

Interaction Design 4 | Designing for Service Experiences | Refugees & Resilience

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The Brief

Students will explore the growing Syrian refugee crisis to understand how products and services might be designed and leveraged for the continued migration of millions of people. The experience for refugees is consistently a long, complicated, confusing, dangerous and often unsupported journey. Throughout the arc of their experiences, refugees engage with various formal and informal services in order to meet their basic needs and move towards safer situations. More often than not, they improvise, hack and make-do in order to survive, move forward and reach their goals.

In Syria alone, over 4.8 million people have fled the country since 2011, seeking safety in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and beyond. Millions more are displaced inside Syria and, as war continues, hope is fading fast. 8.7 million predicted to be displaced inside the country in 2016.

This project is about understanding those experiences and developing viable and appropriate service solutions that respond effectively to the realities that refugees face. Students will effectively work towards improving an existing service or create something entirely new. The design of services involves a system-wide approach. Services involve multiple actors exchanging value over the course of time via various touchpoints. These choreographed interactions play out both on a front and back stage simultaneously. Keeping these elements in mind, you are charged with defining an entire end-to-end service system from various vantage points as well as designing several specific service touchpoints.

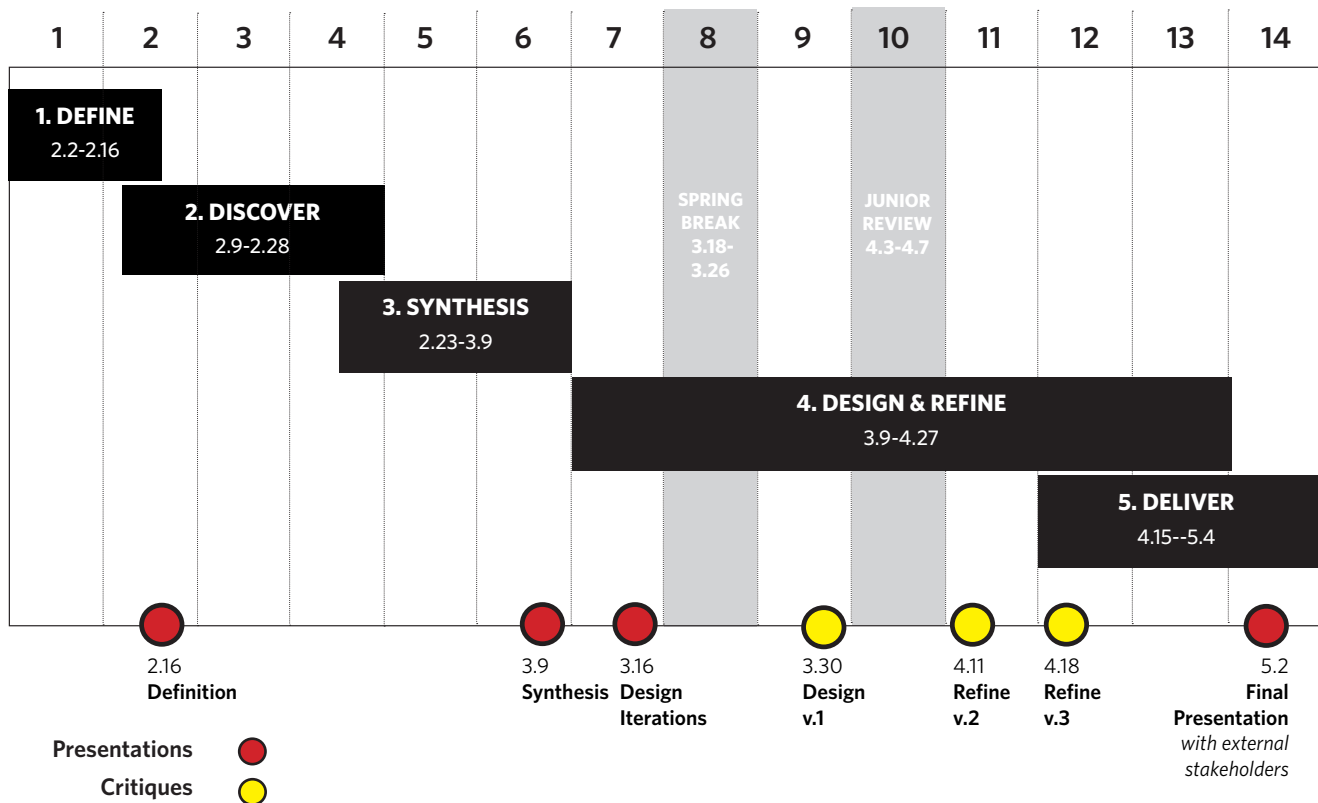
The main users of your service may or may not be refugees. If the latter, you must still demonstrate the impact it will have on the refugee experience. Additionally you will need to design at least one touchpoint where refugees directly interact or experience a value exchange with the offer.

A Collaborative and Iterative Approach

For this project, we will work collaboratively towards solutions that address this real world experience. During the initial Definition phase, the class will work collectively to unpack this wicked reality and begin creating a unified understanding of the current state. As we identify various directions to explore further, small 3-4 person teams will be created. You will remain on these teams for the duration of the project.

Both as a classroom and as individual teams, you will engage with the issue through first-hand accounts with refugees, government agencies, philanthropic organizations and private companies to deeply understand the context of refugees' and key stakeholders' experiences, needs and goals. The human-centered design approach will employ ethnographic research methods, allowing teams to uncover patterns that come from insights and observations. Additionally, through iterative cycles, teams will gather feedback, present to and potentially co-design with those people and organizations for whom their solutions are designed.

