



USC VITERBI SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING DATA SCIENCE/INF PROGRAM

Data Science 556: User Experience Design & Strategy - 4 units

Fall 2020 (32409D) Syllabus

Monday 2:00pm - 5:20pm – GFS 212

(Hybrid course/physical attendance not required)

Professor Jaime Levy

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TA: Mani Manthina

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PLEASE READ EVERYTHING IN RED CAREFULLY BEFORE ENROLLING!

[Here is the course website for the latest info such as Zoom and waitlist links:](#)

<https://tinyurl.com/y25gegp2>

Slack Workspace URL: <https://ds556-fall2020.slack.com>

Professor's Office Hours:

Office hours are available throughout the week over Zoom by appointment.

Appointments can be booked by accessing the professor calendar here:

<https://jaimelevy.as.me/OfficeHours>. For minor issues (i.e. absences, simple homework questions) it is highly recommended that you contact a teacher's assistant first.

Catalogue Description

The practice of User Experience Design and Strategy principles for the creation of unique and compelling digital products and services.

Expanded Course Description:

Designers, product managers/owners, engineers and entrepreneurs must work collaboratively to create innovative and compelling user-centered products and services. The process of developing a shared vision of a product's value proposition requires an open mind to experimentation and failure. User Experience Design and Strategy are practices that, when conducted empirically, are a better guarantee of a successful digital product than just writing a bunch of code and crossing your fingers.

This course is a combination of contemporary methodologies culled from several disciplines including user research, interaction design, and business strategy. Topics will include: competitive analysis and identification of marketplace opportunities, value innovation, rapid prototyping, customer discovery, and designing for conversion using metrics. By the conclusion of the course each student should be equipped with a strategic method to quickly and effectively launch a product or service online.

Recommended Prep:

Students should have a basic familiarity with web development and/or graphic design using a digital layout tool. However, you can easily pick up these skills by allowing yourself extra time to do the assignments and by paying close attention to the homework critiques in class.

This course is foundational and appropriate for students with backgrounds in a wide variety of fields, including any engineering discipline, and other fields including business, cinematic arts, communications, and design.

You will need to have a total cash budget of approximately \$150 to either compensate research participants or for running online ad campaigns in order to do some of the homework assignments.

Course Objectives:

The course objectives are to provide:

- An overview of the discipline of user experience design including an introduction to the principles of information architecture, interaction design, and user research
- An understanding of how to conduct strategy informed by both traditional and contemporary business approaches such as “Blue Ocean Strategy” and “Lean Startup”
- An understanding of how to validate your assumptions about your end-user’s needs through customer discovery techniques, user interviews and design experiments
- A comprehensive view of the necessary tools and techniques to enact a successful User Experience strategy for a digital product through hands-on weekly assignments and class critiques
- The analytical abilities required for students to be able to confidently articulate their impressions of technological advancements that affect how people communicate, shop, earn money, and entertain themselves using digital products and services

Methods of Teaching/Class Rules:

Each class will include a weekly lecture, homework critiques/peer reviews, and in-class discussions or exercises. The materials presented in readings, videos, and lectures are intended to assist you in completing the homework assignments.

Throughout the course, students will work independently and in teams to develop a single comprehensive prototype and visual presentation (“pitch deck”) that will demonstrate both creative and strategic-thinking capabilities.

Students will be required to complete all homework assignments, which should average between three to four hours each to complete. A computer with access to the internet is required to do all of the assignments.

Between 60-75-minutes of each class will be dedicated to homework critiques. Students will also be called upon to also give feedback to each other. This is a design-centric course so some feedback may seem subjective. If you have issues with getting subjective feedback or learning from the critiques of other student’s work, please consider taking a coding class instead.

Students **must** be fluent in English at a college-level for speaking, reading, writing, and have strong listening comprehension skills. Homework assignments or a final turned in with spelling and/or grammatical errors will be graded down. Oral presentations must be articulated so that everyone can hear and understand you clearly.

