

Web System Design and Management

GLIS 634

Fall 2014

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WARNING: this syllabus is provided for informational use only. The specific content and assignments may change before the start of the course. Students of this course should not use this document but instead retrieve the official version that can be downloaded from the course management site.

Instructor: Prof. Charles-Antoine Julien <charles.julien@mcgill.ca>

Class times: Wednesdays, 8:30 pm - 11:30 am

Location: EDU 211

Duration: Sept. 3rd - Nov. 26th, 2014

Description

This course has been developed with the information professional in mind. It seeks to provide students with the skills and understanding that they are most likely to require in their information careers: the strategy, design, and management of a web site.

- Principles and practices of designing websites in the context of libraries and information centres.
- Conceptual approach to organizing information for the World Wide Web including design, implementation and management issues.
- **Topics include:** Web development tools, markup languages, and Web server administration.

Learning Objectives

- **Foundations:** Understand the history and architecture of the World Wide Web and its relevance to the organization and dissemination of information; Understand the relevance of the World Wide Web to the information professions (librarians, archivists, and knowledge managers).
- **Development:** Understand how HTML and CSS are used to create web pages; Understand how technologies such as JavaScript and PHP are used to create dynamic web sites; Understand the issues relating to developing web sites for mobile and other non-traditional devices; Assess the relevance of Web 2.0 to the domain of the information professions; Understand how to create content for the web; Create simple web pages using HTML and CSS;
- **Design:** Understand the various components that make up a site's information architecture (organization, navigation, page layout); Create an information architecture for a web site; Understand how to assess the usability of an existing web site; Understand the importance of branding in web site design.
- **Management:** Understand the elements of a web strategy; Create a web strategy for an organization; Assess the performance of a web site; Understand how to manage a web site development project; Understand how to manage the operations of a web site.

Course schedule

Week	Date	Title	Readings
1	Sept.3	Introduction Web Strategy Make teams	Krug 8,9
2	Sept.10	HTML Find 2-3 library Web sites that need change	Duckett 1-6, 8
3	Sept.17	CSS 1 Send team composition and chosen site to instructor Markup Exercise 1 Review	Duckett 10-12
4	Sept.24	CSS 2 Markup Exercise 2 Review	Duckett 13, 14, 16
5	Oct.1	Page Layout 1 Markup Exercise 3 Review	Ducket 15
6	Oct.8	Page Layout 2 Project Briefs due at 11:59pm	Krug 3,4,6,7
7	Oct.15	Study Break	
8	Oct.22	Site Organization and Navigation Markup Exercise 4 Review	Morville 4-9, 11, 12
9	Oct.29	Usability Markup Exercise 5 Review	Krug 1, 2, 10, 11
10	Nov.5	Web Applications Markup Exercise 6 due at 11:59pm	Duckett 7, Castro 19-20
11	Nov.12	Web Content, Project Management	Krug 5; Lynch 9, 11, 12; Ducket 18
12	Nov.19	Team Presentations - Site Proposals Submit slides on myCourses before 6:00pm the day before (Nov.18)	
13	Nov.26	Final Exam: 8h30 - 10h00 (In class)	HTML, CSS, Slides, readings
14	Dec.3	Site Proposals due at 11:59pm Team Mate assessments due two days later on the 5th at 11:59pm	

Textbooks

The following textbooks are all freely available from McGill libraries.

- Castro, Elizabeth (2007). *HTML, XHTML & CSS* (6th ed.) Berkeley: Peachpit Press. <http://proquest.safaribooksonline.com/0321430840>

- Duckett, Jon (2011). *HTML & CSS: Design and Build Websites*. Indianapolis, IN: John Wiley & Sons. <http://www.books24x7.com/marc.asp?bookid=41781>
 - **Note:** this is a personal recommendation. There are excellent freely available online tutorials for HTML/CSS; for example, w3schools.com
- Krug, Steve (2006). *Don't Make Me Think*. 2nd ed. Indianapolis, IN: New Riders. <http://proquest.safaribooksonline.com/0321344758?uicode=mcgill>
- Lynch, Patrick J., and Sarah Horton (2008). *Web Style Guide (3rd ed.)*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Morville, Peter and Louis Rosenfeld (2007). *Information Architecture for the World Wide Web*. 3rd ed. Sepastopol, CA: O'Reilly. <http://mcgill.lib.overdrive.com/220C319F-8939-4304-B250-1EC7E03EE3B6/10/50/en/ContentDetails.htm?id=70895D2A-70FD-4E93-8B26-169528220E8A>

