GLIS 691: Special Topics — User-Centred Design (3 credits)
Prof. Karyn Moffatt

DISCLAIMER: This syllabus is provided for informational use only. Content and assignments may change before the start of the course and may differ between course sections. Students enrolled in this course are to retrieve the official version from the McGill course management site.

Course Description

This course will provide an intensive project-based introduction to interaction design, oriented toward practical methods for designing interactive systems. The goal of this course is to prepare information professionals capable of participating in the design of information system interfaces, through hands-on experience with the techniques and methods used.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the course, you should be able to:
- Identify the principles and concepts of user-centered design
- Critically discuss the appropriateness of potential design methodologies and their applicability to different problems and contexts
- Gather useful information about users and their activities through systematic observation
- Demonstrate effective skill in employing design and evaluation methods
- Prototype a small system, using an iterative, user-centered design process

Instructional method

A mix of class & small group discussions, with in-class activities. A multi-stage group project will enable you to put into practice knowledge learned in class.

Required text

A list of readings will be posted on the course website. All readings will be available through the McGill Library or the course website. We will cover a fair bit of the following book, and if you prefer to read on paper, you may wish to purchase it (available for $19.95 from amazon.ca):

> Greenberg, S., Carpendale, S., Marquardt, N., & Buxton, B. (2011) Sketching User Experiences: The Workbook. Waltham, MA: Morgan Kaufmann.

Course Outline

Week 1	Introduction to the class and interaction design
Week 2	Design and the design process
Week 3	Understanding users
Week 4	Conveying user needs I: Sketching and storyboarding
Week 5	Conveying user needs II: Personas, scenarios, & requirements
Week 6	Prototyping: from low to high fidelity
Week 7	Evaluation
Week 8	Input technologies and techniques
Week 9	Ethical design: participatory and value-sensitive approaches
Week 10	Social computing (tentative)
Week 11	Tele-presence (tentative)
Week 12	Class wrap-up and project presentations

Assignments and Evaluation

Your final course grade will be based on weekly reading reflections, a deeper analysis and class presentation on one of the course topics, and a group design project.

Assignment	Due	Weight
Individual Assignments (30% total)		
1: Project Pitches	Sep 8	5 %
2: Pitch Critiques	Sep 12	5 %
3: Observing Users	Oct 7	10 %
4: Paper Prototyping	Oct 28	10 %
Reading reflections (5 in total)		10 %
Participation		10 %
Group Project (45% total)		
1: Formative Research	Sep 30	5 %
2: Sketches & Storyboards	Oct 21	5 %
3: Paper Prototypes & Initial User Testing	Nov 4	5 %
4: Med-Fi Prototypes	Nov 25	5 %
5: Final User Testing	Dec 9	25 %
Peer evaluation	Dec 9	5 %
Total		**100%**

You are expected to prepare for and participate in class.
No late assignments will be accepted unless a physician's certificate is provided.

Individual Assignment

To complement the practical skills presented in the class, there will be a number of short assignments to practice the skills covered lecture. Detailed instructions will be posted on mycourses with sufficient time for completion.

Reading Reflections (Five (5) reflections worth 2% each)

Each class will have a number of assigned readings (for weeks 2–11). Along with reading these materials **before** each class and coming to class prepared to actively discuss the content, a number of readings will involve preparing a brief reflection and/or related activity. You must post these to designated discussion board on myCourses by 5pm the day before class. Your reflections need not be long; a couple of well thought out paragraphs (1/2–1 page) is fine. You may build on the commentary of others, but make sure you are adding new ideas or perspectives and not just echoing previous posts.

Group Project (45% of final grade; distributed across 5 milestones)

Interaction design in the real world almost always involves teamwork. Thus a substantial component of this class will focus on a group design project. This project will give you hands on experience with the techniques taught in class, and demonstrate how the techniques are used together as part of the design process.

You will complete the project in teams of 3–4 members. The project will consist of a number of milestones, full descriptions of which will be posted on the course website. Each component must be conducted and submitted as a group and will be **due in my mailbox by 4pm on the due date.**