

Spring 2018

Instructor Information

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Office:	Davis 001
Office Hours:	By Appointment

From the Catalog:

“Processes and techniques for designing user-centered information systems on the Web. Issues of needs analysis, content development, cognitive models, human-computer interaction, interface design, and usability testing.”

Course Description:

This course will be about information architecture (IA). IA is a bit of a tricky concept. In this class we will be working from the broad thumbnail definition of IA: **Information architecture** (IA) is the structural design of shared **information** environments. We will be discussing and learning how to develop the structure of these information environments in a way that best serves users.

Course Objective:

This class will provide you with the skills, knowledge, and abilities needed to be an Information Architect. At the end of the class you should be able to produce artifacts which can be used in an IA process, and be transferred to a potential client or across teams (AKA Deliverables). You should understand the role of an information architect in creating information systems and website. You should be able to find necessary information related to the practice of information architecture.

Text Books, Software Supplies

REQUIRED TEXTS

Krug, S. (2009). *Rocket Surgery Made Easy: The Do-It-Yourself Guide to Finding and Fixing Usability Problems* (1st edition). Berkeley, CA: New Riders. ISBN: 978-0-321-65729-9

Covert, A. (2015). *How to Make Sense of Any Mess*.

Rosenfeld, L., Morville, P., & Arango, J. (2015). *Information Architecture: For the Web and Beyond* (4th edition). O'Reilly Media. ISBN: 978-1-4919-1168-6

SUGGESTED TEXTS

Krug, S. (2014). *Don't Make Me Think, Revisited: A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability* (3rd edition). Berkeley, Calif.: New Riders. ISBN: 978-0-321-96551-6

SOFTWARE

Axure RP 8 – This is premium software is used in the web services industry for creating diagrams and developing prototypes. There is a free student license available.

Trello – We will be using Trello to manage and communicate projects in class. Trello is a free web based project management tool.

SUPPLIES

Good quality pens, pencils, A4 or A5 sized notebook (Should be blank, dot grid, or square), sharpie marker (or similar), 1 pack 3x5 notecards

Course Policies

ATTENDANCE:

Students are expected to attend each scheduled class meeting, to be on time, and to be prepared for each class session. The University attendance policy specifies that students may miss up to 3 class meetings (10% of class time) without penalty. This includes both excused and unexcused absences. A grade penalty will apply for excessive absence as indicated in the university [attendance policy](#). Quizzes, homework, and participation points cannot be made up except in the case of prior discussion with the professor, extreme illness, or death in student's immediate family. The absent student is responsible for information covered in class and is encouraged to contact another student for notes, handouts, etc.

CELL PHONES, COMPUTERS, AND TABLETS:

All cell phones and other electronic devices are to be put on vibrate or silenced during class.

Computer use may be encouraged or restricted during class for a variety of reasons. This is a lab class, and computers with necessary software will be provided in that context. Students are welcome to bring their laptops and tablets to class, but should be aware that they may be asked to turn them off and store them at various points.

WRITING/EDITING ASSISTANCE:

The Writing Center (with a main office in the Humanities Classroom Building, Room 014, and satellite centers located in Bates House, Columbia Hall, Sims Hall, and the Thomas Cooper Library) offers free writing assistance to USC students. Call (803) 777-2078 to schedule an appointment.

DUE DATES:

Assignments, not completed in class, should be submitted using Blackboard's "submit assignment" link. Assignments are due at 11:59 pm on the designated day. Late work will not be accepted without prior arrangement, and will be subject to a grade penalty.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

Assignments and examination work are expected to be the sole effort of the student(s) submitting the work. Students are expected to follow the University of South Carolina Honor Code and should expect that every instance of a suspected violation will be reported. Students found responsible for violations of the Code will be subject to academic penalties under the Code in addition to whatever disciplinary sanctions are applied. Cheating on a test or copying someone else's work, will result in a 0 for the work, possibly a grade of F in the course, and, in accordance with University policy, will be referred to the University Committee for Academic Responsibility. This process can result in expulsion from the University.

The University of South Carolina Honor Code and the Carolinian Creed will be followed in this course. The Honor Code states, "It is the responsibility of every student at the University of South Carolina Columbia to adhere steadfastly to truthfulness and to avoid dishonesty, fraud, or deceit of any type in connection with any academic program. Any student who violates this Honor Code or who knowingly assists another to violate this Honor Code shall be subject to discipline." More information of the University's Academic Honesty Policy can be found at <http://www.sc.edu/academicintegrity/honorcode.html> & <http://www.sa.sc.edu/creed/>.

