

 **English 526/[726]: [Advanced] Writing in Electronic Environments (Usability and User Experience/UX)**

Spring 2021 @ Pittsburg State University

Location and Meeting times

Grubbs 304

12pm-12:50 MWF

  **Instructor:** Dr. Jessica Jorgenson (Dr. J)

Office: 424 Grubbs

Office Hours/Student Hours: M-F 9am-10am, MWF 1-2pm, TTH 2-3pm, and by appointment (in person or Zoom will be available)

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This course focuses on how we experience our digital spaces.

For us to start to understand course topics, like user experience and design, we'll start simply by examining the spaces and objects already around us.

I hope you will find it useful, interesting, and maybe even fun sometimes!

 **Required Texts**

All course texts are available in Canvas. We are using *Don't Make Me Think, Revisited: A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability* by Steve Krug. I was able to get a free PDF version of his text, but you are free to purchase it for yourself on [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com) or [Barnes and Noble](https://www.barnesandnoble.com) or through another retailer if you do not wish to use the PDF.

 **Course Description:**

This course will focus on user experience. User experience is a person's emotions, attitudes, and use around a product, system, or service. To help us understand user experience, we will discuss core concepts related to usability and user experience in web and mobile platforms. Assignments will ask us to reflect on and analyze the user experience design of web, gaming, and other digital platforms. A final project will focus on creating a usability test over an app, product, or web platform.

Course Objectives and Goals

This course should help you achieve the following goals:

Rhetorical Knowledge

- Students identify varied rhetorical situations calling for a wide range of responses informed by context and theory.
- Students evaluate the appropriateness of rhetorical choices in light of anticipated consequences.

Process and Collaborative Textual Evaluation

- Students demonstrate respectful negotiating behaviors during collaborative textual production and evaluation (listening attentively, airing all viewpoints, valuing difference, coming to consensus or dissensus, dividing labor fairly, balancing competing agendas, expectations, and values).

Craft & Editing

- Students consider, apply, and control stylistic options (prose style, figurative language, voice, register, tone, word choice, etc.); correctness in syntax, grammar, usage, punctuation, mechanics, and spelling; coherence and cohesion; and the organization of their texts appropriate to the rhetorical situation.

Textual Production & Delivery

- Students identify and evaluate options for genre, medium, design, circulation, and delivery.

Reflective Learning

- Students consciously synthesize and integrate insights from one project into another.

Course Delivery Statement

This course is scheduled as a face-to-face course. In the event of moving to emergency remote instruction, this course will be online synchronous or online asynchronous based on your individual needs and preferences. This means I will have synchronous meetings scheduled, but they will be recorded for later viewing for students needing to participate asynchronously. If you need any accommodations in regards to course delivery, please contact me. I will allow a student to complete this course remotely, if needed.

Classroom Environment and Expectations

I practice a feminist, critical pedagogy where I find that I learn just as much as you and along with you. I have a PhD, but I have no illusions that I know everything about my field. I started college as an unsure, quiet, second-

generation college student (my dad went back to college a little before I started college). Academia was a foreign concept to me, but I believe this challenge helped me to become a better, more thoughtful member of the academy (or so this is always my hope). My courses thrive on discussion, so I expect you to come to class prepared to be an active participant. When I step into a classroom, I step in with the expectation that I will not have to police you. For example, I should not have to tell you to be quiet if someone is speaking. The classroom is a collaborative community full of difference and so it exists as a “contact zone” (see: Mary Louise Pratt, “Contact Zones”). Because the classroom exists as a contact zone, I need you to respect differences in embodied experiences. People from outside communities will enter our classroom, so be prepared to interact with and welcome differences. With this, I encourage you to bring your own knowledge, experience, and expertise to our discussions, but also arrive to class with an open mind. I learn as much from you as I hope you learn from me. I welcome you to the course and I look forward to getting to know you better as we discuss course materials.

