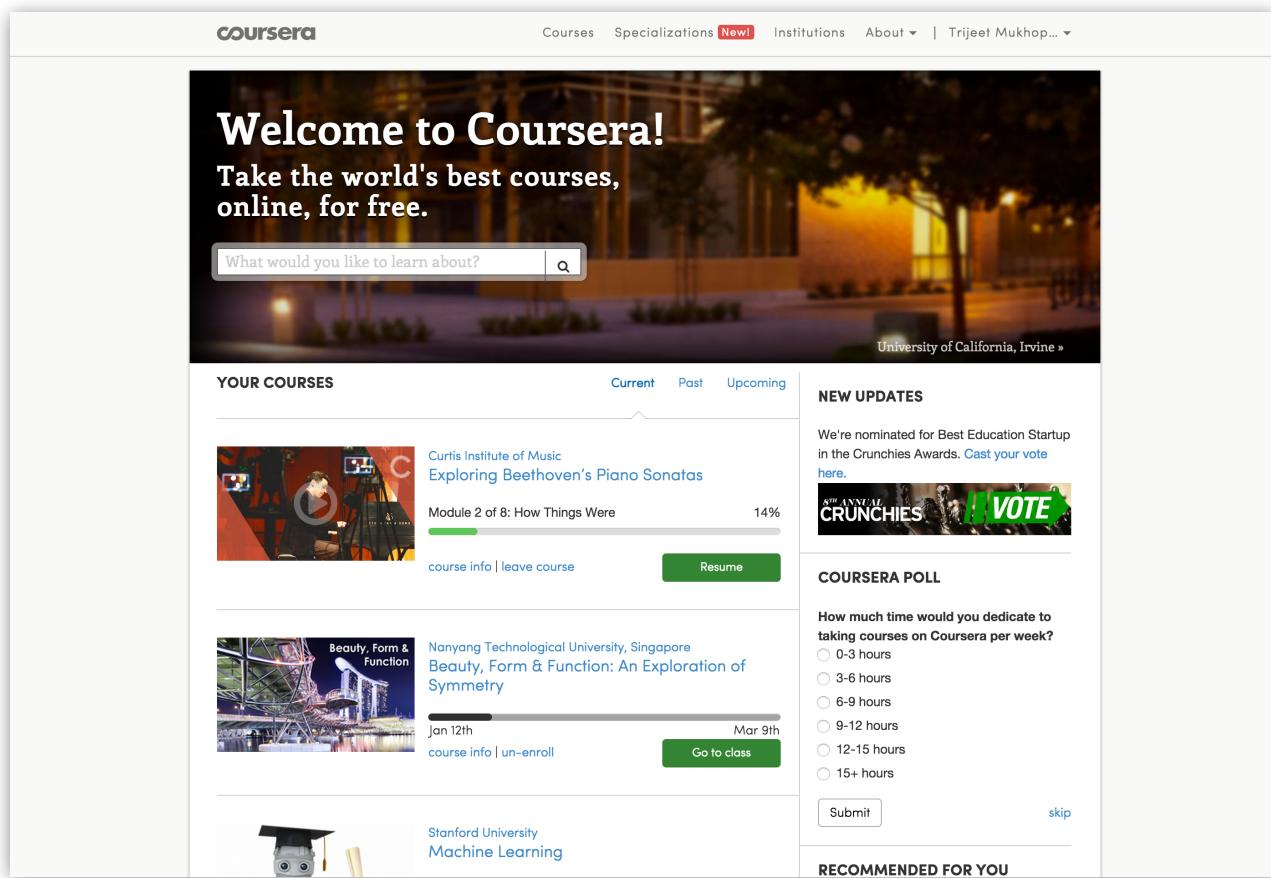
This project was done in three parts, starting from an analysis of the current design for pain points, followed by an exploration of their solutions through low-fidelity sketches, culminating in high-fidelity mockups of the concepts sketched.

I acknowledge that the observations and insights for this redesign have not been conducted based on extensive user research, but rather through feedback from friends who have used the product, and from the first principles of design. I also acknowledge there might be constraints on the assumptions I've made in the design analysis and implementation.

Thank you for taking your time to read this, and I hope this gives you an insight on how I think and design.

Current Design: Problems and Observations

The main issue I have with the current Coursera design is that either it wastes screen estate by displaying information which irrelevant to the user in the given context, or it overloads the user with information and choices, as seen in the following screenshots.



