Communication 3545: Human-Computer Interaction + User Experience
Spring 2026

Instructor: Dr. Jesse Fox

Class information: T/R 12:45 – 2:05 PM, Journalism 216

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

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

Course Description

This course is an introduction to human-computer interaction (HCI) and user experience (UX). Its goal is to provide an introductory overview regarding how to evaluate and design interactive technologies. To that end, we will consider what constitutes good design, we will study a variety of ways to conceptualize and research design problems, we will examine how users' cognitive abilities and emotions influence design, and we will learn about the design and effects of a variety of interfaces. This course is paired with COMM 3165: Evaluation and Usability Testing, which covers a broader range of UX research skills.

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

Class activities, discussions, evaluations, exams, and the design diary should enable students to:
1. Apply theoretical and research-based approaches to HCI design and UX
2. Develop critical skills to evaluate and analyze media technologies
3. Start developing a toolkit for understanding UX and conducting user research
4. Identify and understand the needs of different user groups (e.g., accessibility)
5. Illustrate your understanding of these principles through practice
6. Practice and refine career-related skills such as professional communication, collaborative teamwork, time management, and project management

Required Course Materials

*Preece, J., Sharp, H., & Rogers, Y. (2023). *Interaction design: Beyond human-computer interaction* (6th ed.). Wiley & Sons.

*Lidwell, W., Holden, K., & Butler, J. (2015). *The pocket universal principles of design: 150 essential tools of artists, designers, developers, engineers, inventors, and makers.* Rockport Publishers.

*Other 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.

*One package of white 3" x 5" index cards (lined or unlined).

Course Output & Grade Tracking

	Earned	/ Total Points	%
Evaluation (top 2 scores)		/ 25	
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Exam 1		/ 70	
Exam 2		/ 100	
Final Exam		/ 120	
Design diary		/ 100	
Design diary presentation		/ 20	
Class activities, quizzes, & participation		/ 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.

As a key objective in this course is professionalization, **I do not accept late assignments.** If you are not present and prepared when assignments are collected (e.g., arrive late or leave class early) or miss the Carmen drop box time for digital assignments, you will earn a zero.

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 <u>final</u>.** 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, submit quality work in a timely fashion, be responsive to feedback, and make appropriate adjustments well before the end of the semester to meet your performance goals. 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. If you have questions about C-REP, please consult the C-REP [Answer Bot](), which can provide an immediate response to students' most common questions and issues: https://go.osu.edu/CREPbot

If you have reviewed the materials, checked with the [Answer Bot](), and can't find an answer to your question, you may email the C-REP coordinator. Please direct any questions regarding C-REP or requests for alternative assignments to Ms. Qin at crep@osu.edu . All interactions with C-REP personnel should adhere to C-REP's Respectful Communication policy.

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 course updates from a classmate; notes will not be provided and slides are not posted on Carmen. If you miss class, you will not be able to make up any in-class work or extra credit opportunities.

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. Make-up exams will not be given except in cases of unforeseen and convincingly documented emergencies or official University related absences, in which case the instructor must be notified at least two weeks in advance.

If you must miss class on account of contagious illness (COVID or flu), please email me in accordance with the Communication Policy below. Unless you are suddenly stricken or in an emergency situation, I expect notifications for illness- related absences to occur before class. Documentation may be requested. When you are well enough we can meet to discuss any needed makeup. If you have any questions about testing, how to get vaccinated, etc., please see https://safeandhealthy.osu.edu/.

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. I will not respond to messages sent 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 from your OSU email account at fox.775@osu.edu . Improper, unnecessary, or unprofessional emails 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).

Technology Use

This class involves frequent in-class activities, many of which involve drawing, designing, or otherwise manipulating material. You must have regular-sized (8 ½ x 11") notebook paper and writing utensils with you every day. You will also be asked to sketch or draw in your notes to illustrate or practice certain principles. I recommend a notebook for everyday note taking, but you are permitted to use a flat device and a stylus (e.g., a tablet). If you engage in nonclass activities on your note-taking device, you may lose the privilege of using it, as you are creating a distraction for other students.

