

# Fundamentals of User Research and Experience

USC School Cinematic Arts, CTIN 391

## Instructors:

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- Avimaan Syam

## Course Description:

The course integrates elements of user interface design and research. Upon completion successful students will be able to:

- Apply design principles and tools to improve a user interface.
- Use the thinking out-loud technique to test prototypes of the interface and identifying user issues, documenting them, analyzing them and using that analysis to generate design recommendations.
- Create high fidelity prototypes and wireframes using tools such as Figma or Adobe XD
- Analyze and document the results of user tests and develop suggestions for design changes
- Develop personas to characterize users
- Recognize the types of user testing methods, their purpose, and their requirements.
- Understand the MDA theory of games its relation to emotional design and its use in testing design intent for both behavior and evaluation
- Understand empathy and mood in design
- Present results of testing
- Present results of re-design to clients.

## Required Course Materials:

- Figma Professional **OR** Adobe XD

## Meeting Information:

Thursday from 7:30-9:20PM  
SBC 104

## Units:

2

## The Final Project:

The final project is a completed redesigned UI for a medium complexity game represented as a Clickable Prototype. In addition you will deliver a Companion Document that will breakdown your process & decision making behind the changes.

## More on the Assignments

### **Design Assignments:**

The lab portion of our course is designed to familiarize students with the tools to realize their designs and to take advantage of the instructor's expertise while he is on site. It is expected that students will book as much lab time as necessary throughout the semester, with a required minimum 2 hours a week beginning in the 9<sup>th</sup> week.

### **Reviews & Critiques:**

Our course will have routine design reviews between the student and instructor, as well as group critiques where students will present their work to the class and receive feedback. Feedback will be gathered, but the Professor will instruct the student on which aspects to include in the next revision of their work. After presenting their work, students should take handwritten notes on all feedback and star those elements of feedback which the Instructor deems necessary for inclusion.

## Final Project:

Students are expected to complete their final sets of interface designs by the end of the semester. The deliverables are listed in the right hand column of the schedule above.

## Missing an Assignment Deadline, Incompletes:

The only acceptable excuses for missing an assignment deadline or taking an incomplete in the course are personal illness or a family emergency. Students must inform the professor before the assignment due date and present verifiable evidence in order for a make-up to be scheduled. Students who wish to take incompletes must also present documentation of the problem to the instructor or teaching assistant before final grades are due.

## Attendance Policy:

Punctual attendance at all classes is mandatory. Students arriving late or leaving early will be marked absent from class. The class begins at 7:30, please plan to arrive 10 minutes early. The following guidelines are from the Interactive Media Division handbook regarding absences and grading and apply to all students.

### Guidelines for absences affecting grading

- Two unexcused absences: lowers grade one full grade point

- Three unexcused absences: lowers grade two full grade points
- Four or more unexcused absences: request to withdraw from course (instructor's discretion)

Excused absences are:

- Illness (with a doctor's verification)
- Family or personal emergency (with verification)

### Note for 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 us as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301, and is open 8:30am - 5:00pm Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

### Academic Integrity:

The School of Cinematic Arts expects the highest standards of academic excellence and ethical performance from USC students. It is particularly important that you are aware of and avoid plagiarism, cheating on exams, submitting a paper to more than one instructor, or submitting a paper authored by anyone other than yourself. Violations of this policy will result in a failing grade band be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. If you have any doubts or questions about these policies, consult "SCAMPUS" and/or confer with the instructor.

### Assignments Breakdown

Assignments are to be uploaded to their respective assignment container on BlackBoard. All assignments, with the exception of the final project, are due at or before the beginning of class at 6:30pm.

The final project will be due at the end of the final class. Students can use class time to work on their final project, but should use all other class time to follow along and participate in the many labs that will be conducted throughout the semester.