Syllabus: INST 631 – Fundamentals of HCI

Semester: Spring 2014
Instructor: Leah Findlater

Course Description
This course is an introduction to the fundamentals of human-computer interaction, user interface design, and usability analysis. Students will learn principles and guidelines for usability, quantitative and qualitative analysis methods, and apply them through critiques of existing interfaces and development of new ones. Topics covered will also include cognitive models, task analysis, psychology, experimental design, and prototyping methods.

Learning Outcomes
The outcomes of this course are for you to be able to:
• Critically discuss common methods in the user-centered design process and the appropriateness of individual methods for a given problem.
• Use, adapt and extend classic design standards, guidelines, and patterns.
• Employ selected design methods and evaluation methods at a basic level of competence.
• Build prototypes at varying levels of fidelity, from paper prototypes to functional, interactive prototypes.

Office Hours
Office hours are Thursdays from 11:30am-12:30pm in Hornbake 2118A or by appointment.

Books and Web Resources
All required readings will be available as PDFs posted online. The following books are not required but are suggested for further reading.

Communication
We will use Canvas (http://elms.umd.edu) for submitting assignments, and Wikispaces (http://umdinst631-s14.wikispaces.com/) for dissemination of assignments and readings. I will notify you when major changes are made to the wiki. For general questions about the course and assignments, I'd like to try group discussions on the wiki. Of course, for more personal concerns please email me (leahkf@umd.edu) or use the functionality in Canvas.

Assessment

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<th>Component</th>
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<td>Assignments</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>Hall of Fame/Shame</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>Reading Responses</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Project</td>
<td>45%</td>
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Assignments (30%)
You will complete three graded assignments. Unless specified by the instructor, assignments must be completed independently. Assignments are due by the beginning of class on their due date.

Hall of Fame/Shame (5%)
Everyone is required to present one Hall of Fame / Shame design in class during the semester. For more information and to sign up for a date: Hall of Fame or Shame.

Reading Responses (10%)
Along with each collection of readings, you will often also receive a set of questions to think about while you read. You must submit a one-to-two paragraph reaction on ELMS. Responses must be based on the readings, not “off the top of your head.” Grades are pass / fail. Very rarely, I may award extra credit for exceptional work. Responses are due at the beginning of class by 5:30PM on their designated due date.

Class Participation (10%)
The class will be a more rewarding experience if everyone actively participates. I expect you to come to class prepared to contribute constructively to discussions, ask challenging questions, and help your classmates with in-class programming activities. Outside of class, you can participate by posting useful or interesting information on the course discussion website or visiting the instructor during office hours to ask questions or give feedback. At the end of the term, you are welcome to submit a 1-2 paragraph personal statement on how you contributed to the class. This statement is entirely optional and is due by the beginning of class on the day of the final project presentations.

Group Project (45%)
Group cooperation and communication skills are essential in working with user experience and software development teams. The group project will bring all components of the course together into a semester-long project with teams of 3-4 members. Teams will be able to pick their own topic, although the instructor will also provide suggestions. The project will allow students to apply the user-centered design methods discussed in class to inform the design of a working prototype. Group project presentations must be delivered on time. The late policy for other project deliverables is the same as for assignments.

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>% of Total Project Score</th>
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<tr>
<td>Project pitch (individual)</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>Project proposal</td>
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<td>Contextual inquiry</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Low-fi prototyping and evaluation + informal presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final system and evaluation + final presentation</td>
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Late Assignments
If you have to miss a deadline, you should inform the instructor as soon as possible, indicating when you will submit your work. The instructor will try to accommodate your needs. You should use this clause only for extraordinary personal reasons (e.g., personal illness, death in the family, etc.). The general policy is that late work will be deducted 20% of its total grade per calendar day, starting on the same day it is due. It is at the instructor’s discretion to accept late work and assign late penalties.

Course Design Credit
Some material for this course is adapted from or inspired by Bjoern Hartmann, Jon Froehlich, Julie Kientz, and Jacob Wobbrock.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way we teach may be modified to
facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work with Disability Support Service (DSS) to help us determine appropriate accommodations. Disability Support Service coordinates services that ensure individuals with disabilities equal access to University of Maryland College Park programs. DSS can be reached at 301-314-7682 and http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS/index.html.

**Academic Honesty**
The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council (see: http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/docs/III-100A.pdf). This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. The University of Maryland Honor Pledge reads:

*I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment/examination.*

Unless you are specifically advised to the contrary, the Pledge statement should be *handwritten* and signed on the front cover of all papers, projects, or other academic assignments submitted for evaluation in this course. Students who fail to write and sign the Pledge will be asked to confer with the instructor.

**Syllabus Change Policy**
This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.