My Teaching Style

I approach teaching from a rhetorical and inclusive standpoint, meaning I work to put audience, purpose, and context into the foreground of my teaching. I try not to lecture, though I sometimes realize I have to lecture to share course content with you. I want learning to be interactive, and this is probably why I love digital culture so much. Because our class will be interactive, I encourage you to bring your tablet, laptop, or smartphone to use during class activities. I usually will always try to plan for discussion or activities, but these require your participation. All my class materials required hours of preparation and thoughtful execution, and I try to make that work a visible reality in my teaching. For each class day, I typically will prepare a course outline in a Google document or I may include a Google Slides presentation or video, but please realize that class discussion can lead us to other topics. Please let me know if something is unclear to you during our class discussions. My goal is to build an approachable rapport with you as people, so if there is any way I can further support your learning, let me know. I love the content I teach, so I hope you gain something from me sharing that content.

Class Participation/Attendance

If you are physically able to be in class, I expect your attendance and attention. Because of COVID restrictions, we may not always all be able to be present in the classroom, so here are some guidelines to help you understand how I view attendance and participation if not physically in class.

- If on Zoom, you must participate synchronously.
- Having your camera/video on in Zoom is helpful!

- Use the chat function on Zoom to ask questions or share responses. I may assign a fellow classmate to keep an eye on the chat if I need to.
- I do require you use the chat or an assigned Google doc to participate in class if you are on Zoom.
- If you must isolate or quarantine, I expect you on Zoom unless you are too ill to attend. Please reach out as soon as you can if you are struggling with illness.

I may see the need to add more guidelines as we continue on in the semester. I also know some of you must participate asynchronously. For this purpose, I have added Perusall to the course to help us all share thoughts about our course content. Finally, I know my system is not perfect and we may see a need to change it as the course continues.

Absence related to COVID-19

If you have to be absent from class because of COVID-19, [please fill out this form](#) and notify me via email when you can.

Zoom and In Person **Office Hours**

I have scheduled office hours through Zoom, but I am available for in person meetings during these times meaning I'll be in my office and on Zoom simultaneously. I'll notify you of any changes.

Course Assignments

Each assignment will have its own assignment description and rubric. I'll be discussing each assignment separately in class. *Note: students taking this course for graduate credit will have different expectations for the UX project as compared to undergraduate students.*

- *Perusall (in Canvas):* In order to help everyone participate remotely and asynchronously, I have added Perusall to our Canvas course. This will allow any remote (on Zoom) or Asynchronous learner to engage with our readings by leaving comments and annotating, which I can also bring into class discussion. These will be graded as participation for remote students, but if we hate it we can move onto using Canvas Discussions.
- *Reflection on User Experience Design:* This first assignment is more of a reflective assignment, and will ask you to look at the world through "designer eyes." You will reflect on the things in which you interact with during a typical week.
- *Mini Usability Study:* This assignment asks you to document your own user-experience with an artifact selected by another student over a one week period and prepare for an interview about the usability of that object.
- *UX Project:* This project asks you to create personas, create and conduct a usability test, and write a proposal.

✔ Grading Scale

- A means truly excellent work—exceeding expectations in all areas evaluated. You have thought about audience, purpose, and context and presented information thoughtfully and with creativity.
- B means very strong work that reflects academic and assignment standards: is on-time, well-edited, well presented, and attends to the needs of its audience and context.
- C means that you have adequately met the assignment in most areas
- D means work that does not meet expectations because it does not adequately meet the assignment in one or more areas
- F means work that is not turned in or does not meet expectations in any area of evaluation

✔ Drop Policy

I will not drop a student from a course, no matter how much work that student has completed or if the student stopped coming to class. If you wish to have me drop you from the course, please notify me in writing. You can also drop yourself from a course prior to a drop or withdrawal date.

