

IML 430: Visual Communication and Experience Design
Fall 2020 | 4 Units
Thursdays | 5:00pm-7:50pm | Online

Instructor: Catherine Bell

Email: bellcd@usc.edu

Office Hours: By appointment, please email

COURSE DESCRIPTION

We are all users; we all interact with screens that play an increasingly intimate role in human lives, cultures, and economies. The design of user interfaces—for both established and emerging technology—bridges across disciplines and poses urgent new ethical challenges. Understanding human-centered design (HCD) and its methodologies is a fundamental skill set for critical makers of any digital media.

IML 430 is designed to work in sequence with IML 230: Fundamentals of Media Design. The course will build from foundational graphic design principles and technical skills developed in IML 230. Students will dive into the specific challenges of designing interactive experiences, and the course will cover intermediate visual design concepts specifically as they apply to user interface design. Projects will cover qualitative research, synthesis, interface sketching, wire-framing, prototyping and design iteration, and will validate design choices with usability testing. Software skills will focus on Figma (with optional alternative Sketch or Adobe XD). By the end of the semester students will be capable of designing, prototyping, and validating engaging interactive experiences.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Visual Communication and Experience Design integrates theory and practice. Students should be prepared to read and discuss actively in class, and to develop design skills necessary for completing the assignments. Specifically, students will develop the following skills: collaboration, whiteboard ideation, user interface design, user experience design, typography and color for the screen, and human-centered design.

- to understand and use human centered design methodologies, including research, synthesis, and prototyping.
- to be able to evaluate a user's flow through a system and design for that flow.
- to critically approach ethical questions in the field of user experience design.

REQUIRED READINGS AND SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

- *Lidwell, Norman, and Kritina Holden, Jill Butler. Universal Principles of Design, Revised and Updated: 125 Ways to Enhance Usability, Influence Perception, Increase Appeal, Make Better Design Decisions, and Teach through Design. Beverly, MA: Rockport, 2010.*
- Other readings will be posted on the course Trello board.

GRADING BREAKDOWN

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale:

- 10% Reading responses
- 30% Three Short Design Exercises (@ 10% each)
- 10% Participation in in-class discussion
- 25% UI: Project 1 (Solo Project)
- 25% UX: Project 2 (Group Project)

Work will be evaluated on how well it demonstrates understanding of the class material, conceptual creativity, and aesthetic quality. Exceptional or great work will receive As, good work will receive Bs, and work that meets minimum requirements will receive Cs. Late projects will be accepted for up to two weeks after the original due date, with points deducted from the final score. After two weeks, no credit will be given for late work.

REQUIRED READINGS

Course Textbook:

Lidwell, Norman, and Kritina Holden, Jill Butler. *Universal Principles of Design, Revised and Updated: 125 Ways to Enhance Usability, Influence Perception, Increase Appeal, Make Better Design Decisions, and Teach through Design*. Beverly, MA: Rockport, 2010.

All other readings will be posted on the course Trello board.

OPTIONAL SUPPLIES

A "dot grid" notebook, similar to this one:

<https://www.amazon.com/Dotted-Bullet-Journal-Notebook-Premium/dp/B013VPDJLW>

PROJECT 1: USER INTERFACE

For each student:

Design a multi-screen user flow for an online magazine. Choose any magazine from the past or present that has a specific audience and a distinctive voice as a publication.

Start with a mood board. Decide on a color palette and typography, as well as creating a screen friendly instance of the brand for the magazine.

Utilize the brand you have set up consistently and elegantly throughout the flow of screens.

Consider interaction design; when and where do things animate? Can you use animation to convey something meaningful to users?

Consider the user as a reader. Create a comfortable reading experience for them on wide screens and narrow ones. (Responsive design.) Is your design legible? How do readers navigate between articles?

Present your design to class. Be ready to talk about decisions you made and how they reflect the magazine you chose.

Deliverables:

Moodboard

Multi-screen design, including a flow of screens for desktop and mobile web. (Use Figma, Sketch, or Adobe XD)

5-minute presentation, 5-minute critique

Optional deliverables:

Animation visualizations

PROJECT 2: USER EXPERIENCE

This assignment is for teams of 2-3 students.

Use a human-centered design process to design a tool for people living in social isolation during this pandemic. Decide with your team what the core direction and platform of your app will be. Choose one of the following user quotes as a starting point; "I'm bored." "I'm stir-crazy." "I'm overwhelmed." "I'm stressed." "I'm broke." "I'm lonely." "I'm"

Research:

=====

Find potential users of your system. Interview them to discover needs and tasks related to their time in social isolation during this 2020 pandemic. What are their core needs? How might we meet these needs (or lessen them) with a digital tool?

(Minimum research: 3 interviewees, 20 minutes each)

Optional: conduct task analysis , C&C, or survey research.

Synthesis:

=====

Transcribe and review your interviews. Identify connections and commonalities between users. Create personas and scenarios to identify the aggregated traits of a user to target your design process. Optional: Start working with information architecture to create a skeleton of the experience you will design.

Optional: Create a user journey map.

Problem Statement:

=====

Create a problem statement to frame your design challenge.

What features and user flow can you design for this digital tool? What device (example, web, mobile, tablet) will be the right platform?

Wireframe:

=====

Start with collaborative sketching on the whiteboard. Craft a better digital tool for your target users by creating a user flow across multiple screens or states.

Prototype:

=====

Create a low or medium fidelity prototype of your experience design. Test your design assumptions with users. Look for ways to optimize. Optional: Prototype again to repeat the iterative cycle.