Screenshot 1. Home screen¹ of the user after the log in

The objective of the home screen should be to give the user a brief overview of their activity and progress on Coursera, and promote discovery of relevant content and news. However, in the current design:

¹ Disclaimer: The design for home screen on the website was changed two days after the screenshot was taken

- There is no quick way of checking upcoming deadlines/lectures for courses, or announcements. The user shouldn't have to navigate into specific pages of the courses they are enrolled in to get a gist of their tasks.
- The information on the cover image occupying the top third of the screen is redundant — it's safe to assume that a logged in user knows what Coursera's product offers. This results in the cover image wasting valuable screen estate which could be better used for displaying more relevant information. The only essential element is the search bar, which can be repositioned somewhere else without sacrificing on the user's experience.
- Also, for a new user, there is no on-boarding process — they are just presented with a similar version of screen above, albeit with an empty Your Courses section, with some text saying you haven't enrolled in any courses yet, but not providing any indication of how to go about discovering content (I profusely apologize for not having an example of it, as I mentioned in footnote 1, the design for the home screen was modified before I took all my screenshots of it). It would be helpful for new users to be directed to popular courses so that they utilize the product in a more efficient and engaging manner.

The screenshot shows the Coursera website's Courses page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Courses, Specializations (marked as 'New!'), Institutions, About, and a user profile. Below the navigation is a search bar labeled 'Search for a course'. To the left, there is a sidebar with various filters:

- On-Demand (35)
- Eligible For
 - Verified Certificates (206)
 - Specialization (106)
- All Languages
 - English (778)
 - Chinese (122)
 - Spanish (44)
 - French (36)
 - Portuguese (33)
 - Russian (28)
 - Turkish (12)
 - Italian (7)
 - Ukrainian (6)
 - German (3)
 - Vietnamese (2)
 - Hebrew (2)
 - Japanese (2)
 - Greek (1)
 - Persian (Farsi) (1)
 - Khmer (1)
 - Macedonian (1)
 - Czech (1)
 - Arabic (1)
 - Dutch (1)
- All Categories
 - Arts (47)
 - Biology & Life Sciences (111)
 - Business & Management (145)
 - Chemistry (30)
 - Computer Science: Artificial Intelligence (42)
 - Computer Science: Software Engineering (64)
 - Computer Science: Systems & Security (38)
 - Computer Science: Theory (51)
 - Economics & Finance (112)
 - Education (115)
 - Energy & Earth Sciences (45)
 - Engineering (76)
 - Food and Nutrition (26)

The main area is titled 'Courses' and displays five course cards:

- University of Toronto**
Bioinformatic Methods I
with Nicholas James Provart
Go at your own pace.
[Learn now!](#)
- University of Virginia**
Grow to Greatness: Smart Growth for Private Businesses, Part II
with Edward D. Hess
Go at your own pace.
[Learn now!](#)
- Xi'an Jiaotong University**
有机化学
with 唐玉海
Go at your own pace.
[Learn now!](#)
- Xi'an Jiaotong University**
系统平台与计算环境
with 吴宁, 陈文革 & 楼忠孝
Go at your own pace.
[Learn now!](#)
- Xi'an Jiaotong University**
中国哲学经典著作导读
with 燕连福, 韩鹏杰, 麦建平, 张帆, 廖建清, 李重, 邓妙子 & 魏自新
Go at your own pace.
[Learn now!](#)

Below these, there are two more course cards:

- The University of Edinburgh**
Critical Thinking in Global Challenges
with Professor Mayank Dutta & Dr. Celine Caquineau
Jan 19th, 2015
5 weeks long
[Verified Certificate](#)
- Yale University**
Introduction to Classical Music
with Craig Wright
Jan 12th, 2015
8 weeks long
[Verified Certificate](#)

At the bottom, there is one more course card:

- Higher School of Economics**
Теория игр (Game Theory)
with Dmitry Dagaev
Jan 19th, 2015
11 weeks long
[Verified Certificate](#)

Finally, there is a course card for:

- École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne**
Digital Signal Processing
Jan 19th, 2015
10 weeks long

Screenshot 2. Courses page

The objective of the Courses page should be to allow the user to browse (and eventually enroll in) courses they find interesting/relevant, resulting in a natural and simple process of content discovery. However, in the current design:

- The user is overwhelmed with a multitude of choices and checkboxes, leading to “choice paralysis”². There should be a simple and intuitive way of discovering courses the user finds relevant.

² The state of over-analyzing (or over-thinking) a situation so that a decision or action is never taken, in effect paralyzing the outcome.

- The list of courses on the right is a really long list of courses with no overarching organization or structure, making it hard to find a course a user would be interested in. People usually browse for classes by subject and through a large list of all classes.
- If the checkbox for “Specialization” in the Eligible For is enabled, its list on the right is basically a list of specializations, which brings to question the existence of having a dedicated page for Specializations. Since Specializations are just a series of courses, it might be more intuitive for the user to have it as a subsection of courses, rather than a separate page.

