

**Course Syllabus   
UX 100 – Design Thinking I: Foundations  
User Experience Design Program, Faculty of Liberal Arts**



***Instructor:*** Dr. Scott Paquette  
***Email:*** [spaquette@wlu.ca](mailto:spaquette@wlu.ca) (always use this email for communications)  
***Office Hours:*** *Mondays at 7-8pm or* by appointment

***Class:*** Mondays and Wednesdays at 5:30-7pm  
***Classroom: All classes are conducted via Zoom (links are on MLS)***

**Course Overview**

Design thinking is a process for creative problem solving. It helps people generate, embrace and execute bold ideas. Design thinking is an iterative process where we seek to understand the user, challenge previous assumptions, and redefine problems in an attempt to identify alternative strategies and solutions that might not be instantly apparent. Design thinking can be used in the design of many types of products and services by putting the user in the center of the design process.

Design thinking revolves around a deep interest in developing our understanding of the people for whom we’re designing products and services. It helps us observe and develop *empathy* with the user of our designs. Design thinking helps us in the process of *questioning* – questioning the problem, questioning the assumptions, and questioning the implications of the solution. It can be extremely useful in addressing problems that are ill defined or unknown by reframing the problem in human-centric ways and creating many ideas in brainstorming sessions. We will adopt a *hands-on* approach through sketching, prototyping, and testing.

This course is an introduction to the theories and methods that underpin design thinking and practice. UX100 introduces the design process, design theories, universal design, and the socio-cultural implications of design. You will investigate the interactions between people and their natural, social, and designed environments where purposeful design helps determine the quality of those interactions. This course allows students to practice designing outcomes through critically assessing the processes, outcomes and effects of designing for engagement.

**Required Readings / Texts**

The Field Guide to Human-Centered Design, <https://www.designkit.org/resources/1.html>

This is a free download that guides students through the IDEO process for design thinking and user-centered design.

Other readings as assigned in course schedule and/or posted online.

**Required Materials List**

As this is a hands-on class (even if it is online), we will be practicing design techniques, improving our creative thinking, and building testable prototypes in interactive online sessions. You will need to have the following materials for **every class**.

If you are unable to find the items listed below, you may consider compatible alternatives (different brands and colours). Office supply stores such as Staples, as well as WalMart and Amazon often have these items so feel free to shop around. Please have all materials purchased by Week #2.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Item Name and Specifications | Example |
| Journal or sketchbook – plain unlined 5" x 8-1/4"      QUANTITY: 1 |  |
| Post-it notes, multicolored - unlined    3x3 in and 3x5 in sizes    QUANTITY:    1 multi-pack of 3x3 in. notes  1 multi-pack of 3x5 in. notes |  |
| Sharpies  Fine point permanent markers – black    QUANTITY: 2 |  |

**Course Grades and Description of Work / Assignments**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Assignment** | **Due Date** | **Value** |
|  |  |  |
| 1. Read / View / Think | Weekly | 10 assignments for 30% |
| 1. Getting to Know your Users (Individual Assignment) | June 5th | 25% |
| 1. Design Sprint Project (Group Assignment) | July 26th | 45% |
|  |  |  |
| **TOTAL** |  | **100%** |
|  |  |  |

***Late Assignment Policy***

For each day your assignment is late, 10% will be deducted from your grade. After 5 days, your grade will be zero for the assignment and you will fail that assignment

There are 12 weeks of in-class sessions. Attendance at all online classes via Zoom is ***mandatory***. In total, that’s 24 times you need to show up to class prepared to work hard and contribute to the class. It is not enough just to be logged into Zoom, you need to be prepared for class (complete all readings and have all supplies you need for class), bring your focused attention to class and participate in the activities each night. This means staying off your laptops and phones for ***non-class*** use. You are expected to pay attention to whomever is speaking, offering feedback and asking questions, stepping up and taking ownership of your own learning, and giving help to others and asking for help when you need it. I believe that everyone has something to contribute to how the class learns, and participating in all the class discussions and activities will enhance your learning in the course.

