

# Communication 4555: Computer Interfaces & Human Identity

## Fall 2024

**Instructor:** Dr. Jesse Fox

**Class Information:** W/F 2:20 – 3:40 PM, Journalism 216

**Office hours:** Wednesdays 10 AM – 12 PM & by appt., Derby 3084 (or Zoom by request)

**Other contact:** See the Communication policy below before emailing. Appropriate emails are welcome. Do not contact me via Carmen.

**Course Description:** This course examines what role human identity plays in the ways in which people use computer interfaces (and, more broadly, emerging technologies). We will focus on the following aspects of “human identity”: (a) traits and attributes that characterize an individual/member of a group and (b) traits and attributes that make human beings unique (and distinct from non-human beings).

This class is worth 3 credit hours. According to OSU 3335-8-24 A-1, “One credit hour shall be assigned for each three hours per week of the average student’s time, including class hours, required to earn the average grade of ‘C’ in this course.” Thus, it is expected that you will spend an average of 9 hours per week for this course. We spend less than 3 hours in class; the remaining time should be devoted to reading, studying, and working on course assignments.

**Course Objectives:** Students will engage with topics through lectures, readings, discussions, activities, and assignments. By taking this course, students should be able to gain theoretical and empirical knowledge and insights into:

1. How computer interfaces influence users’ self-concept and personal/social identity;
2. How users’ self-concept and personal/social identity shape their experience with computer interfaces; and
3. How cognitive, affective, and behavioral dynamics associated with self-concept and personal/social identity shape people’s relationships with computer interfaces.

### Required Course Materials

\*All readings will be posted to Carmen.

\*A regular-sized (~8 ½” x 11”) notebook or filler paper and pens/pencils. Bring these to class every day. Colored pencils or pens are also recommended, but not required.

### Technology Requirements

To participate in any online synchronous sessions, this class requires a laptop or desktop computer with a working camera, microphone, keyboard, and audio, as well as stable internet access with enough bandwidth for Zoom. You can learn more about OSU tech requirements and technology available to students on Carmen (Resources module > OSU Technology Resources).

If we must move to online exams, be prepared to use Honorlock, an online proctoring tool. Honorlock requires a laptop or desktop computer with a webcam, microphone, and the Google Chrome browser (version 120 or higher). For more information on requirements, accessibility, installation, misconduct, and proctoring alternatives, see Carmen (Resources > Honorlock).

### Course Output

	Earned	/ Total Points	%
<i>Assignment 1</i>		/ 30	
<i>Assignment 2</i>		/ 30	
<i>Exam 1</i>		/ 70	
<i>Exam 2</i>		/ 100	
<i>Final Exam</i>		/ 120	
<i>Final project &amp; presentation</i>		/ 110	
<i>Class activities, quizzes, &amp; participation</i>		/ 90	
TOTAL:		/ 550	

Evaluation dates, exam dates, and due dates are included in the schedule below. Exams will consist of multiple choice and/or short answer questions.

### Grading

A	93 – 100%	512 - 550	B-	80 - 82.9%	440 - 456	D+	67 - 69.9%	369 - 384
A-	90 - 92.9%	495 - 511	C+	77 - 79.9%	424 - 439	D	60 - 66.9%	330 - 368
B+	87 - 89.9%	479 - 494	C	73 - 76.9%	402 - 423	E	< 60%	< 329
B	83 - 86.9%	457 - 478	C-	70 - 72.9%	385 - 401			

Your final grade will be reported in accordance with the number of points you have earned in class. **Please note that your final grade is final.** This class is, in part, about professional behavior and career preparation. It is your responsibility to keep up with readings and lecture, take notes, study, track your performance, and make timely adjustments well before the end of the semester. Do not ask me to change your grade when the semester is over; applying subjective standards after the fact invalidates the standards applied to the class and is unfair to other students.

If you wish to earn extra credit in the course, you may a) participate in studies via C-REP or b) complete alternative assignments provided via C-REP. You may earn up to six credits worth up to 3% of the course grade. Information on how to participate in C-REP is available in the Resources module on Carmen. Please direct any questions regarding C-REP or requests for alternative assignments to Ms. Ryu at [ryu.205@osu.edu](mailto:ryu.205@osu.edu).