Assessments

HTML & CSS Markup exercises (30%, individual)

A series of increasingly demanding individual HTML & CSS exercises submitted over several weeks, details of the exercises will be provided in separate handouts:

1. **Report Markup:** Create a simple HTML page (easy)
2. **Image Gallery:** Create multiple HTML pages with images (easy)
3. **Report Display:** Use CSS to change how the report from exercise #1 is displayed (Medium)
4. **Annual Report:** Use HTML and CSS to recreate the formatting of a business document (Medium)
5. **Positioning:** Using CSS positioning to create standard layouts. (Hard)
6. **Curriculum Vitae (30%):** Create a web version of your CV.
MarkUp 6 will not be graded unless Markup 1-5 are submitted on time (see note below).

Markup 1-5 will not be graded but **you must submit them** the night before their respective in-class review (see schedule) at 11:59pm. Failure to submit any assignment will result in a **25% deduction** for MarkUp 6.

Note that Markup 1-2 are easy: do not get lured into a false sense of security by assuming the rest are just as easy. They are not.

Each exercise must meet the following criteria:

- HTML code must [validate as HTML5](#).
- CSS must [validate as CSS 3](#).
- **Note:** exercises that do not validate will be **deducted by 50%**
- Exercises that contain multiple files **must** be packaged in a single zip file. No other formats are acceptable (e.g., RAR, multiple files). Multi-file exercises not packaged in a single zip file will be **deducted by 20%**.
- HTML & CSS can look different in various browsers (e.g., Internet Explorer, Safari, Chrome, FireFox, etc.): for the purposes of this course, at the very least, ensure that your code works perfectly in the most popular browser.
- For all elements, your CSS must set cascading default values for
 - colors,
 - font families, and

- font sizes.
- When styles are used, they must be in one or many external style sheets. Exercises that use document or inline styles will be **deducted by 25%**.
- Use a good number of tags, attributes, and CSS properties. Demonstrate that you've learned and tried various options. This being said, **don't use a feature just for the sake of it**: implement a feature because it makes sense.
- **Everything eventually changes**. Your HTML and CSS **must** be well organized and formatted to make it easy for someone else to read and maintain.
- **The work must be your own**. Using tools or web sites that generate code will be considered plagiarism. Such generated code is easy to recognize.

Web Site Redesign Project Brief (20%, group)

You will prepare a specification for the redesign of an existing web site of a public library or archive. This defines a web strategy and its articulation in terms of the primary users of the site and the tasks they need to perform.

Requirements

The project brief must include the following:

- A brief overview of the library/archive, and the community it serves.
 - The overall mission and goals of the library/archive.
 - The top three goals that the library/archive has for its web site, in order of priority*. These are goals that you decide upon based on your understanding of the library/archive, its community, and the capabilities of the web.
 - List and briefly describe the top three categories of people who are the primary audiences for the library/archive's web site, in order of priority*.
 - For each category of user, list, describe, and prioritize * their primary uses of the site.
 - List the site objectives (i.e. the tasks that users should be able to complete) that the site should support, again in order of priority *.
- Note:** your objectives should balance the priorities of the library and the priorities of the user.
- A brief assessment of the library/archive's current web site, focusing on how well it meets or does not meet the site objectives you have defined above.

* Follow the list with a brief justification for your selection and prioritization.

Project Teams

You will form teams of four people (barring approved exception). Teams are expected to communicate and work together throughout the semester. Everyone on the team is responsible for the entire work, and will receive the same grade for the work submitted.

Conflicts between team members should be addressed as soon as possible using honest communication.

Unresolvable issues should be brought to the instructor's attention as soon as possible.

Selecting a library/archive Web Site

The library/archive you choose should be a public library or archive from a North American city or town.

For libraries, ideally there should be only one branch serving the population, although you can choose a situation where there are 2-3 branches (i.e. you cannot choose a city like Montreal or Toronto that has a public library system made up of a large number of branches).

Most importantly, the web site should be, in your opinion, in need of redesign.

Audience

The report should be written with the assumption that it will be read by the team of librarians/archivists and developers who will be coming up with a new design for the website, as well as the librarians/archivists who work at the public library/archive in question.

Format

The report should be written as concisely as possible. Use headings to organize your report and make it easy to scan. Make good use of lists (bulleted or numbered) and tables to convey information. Avoid the long paragraphs of prose common to most academic papers.

Consistently use either APA or MLA citation style.

Marks will be deducted from papers that are poorly formatted, organized, presented and/or written.