Optional: Polish your design with high fidelity UI.

Presentation:

=====

Lastly, present your improved design to class in a presentation. Show us your research and synthesis. Present us with your iterated prototype, justifying your design decisions.

Optional:

=====

If your process leads you to redesign the lobby space itself or other factors in users' experience, you may incorporate this work as well.

Deliverables:

=====

10-minute presentation (timed) to include:

Quotes from interviews

At least 1 user persona

User scenario

User flow

Wireframes

Initial and iterated prototypes

Conclusions: learnings + next steps

Optional deliverables:

=====

User journey map

Information architecture

Additional persona/s

Relevant data and visuals

High-fidelity design examples

FINAL: UX CASE STUDY

For each student individually:

Write a UX case study for your project two: User Experience redesign project.

Use a standard case study outline and detail your human-centered design process, along with challenges and successes. Use a minimum of 5 elegant visuals to illustrate your case study.

Publish to Medium and share the URL.

FINALS DUE DATE: 11/25/2020 at noon.

Email final URL to bellcd@usc.edu

Design Exercises 1-3

These are due throughout the semester. Goal is skills building and progress check.

Exercise #1: Calculator UI

Design a calculator. Standard, scientific, or specialty calculator for something such as a mortgage? Is it for a phone, a tablet, a web app? (It's up to you!)

IMPORTANT: Design for a real screen size. What device does this calculator live on? Does it use the whole screen or a partial screen?

Exercise #2: Car Dashboard UI

Design a car interface. Consider the elements you'd want and need in your own dashboard. Be creative, yet logical.

IMPORTANT: Does this interface use emerging tech, such as voice interface or autonomous vehicle controls?

Exercise #3: UX Persona or Journey Map

With your Project 2 teammate/s:

Each teammate should submit a single user persona or journey map based on your research so far.

SYLLABUS

Our course syllabus evolves as the semester continues.

We will cover use of the syllabus board in the first class.

You can find the syllabus on Trello, link will be provided by email and on first day of class.

(The board is private, please request access through Trello, or email bellcd@usc.edu)

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Diversity Statement:

Diversity and Inclusion are foundational to the SCA community. We are committed to fostering a welcoming and supportive environment where students of all identities and backgrounds can flourish. The classroom should be a space for open discussion of ideas and self-expression; however, SCA will not tolerate verbal or written abuse, threats, harassment, intimidation or violence against person or property. If students are concerned about these matters in the classroom setting they are encouraged to contact their SCA Diversity and Inclusion Liaison, <http://cinema.usc.edu/about/diversity.cfm>; e-mail diversity@cinema.usc.edu. You can also report discrimination based on a protected class here <https://equity.usc.edu/harassment-or-discrimination/>

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 Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” <https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, <https://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

Statement on Fair Use:

Fair use is a legal principle that defines certain limitations on the exclusive rights of copyright holders. MA+P projects are produced with fair use doctrines in mind using its four pillars: (1) the purpose and character of use, (2) the nature of the copyrighted work, (3) the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole, and (4) the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work. Generally speaking, this means you must only use as much of a copyrighted work as is necessary to make your point, and you must cite your sources accordingly.

Citation Guidelines:

We assert that work produced in our classes is covered under the Doctrine of Fair Use. In order to make this claim, however, all projects must include academically appropriate citations in the form of a References section, which covers all sources, in order to receive a passing grade. The References section is either included in the project itself or as a separate document, as appropriate. For citation purposes, we follow *Kairos Journal of Rhetoric, Technology and Pedagogy* style guide; Kairos uses [APA format](#), which is slightly modified and whose general

guidelines and specific examples may be found here: <http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/styleguide.html#apa>

Computer Code:

Computer code is often shared and reused. This is appropriate in a MA+P course unless otherwise directed by the assignment. If you do use code, you should attribute it. Please follow these protocols from MIT which call for placing a comment in one's code with a URL to the original source, a note if it was adapted, and the date of retrieval: <https://integrity.mit.edu/handbook/writing-code>

Research:

Need to do research but don't know where to start? Searching for a book, article, or data to support your argument? Not sure how to cite a source in your bibliography? Ask a librarian! Research help is available:

- In person and by phone, chat and email at Ask a Librarian
- Through research guides and FAQs
- By contacting your subject librarian

Disruptive Student Behavior:

Behavior that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students' ability to learn and an instructor's ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action.

Support Systems:

Student Health Counseling Services - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call
engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

Student Health Leave Coordinator – 213-821-4710

Located in the USC Support and Advocacy office, the Health Leave Coordinator processes requests for health leaves of absence and advocates for students taking such leaves when needed.

<https://policy.usc.edu/student-health-leave-absence/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call
engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) | Title IX - (213) 740-5086
equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help a survivor of harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following protected characteristics: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations.

Bias Assessment Response and Support - (213) 740-2421
studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions for appropriate investigation and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776
dsp.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710
studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101
diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Trojan Food Pantry
<https://campusactivities.usc.edu/trojan-food-pantry/>

Any currently enrolled USC student who does not have a dining hall meal plan or whose plan's swipes have been fully used and is experiencing a food emergency/food insecurity qualify for the services of the Trojan Food Pantry.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

PLEASE NOTE:

FOOD AND DRINKS (OTHER THAN WATER) ARE NOT PERMITTED IN ANY INSTRUCTIONAL SPACES IN THE CINEMATIC ARTS COMPLEX