**Attendance:** Only students enrolled in this section are permitted to attend class. Attendance (both physical and mental) is key to your success in this class. Your grade is largely contingent on your continued presence in class. Listen, take notes, and ask questions. Much of the material presented in lecture is not found in your readings. If you miss class for whatever reason, it is

your responsibility to obtain notes and get any news or updates from a classmate; notes will not be provided and slides are not posted on Carmen.

Exams must be taken at the scheduled time. The dates are clearly identified on the schedule below; if you foresee a conflict with the exam time, you will need to reschedule your conflict or reconsider your enrollment in this class.

Given the continued high prevalence of COVID, including breakthrough cases among vaccinated individuals, students should not attend class if they are feeling sick or if they have been exposed to COVID. It is very important that individuals avoid spreading the virus to others. If you have any questions about getting tested, when you should quarantine, how to get vaccinated, etc., please see <https://safeandhealthy.osu.edu/>.

If you must miss class on account of COVID, please email me in accordance with the Communication Policy below. Unless you are suddenly stricken or in an emergency situation, I expect notifications for COVID-related absences to occur before class. When you are well enough we can meet to discuss any needed makeup.

**Communication Policy:** Your communication should be respectful and civil at all times and across all channels, whether formal or informal (in person, email, Zoom, group chats, etc.). This includes speaking publicly or privately to your instructors, classmates, teammates, teaching assistants, staff, researchers, or any visitors to class.

If you need to speak with me, it should almost always be in class or office hours. Email should be reserved for a) reporting illness and emergencies and b) scheduling an appointment. Be sure you have checked all provided resources before emailing me. **Never message me via Carmen.**

All online communication must be properly formatted, courteous, and professional. If you do not know what an email should look like, read the How to Email Your Instructor document on Carmen (in the Resources module) before emailing me at [fox.775@osu.edu](mailto:fox.775@osu.edu). Improper, unnecessary, or unprofessional emails (and all Carmen messages) will be returned unanswered and are subject to grade penalties at my discretion. Rude or aggressive communication, including persistent violations of the communication policy, qualify as problematic behavior and will be penalized and/or reported (see below).

**Zoom Engagement and Etiquette:** If we have a class session online, we will use CarmenZoom. I will send a Carmen announcement with the class link. You will need to log in using your university credentials and Duo authentication.

During class, you will need to be in a location where you can fully participate on camera (you can speak, others can hear you, etc.) and you are not distracting others. You must have your camera on during class. Having your camera off will not be considered participation unless there is a documented issue you have discussed with me. If you are concerned about your environment (and your device supports it), try an appropriate Zoom background. Please keep your microphone on mute unless you are speaking.

Class policies are still in effect online. You should not distract others or make them uncomfortable: you should be fully dressed and there shouldn't be anything inappropriate or distracting on camera. I may ask you to turn your camera off or turn off your camera if there is a problem. Extreme or persistent issues may qualify as problematic behavior and will be penalized and/or reported (see below).

**Unprofessional and Problematic Behavior:** Disruptions and distractions (including talking during lecture; text messaging; nonclass mobile device or computer use); aggressive or threatening behavior; and negative participation (e.g., use of inappropriate language or derogatory speech, refusal to adhere to class protocols, damaging class materials) will not be tolerated. This includes failure to adhere to any COVID-19 protocols that may go into effect, including proper masking. Any student who engages in such behavior may be removed from class, banned from participating in activities, and/or receive grade penalties. Incidents will be reported to appropriate parties as needed, including the School of Communication, OSU Human Resources, Title IX, and/or OSU Police.

Phone or other nonclass device use (laptops, smartwatches, etc.) is prohibited and considered a disruption. Any student who is observed using devices for nonclass activity or whose device rings, beeps, or audibly vibrates during class will suffer grade penalties (1% of the overall class grade for the first offense, 5% for the second offense, etc.) and may be asked to leave class. If devices are a problem, they may be banned at the individual or class level. **Turn your phone off and put it away before the start of class.**

**Disability Accommodations:** The university strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. In light of the current pandemic, students seeking to request COVID-related accommodations may do so through the university's [request process](#), managed by Student Life Disability Services. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic, or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services.

