

# Communication 7851: Human-Computer Interaction

## Spring 2026

**Instructor:** Jesse Fox, Ph.D.

**Class Information:** T/R 2:20 – 3:40 PM, Derby 3116

**Office hours:** Derby Hall 3084, Tuesday 10 AM - 12 PM and by request.

**Zoom:** If you'd like to meet via Zoom, please let me know in advance. We will use the following link: <https://go.osu.edu/foxzoom>

**Email:** [fox.775@osu.edu](mailto:fox.775@osu.edu) If you need to email, please put "COMM 7851" in the subject line. Do not contact me via Carmen.

### Course Description

This course is one of two seminars offered as part of the communication technology focus area of the School of Communication graduate program. It delves into the major theories, concepts, and guiding research in computer-mediated communication (CMC). Although our primary focus is within the field of communication, the course also draws on literature from psychology, computer science, design, and other relevant disciplines.

### Course Objectives

Via the readings, class discussion, knowledge assessments, and assignments, you will:

1. Explore HCI concepts and theories and their relevance to communication
2. Critically evaluate and synthesize interdisciplinary HCI research
3. Identify and elaborate elements of HCI design and their effects on users
4. Understand the effects of HCI design and UX on research conducted with digital technologies
5. Brainstorm and elaborate research ideas advancing our understanding of HCI
6. To develop skills that will benefit you in future careers, including tech skills

### Required Materials

- \* All required readings can be found on Carmen.
- \* *The APA Style Manual* (7th ed.)
- \* A technological setup that enables you to participate fully in remote class discussions and activities, should that be necessary.

### Recommended Materials

- \* Most recommended readings can be found on Carmen.
- \* Strunk, W., & White, E. B. (2000). *The elements of style* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Allyn & Bacon. (Or any later edition)

## Assignments

*Discussion participation* (20%). You are expected to make substantial and meaningful contributions to class discussions. **Merely attending class does not constitute participation.** Answering every question does not mean you are offering a substantial and meaningful contribution. Being able to ask thoughtful questions, challenge assumptions, provide evidence-based arguments, and defend your perspective is essential as an academic and in most careers—as is learning to listen, learning to pause and process, learning to share the floor, and learning when *not* to speak. Throughout each class I will be tracking your performance, and this information will be used to determine your participation grade.

*Tailored tech skill*. (10%). Researching technologies means you must have a grasp on how to use them. For this class, you will identify a technological skill you need to improve and propose a learning path, a timeline, and a method of assessment for these skills. Examples may include learning how to use or implement skills such as: coding/programming, website development, video editing, Photoshop, Tableau, R, or Google Analytics. Resources you may consult include campus resources, online or offline courses, tutorials, or working with a tutor to learn.

Examples of free online resources include:

<https://www.codecademy.com> (Python, JavaScript, R, HTML + CSS, etc.)

<http://khanacademy.org> (JavaScript, HTML + CSS, animation, etc.)

<https://www.adobe.com/learn> (Photoshop, Premier, Dreamweaver, etc.)

You Tube (many series, but I suggest finding recommendations)

*Methods/skills assignments* (20%). During the course there will be assignments focused on advancing your skills. Some will be completed in class and others will be completed on your own.

*Knowledge assessments* (20%). At 4-5 points in the semester, you will be given an in-class assessment. You will be given a designated question based on the day's readings and ~15 minutes to write a response. Your lowest score will be dropped.

*Final project* (30%). The remaining 30% of your grade is up to you. Please let me know as soon as possible which option you choose (extended skills, lit synthesis, research proposal). Each option will have interim due dates and a final due date (see calendar).

*\*Extended skills.* The skills path allows you to continue to develop or practice skills, consider the implications more deeply, or apply skills or concepts to a new context. You will be expected to complete 3-4 of these options (check with me after the second submission). For example, we will be doing some user testing in class; the extended skill would be to write up a heuristic evaluation for a specified audience (e.g., convincing a school board or organization they should or should not adopt a technology). Keep in mind you will want to provide evidence of your effort in these submissions.

*\*Research project.* Students who are very interested in this topic and looking for flexibility to pursue projects distinct from their existing research track may wish to make progress towards a new idea. Your options: a) a literature synthesis of an HCI topic, or b) an executable research proposal. Whatever you do, these must be **your original ideas, not your advisor's or your lab's.** We will work together individually to decide what would be reasonable to submit by the end of the semester.