Phone or other nonclass device use (laptops, tablets, smartwatches, headphones, 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. **Phones and other devices should be silenced and put away before class starts.**

Any form of audio recording, video recording, or photo capture is not permitted during class unless you are given explicit permission to do so from me and also consent from anyone you are recording. Anyone who violates this policy will be subject to grade penalties and may be asked to leave class.

Unprofessional and Problematic Behavior

Disruptions and distractions (including talking during lecture; text messaging; nonclass device 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. 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.

Distributing or sharing course materials with third parties (i.e., anyone who is not also currently enrolled in this course) is strictly forbidden and subject to reporting and/or grade penalties as described above.

Disability Accommodations

The university strives to maintain a healthy and accessible environment to support student learning in and out of the classroom. If students anticipate or experience academic barriers based on a disability (including mental health and medical conditions, whether chronic or temporary), you should notify me immediately so that we can meet privately to discuss.

To establish reasonable accommodations, you will be asked to register with Student Life Disability Services (098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Ave.). After registration, students should make arrangements with their instructors as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that accommodations may be implemented in a timely fashion. You can connect with them at slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; or slds.osu.edu.

Academic Integrity

I take academic dishonesty very seriously. Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research, and other educational and scholarly activities. Thus, The Ohio State University and the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) expect that all students have read and understand the University's Code of Student Conduct, and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Students must recognize that failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in the University's Code of Student Conduct and this syllabus may constitute academic misconduct.

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. If COAM determines that a student violated the University's Code of Student Conduct (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in the course and suspension or dismissal from the University. 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), including generative AI, without proper acknowledgment of the source you consulted. 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, online sources, AI, 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 me 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. If you are interested in using an AI tool, 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 of your process. 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 me 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 me before doing anything about which you are uncertain.***

Additional resources can be found in the Resources module on Carmen, including:
　　　　*Additional Course Policies (syllabus addendum)
　　　　*Comm 3545 Student Resources (academic, tech, wellness, professional, financial)
　　　　*Comm 3545 Study Tips
　　　　*How to Email Your Professor
　　　　*C-REP Student Guide

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. 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 typological 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 typological 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

Date > Topic > Assignments

T Jan 13 > Class intro; the field of HCI + UX

R Jan 15 > UX, design thinking, & the design process

T Jan 20 > Foundations & key concepts > Intro evaluation

R Jan 22 > UX goals & design principles

T Jan 27 > UX goals & design principles

R Jan 29 > Interfaces & interactions > Evaluation 1

T Feb 3 > Interfaces & interactions

R Feb 5 > Users & motivations > **Evaluation 1 due**

T Feb 10 > Users & motivations / exam review

R Feb 12 > EXAM 1

T Feb 17 > Cognition > Evaluation 2

R Feb 19 > Cognition

T Feb 24 > Affect > **Evaluation 2 due**

R Feb 26 > Affect

T Mar 3 > Social > Evaluation 3

R Mar 5 > Social

T Mar 10 > Social / exam review > **Evaluation 3 due**

R Mar 12 > EXAM 2

T Mar 17 > Spring Break

R Mar 19 > Spring Break

T Mar 24 > Persuasion

R Mar 26 > Persuasion

T Mar 31 > Ethical considerations & empathy

R Apr 2 > Defining > **Design diary check-in**

T Apr 7 > Ideating

R Apr 9 > Prototyping

T Apr 14 > Prototyping/Testing

R Apr 16 > Testing

T Apr 21 > Presentations > **Presentations due**

R Apr 23 > Presentations / exam review > **Design diary due**

R Apr 30 > FINAL EXAM: 2-3:45 PM

Note: More details (including readings due for each class) can be found in each week's Carmen module.