IxD210: Systems

Term Project

# Project Overview

In this two phase project you will first identify and research a system of interest to you, identify leverage points for improving the flow of that system and then, in the second phase, design a software experience aimed at increasing the efficiency of the system. Along the way you will apply principles of Systems Thinking and practice HTML5 prototyping skills.

To help you manage this challenging task, the project work and grading will be broken into two phases, and each phase will have scheduled interim deliverables.

## Phase I

The focus of Phase I is on finding a topic to work on, researching this topic and synthesizing your findings in an HTML5 website. This phase culminates in a discovery document presented in a website, right before spring break.

**You will be entirely responsible for identifying the area of focus for your project.**

### Tip: Once you choose your topic you need to be very proactive about contacting and interviewing subjects and/or observing a new environment.

### Why do this?

You are asked to do your own research in this class, because thinking in systems means being able to approach a given situation, learn what’s happening in this situation beyond surface appearances (i.e. *research* the system underlying the situation) and model (i.e. describe) the perceived system from one or more points of view.

## Phase II

The goal here is to design software that helps people by introducing change to one system leverage point you discovered in Phase I. A series of assignments will help you model and define the area you want to work on improving. The final assignment will bring all this together in the form of a basic prototype.

### Tip: You will need to use your own creativity and sweat to generate a solution, but doing all the intermediary modeling assignments is what will lead to a vision and solution for this project

### Why do this?

The whole purpose of Systems Thinking and Design is to really understand a situation and find where change can be most impactful (leverage points). As interaction designers we look for ways that software can make the most difference. This second phase will introduce you to some tools to think through, define and communicate a software solution.

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# Guidelines for Selecting a Topic

You are responsible for identifying the topic of your project. You can expect feedback and coaching to help with your choice but the final decision is yours to make. The following guidelines will help you in that choice.

## Explore Your Passion

Your work on this topic will occupy you for two months and count for 50% of your grade so passion for the topic will be essential to executing the project successfully.

## Select for Clarity of Outcome

Find an organization or company to work with that is working to produce a very clear and specific outcome. The outcome could be physical or behavioral, but it should be well defined and easy to measure. A commercial bakery would be an example of a business with a clear physical outcome and a non-profit working to get kids to drink less soda is an example of an entity with a clear behavioral goal.

## Ensure Access

You must choose an entity that you can visit and where you can get high quality input directly from the stakeholders involved in it. You cannot succeed at this project by relying on secondary sources and one or two phone contacts At some level the entity you select must be willing to enter into some kind of relationship with you, and accept at least a small role in guaranteeing your success. This may appear daunting but you will be pleasantly surprised what people will be willing to do to help polite and enthusiastic students.

# **Assignments Overview**

| **#** | **Title** | **Due Date** | **Pts /50** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | PHASE I |  | 25 Total |
| 1 | Draft Proposal | Wed 02/12/14 | 2 |
| 2 | Final Proposal | Wed 02/19/14 | 3 |
| 3 | Draft Discovery | Wed 03/12/14 | 5 |
| 4 | Final Discovery | Wed 03/19/14 | 15 |
|  | PHASE II |  | 25 Total |
| 5 | Concept Model | Wed 04/02/14 | 2 |
| 6 | Persona Model | Mon 04/07/14 | 2 |
| 7 | Interaction Model | Wed 04/09/14 | 2 |
| 8 | Object Model | Mon 04/14/14 | 2 |
| 9 | Data Model | Wed 04/16/14 | 2 |
| 10 | Draft Prototype | Wed 04/23/14 | 5 |
| 11 | Draft Final | Wed 04/30/14 | 10 |