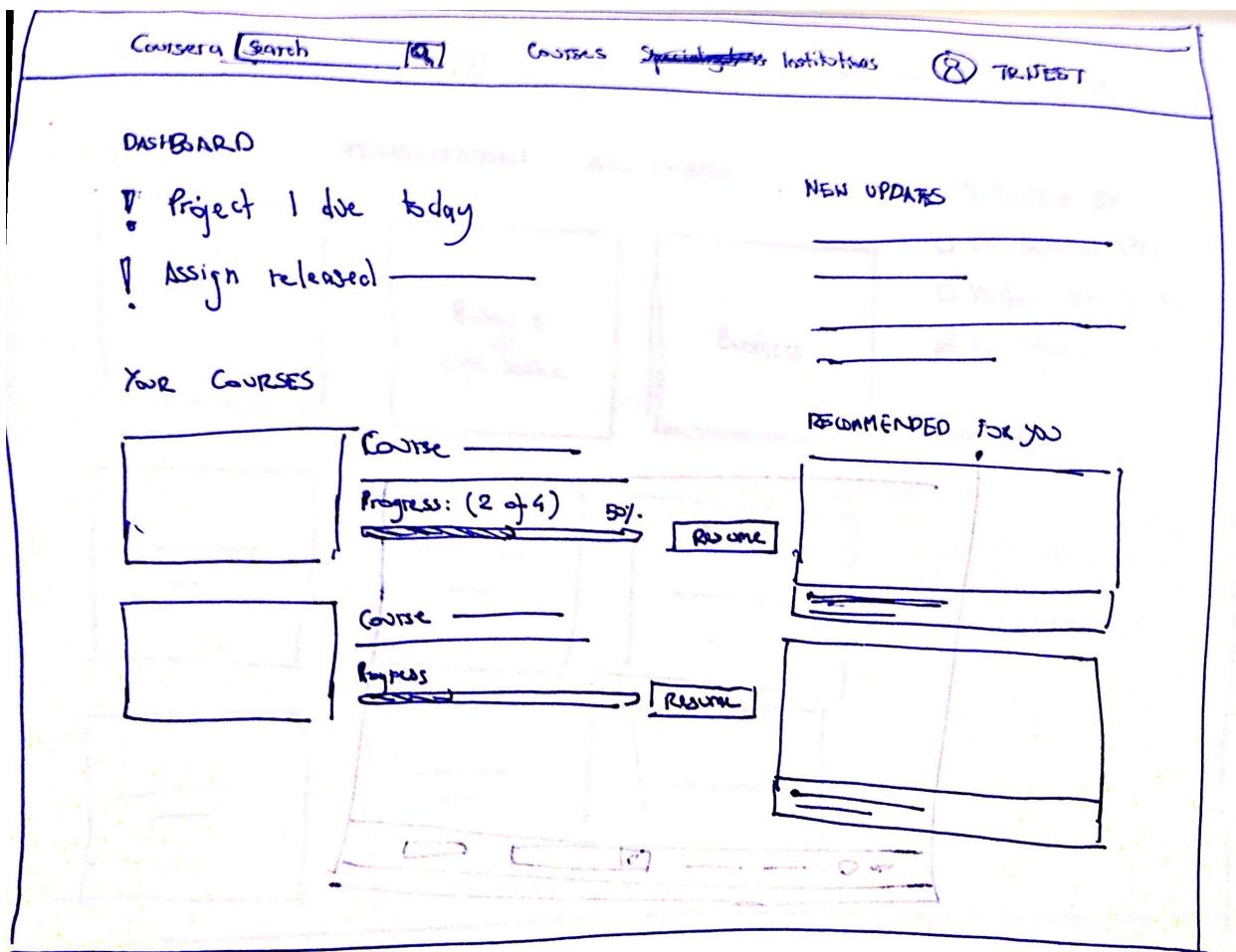
In overview, the pain points of the current design are:

- Ineffective distribution of information relevant to the user, and wastage of screen estate.
- The home screen doesn't serve as a central hub for the user's activities or information.
- The interface isn't very friendly to a new user — the barrier of good content discovery for a new user is high.
- Ineffective discovery of courses in the Courses page — the user is faced with too many options and choices. Acute lack of an intuitive and natural system of finding courses.

Redesigning the system: Low-Fidelity Sketches

Keeping the aforementioned observations in mind, here are some low-fidelity sketches of alternate interfaces as viable solutions (rejected sketches included in appendix) to the above discussed problems.

