

HU4628: Usability & User-Centered Design - Syllabus & Policies

Spring 2018—Section R01 (CRN 12632) – Mondays and Wednesdays, 3:35-4:50 p.m., Walker 120A

Instructor Information

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Course Description & Overview

The catalog description of this course is outdated; until it can be updated, we will use the following description: “Theory and practice of user-centered design (UCD) and usability testing (UT) in technical communication. Projects include design and testing of instructions or procedures, as well as a collaborative client-based UCD or UT project.”

This semester, you will form cross-functional teams with students from CS4760 and CS5760 to develop, write content for, and usability test citizen science apps.

Required Textbooks & Other Materials

- CS4760 Web site: <http://cs4760.csl.mtu.edu/>
- Norman, Donald. *The Design of Everyday Things*, Revised and expanded edition. Basic Books, 2013. ISBN 978-0465050659.
- usability.gov: Improving the User Experience <https://www.usability.gov>
- Other assigned readings and links announced and posted in Canvas.

Assessment: Student work products (exams, essays, projects, etc.) may be used for university, program, or course assessment. Work used for assessment will not include individual student identification. This class is tagged with Goal 5, Communication. View the Goal 5 rubric here:

<http://www.mtu.edu/assessment/documents/university-goals/goal-5-rubric-for-written.pdf>

Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of HU 4628, you will	How will I do this? How is success measured?
Demonstrate broad familiarity with theories, practices, challenges, and contexts of usability and instruction writing in technical communication.	Read, participate in class discussions and in-class activities, develop robust projects.
	Assessed via written and oral reports, Norman discussion posts, and classroom performance
Understand how the theories and practices of usability and instruction writing integrate with and build the technical communicator’s toolkit.	Read to learn and practice a variety of techniques
	Assessed via written and oral reflection; prepare materials for senior portfolio if you are an STC or STA major.
Understand, select from, and deploy a variety of research methods used by technical communicators, including observation, heuristic inspection, persona and scenario development, interviewing, and surveys and questionnaires.	Read, participate in class discussions and in-class activities, engage in independent study.
	Assessed by means of written and oral performance.
To synthesize the work of HU4628, design, carry out, and evaluate a significant usability or user centered design project for an external client.	All channels of information, from inside or outside the class.
	Assessed via your performance in the cross-functional team and communication products produced by and for the team.

Assignments & Grade Distribution: Detailed assignment sheets and rubrics will be in Canvas.

- **SUSTAINED ATTENDANCE, READING/PREPARATION, and PARTICIPATION.** More than 3 absences could adversely affect your grade. Goal: to demonstrate professionalism, thoughtfulness, tactfulness, and preparation. May include collected in-class writing, homework, or other activities; impromptu presentations; and other deliverables.
- **NORMAN RESPONSES** (150 points (3 @50 points): Goal: to help you demonstrate your reading, preparation, and reflection; to help focus class discussions.
- **INSTRUCTIONS/PROCEDURES HEURISTIC INSPECTION (individual)** (100 points). Goals: (1) to demonstrate effective instruction/procedure writing and usability testing; (2) to explain and reflect on rationale and process in light of theories and best practices. *Assessment document.*
- **INSTRUCTIONAL/PROCEDURES USABILITY TEST AND REPORT (individual)** (200 points): Goals: (1) to practice usability testing techniques while learning the basics of UT software; (2) to write up the results of your test in a standard usability test report format. *Assessment document.*
- **FINAL PROJECT (group)** (450 points—various components). Goal: To synthesize course content, collaboratively research, design, draft, revise, and conduct a project for a client. Includes interim and final deliverables (usability test plans, reports, pilot tests, heuristic evaluations).
- **FINAL REFLECTION (individual)** (100 points). Self-assessment; possible exit interview.

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage	Letter Grade	Percentage
A	93% & above	C	70% – 75%
AB	87% – 92%	CD	65% – 69%
B	82% – 86%	D	60% - 64%
BC	76% – 81%	F	59% and below

Class Policies

- **Attendance:** Consistent attendance—including class meetings, team meetings, and conferences with the instructor—is expected. If you have extenuating circumstances that interfere with consistent attendance, please communicate with your instructor and/or the Dean of Students (906-487-2212 or deanofstudents@mtu.edu).
- **Late or Missing Work:** Late work **may** receive partial credit at the professor's discretion; final drafts and tests turned in late will receive a reduced grade. Negotiate late team contributions with the team.
- **ALL major assignments** must be completed to receive a passing course grade.
- **Cell phones and other devices:** Use only for class-related or emergency purposes.:

University Policies and Links

- **Academic Integrity:** <http://www.admin.mtu.edu/usenate/policies/p109-1.htm>
- **Disability Services:** <http://www.mtu.edu/deanofstudents/students/disability/> If you have a disability that could affect your performance in class or that requires an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act, please contact your instructor or Disability Services at 487-1494.
- **Veterans / Military:** <http://www.mtu.edu/registrar/students/veterans/> Veterans and active duty military personnel with special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployments, drill requirements, disabilities) are welcomed and encouraged to communicate these, in advance if possible, to their instructor(s).
- **The Office of Institutional Equity and Inclusion** facilitates Michigan Tech's development of an environment that is free from prejudicial discrimination or harassment and that is conducive to learning and individual growth for all campus members and visitors. <http://www.mtu.edu/equity>
- **Equal Opportunity, Discrimination, Harassment Statement and Procedures:** <http://www.mtu.edu/equity/equal-opportunity/harassment-discrimination/>