Objectives and Outcomes

This course explores the computer science subfield of interaction design (IxD), a.k.a. computer-human (or human-computer) interaction (CHI/HCI). IxD seeks to understand human behavior when interacting with computing systems and studies metrics, techniques, and theories for achieving effective interaction. Long after you finish this course, my hope is that you will be able to:

1. Appreciate and express the art and science of interaction design, including its theories, principles, methodologies, and role in software design and development.

2. Communicate, evaluate, and expand upon a user interface of your own design.

3. Demonstrate the fundamentals behind designing and implementing user interfaces.

In addition to the course-specific content, you are also expected to:

4. Follow disciplinary best practices throughout the course.

Prerequisites/Prior Background

Intermediate to advanced proficiency in any programming language is very helpful. Concurrent or prior taking of CMSI 386 Programming Languages provides exposure to common language concepts with varying syntax. Some material in this course carries directly into CMSI 371 Computer Graphics.

Materials and Texts


Course Work and Grading

Your final grade will be based on the percentage of the points you get for the following deliverables against the total number of possible points. “W” indicates a written assignment and “P” indicates programming work:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GitHub and YouTube account listing</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front-end design/white paper</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front-end development</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>API integration</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front-end evaluation and design vision document</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reusable direct manipulation user interface component</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 500 points

Percentages ≥ 90% get an A– or better; ≥ 80% get a B– or better; ≥ 70% get a C– or better. I may nudge grades upward based on qualitative considerations such as degree of difficulty, effort, class participation, time constraints, and overall attitude throughout the course.

Term Portfolio

Your accumulated writings and software for the semester comprise the term portfolio—the final, definitive artifact that demonstrates the course’s outcomes. It is how you show that you have, indeed, accomplished the objectives of this course.
An assignment’s number is its due date in mmdd format, and it is always due by 11:59:59.999pm of that date. Point values are based on the state of your assignments at that moment.

Formal Written Work
Your portfolio will include at least three (2) pieces of formal written work:
• A design document/white paper for a web app front end which you will envision, to be built on top of a pre-existing, functional application back end (web service API)
• A culminating document that evaluates your web app and envisions future enhancements
Demonstrate outcomes 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, and 4d–4f to maximize the points for these assignments.

Programming Work
The second major type of work in your portfolio is software. Programming work includes:
• Front-end development of envisioned web app
• Integration with web service API
• Implementation of a reusable direct manipulation user interface component
Demonstrate outcomes 3a, 3b, and 4a–4f to maximize the points for these assignments.

Version Control & Automated QA
Version control is an indispensable part of today’s computer science landscape in industry, the academy, and the open source community. We use version control heavily in this course: make sure that you get the hang of it.

None of the assignments can be completed (well) overnight; they should be the result of steady progress from the moment they are assigned to the date they are due. “One and done” submissions will negatively affect the final score.

For the programming assignments, as an incentive for making steady progress early and often, an automated QA (quality assurance) system will be connected to your assignment repository via continuous integration (CI).

CI monitors your assignment repository and can trigger assorted automated activities when new work arrives. For this course, CI performs automated QA on your source code.

Submit your work-in-progress to have the system identify areas of improvement. These areas will appear in a QA report that will be linked to your commits. Eliminate these errors and warnings and make sure your programs work correctly “out of the box” by the due date to maximize your points. I reserve the right to discontinue further evaluation of your work if the severity or amount of QA flags makes the process too difficult or disruptive.

Workload Expectations
In line with LMU’s Credit Hour Policy, the workload expectation for this course is that for every one (1) hour of classroom instruction (50 scheduled minutes), you will complete at least two (2) hours of out-of-class work each week. This is a 3-unit course with 3 hours of instruction per week, so you are expected to complete $3 \times 2 = 6$ hours of weekly work outside of class.

Attendance
Attendance at all sessions is expected, but not absolutely required. If you must miss class, it is your responsibility to notify me about this and keep up with the course. The last day to add or drop a class without a grade of W is August 31. The withdrawal or credit/no-credit deadline is November 2.