Home Screen



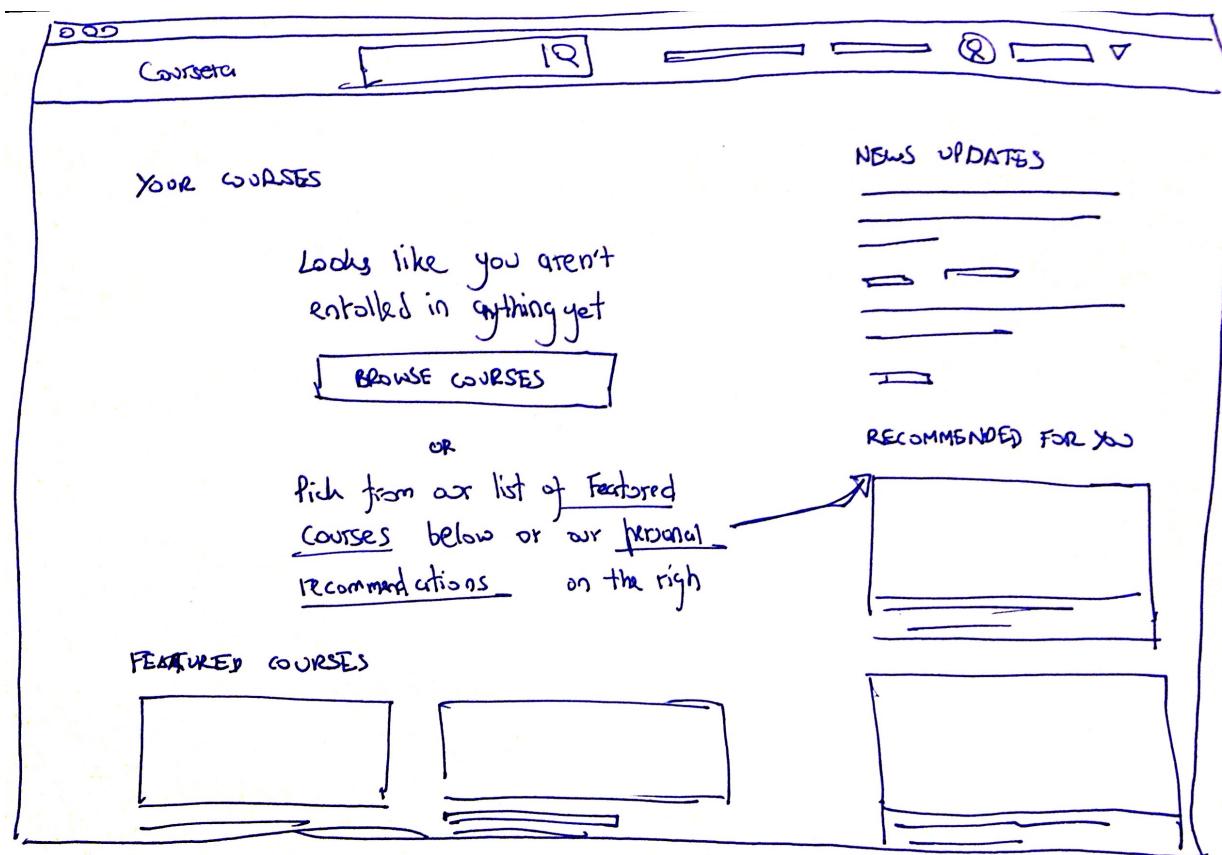
Sketch 1. Revised Home Screen

In this sketch, I restructured the elements on the page to create a better "Home" screen for the user — providing the user a brief overview of their courses and progress. The changes are as follows:

- Added a dashboard section, which notifies the user of upcoming deadlines and lectures, and new announcements.
- Removed the cover image, and hoisted the search bar to the header, freeing screen estate above the fold for other elements.
- Coalesced the Courses and Specializations links in the header into one link for Courses in the header.

This resulted in a cleaner and more informative interface for the user, a place where they got an overall idea of their agenda and progress (without having to dig into individual pages), providing an overview which is desired from a home screen.