Students who miss the first day of class will potentially be dropped from the course if there is a long waiting list to enroll.

Grading Schema:

Homework Assignments:	50%
Participation:	15%
Test:	10%
Final Project:	15%
Final Presentation:	10%
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Total	100%

Grades will range from A through F. The following is the breakdown for grading:

- 94 - 100 = A 74 - 76 = C
- 90 - 93 = A - 70 - 73 = C-
- 87 - 89 = B+ 67 - 69 = D+
- 84 - 86 = B 64 - 66 = D
- 80 - 83 = B- 60 - 63 = D-

77 - 79 = C+ Below 60 is an F

The graded coursework will consist of five components:

1. **CLASS PARTICIPATION** – Class participation is based on attendance and engagement in informed discussions, student assignment critiques or class exercises. Students are expected to arrive to class each day and stay for the entire class in order for it to be counted. The only accepted reasons for missing classes are (1) having a medical reason such as being contagious with the flu or a condition that renders you immobile (2) a death in your immediate family. In either case, documented proof will be required. You may miss up to one class and still be eligible to earn an “A” assuming you successfully complete all the assignments, the final project, participate in class and give an amazing final presentation. If you want to earn 15% in this category, be certain that you sit toward the front of the classroom, give feedback to at least one assignment every week, and NEVER use your mobile phone during class.

2. **WEEKLY HOMEWORK (13 assignments)** - A set of exercises will be assigned. Each student is expected to submit the completed assignment on blackboard each week. Homework is due by midnight of the evening prior to the day that the class meets. All homework assignments will receive up to 2 points. If you turn it in late you lose a point. If you turn it in and you have not followed the directions, you can also lose a point. NO assignments will be accepted late. An incomplete grade will be granted only under the conditions specified in the student handbook, *SCAMPUS*, which is available online, <http://scampus.usc.edu>.

3. **TEST** - There also will be one multiple choice test on all the additional article readings provided with each homework assignment. You must score at least 70% or above to pass. The test counts toward 10% of your course grade.

4. **FINAL PROJECT** - Each student will submit a final visual presentation (in PDF format) along with their digital product prototype. It is due on the same day of the final presentation. This project will be a refined version of all the homework assignments ordered to tell a compelling story about their process, what they learned, and the benefits of their core user experience expressed in the prototype. The final presentation can be created using a presentation tool such as PowerPoint or Keynote. The prototype demo can be created using Adobe XD or a similar rapid prototyping tool. Students will be graded based on creativity, ingenuity, and ability to apply class teachings.

5. **FINAL PRESENTATION**– In the last week of class, students will present their 7-8-minute visual presentation including the prototype to the class. They will be graded on oral presentation skills such as eye contact, enthusiasm, and storytelling skills. If your presentation goes over and under by one-minute, it will affect your grade. So rehearse, rehearse, rehearse!

Class Communication:

Blackboard at USC will be used for class communication and homework assignment uploading. We will also have a Slack channel so that students can easily communicate with each other and the TA with quick questions/feedback.

Books, Readings, Videos:

All books will be available to purchase at the USC bookstore or online from the Amazon bookstore. All articles and videos will be available at no charge and distributed via links from Blackboard.

Required Book (Abbreviated titles are used in class schedule):

UX Strategy: How to Devise Innovative Digital Products that People Want. (2nd Edition) Jaime Levy. O'Reilly Media, 2021 (UXS)

Note: The 2nd edition of UX Strategy is not yet for sale. Free chapters will be distributed to the students throughout the semester. You are NOT required to buy or read the first edition of the book.

Recommended Books:

Business Model Generation: A Handbook for Visionaries, Game Changers, and Challengers. Alexander Osterwalder and Yves Pigneur. Wiley, 2010

<http://amzn.to/1UFwwmu>

Class Conduct:

This is a no-screens class. Please keep your mobile devices and laptops in your bags. Consider taking notes on paper or into the course textbook since the lectures closely follow it. Breaking this rule will negatively impact your participation score.