I only recommend research proposals for students with enough experience to fully invest in originating a sound, valid HCI study informed by appropriate theorizing. If you are interested in generating the foundation for a potential conference paper or publication but do not have sufficient grounding, the literature synthesis is a better choice. Research proposals must be **your original ideas informed by what you have learned in this class**, not the same ol' thing you've previously developed with a new moderator tossed in or something you are working on with collaborators (e.g., your advisor or lab mates).

### **Life**

I expect you to attend and participate in every course session to the extent that you are able, but of course there is a lot going on right now. For these reasons, I ask that you are as open as you are comfortable with regarding life and health-related issues affecting you or your schoolwork. If you are too ill to participate in this course, please let me know as soon as you are able. If you have other issues impeding your performance in class (e.g., concerns about your safety coming to campus), let's talk about it and try to find workable solutions.

### **Other Course Policies**

#### **Email Policy**

Email is the bane of my existence, and there are always hundreds of unread emails haunting my inbox. Most issues are better addressed talking in person (affordances, y'all). As much as possible, please reserve email for administrative issues and issues that can't wait until class. If you email me, please put "COMM 7851" in the subject line.

#### **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.

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 is subject to grade penalties and may be asked to leave class.

### **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. 12<sup>th</sup> 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 [sls@osu.edu](mailto:sls@osu.edu); 614-292-3307; or [sls.osu.edu](http://sls.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 *before* you start working, 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.**

## My Expectations

Being a graduate student is not an easy job; if it were, it would be terrible preparation for a career in academia. Graduate school is your opportunity to learn and develop as a scholar. Moreover, if you are earning a degree in Communication (not a degree in this very narrow aspect of the field that you study) it is your responsibility to have a well-rounded education in the discipline more broadly. Thus, I expect this class to be a priority for you. I expect you to come to class fully prepared and ready to engage every single day. I expect you to be motivated and willing to learn, critique, and dispute the material, and to grow as a scholar.

Another part of graduate school is learning the meta-lesson of how to succeed in academia, although these lessons extend to most careers. I expect your performance in class to reflect professionalism. A considerable part of this is learning how to make a good impression on others who will always be evaluating you; demonstrating that you are a responsible, capable, and diligent scholar; listening to, respecting, and helping others; and meeting (better yet, exceeding) expectations that others have for your performance. For this course, this means keeping up with and meeting deadlines for all readings and assignments; participating in class discussion in a meaningful way *every* meeting; and submitting professional, insightful, and polished work.

### **What You Can Expect**

I love teaching. I love working with graduate students. All caps. I am here to help you learn and prepare for your future as best I can. As an academic, I consider myself forever a student: I don't know all the things, but I am willing to learn. And, I expect to learn something from each of you. I love when students question and confront the material; one of the best parts about teaching graduate classes is to have my thinking or perspective challenged.

I am happy to meet with you to talk about class or academia or life or, especially, food. I loathe communicating through email and things often get buried in my inbox, so please never hesitate to follow up or ask me in person if I have not attended to something.

*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.*

## COMM 7851 Tentative Course Schedule

*See Carmen for readings and additional content.*

### Date > Topic > Assignments

T Jan 13 > Class intro

R Jan 15 > What is HCI?

T Jan 20 > Foundations of HCI

R Jan 22 > Channels and affordances

T Jan 27 > Channels and affordances > **Tech skills proposal due**

R Jan 29 > Interactivity

T Feb 3 > HCI in research > **Method 1 due**

R Feb 5 > HCI in research

T Feb 10 > Ethics

R Feb 12 > Self & identity

T Feb 17 > Social identity

R Feb 19 > Cognitive effects > **Method 2 due**

T Feb 24 > Affect

R Feb 26 > Social: Perceptions and attributions

T Mar 3 > Social: CASA

R Mar 5 > Social: Beyond CASA > **Paper proposal / ESA due**

T Mar 10 > Social: relationships

R Mar 12 > Social: relationships > **Method 3 due**

T Mar 17 > **SPRING BREAK**

R Mar 19 > **SPRING BREAK**

T Mar 24 > Influence & persuasion

R Mar 26 > Influence & persuasion

T Mar 31 > Health & well-being > **Tech skills output due**

R Apr 2 > UX design process & design methods

T Apr 7 > UX design concepts & affect > **Paper check-in / ESA due**

R Apr 9 > UX evaluation methods

T Apr 14 > UX implications in research

R Apr 16 > TBD

T Apr 21 > TBD

R Apr 23 > TBD

R Apr 30 > **Final paper or ESA due by 5 PM**