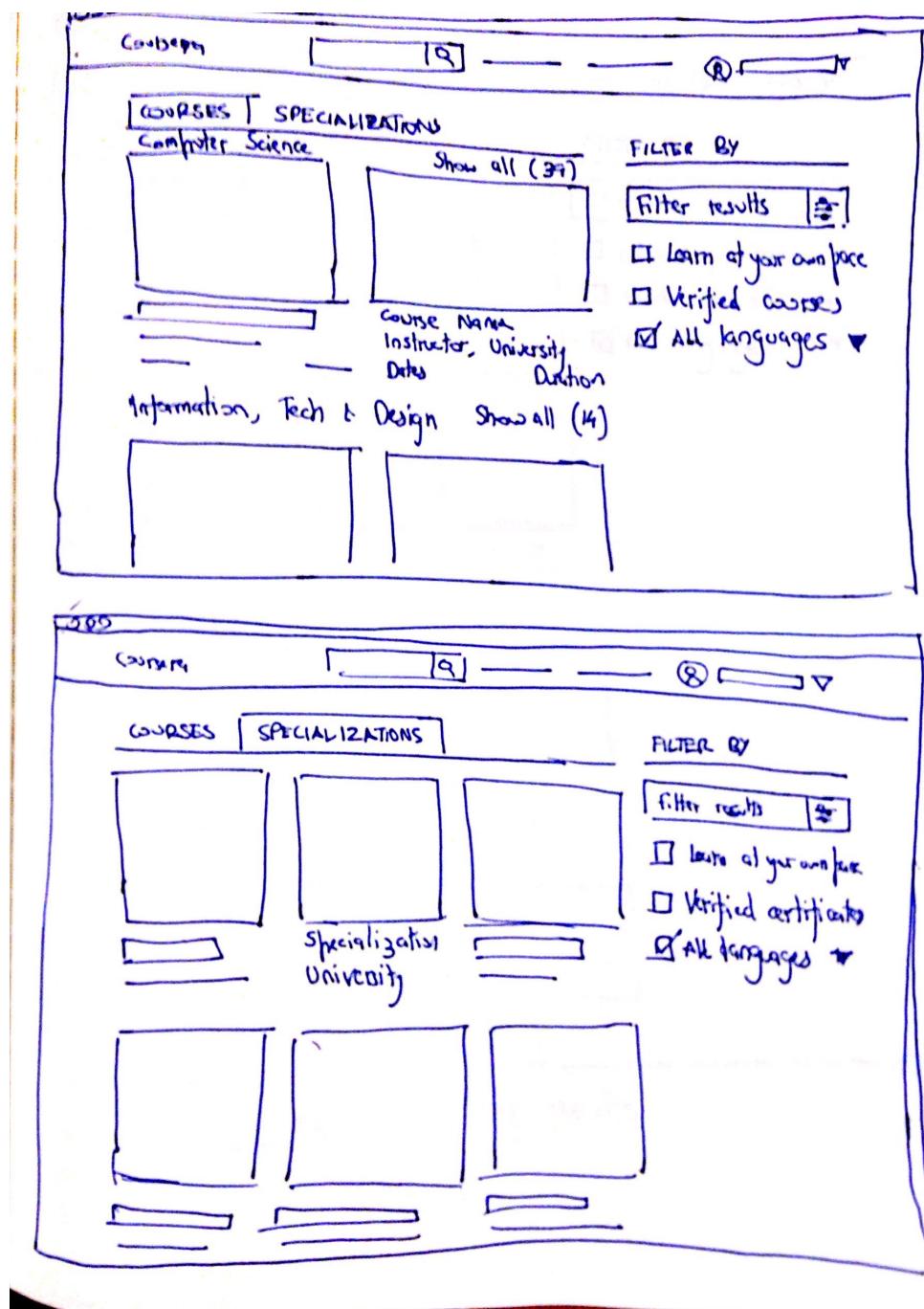
Home Screen with new user onboarding



Sketch 2. Simple onboarding home screen for a new user

In this sketch, I tried to improve the first time experience of a new user who hasn't signed up for any courses by providing them helpful navigation hints and exposing them to featured (most popular) courses on Coursera.