Class Structure & Schedule:

Class sequence, dates, topics and guest speakers are subject to change as the semester proceeds. Any major revisions will be promptly announced in class and/or by email.

	Topics/Activities	Readings & Homework	Homework Due
Wk 1 8/24	Review of syllabus & past student projects. Class introductions. What is UX Design.	Reading: UXS Ch 1& 2 - HW 1: Write 3 Customer/Problem Hypothesis Statements.	
Wk 2 8/31	The Four Tenets of UX Strategy.	Reading: UXS Ch 2 & 3 - HW 2: Create a Provisional Persona and Customer Discovery Plan-of-Action.	HW 1
Wk 3 9/7	Defining the Initial Value Proposition. Provisional Personas. Customer Discovery. Problem Interviews.	Reading: UXS Ch 3 - HW 3: Conduct Customer Validation Interviews & Create Research Findings Slides.	HW 2
Wk 4 9/14	HOLIDAY – LABOR DAY – NO CLASS Note The following homework assignments may be pushed by a week.	Reading: UXS Ch 4 - HW 4: Identifying Your Competition and Conducting Competitive Research.	HW 3
Wk 5 9/21	Conducting Competitive Research. Identifying your Direct and Indirect Competitors. Review of UX Strategy Toolkit.	Reading: UXS Ch 5 - HW 5: (two parts): Competitive Analysis & Findings Slides.	HW 4
Wk 6 9/28	Conducting Competitive Analysis. Writing a Findings Brief.	Reading: UXS Ch 6 - HW 6: Storyboard Key Experience.	HW 5
Wk 7 10/5	Storyboarding Value Innovation. Designing Key Experiences.	Reading: UXS Ch 7 - HW 7: Create a Prototype for Testing the Value Innovation and Business Model.	HW 6
Wk 8 10/12	Creating Prototypes for Running Experiments. The Experiment Design Tool. Writing a script.	Reading: UXS Ch 8 - HW 8: Participant Recruitment Ad, Script Interview & Demo.	HW 7
Wk 9 10/19	Planning a Qualitative Guerrilla User Research Online Study. Finalizing the solution prototype and writing up the interview questions. Students will be paired up in teams.	Reading: UXS Ch 8 - HW 9: Conduct your online research study.	HW 8
Wk 10 10/26	Conducting Qualitative Guerrilla User Research Field Study and Analysis. REQUIRED ARTICLES TEST!!	Reading: UXS Ch 8 - HW 10: Create a Finding's Brief including updated prototype screens.	HW 9
Wk 11 11/2	Growth Design and Landing Page Experiments	Reading: UXS Ch 9 - HW 11: Design a Landing Page & Creating Facebook Ads	HW 10
Wk 12 11/9	Landing Page Experiment and Ad Campaign (Updating the Landing Page and running an Online Ad. Campaign - Experiment 1)	Reading: UXS Ch 9 - HW 12: Run Value Prop Landing Page, Ad Campaign, and Create Findings slides explaining what you learned and next steps.	HW 11
Wk 13 11/16	Giving Pitches. Running Final Facebook Campaign (experiment 2) to Final Landing Page.	Reading: UXS Ch 9 - HW 12- REDO: Run Online Ad Campaign Again (doubling your metrics) and Update Findings slides.	HW 12
Wk 14 11/23	Early Final Presentations (Volunteers only). Lean Canvas exercise.	Reading: UXS Ch 10 and 11 - Create Final Presentation Decks. Rehearse Presentations.	HW 13
Wk 17 12/7	Final Presentations	Enjoy your winter recess!!!!	Final Project

Students with Disabilities:

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. Your letter must be specific as to the nature of any accommodations granted. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 am to 5:30 pm, Monday through Friday. The telephone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sa-ctions>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* <http://equity.usc.edu> or to the *Department of Public Safety* <http://adminopsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety>. This is important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men* <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage <http://sarc.usc.edu> describes reporting options and other resources.

Support Systems

A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. *The Office of Disability Services and Programs* http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* <http://emergency.usc.edu> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.