👨👩👧👦 Family Policy

Children or caregiving should not be a barrier to an education. Children are welcome in my classroom. If you are a breastfeeding mother, you have every right to have your baby with you. Please consider the following when you bring your child or children to class:

- If your child causes a disruption in learning, you may leave the room with your child. Another student can take notes or share information with you. You are welcome to reach out to me after class to review any missed materials.
- If you need to take a break to feed or care for your child, please let me know and I'm happy to accommodate you.
- All other students and classroom guests must respect your needs as a parent or caregiver. You are protected under Title IX. Please report any disrespect to me as I may not be aware of everything happening in our classroom at all times.
- Social distancing will greatly affect if someone can be in class, so please let me know ahead of time if you are having childcare needs.

If you have questions about this policy, please talk to me.

📱 Electronic Devices in the Classroom

We will use electronic devices frequently in class for class purposes. Any use of electronic devices outside of class purposes is strongly discouraged and may result in disciplinary actions.

Zoom

I will use Zoom for anyone who cannot attend in person classes. You do not need to have your microphone or camera on. We may use the chat or annotate function in Zoom, and Google Docs and Perusall, to help us facilitate engagement with the course content. If we need to move in person classes to remote instruction, Zoom will be used for any synchronous class meetings.

Contacting the Instructor

Email or Canvas inbox is the best way to contact me. I do ask that you give me 24 hours on a weekday to respond to an email. If you email me during the weekend, and this includes Friday afternoon, I may not respond to it until Monday. When it comes to discussing grades or grade disputes, I would prefer you email me only to set up a time to meet and we can discuss the grade in person.

Plagiarism and Cheating Policy

In my experience, plagiarism and cheating most often occur because of student stress and/or a student not understanding an assignment. Please talk to me if you are stressed about your assignments, grade, or if you are not understanding an assignment.

Students in the military and veterans

Veterans and students who are soldiers on active duty should let the instructor know of any special circumstances.

Accommodation Statement

All of us learn in different ways, and the organization of any course will accommodate each student differently. For example, you may prefer to process information by speaking and listening, so that some of the written handouts I provide may be difficult for you to use as a learning tool. In this case, you may want to pay particular attention to class discussion and group activities. Please talk to me as soon as you can about your individual learning needs and how this course can best accommodate them. If you do not have a documented disability, remember that other support services, including the PSU Writing Center, are available to all students.

Syllabus Supplement

You may view the [Spring 2021 syllabus supplement here.](#)

Questions? Comments

Inbox me or make an appointment to chat!



Course Calendar: *I reserve the right to amend/change the syllabus at any time. Due dates may be subject to change. All changes will be announced in class, on Canvas, and shared via email.*

Date	Class Activity	Readings and Assignments due
Week 1 Wednesday, Jan 20	Introductions and overview of the course	
Friday, Jan 22	<p>What does it mean to be user-friendly?</p> <p>Intro to Reflection on UX Design assignment</p>	<p>Read: UX #1 Assignment: Reflection on User Experience Design assignment</p> <p>Make sure to read through the syllabus before class.</p> <p>To do: Bring an object you think is user-friendly to class.</p> <p>Introductions due to Discussions.</p>
Week 2 Monday, Jan 25	Discuss usability	Read: Introduction to Usability
Wednesday, Jan 27	<p>We'll compare the UX Design of a Typewriter to that of a laptop.</p> <p>Try to bring a laptop to class today if you can.</p>	Read: User Experience (UX Design) (the video is kinda blah, but it has good info. We may watch it in class)
Friday, Jan 29	Design our own UX honeycomb (or something else!)	Read: UX Honeycomb Introduction (just look over the honeycomb) and its optimization in recent years.

<p>Week 3 Monday, Feb 1</p>	<p>We'll look at architecture (as in rooms and buildings) to understand good design.</p>	<p>Read: 10 principles of good design</p>
<p>Wednesday, Feb 3</p>	<p>Create our own inclusive design guidelines as users</p> <p>Difference between universal design, inclusive design, and accessibility.</p>	<p>Listen or read before class: Podcast on Inclusive Design from Benjamin Evans: The Power of Inclusive Design and 6 principles for Inclusive Design</p>
<p>Friday, Feb 5</p>	<p>Discuss dark patterns and share examples.</p> <p>Discuss gender and trans-inclusive design principles</p>	<p>Read: Dark Patterns and Beyond the Binary</p>
<p>Week 4 Monday, Feb 8</p>	<p>No class because of SNOW DAY</p>	<p>SNOW DAY</p>
<p>Wednesday, Feb 10</p>	<p>No class. Turn in assignment</p>	<p>Due: Reflection on User Experience Design due by 11:59pm</p>
<p>Friday, Feb 12</p>	<p>Prepare for UX #2 assignment</p>	<p>Read: UX #2 assignment: Mini Usability Study</p> <p>Read: Black People have always been UX Designers</p>