ACCOMMODATIONS:

It is the policy of the University of South Carolina to make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. Students with certified eligibility through the Office of Student Disability Services who need accommodations to participate fully in all class activities and fulfill class requirements should see one of the instructors as soon as possible. Any other students with documented disabilities should contact the Office of Student Disability Services at 777-6142 to make arrangements for appropriate accommodations.

Assignments

Assignment	Due Date	Points
Elevator Pitch*	1/18	10
Design Diary*	Weekly	10
Here you... Statement*	1/26	10
Personas*	2/2	10
Task analysis*	2/9	15
Content Inventory*	3/1	50
Content Strategy Model	3/8	20
Card Sort	3/23	15
High level sitemap	3/30	10
Blueprint	4/6	25
Wire Frame	4/13	10
User Test	4/20	15
IA Brief	5/8	65
Total		255

*Indicates solo assignments

ASSIGNMENT OVERVIEW

This course work for this class is centered on the conceit of a redevelopment project for an existing website. Students are asked (but not required) to pick a specific website as their focus for the class. For the first half of the class work will be individually completed. For the second half of the class students will be organized into teams. Students should choose one of the websites from their individual assignments in the first half of class and build on those assets. Each assignment is meant to either be a deliverable, or asset which could be transferred to a client or development team, or is intended to aid in the creation of such an asset as part of a further assignment. For example, the 'Here you... statement', may not be a transferable asset, but does serve as a mission statement to focus the deliverables produced afterwards. Assignments build on each other and are expected to be refined over the course of the class. Initial due dates are for complete drafts, not perfect drafts.

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTION, GOAL, AND LEARNING OUTCOME:

Elevator pitch	Here You...	Personas
A sort two paragraph speech, telling the class about yourself, and providing the instructor with a suggestion for class that will help you succeed	Here you... is a short statement that describes the purpose of the website. Statement will be one sentence to one paragraph in length.	Students will create 2 personas. A personal is a sketch of an <i>idealized</i> user. Each represents a demographic group that uses the site (or is a stakeholder in the organization hosting the site).
Introduce presentation element to class, and provide experience with constraints and form.	Provide focus for the metaphor of a website. Here you... statements serve as a mission statement that can be used to as a cognitive aid later in the IA process. Students will construct one as part of their work.	Personas are representations of users. They serve to focus the design process. In order to construct the space of a website you will envision the typical occupants of the space.
Students will demonstrate understanding of the impact of constraints on information design through creating and giving a short speech about themselves.	Student will demonstrate their understanding of the metaphorical nature of IA through crafting a 'Here you...' statement.	Students will demonstrate their ability to conceptualize an information space by developing a set of personas representing typical users.

Task Analysis	Content Inventory	Content Strategy Model
A task analysis looks at what tasks different users might attempt to do on the site. It looks at the steps involved in each task. Using your previously developed personas examine the tasks involved in using the site and document it into a series of flow-charts.	A content inventory is an inventory of existing content on the site, and where it lives. This overview is helpful in determining what exists and can be reused, and what needs to be created. Additionally the content audit will provide you with a familiarity with the site, as it exists now.	This assignment involves the development of a short document detailing what content needs to be on the site and how that helps users accomplish their tasks.
Creating a task analysis is the first part of designing user flows, and eventually specifying what goes on each site. By conducting a task analysis you will see what the main purposes of the site is and how many steps are needed for users to reach their goal.	A content audit is essential when working with complicated site architecture. On simple sites, it serves to illuminate issues with site content before sitemaps and wireframes are developed.	Content strategy normally goes hand in hand with information architecture. We will develop a short document that specifies the required content and structures to help users achieve their goals.
Students will demonstrate their ability to analyze a website's purpose by constructing an analysis of the tasks necessary for the successful use of the site.	Students will demonstrate their ability to investigate a sites content for insights into the nature of its digital space.	Student will demonstrate their understanding of the nature of the website through documenting structural and content requirements.

Card Sort	High Level Sitemap	Blueprint or detailed Sitemap
A card sort is a basic test typically establishing or testing hierarchies and navigation.	Diagram of the elements on the site and their relationship to each other.	Taking the sitemap a step further and laying out content that should appear on each page.
Students will gain experience running and observing a card sort, and analyzing the results.	Students will develop a high level sitemap that will serve as a deliverable and guide further development	Students will refine their design by specifying which site content goes where on the website.
Students will demonstrate their ability to conduct and analyze card sorts through facilitating 2 sorts.	Students will demonstrate their conceptual understanding of information architecture through the development of a high level sitemaps.	Students will demonstrate ability to synthesize content of information architecture through the development of a blueprint/detailed sitemap that unifies the sitemap and user flow with the content strategy model.