Academic Honesty
Academic dishonesty will be treated as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences that can range from receiving no credit to expulsion. It is never permissible to turn in work that has been copied from another student or copied from a source (including the Internet) without properly acknowledging the source. It is your responsibility to make sure that your work meets the standard of academic honesty set forth in:

http://academics.lmu.edu/honesty

Special Accommodations
Students with special needs who require reasonable modifications or special assistance in this course should promptly direct their request to the Disability Support Services (DSS) Office. Any student who currently has a documented disability (ADHD, autism spectrum, learning, physical, or psychiatric) needing academic accommodations should contact DSS (Daum 224, x84216) as early in the semester as possible. All requests and discussions will remain confidential. Please visit http://www.lmu.edu/dss for additional information.
### Topics and Important Dates

Correlated outcomes are shown for each topic. Specifics may change as the course progresses. University dates (italicized) are less likely to change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>August/September</th>
<th>Introduction to the course; background and history of interaction design (1a, 2a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 31</td>
<td>Last day to add or drop a class without a grade of \textit{W}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 3</td>
<td>Labor Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Usability metrics (1b, 2a, 2b); guidelines, principles, and theories (1b, 2a, 2b); introduction to modern web apps (3a, 4a–4e)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Overview of interaction styles (1b, 2a); menus, forms, and dialogs (1b, 2a, 2b); implementation in HTML/CSS/JavaScript (3a, 3b, 4a–4e)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Direct manipulation (1b, 2a, 2b); affordances (1a, 1b, 2a, 2b); implementation in HTML/CSS/JavaScript (3a, 3b, 4a–4e)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2</td>
<td>Withdraw/credit/no-credit deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 21–23</td>
<td>Thanksgiving; no class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>Code review/improvement workshops (1a–4e); miscellaneous topics (varies; time permitting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 14</td>
<td>Last set of term portfolio assignments due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You can view my class calendar and office hour schedule in any iCalendar-savvy client. Its subscription link can be found on the course web site (it's too long to provide in writing).

### Tentative Nature of the Syllabus

If necessary, this syllabus and its contents are subject to revision; students are responsible for any changes or modifications distributed in class or posted to the course website.
# Course Outcomes

1. Appreciate and express the art and science of interaction design, including its theories, principles, methodologies, and role in software design and development.

1a. Understand and express how interaction design relates to mental models. This is derived mainly from Don Norman's big picture view of interaction design, as explained in *The Design of Everyday Things*.

1b. Understand and describe core interaction design concepts: usability metrics; interaction design guidelines, principles, & theories; interaction styles; and affordances & natural mappings. For these outcomes, “understand and describe” includes being able to list, define, explain, and give examples of relevant concepts, always with clarity, coherence, intellectual force, and stylistic control.

2. Communicate, evaluate, and expand upon a user interface of your own design.

2a. Effectively use: usability metrics; interaction design guidelines, principles, & theories; interaction styles; and affordances & natural mappings to make appropriate, well-founded interaction design decisions, then communicate them in written form. Such decisions include user interface analysis, diagnosis of interaction design problems, evaluation or comparison of user interfaces, choosing interaction styles, and envisioning new user interface designs. Such choices or decisions must also be clearly explained or justified.

2b. Assess the performance of a particular user interface, including but not limited to capturing and prioritizing usability metrics and correlating results to mental models and interaction design theories. Interaction design is not an entirely subjective endeavor, and can in fact be evaluated objectively and quantitatively. It is important to be able to conduct such evaluation, particularly on one's own designs, in order to map out genuine improvements to an application's usability.

3. Demonstrate the fundamentals behind designing and implementing user interfaces.

3a. Know and understand how user interfaces are constructed, especially the model-view-controller (MVC) paradigm. These outcomes are all demonstrated by writing programs that involve one or more of these areas. Thus, some specific set of technologies, languages, and libraries must be learned and used. However, it must also be understood that these concepts are general and technology-independent: when called for, one should be able to transfer this knowledge to other platforms.

3b. Know and understand event-driven programming.

4. Follow disciplinary best practices throughout the course.

4a. Write syntactically correct, functional code. Code has to compile. Code has to work. No errors, no bugs. Use unit tests as much as possible.

4b. Demonstrate proper separation of concerns, especially MVC. This is the basis of good software design. It makes software easier to maintain, improve, and extend. Proper separation of concerns includes but is not limited to correct scoping of variables & functions and zero duplication of code.

4c. Write code that is easily understood by programmers other than yourself. This outcome involves all aspects of code readability and clarity for human beings, including but not limited to documentation & comments, spacing & indentation, proper naming, and adherence to conventions or standards.

4d. Use available resources and documentation to find required information. The need to look things up never goes away. Remember also that the course instructor counts as an “available resource,” so this outcome includes asking questions and using office hours.

4e. Use version control effectively. In addition to simply using version control correctly, effective use also involves appropriate commit frequency and descriptive commit messages.

4f. Meet all designated deadlines.