1. ***Read / View / Think (30%)***

A close up of a map

Description automatically generated

For 10 weeks in the course calendar (see below) you will see various book chapters, articles, etc listed. As well, there will be a weekly question or discussion prompt on the week’s theme. Each week, you are required to complete the assigned reading and write a very brief (250-500) word response that you post on the weekly MLS discussion board. These posts are available for everyone in the class to read and respond with their thoughts and ideas.

For each post you are graded on the following:

* Grammar, punctuation, spelling, and writing style (this is ***VERY*** important)
* The length of your response (no less than 250 words)
* The completeness of your response

Your responses are due each week (posted on the correct MLS discussion board) by 11:59pm on the Sunday of the week. For these posts, ***no late responses*** will be accepted.

1. **Getting to Know Your Users – Individual Assignment (25%)**

The most important work in any design thinking / UX process is getting to know your user. This involves researching the user, talking to them, and creating tools to communicate your findings ***BEFORE YOU DECIDE WHAT YOU ARE DESIGNING***.

This assignment give you a situation in an organization where you’ve been asked to learn more about their users / customers to solve a problem. You will create a research plan that will give you the data you need to better understand your users’ problems, needs, and preferences. You will then create an empathy map, personas and a journey map to communicate your findings back to the organization in order for them to choose a design path.

The specific problem will be posted on the MLS course page.

For this assignment, you should hand in a Word / PDF document with the following:

1. A title page with your name and the assignment subject
2. An introduction to the assignment and the problem (1/2 page)
3. A testing strategy plan that could be used to learn more about the users (2 pages)
4. An empathy map
5. Two personas
6. A journey map
7. ***Design Sprint Project (45% 🡪 20% interim and 25% final reports)***



In teams, you will conduct a design sprint for an organization to help them solve a real-life problem.

For this assignment, the process we will follow is:

**Weeks #1&2** – You will be assigned into groups. In these first weeks you should meet with the group and decide how you are going to work together. How will you communicate, when will you meet and where, what is your meeting schedule, how will you collaborate on the assignment, what tools will you use to create the deliverables?

You should also decide which topic your group will work on. Topics will be provided in class for you to choose from. Pick one that interests you and that you think would be fun to explore and learn about. It’s OK if multiple groups choose the same topic.

**Weeks #3-5** – Here is where you start going through the design thinking process to address the topic / problem you’ve been given. Do some preliminary research to understand your problem, the organization, and who your clients are. Begin by gathering this information to create your initial design deliverables, which are an empathy map, personas, and journey map. Reflect on what you have learned about the client. Your research should be done by 1) searching the internet to learn more about your target users, and 2) interviewing and researching your target users (for th purpose of this class, you can talk to 3-5 classmates, roommates, family, etc).

**Week #6** – You will hand in an interim report (maximum 7 pages) that will have the following:

1. A title page with the names of the group members who contributed to the report.
2. An introduction to your report and to the problem you are working on.
3. A description of the research you performed. What did you learn about the problem, the organization, and the people?
4. An empathy map.
5. Personas
6. Journey Map
7. A description of how your research helped you understand the problem and users. What are your next steps and how will your empathy map, personas, and journey map guide you in these steps?

**Week #7** – Defining the problem – Using the ‘how might we statements’, be very specific in the problem you are working on. This can include what you’re NOT going to do (so define the scope of your work for this term). Make sure it’s something you can deliver by the end of the term!

**Week #8** – Hold some ideation sessions with your team. Follow the design thinking ideation process where you diverge with many ideas, then converge into one your group will pursue going forward. NOTE that it is only at this step in the process you now start to know what your solution will look like (website, app, physical experience, podcast, game, etc). Your result from this work is a specific idea you will design.

**Weeks #9-10** – Create a prototype of your design. This prototype does not have to be a complete and working experience, it can be done on paper (via sketching), PowerPoint, etc. If you are thinking of a digital solution you don’t need to build an app or a website, just depict what one would look like. REMEMBER, this is your FIRST prototype. It will change after MANY iterations so you don’t want to create a hi-fi version then have to change it many times. That’s a lot of work!