Courses page



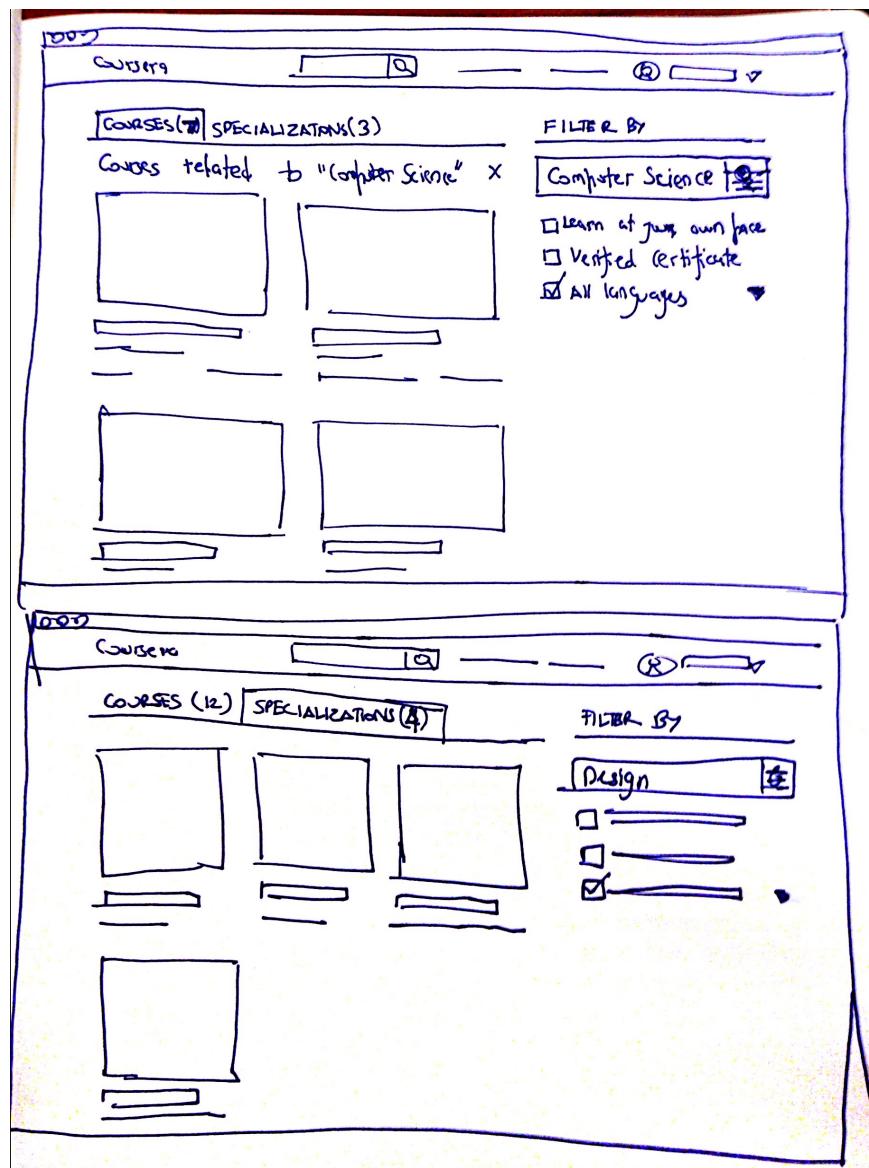
Sketch 3. Revised Courses page

In this sketch, the major focus was to design an interface which resonated the way people actually went about discovering stuff.

- Instead of having Specializations as a separate page, or an option on the checklist, it is made as a subsection of the Courses page. Courses and Specializations are now displayed in two separate tabs in the Courses page, keeping them distinct, but still in the same context.
- The Courses list is now arranged by topics (eg. Art, Business, Computer Science, etc.)
 - This results in a more intuitive of browsing for courses — human beings generally tend to browse classes categorized by topics they are interested in.
 - The number of courses shown per category is capped at 4. The reasoning behind this being that looking at 4 courses in topic (even if they are unfamiliar with it) gives the user a brief overview of the topic, at the same time keeping it short such that if the user isn't interested in it, they can easily scroll down to other topics without being burdened by things they don't care about. However, if they are interested in a certain topic, they can expand it in order to see more courses offered in that topic.
- The Specializations list is similar to what it was before, just a list of specializations offered by Coursera, except now it is integrated into the same page offering all the learning material, and the user could easily filter through the results to access material they cared about.
- Rather than the just listing the courses/specializations alphabetically, they are sorted in the order of material that you might find interesting (recommendations by Coursera), and then by popularity. This would

deliver more relevant content to user without them requiring them to filter items, or scroll around a lot.

- Instead of the massive checklist of options in the current design, this design gets rid of “choice paralysis” providing the user with a reduced set of options to filter courses. The user can either fuzzy search by typing in keywords in the “Filter Results” textbox, and the lists will filter accordingly to display relevant content.



Sketch 4. Courses/Specializations page with keyword filtering

Finalizing everything: Hi-fidelity mockups

All of the work above culminates in these hi-fidelity mockups which incorporate the solutions discussed above to give glimpses of what the redesign of Coursera will look like.

Invision prototype: <http://invis.io/ED246XIHF>

Home screen

The mockup displays the Coursera home screen with the following components:

- Header:** Coursera logo, search bar, Courses, Institutions, and user profile for John Doe.
- DASHBOARD:** A section for upcoming assignments and events:
 - Quiz: Tonal Analysis due at 12.00 am, 24th January (Quiz 2 of 5 in Introduction to Music Theory)
 - Support Vector Machines at 11.00 am, 24th January (Lecture 3 of 9 in Machine Learning)
 - Assignment 4 released for Interaction Design (Due at 5.30 pm, 30th January)
- YOUR COURSES:** A list of current courses:
 - Machine Learning** (VERIFIED COURSE): Instructor Andrew Ng, Stanford University. Progress: Module 3 out of 9 (26th January - 4th April). Status: CURRENT. Action: RESUME.
 - Introduction to Music Theory**: Instructors: Talya Berger, Joe Cadagin, Berklee School of Music. Progress: 50% (Learn at your own pace). Status: CURRENT. Action: RESUME.
 - Interaction Design** (A PART OF THE HUMAN-COMPUTER INTERACTION SPECIALIZATION): Instructor Scott Klemmer, University of California, San Diego. Progress: Module 1 out of 12 (13th January - 28th March). Status: CURRENT. Action: RESUME.
- UPDATES:** A section for news and announcements:
 - Andrew Ng to start course on Deep Learning and Neural Networks. Status: READ MORE.
 - Classes from Harvard University now available on Coursera. Status: READ MORE BROWSE CLASSES.
 - Coursera introduces Specializations: A sequences of courses to master a skill. Status: READ MORE.
- RECOMMENDED FOR YOU:** A section showing recommended courses:
 - Software Design for Music** with Ge Wang, Stanford University. Progress: 1st February - 1st April. Status: 8 weeks long. Status: VERIFIED CERTIFICATE.
 - Visual Design for the Web** (Cover image: "good design is the made visual").