Week 5 Monday, Feb 15	Snow Day	Snow Day.
Wednesday, Feb 17	We will discuss how to write a usability test and go over the dashboard for our next assignment	Read: make sure to have read through our mini usability study assignment.
Friday, Feb 19		Prepare: bring an object or artifact to class you can live without for a week, or be ready to grant online access to something from someone.
Week 6 Monday, Feb 22	No class--work on writing your usability test. Optional Zoom for questions during our class time.	No class--work on usability testing and be using the object or online platform.
Wednesday, Feb 24	Usability testing in class for UX #2	Bring the object you are using for your assignment to class today for usability testing. Make sure to bring your usability test to class for your partner, too!
Friday, Feb 26	Discuss setting up your assignment	To prepare: look over your notes from Wednesday.
Week 7 Monday, March 1	Introduce UX Project	Read: UX project assignment Read: Krug, Preface and intro

Wednesday, March 3	Krug's definition of usability and the first two chapters 5 second usability test in class.	Chapter 1 and 2 in <i>Don't Make Me Think</i>
Friday, March 5	No class.	Due: Mini Usability Study documents by 11:59pm
Week 8 Monday, March 8	Examining how we use the web.	Read: Krug, Chapter 3 and 4
Wednesday, March 10	Writing for the web	Read: Krug Chapter 5 and 6
Friday, March 12	More on web design: how to design the web for better usability and better users. Prepare for conferences on your UX projects	Read: Krug Chapters 7 and 8
Week 9 Monday, March 15	No Class-conferences on UX Projects	Meet with me to discuss your UX website project focus
Wednesday, March 17	No Class-conferences on UX Projects	Meet with me to discuss your UX website project focus
Friday, March 19	No Class-conferences on UX Projects	Meet with me to discuss your UX website project focus
Week 10 Monday, March 22	Usability testing 101.	Read: Krug, Chapter 9
Wednesday, March 24	Mobile usability Accessibility in UX	Read: Krug, Chapter 10-12
Friday, March 26	Catch up day/self care day. No class	Catch up day/self care day. No class.
Week 11	Introduction to personas	Read A Guide to

Monday, March 29		creating user personas and Adobe Blog Post on User Personas
Wednesday, March 31	Remote usability testing information. Usability testing best practices. User journey	Read: Document on Remote Testing Read: User Journeys: A beginner's guide
Friday, April 2	No class	Self-care day
Week 12 Monday, April 5	No class. Personas due.	Personas (3 or 5) due.
Wednesday, April 7	Wireframing. Optional: bring usability test draft to class.	Read Wireframes: Beginner's Guide Optional: Bring usability test draft to class.
Friday, April 9	No class.	Due: Usability test by 11:59pm.
Week 13 Monday, April 12	No class meeting: Run Usability tests	
Wednesday, April 14	No class meeting: Run Usability tests	
Friday, April 16	No class meeting: Run Usability tests	
Week 14 Monday, April 19	Debrief about Usability testing. Discuss reviewing results. AMA.	Prepare for class: be ready to talk about what you learned during your usability tests and bring your results/notes. We'll talk about how to analyze these.
Wednesday, April 21	Proposal format for UX project.	
Friday, April 23	Work Day--No class	
Dead Week	No class--work on UX	

Monday, April 26	Proposals	
Wednesday, April 28	No class--work on UX Proposals	
Friday, April 30	No class--work on UX Proposals	
Final exam: Friday, May 7 at noon		Due: UX Proposal due at Final Exam time