Wireframe	User test	IA Brief	Design Diary
A rough sketch or outline for how content will be displayed on a page on the site.	A think aloud protocol, asks test users to vocalize their process as they complete tasks on the site. Students will use wireframes previously developed to test their design.	A final document, which brings together previous work from earlier in the process, provides refined wire frames, and a style guide specializing visual hierarchies of the site.	Students will find three cool/inspiring things a week, and document them.
Students will develop rough wireframes for their site that may be used to test site design.	Students will gain experience running and analyzing a think aloud protocol user test.	Students will deliver a finalized document that can be used as a portfolio piece or a given to a client.	Students will gain an understanding of IA as a practice through mixing awareness of design/IA with practice of class
Students will demonstrate ability to create prototypes through the development of wireframes. Students will demonstrate their understanding of screen space through the creation of wireframes.	Students will demonstrate their knowledge of user testing through conducting think aloud protocol test based on wireframes they have created.	Students will demonstrate their comprehensive knowledge of the class by creating a document and presentation covering an IA process.	Students will demonstrate ability to find resources relevant to IA projects through the keeping of a design diary.

Schedule Legend

Bold Text	Required reading or viewing
<u>Underlined Text</u>	Class Theme

Week 1	1/16-1/18	Due	On Deck	Other things to be aware of...
1/16	<u>Introduction to information architecture and overview of elevator pitches</u> Syllabus		Elevator Pitch	
1/18	<u>Elevator pitches and IA as metaphor for space.</u> PB: CH1 Watch: JJ Garrett IA Summit Plenary https://vimeo.com/4304573 Here you... assigned Design Diary assigned	Elevator Pitch	Here You... Statement	
1/19	NOTHING DUE			

Week 2	1/23-1/25	Due	On Deck	Other things to be aware of...
1/23	<p><u>IA, Design Patterns, IA and the organization of information</u></p> <p>Read: PB: 2</p> <p>Read: Covert: Ch 1-2</p> <p>Watch: Mike Montero, How Designers Destroyed the World</p> <p>https://vimeo.com/68470326</p> <p>Read: The Sciences of the Artificial, Herbert A. Simon Chapter 2 [Course Reserve]</p>		Here You... Statement	
1/25	<p><u>Analyzing Site Requirements</u></p> <p>Read: PB: CH5</p> <p>Read: Sterling, B. (2013) "Patently untrue: Flshy defibrillators and synchronised baseball are changing the future" <i>Wired Magazine</i></p> <p>http://www.wired.co.uk/magazine/archive/2013/10/play/patently-untrue</p>		Here You... Statement	
1/26	Here you... DUE – Submit via Blackboard	Here you... statement, Design Diary	Persona Sketches	

Week 3	1/30-2/1	Due	On Deck	Other things to be aware of...
1/30	<u>Elements of visual vocabulary</u> Read: PBB: 6, 13 Read: A Visual Vocabulary for Information Architecture http://www.jjg.net/ia/visvocab/#init Watch: Level Up Your Axure Skills https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ct_AIWMFU0M		Persona Sketches	
2/1	<u>Personas workshop and Critique</u> Read: Hinton A. How to breath life into personas http://boxesandarrows.com/how-to-breathe-life-into-personas/ Read: Poole, J. Crappy personas vs. robust personas https://www.uie.com/brainsparks/2007/11/14/crappy-personas-vs-robust-personas/ Read: Hinton, A. Personas and the role of documentation http://boxesandarrows.com/personas-and-the-role-of-design-documentation/		Persona Sketches	Task Analysis
2/2	Persona Sketches Due	Design Diary, Persona Sketches		

Week 4	2/8-2/9	Due	On Deck	Other things to be aware of...
2/6	<u>Design Process</u> Covert Ch: g3 Watch: Covert, A. How to make sense of any mess https://vimeo.com/139025676		Task Analysis	
2/8	<u>Task analysis and flow diagram workshop</u> Covert Ch3-4		Task Analysis	Content Inventories
2/9	Task Analysis Due	Design Diary, Task analysis		Content Inventories