Also run a user test. Create some questions about the prototype, and some tasks that could be performed. Show your prototype to friends/family/roommates/classmates etc and have them test your design. Keep notes on what they think, their ideas and comments, and how your prototype performed.

**Week #11** – Write the final report. The final report should include the following:

1. Title page with all the group members’ names who contributed to the report
2. Table of Contents
3. Executive summary – summarize your entire report in ½ a page or less
4. The content from your interim report: research, empathy map, personas, journey map.
5. The definition of the problem and the ‘how might we statement’.
6. A description of your ideation process. What ideas did you generate and how, how did you narrow them down to choose one?
7. Your prototype of your user experience.
8. A description of how you tested your design.
9. What would you do next if you were to continue working on the design, remembering design thinking is a cyclical process?

**Week #12** – Hand in your completed final assignment! It should be in Word or PDF format, maximum 15 pages (title page, table of contents, appendices and references do not count in the page count).

***PLEASE NOTE:*** All group members are required to contribute ***EQUALLY*** to the 2 deliverables in this project. All students are expected to attend all group meetings, participate, contribute, and come prepared to work. All students should work together and meet their group’s deadlines. Any group member who does not contribute towards a deliverable **will receive a failing grade** for that portion of the work. Marks can also be deducted for not participating in group activities.

At the end of the term, a group evaluation will be distributed to all students, where they will rank their group members on effort and quality of work. ***Those members who fail to contribute equally to the group work can have their final grade reduced.***

**Class Schedule – Summer 2024**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Theme** | **Activities** | **Due** |
| **May 6 / 8**  **Week #1** | Introduction to the course  Introduction to Design Thinking | All in class.  Feel free to introduce your self to the class in the online discussion forums. | Read the syllabus … at least once! Maybe twice! Or three times!! |
| **May 13 / 15**  **Week #2** | IDEO’s Design Thinking Process | Field Guide: pages 9 – 25  Article - <https://blog.oup.com/2016/03/design-thinking-scientific-method/> | Online Discussion Question #1 |
| **May 22**  **Week #3** | Researching your users and problems | Field Guide: pages 27 – 44  Article - <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/ux-research-cheat-sheet/> | Online Discussion Question #2 |
| **May 27 / 29**  **Week #4** | Getting to Know your user – Empathy Mapping and Personas | Article - <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/empathy-mapping/>  Article - <https://uxbooth.com/articles/empathy-mapping-a-guide-to-getting-inside-a-users-head/>  Article - <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/persona/>  Article - <https://www.justinmind.com/blog/user-persona-templates/> | Online Discussion Question #3 |
| **June 3 / 5**  **Week #5** | Sketching, iteration, and pivots | Article - <https://www.inc.com/alison-davis/to-dramatically-improve-employee-communication-use-design-thinking.html>  Article - <https://99designs.com/blog/tips/ux-sketching/> | Online Discussion Question #4  ***Individual Assignment #1*** |
| **June 10 / 12**  **Week #6** | Defining the problem | Field Guide: pages 85 – 94 | Online Discussion Question #5  ***Design Sprint Interim Report*** |
| **June 17 / 19**  **Week #7** | Ideation – Finally coming up with design ideas | Field Guide: pages 94 – 104  Article - <https://dribbble.com/stories/2022/08/18/ux-ideation-tips-raw-studio> | Online Discussion Question #6 |
| **June 24 / 26**  **Week #8** | Prototyping | Field Guide: pages 105 – 123  Article - https://www.nngroup.com/articles/ux-prototype-hi-lo-fidelity/ | Online Discussion Question #7 |
| **July 3**  **Week #9** | Guest Speaker - TBD | None. | Online Discussion Question #8 |
| **July 10 / 12**  **Week #10** | Testing with users | Field Guide: pages 126 - 133 | Online Discussion Question #9 |
| **July 17 / 19**  **Week #11** | Implementation  The UX Profession | Article & Discussion - <https://ux.stackexchange.com/questions/116807/what-to-do-during-the-implementation-phase> | Online Discussion Question #10 |
| **July 24 / 26**  **Week #12** | Design Thinking: What’s Next?  Course Wrap Up | Article - <https://modus.medium.com/whats-next-for-design-thinking-d44bebbb7649> | ***Design Sprint Final Report*** |

**University and Course Policies**

Laurier has several senate approved policy statements it requires instructors to include in their syllabus.