Almost half of this project will be spent engaged in iterative cycles of design and refinement. Teams will move through weekly design sprints (see course schedule in the Syllabus) incorporating feedback to advance their service design solutions. Designs will be reviewed and critiqued by instructors, the class, and external stakeholders.



Phase 1: Definition

Teams will explore the various ideas surrounding the refugee crisis. By working to reach a shared view of the domain, students will gain an initial sense of the types of research that will have to be conducted in the next stage, clarifying all the things your team does not know. It is also a time to identify team member's strengths and potential roles moving forward.

Methods

Affinity diagramming, dialectical modeling

2.16 Definition Deliverables

Project statement (current understanding of the services to explore), territory map, and a research plan, research objectives, guide and tools/methods

Phase 2: Discovery

This phase requires the suspension of opinion as to what the problems are as teams immerse themselves in field research according to the research plan developed in Phase 1. Through a variety of research methods, students will look for types of users, including outliers, to garner an understanding of the various perspectives of the domain. Teams are expected to understand the service environment and the conditions the Syrian refugees operates within, their perceptions, and core competencies, latent needs, and deep desires. Through secondary research, teams will continue to learn about existing systems and alternative models. The goal of this stage is to begin to understand what stakeholders experience of 'what is,' as the team starts to build a deeper understanding of boundaries shaping the situation.

Methods

Contextual inquiry, directed storytelling, ethnographic research, blueprinting, shadowing, surveys, touchpoint tours, benchmarking/audit of existing services(formal/informal)

Phase 3: Synthesis The next stage involves modeling the perspectives of ‘what is’ to communicate the various truths of the situation. As teams frame the areas of opportunity by mapping their research findings, they will start to gain an understanding of the desires and needs of stakeholders and the existing constraints they face. Through the development of various conceptual models and building of frameworks for the service experience, students will communicate the various views of the goals and actions to be delivered.

Methods

Affinity mapping, blueprinting, mapping and modeling, perceived needs vs. observed needs

3.9 Deliverables

Presentation summarizing the Synthesis stage, including the following: key insights and themes; experience cycles including touchpoints, processes, and value exchanges; user and stakeholder models *ex. personas, user typologies*; service design principles; and service frameworks, opportunities and strategies.

Phase 4: Design During this phase of the design process, teams are working to develop a wide range of concepts that respond to the understanding gained in earlier phases. As teams work to formulate arguments for ‘what might be’ they are encouraged to explore various concept development techniques to drive the activities of prototyping and collaborative design with participants of the service. The goal is to reach one human-centered service concept direction that has been refined through the testing and iterations of a series of prototypes.

Methods

Scenarios, storyboarding, brainstorming, experience prototyping, make tools

3.16 Deliverables

Presentation summarizing your Service Design direction. Following on a week of exploration, students will present the following: service concepts and key touchpoints, experience strategy (values, tools, etc across touchpoints).

Phase 5: Refine At this stage, teams are working to explain the principles, genres and components of the greater whole that is their refined service concept. Students will work toward creating an embodied experience of ‘what might be’ through a variety of techniques, in order to meet the needs and desire of Syrian refugees for what is possible. Working to revise and improve first iterations of the service concept, teams will include the documenting of values, tools, etc. across the service touchpoints, illustrating how their research findings are driving the final concept.

Methods

Video sketch, 3D modeling, interactive prototypes, presentations, documents, concept maps

3.30, 4.11, 4.18 Deliverables

Weekly Design Critiques: Teams will engage in weekly design sprints to iterate, gather feedback and refine concepts. The output and insights of these sprints will be shared with the class in order to gather critical feedback. Potentially, external stakeholders will be in attendance to provide a variety of perspectives around issues of viability, feasibility and desirability.

Phase 6: Deliver Teams will summarize their project process, the developed service vision and provide an overview of their final concept. Through the use of models, digital prototypes, emotional pieces, and scenarios of use, teams will need to provide a rich illustration of the conceived service experience. -

Deliverables

- 5.2** Final presentation making a compelling argument for your design solution, including: an emotional communication piece, a product/service working prototype, and project documentation.
- 5.4** A final digital document outlining: key insights, activities and approaches for each stage of the project. Additionally, the teams final presentation plus all files related to your final service concepts ex. InVision prototype, final video sketches, etc..

Assessment

Process

Conduct a comprehensive audit of the territory
Effectively prototype and evaluate ideas and design concepts
Iterate on designs through stakeholder and user feedback
Provide and receive constructive and actionable feedback
Able to collaborate with team and class at-large
Lead and contribute in a meaningful way to critiques and presentations

Service, UX and UI Design

Effectively design for optimal usability, context and flow
Define a clear service offering and rationale behind over-all direction; individual touchpoints and specific features
Articulate system as well as individual touchpoint "solutions"
Demonstrate use and experiences over-time
Demonstrate the impact on and transformation of current state to a new or improved future state
Create clear and high-quality wireframes

Visual and Communication Design

Effectively communicate through formal principles of form, grid and hierarchy
Effectively explore and communicate through hand-sketching
Create compelling and defensible experience-based "arguments" and scenarios
Create empathy and logic for design solution

Presentation Skills & Professionalism

Clearly and comprehensively articulate process and concepts in an integrated manner
Present with clarity, confidence and fluidity as a team
Be deliberate, engaging, and sincere as a presenter