Your report should contain **no more than 2000 words** (not including the cover page and bibliography). Be concise in your writing, focus on the things that are more important as opposed to being comprehensive.

Site Proposal (30%, group)

You will work in the same project teams to develop a proposal and prototype Web site to meet the needs of the library/archive described by the [Project Brief](#).

Site Proposal Requirements

- Strategy and objectives: restate the web strategy and site objectives for the site in your own words based on conversations with the “client” (i.e. the originating project team).
- Information architecture: propose an information architecture for a site that will support the web strategy. Your information architecture must include:
 - A site structure diagram showing the pages in the site and how they are organized.
 - A general description of the visual elements making up the site.
 - Wireframe diagrams showing the layout for the home page and at least one 'inside' page.

Your information architecture must be text-complete, i.e. it must use the actual text that will be presented on the site. This being said, long text can be replaced by placeholder copy.

- Operational plan: Outline the ongoing work that would be involved in operating the proposed web site.
- Performance: Describe how you would measure the performance of the site to determine if it was successful.
- Home Page Prototype: code the HTML/CSS for the home page of the proposed web site.

Audience

The report should be written with the assumption that it will be read by:

1. the client (i.e. the project team who wrote the brief)
2. the librarians who work at the public library/archive in question
3. the design and development teams would use the document to plan, estimate, and carry out the first iterations of the site development.

Presentation (5/30 points)

As part of this assignment your team will need to do a presentation to the class. You will present the library/archive, its community, as well as the web goals and target audience for the site. The objective is to **present your site design to the "client"**. The audience should be able to:

1. understand the design you are proposing
2. believe it meets the requirements defined in the project brief

The presentation should be **no more than 8 minutes**, with an additional 2 minutes for questions.

The presentation must include a **PowerPoint or PDF slide deck** that has to be submitted to myCourses the day before.

For the sake of efficiency, no other type of slide deck format is accepted.

Each person on the team has to present.

You do not have to provide the full design proposal report to the audience; prioritize and choose the content to present.

Format

Your proposal should be **somewhere between 2000-3000 words** in length, not including the cover page and bibliography. This word count should only be considered a rough guide, as a good portion of your proposal will likely be presented using diagrams, illustrations, and tables that provide a lot of information without increasing the word count significantly. Again, remember that it is better to focus on the things that are more important than it is to be comprehensive.

Use headings to organize your report and make it easy to scan. Make good use of lists (bulleted or numbered) and tables to convey information. Avoid the long paragraphs of prose common to most academic papers.

Your report should consistently use either APA or MLA citation style.

Note that you still need to properly cite any sources as you would in any academic paper.

Marks will be deducted from papers that are poorly formatted, organized, presented and/or written.

Teammate Assessment (2.5% for the assessor, 2.5% from other team members)

Each team member will assess the overall performance of every other teammate. The quality of the assessment will dictate your score on 2.5%, and the assessments from your teammates will greatly influence your score on 2.5%, as ultimately chosen by the instructor.

Each teammate's assessment should be a maximum of **200-250 words (could be much less), for a maximum total of 600-800 words.**

Do not feel obliged to say anything if everything went well. The text should explain **only** less than perfect scores.

Final Exam - HTML/CSS (15%)

The final exam covers theory (i.e., slides and readings) and your practical knowledge of HTML/CSS.

All documentation is allowed up to 4 double sided 8.5 by 11 in. paper sheets. You can use both sides of the paper for total of 8 pages of notes. Notes can be in any format (e.g., printed, handwritten, etc.).

Submitting your assignments

- Your assignment must be submitted electronically using the Assignments tool in myCourses.
- To submit your markup assignments, store your files in a compressed/zip file.
- Your other assignments must be submitted electronically as an MS Word file (.doc or .docx) or alternately as a PDF file. All diagrams, tables, etc. must be inserted in your document: they cannot be submitted as separate files (.xls, .pdf, etc).
- Late assignments will not be accepted, and will receive a grade of zero (0). Extensions are only granted in the most exceptional of circumstances, and they must be requested at least one week before the assignment is due.

General Information

Academic Integrity

McGill University values [academic integrity](#). Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Council and Disciplinary Procedures.

Academic Policies

Additional policies governing academic issues which affect students can be found in the [McGill Charter of Students' Rights](#).

Language of Instruction

All lectures, discussions, and course materials are in English. However, students have the right to submit their work in French.

Students with disabilities

If you have a disability please consult the [Office for Students with Disabilities](#)

Acknowledgements

This syllabus is based on the work of Edward Bilodeau from McGill Libraries.