Week 5	2/13-2/15	Due	On Deck	Other things to be aware of...
2/13	<u>Content Strategy</u> Covert: Ch 5 PB Ch 12.		Content Inventories	
2/15	<u>Content Inventories</u> Watch: Spencer, D. How to conduct a content audit http://uxmastery.com/how-to-conduct-a-content-audit/		Content Inventories	
2/16	Design Diary Due	Design Diary	Content Inventories	

Week 6	2/20-2/22	Due	On Deck	Other things to be aware of...
2/20	<u>Semantic Analysis Techniques and technology:</u> Read: Berners-Lee, Tim, Hendler, James & Lassila, Ora (2001). The Semantic Web. Scientific American, 284 (5), 34-43. Carter J. (2016) How will open AI change the industry? http://www.techradar.com/news/world-of-tech/how-will-open-source-ai-change-the-tech-industry--1322242		Content Inventories	
2/22	<u>Catch Up Day</u> Read things you may have missed. Watch video announcement for content strategy assignment via Blackboard.		Content Inventories	
2/23		Design Diary		

Week 7	2/27-3/1	Due	On Deck	Other things to be aware of...
2/27	<u>Way Finding</u> Read: PBB Ch. 7-8 Krug, P (2014) Don't make me think. Ch6. [Course Reserve]		Content Inventories	Card Sort Assigned
/153/1	<u>Content Inventories</u> Covert Ch. 6		Content Inventories	Content strategies are coming.

3/2	<u>Content inventories due</u>	Content Inventories , Design Diaries		
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Week 8	3/6-3/8	Due	On Deck	Other things to be aware of...
3/6	<u>Content Strategy workshop</u>		Content Strategy	Teams Assigned
3/8	<u>Bringing together and managing documentation</u> Watch: McGrange, K. (2013) Adapting ourselves to adaptive content. http://www.webstock.org.nz/talks/adapting-ourselves-to-adaptive-content/ Read: WWF CH. 5 Listen: Coleman, J. (2014) Data Sets You Free: Analytics for content strategy. http://library.iasummit.org/podcasts/data-sets-you-free-analytics-for-content-strategy/			Card Sorts and High level wire frames assigned
3/9	Content Strategy Model Due	Design Diary, Content Strategy		

Week 9	3/13-3/15	Spring Break
3/13	Spring Break	
3/15		
3/16		

Week 10	3/20-3/22	Due	On Deck	Other things to be aware of...
3/20	<u>Pulling meaning from other sources</u> Salmoni, A. (2012) Open card sort analysis 101 http://www.uxbooth.com/articles/open-card-sort-analysis-101/ Neilson, J. Why you only need to test with five users. https://www.nngroup.com/articles/why-you-only-need-to-test-with-5-users/			High Level Sitemaps Assigned
3/22	<u>Card Sort Report Workshop</u> Rocket CH 1-4		High Level Site Maps	
3/23	Card Sorts Due	Design Diary Card sort Due		

Week 11	3/27-3/29	Due	On Deck	Other things to be aware of...
3/27	<u>Professionals Panel/ Guest Speaker</u> Rocket: Ch4-7		Site Maps	Wireframes Assigned
3/29	<u>Parts of a website</u> Read: Atomic web design chapters 1-2		Blue Prints	
3/30	High Level Site maps due	High Level Site maps and design diary		

				Other things to be aware of...
Week 12	4/3/4/5	Due	On Deck	
4/3	<u>Blue Prints Workshop</u> Rocket: Ch 8 -11		Wire Frames	
4/5	<u>Wire Frame Workshop</u> Rocket: Ch 12-16		Wire Frames	
4/6	Blue Print Due	Blue Print Due		

				Other things to be aware of...
Week 13	4/10-4/12	Due	On Deck	
4/10	<u>User testing in a nut shell</u> Don't Make Me Think – CH9 [Course reserve]		User Tests	
4/12	<u>Testing Workshop</u>		User Tests	
4/13	Wire Frames Due	Wireframes		

				Other things to be aware of...
Week 14	4/17-4/19	Due	On Deck	
4/17	<u>Guest speaker(s)</u>		User Tests	
4/19	<u>User Testing Report Workshop</u>			
4/20	User Testing Due	Design Diary, User Testing		

Week 15	4/24-4/26	Due	On Deck	Other things to be aware of...
4/24	<u>Accessibility and Consequences</u>	Blue Prints	Wire Frames	
4/26	<u>Putting it all Together</u>			
4/27		Design Diary		

Final	5/8	Due
5/8	Show and tell / Paper copy due 7:30 PM	Color Print out of Final IA Brief, IA Brief submitted via blackboard by 11:59pm