1. Academic Calendars: Students are encouraged to review the Academic Calendar for information regarding all important dates, deadlines, and services available on campus.

2. Special Needs: Students with disabilities or special needs are advised to contact Laurier’s Accessible Learning Centre for information regarding its services and resources.

3. Plagiarism: Laurier University uses software that can check for plagiarism. If requested to do so by the instructor, students are required to submit their written work in electronic form and have it checked for plagiarism. (Approved by Senate May 14, 2002)

4. Academic Integrity: Laurier is committed to a culture of integrity within and beyond the classroom. This culture values trustworthiness (i.e., honesty, integrity, reliability), fairness, caring, respect, responsibility and citizenship. Together, we have a shared responsibility to uphold this culture in our academic and non-academic behaviour. The University has a defined policy with respect to academic misconduct. As a Laurier student you are responsible for familiarizing yourself with this policy and the accompanying penalty guidelines, some of which may appear on your transcript if there is a finding of misconduct. The relevant policy can be found at Laurier's academic integrity website along with resources to educate and support you in upholding a culture of integrity. Ignorance is not a defense.

5. Classroom Use of Electronic Devices: Students may use electronic devices in class for the completion of course work. The use of laptops, cellphones, tablets, etc. is at the discretion of the course instructor and misuse of these devices (ie. for non-course related activities or in ways that are distracting for other students) will result in the suspension of these privileges.

6. Final Examinations: Students are strongly urged not to make any commitments (i.e., vacation) during the examination period. Students are required to be available for examinations during the examination periods of all terms in which they register. Refer to the Handbook on Undergraduate Course Management for more information.

7. Foot Patrol, the Wellness Centre, and the Student Food Bank: The University approved the inclusion of information about select wellness and safety services and supports on campus in the course information provided to students. (Approved by Senate November 28, 2011.) Specific language (by campus) is provided below.

**Campus Resources**

Good2Talk is a postsecondary school helpline that provides free, professional and confidential counselling support for students in Ontario. Call 1-866-925-5454 or through 21-1. Available 24-7.

*Kitchener/Waterloo Resources:*

Waterloo Student Food Bank: All students are eligible to use this service to ensure they’re eating healthy when overwhelmed, stressed or financially strained. Anonymously request a package online 24-7. All dietary restrictions accommodated.

Waterloo Foot Patrol: 519.886.FOOT (3668). A volunteer operated safe-walk program, available Fall and Winter daily from 6:30 pm to 3 am. Teams of two are assigned to escort students to and from campus by foot or by van.

Waterloo Student Wellness Centre: 519-884-0710, x3146. The Centre supports the physical, emotional, and mental health needs of students. Located on the 2nd floor of the Student Services Building, booked and same-day appointments are available Mondays and Wednesdays from 8:30 am to 7:30 pm, and Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 8:30 am to 4:15 pm. Contact the Centre at x3146, wellness@wlu.ca or @LaurierWellness. After hours crisis support available 24/7. Call 1-844-437-3247 (HERE247).

*Brantford Resources:*

Brantford Student Food Bank: All students are eligible to use this service to ensure they’re eating healthy when overwhelmed, stressed or financially strained. Anonymously request a package online 24-7. All dietary restrictions accommodated.

Brantford Foot Patrol: 519-751-PTRL (7875). A volunteer operated safe-walk program, available Fall and Winter, Monday through Thursday from 6:30 pm to 1 am; Friday through Sunday 6:30 pm to 11 pm. Teams of two are assigned to escort students to and from campus by foot or by van.

Brantford Wellness Centre: 519-756-8228, x5803. Students have access to support for all their physical, emotional, and mental health needs at the Wellness Centre. Location: Student Centre, 2nd floor. Hours: 8:30 am to 4:15 pm Monday through Friday. After hours crisis support available 24/7. Call 1-884-437-3247 (HERE247).