Mockup 1. Home screen with dashboard

Coursera

🔍

[Courses](#)
[Institutions](#)

John Doe ▾

YOUR COURSES

CURRENT
PAST
UPCOMING

Looks like you aren't enrolled in any courses yet.

[BROWSE COURSES](#)

Or, take pick them up from our list of **Featured Courses** below, or from the **Recommended for you** list on the right.

UPDATES

Andrew Ng to start course on Deep Learning and Neural Networks.
[READ MORE](#)

Classes from Harvard University now available on Coursera
[READ MORE](#) [BROWSE CLASSES](#)

Coursera introduces Specializations: A sequences of courses to master a skill
[READ MORE](#)

FEATURED COURSES

Machine Learning
with Andrew Ng, Stanford University
1st February - 1st April

8 weeks long

Digital Signal Processing
with Perry Cook, Princeton University
15th January - 1st April

10 weeks long

RECOMMENDED FOR YOU

Software Design for Music
with Ge Wang, Stanford University
1st February - 1st April

8 weeks long

Visual Design for the Web

Mockup 2. New user home screen with Featured and Recommended Courses

16

Courses page

COURSES **SPECIALIZATIONS**

Computer Science: Artificial Intelligence

Show all courses (12)

Machine Learning
with Andrew Ng, Stanford University
1st February - 1st April 8 weeks long

Digital Signal Processing
with Perry Cook, Princeton University
15th January - 1st April 10 weeks long

Data Mining Specialization **Verified Certificate**

Text Mining and Analytics
with Cheng Xiang Zhai, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
1st February - 1st March 4 weeks long

Mining Massive Data Sets
with Jure Leskovec, Anand Rajaraman & Jeff Ullman, Stanford University
25th January - 25th March 8 weeks long

Music, Film and Sound

Show all courses (26)

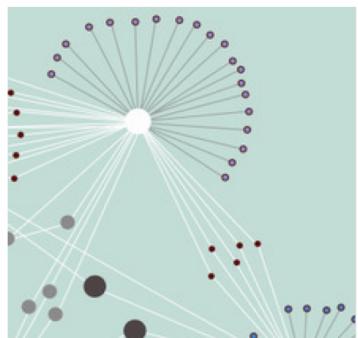
 

Mockup 3a. Courses page: Course List



COURSES

SPECIALIZATIONS

**Data Mining**

University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign

**Entrepreneurship: Launching an Innovative Business**

University of Maryland, College Park

**Human Computer Interaction: User Experience and User Interface Design**

Georgia Institute of Technology

**Modern Music**

Berkeley School of Music

FILTER BY

Filter results by keywords

- Learn at your own pace (4)
- Verified Certificates (18)
- All Languages (24)



coursera

Search Coursera Search

Courses Institutions  John Doe ▾

[COURSES \(11\)](#) [SPECIALIZATIONS \(3\)](#)

Courses related to "Design"



Interaction Design
with Michael Don, Georgia Institute of Technology
1st February - 1st April 8 weeks long



Algorithms: Design and Analysis
with Tim Roughgarden, Stanford University
15th January - 1st April 10 weeks long



Design Thinking: Needfinding
with Jeff Ullman, Stanford University
15th January - 1st April 10 weeks long



Mobile Design
with Jane Doe, CMU
15th January - 1st April 10 weeks long



Interactive Art



Data Visualization

FILTER BY

X

Learn at your own pace (1)
 Verified Certificates (4)
 All Languages (14)

coursera

Search Coursera Search

Courses Institutions  John Doe ▾

[COURSES \(11\)](#) [SPECIALIZATIONS \(3\)](#)

Specializations related to "Design"



**Human Computer Interaction:
User Experience and User
Interface Design**
Georgia Institute of Technology



Digital Marketing
University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign



Mobile Development in Android

FILTER BY

X

Learn at your own pace (1)
 Verified Certificates (4)
 All Languages (14)