After registration, you must meet with me as soon as possible to discuss what accommodations may be possible for the course at that point in time. It is your responsibility to schedule an appointment or meet with me during office hours. If you do not, I will assume no accommodations are necessary. SLDS contact information:

[slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu); 614-292-3307; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

**Academic Integrity:** I take academic dishonesty very seriously. All students are subject to the student code of conduct (see <https://trustees.osu.edu/bylaws-and-rules/code> ), including the student code of academic integrity. Violations will result in severe penalties in this course (including a zero on the assignment) and all violations will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. For this course, *academic dishonesty* includes (but is not limited to):

- Dishonest conduct, such as knowingly reporting a false emergency.
- Use of someone else's ideas or expression (e.g., writing) without proper acknowledgment of the source. Proper acknowledgment (e.g., citation, quotation, footnote) should make clear both the **extent** and **nature** of the use. If you have used someone's exact words, you should use "quotation marks" as well as a (citation). If a large portion of your writing uses another person's ideas, argument structure, or narrative form then you should make clear where the "borrowing" begins and ends. Note that *paraphrasing someone, summarizing their arguments, or using their ideas* are all plagiarism if the source is not acknowledged. Plagiarism is more than just using someone else's exact words. Also, be aware that "someone else's ideas" here includes textbooks, articles, web pages, your professor's notes, your roommate's assignment from another class, and *anything else other than your own ideas and your own writing*. There is no outside source that it is acceptable to use without citing.
- Collaborating with other students on any assignment, homework, class project, etc., without the clear consent of the instructor is also academic dishonesty. If work is not assigned as a group project, you must do it entirely on your own. **Check with your instructor if in doubt.**
- Using software, artificial intelligence, websites, or other tools to provide or automatically generate answers to questions, ideas, sentences, or other portions of class assignments, quizzes, exams, or other submitted work. I may permit use of certain tools for certain assignments, but you must a) discuss with me and obtain my explicit permission at least one week in advance of submission, and b) include an appendix with your submission explaining what tool you used and how you used it. You may also be required to c) submit documentation. Failure to complete all these steps will be considered a violation.
- In most instances, taking your own work from one course and submitting it in a different course is also considered academic dishonesty. It is not appropriate to claim that work was done for one class when in fact it was written for a different class. **Check with your instructor if in doubt.**
- Exchanging information with another individual during a test, quiz, or examination is clearly academic dishonesty, as is the use of any materials not permitted for the exam.

It is your responsibility to be aware of the rules of academic dishonesty—ignorance is not a defense. ***When in doubt, consult your instructor before doing anything about which you are uncertain.*** You should also read “Ten Suggestions for Preserving Academic Integrity” available at <https://oaa.osu.edu/academic-integrity-and-misconduct/student-misconduct> .

**Diversity Statement:** The School of Communication at The Ohio State University embraces and maintains an environment that respects diverse traditions, heritages, experiences, and people. Our commitment to diversity moves beyond mere tolerance to recognizing, understanding, and welcoming the contributions of diverse groups and the value group members possess as individuals. In our School, the faculty, students, and staff are dedicated to building a tradition of diversity with principles of equal opportunity, personal respect, and the intellectual interests of those who comprise diverse cultures.

**Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct:** Everyone at Ohio State has the right to be free from harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, and sexual exploitation. To report any such incidents, find resources, or seek support, you may contact the Office of Institutional Equity. Please note your interactions may be confidential or not, so be sure to ask if this is a concern. The OIE website is <https://equity.osu.edu>. You may call 614-247-5838 (TTY 614-688-8605) or email [equity@osu.edu](mailto:equity@osu.edu).

