
Comm244:

Design for the World Wide Web

Overview

No one could have predicted how rapidly use of the World Wide Web would accelerate. Today the web is used by artists and businesses, nonprofit organizations and universities, poets and stockbrokers alike. It is used to sell and buy things, to teach and to learn, to showcase the arts or share family photos across continents. It has even become an art form itself. The future of the web relies heavily on designers who can create a powerful and interactive visual presence that facilitates communication rather than obscures it. This course is designed to begin to build the skills necessary to accomplish that end.

Goals

Web design, as a discipline, demands elegant solutions to complex problems: how to combine the clear display of site content and navigation with an engaging and effective visual presentation of that information. In this course you will wear many hats. You will write and sketch, you will research and deconstruct, you will design layouts and information, you will record and notate. By making sure that you are in attendance and that you complete your assignments, you should, by the course's end, be able to conceptualize, organize, design and produce a small, functioning web site.

You will be able to:

- Understand principles of information architecture and apply them
- Understand principles of navigation, accessibility, web standards and usability and be able to apply them
- Understand file management and directory paths
- Be comfortable with semantic mark up
- Have a rudimentary understanding of HTML5, and CSS.
- Have a rudimentary understanding of working with images on the web, including basic Photoshop skills, scanning, etc.
- Understand FTP protocol and the use of text editing programs
- Manage the site development process and work flow.

Fall 2012
Monday 3:30-6:20

Instructor: Ellen Grabiner
E-Mail: grabiner@simmons.edu
Phone: x2827
Office: L322
Office Hours: Monday 2:30-3:30, T-TH 2-3:30
and by appointment.

Required Texts:

Learning Web Design, 4th Edition
by Jennifer Niederst Robbins

Don't Make Me Think: A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability, 2nd Edition, by Stephen Krug

Recommended: HTML5: The Missing Manual, by Matthew MacDonald, HTML5 Up and Running, by Mark Pilgrim, as well as other, CSS3 reference books.

Class web site:
web.simmons.edu/~grabiner/comm244

Methods

There are some who maintain that there is no need to attend face-to-face school anymore, because everything you might need to learn exists on-line somewhere. And while it is true, especially in the field of web design, that you can find absolutely everything you need on-line — and you will be strongly encouraged to do so — in the collegiality of the classroom is where you will learn so much more. In the process of deconstructing a web site, seeing how your fellow students completed their assignments, what questions are asked and answered, learning occurs. We will demonstrate skills and point to resources, we will practice, practice, practice what we have learned, we will work individually and in small groups, you will blog, mark up, design and sketch, do research, and we will critique and then critique again, the work that we do.

Websites and Coding and Blogs, Oh my!!!

Much of what we do will in fact take place on line. Our home base will be the class web site, <http://web.simmons.edu/~grabiner/comm244> upon which will be located homework assignments, readings, resources, the syllabus, etc. You will create your working class web site that will link to the main class website, and you will also create and maintain a blog throughout the semester, journaling about your process, amassing information and resources. Your blog posts are meant to get you thinking and writing about issues in web design. They will also help you hone your web writing skills, which is another line on your resume that will impress! They should be well written and carefully proofed. Anyone else's thoughts or work should be appropriately cited and linked to. We will also work on a practice web site, The Good Food site, and for the culmination of all your work this semester you will design, test, produce and upload a website of your own.

Grading

Your grade will be parsed out at follows:

- Homework assignments 20 %
- Good Food site 15 %
- Blog/web journal 15 %
- Final project 30 %
- Class Participation 20 %

Those Other Rules

Any assignment that is not completed will receive a “zero” for a grade. If you absolutely must miss a class, you are responsible for making up the material. This does not mean expecting a private lesson about what was covered. It does mean finding a student in the class who is willing to share her notes and information with you, it does mean reviewing the the class web site and any materials uploaded to it, it does mean finding out if assignments, quizzes, readings were handed out or assigned and making sure you either get them on line or from me. You are responsible for all the material presented in class, in the readings and on our class web site, whether or not you are in attendance. The heart of this course is what happens in class. Yes, there are outside assignments and opportunities to participate in extending our classroom discussion outside of the classroom time. But what is truly important is the shared learning experience during class time. For this reason, please be aware that if you miss more than six classes over the course of the semester, you will not pass the course.

A Note on Plagiarism:

Don't. All the work you hand in must be your own. Your very own. I will know it if you use other's words or code and don't give them credit. Do learn from one another, do do research but acknowledge what is the work of others. I will know it if you

steal other's work from the web. You will force me to involve the honor board which I am loathe to do, but have no choice. Don't do it.

Weekly Schedule: Broad Strokes

Week One

- Introduction to Web Design: What is a web page, web site? Introduction to HTML5 and FTP.

Week Two

- Fundamental HTML5; basic markup, creating links, begin Good Food website.

Week Three

- Introduction to CSS; Web standards and HTML5 validation

Week Four

- Introduction to Usability; CSS and more CSS; Typography and the web

Week Five

- Usability Lab Tour/ Introduction to web graphics and Photoshop

Week Six

- The Design Process; usability, information architecture.

Week Seven

- Mock ups, Wireframes and the Grid

Week Eight

- Good Food presentations!

Week Nine

- Your final project: mockups, content inventory, and markup

Week Ten

- Site maps and navigational structures

Week Eleven

- Making that web-site work!