Mockup 4. Courses/Specializations with keyword filtering

Appendix

Rejected Concepts

1. Courses page

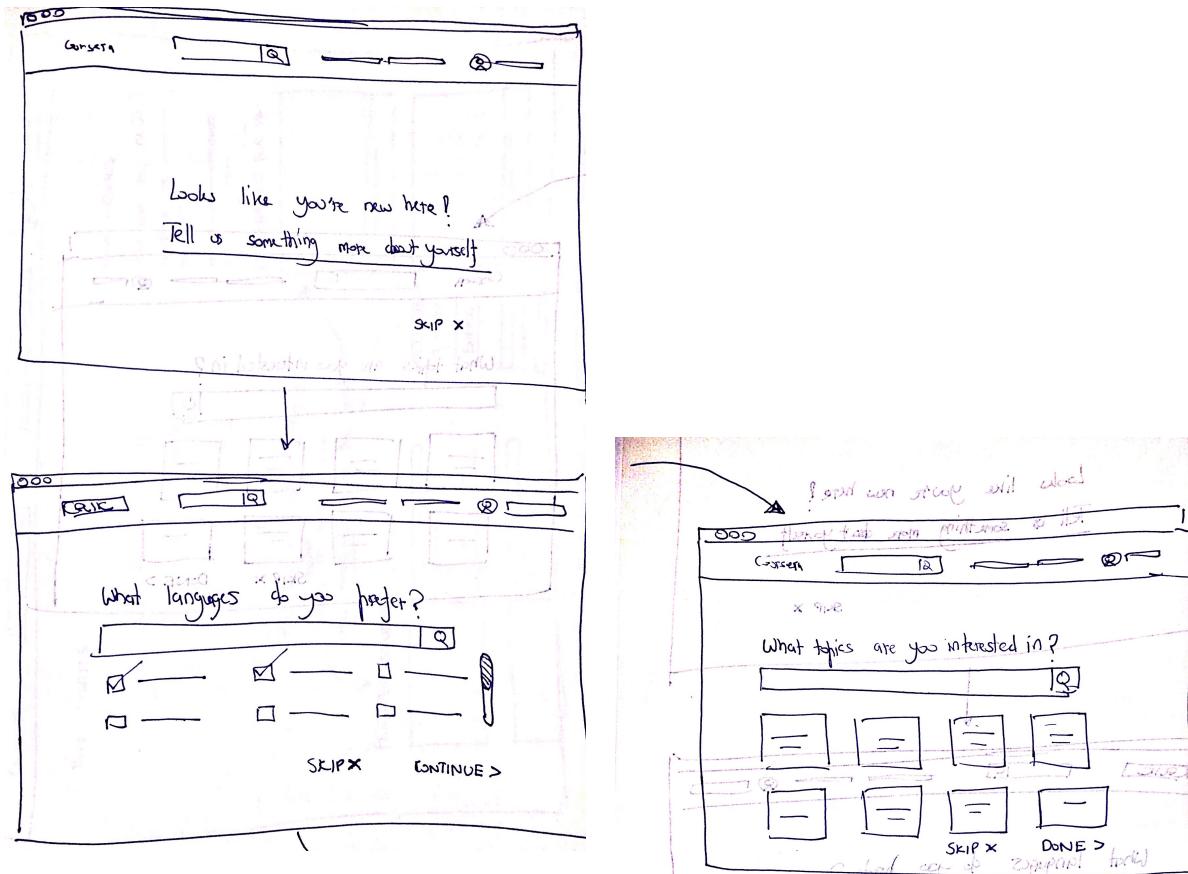


This sketch explores an alternate arrangement for the Courses page, using 3 tabs, for Categories (a list of the all the subjects/topics), Specializations (a list of specializations offered) and All Courses (a list of all courses).

One of my observations was that people prefer to browse content topically, and the Categories was an attempt at solving that. However, I rejected this concept because this abstracts the user one more layer from the actual content. The current redesign chosen riffs from the idea of having categorization, but at the same time, displays the most popular courses in that topic such that user can browse course material without having to navigate back and forth between categories and courses in each category.

Also, the All Courses tabs was initially thought of as a fallback if the user just simply wanted a dump of all the courses offered. But, in the current redesign, all courses are displayed anyway in the Categories tab, albeit grouped by topics, making this view redundant. Moreover, this view doesn't really address any of the issues in the initial design.

2. Explicit onboarding process



When I used the current design of Coursera as a new user, there was no onboarding process to familiarize me with the system, which led to this initial attempt at an explicit onboarding process. I eventually rejected this because I realized the data obtained about the user is not super significant in improving the user's experience, and this explicit process is just putting the user away from actual content for longer. Also, information like language preference and topic interests are better learnt passively (by observing the user's behavior in the system), rather than pelting the user with a large range of options they have to choose from, because it forces them to pay attention and browse the entire list because they feel they can only do this once, and poor choices/missing choices will result in them creating a sub-par experience for themselves. In the current redesign, if a new user is on the system, they are given simple helper prompts which try to kickstart their Coursera consumption by exposing the popular/featured content, or by pointing them to the course list, so that they can discover for themselves.

Design Document: Color palette, UI Kit, Typesheet, and Grid



SECTION HEADER

Heading 1

Heading 2

Heading 3

Heading 4

Heading 5

POSITIVE BUTTON

IMAGE OVERLAY

Checkbox (unselected)

Checkbox (selected)

Paragraph 1. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua.

Paragraph 2. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua.

Paragraph 3. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua.

Paragraph 4. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua.

METADATA

Text box with button