Additional resources can be found in the Resources module on Carmen, including:

- \*Comm 4555 Student Resources (academic, tech, wellness, professional, financial)
- \*Comm 4555 Study Tips
- \*How to Email Your Professor
- \*C-REP Student Guide
- \*OSU Mental Health Resources
- \*OSU Technology Resources

*This syllabus is an agreement between the instructor and the student. The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus as deemed necessary, particularly given the COVID situation. By staying enrolled in this class, the student agrees to abide by the policies described herein.*

## Grading Rubric

**A:** All work is outstanding. Work is rich, creatively presented, well-structured, and error-free (or close to it). Content of presentations is accurate, on topic, presented in a professional and highly engaging fashion, and provides genuine enlightenment to the audience. Work reveals a deep understanding of the content of the course as well as the ability to work with concepts beyond the level of simply regurgitating facts and definitions. Overall, work demonstrates a solid grasp of all content and a high level of ability for creative, integrative, or intellectually rigorous application of the material.

**B:** All work is of high quality. Work is clear, well-structured, and largely error-free. Grades of A and B are not possible for work that does not demonstrate mastery of basic writing skills including spelling, grammar, organization, and logic. Work follows directions and conforms to all required elements, as well as maintaining the audience's attention and interest. Content demonstrates a thorough understanding of all elements of the course. Overall, work demonstrates a solid grasp of all content, and some ability for creative, integrative, or intellectually rigorous application of the material.

**C:** All work is of acceptable, average quality. Work is on topic, responds to the requirements of the assignment, and contains few errors. A grade of C is not possible for work that demonstrates significant departure from basic writing skills (spelling, grammar, etc.). Work addresses the requirements of the assignment and includes some elements of good style and structure. Content demonstrates a basic understanding of most elements of the course. Overall, work demonstrates a reasonable grasp of all content, but limited ability for creative, integrative, or intellectually rigorous application of the material.

**D:** Some work is of unacceptable quality. Work addresses the topic in a broad sense, but misses some key points, omits required elements, or contains an unacceptable level of errors. Work addresses the assignment at a basic level, but lacks fundamental elements of professional presentation, structure, or organization. Content reveals some key areas of the course material in which knowledge is lacking. Writing is likely to have several grammatical, spelling, or typographical errors. Overall, work demonstrates a weak grasp of content and little ability for creative, integrative, or intellectually rigorous application of the material.

**E:** A majority of the work is of unacceptable quality. Work fails to meet the basic requirements of the assignment, lacks basic elements of professional presentation, or is otherwise unresponsive to instructions. Writing is likely to have frequent grammatical, spelling, or typographical errors. Content reveals a widespread lack of knowledge. Overall, work demonstrates little grasp of the material.

*These guidelines were adapted from materials provided by the University of Arizona Department of Communication.*

## Course Overview

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
W Aug 21	Class intro	
F Aug 23	Self & identity	
W Aug 28	Interfaces & affordances	
F Aug 30	Self-expression & self-disclosure	
W Sep 4	Self-presentation & customization	
F Sep 6	The authentic self	
W Sep 11	Collective self	
F Sep 13	Identity exploration	
W Sep 18	Malleable & fragmented selves	<b>Assignment 1 due</b>
F Sep 20	Malleable & fragmented selves / exam review	
W Sep 25	<b>EXAM 1</b>	
F Sep 27	Quantified self	
W Oct 2	Algorithmic self	
F Oct 4	Self-esteem	
W Oct 9	The techless self	
F Oct 11	<b>Fall Break</b>	
W Oct 16	Social comparison	
F Oct 18	Self-objectification	
W Oct 23	Self-regulation & needs	<b>Assignment 2 due</b>
F Oct 25	Needs / exam review	
W Oct 30	<b>EXAM 2</b>	
F Nov 1	Social identity processes	
W Nov 6	Social identity processes	
F Nov 8	Doppelgängers & digital chameleons	
W Nov 13	Proteus effect	
F Nov 15	The infinite self	
W Nov 20	Boundaries of self	
F Nov 22	Project work day	
W Nov 27	<b>Thanksgiving</b>	
F Nov 29	<b>Thanksgiving</b>	
W Dec 4	Presentations / final exam review	<b>Final project due</b>
<b>Wed Dec 11</b>	<b>FINAL EXAM: 12 – 1:45</b>	

Note: More details (including readings due for each class) can be found on Carmen each week.