JMC:3611:0001

Web Design Basics

School of Journalism and Mass Communications / College of Liberal Arts and Sciences / University of Iowa

Fall 2017 - 5:30 p.m. - 7:20 p.m. MW, W332 AJB
DEO: David Ryfe

Instructor
Max Freund / Managing Editor of Digital
The Gazette
Maxwell-freund@uiowa.edu

Office hours: 7:30 to 9 p.m., MW, W332 AJB – as needed.

Materials

A computer

A USB flash drive. Required to store your website.

To do well in this class

This course is a best attempt to teach you the skills you need to create and operate a robust, active and dynamic website with an eye towards presenting journalistic content in an engaging and impactful way.

In order to do so, students will be challenged to learn the fundamentals of HTML and CSS, within the framework of hand coding their own website without the aid of an existing CMS (content management system).

While this may be a challenge for some students, it will provide them with the skillsets needed to move forward and work in any existing web framework, while also allowing them full customization from the onset.

Although no course can provide you with every possible skill needed to build and run a website, engaged students will learn the most fundamental of those skills. We will also lay the groundwork for you to acquire new skills on your own.

Most students in this class will have no prior experience with web development. So if you are scared you are behind from the onset, or that your brain can't handle this
stuff, don’t worry, it can, and you can. Mistakes and confusion are to be expected from time to time, but together, we can break through those barriers and gain a stronger understanding of journalistic web development.

We will assume that everyone has little or no web development experience, and build you up from there. While this might mean a bit of boredom in the first few weeks of the semester for some of you, by the end of this course, you all will be leaving with valuable portfolio pieces and advanced, marketable skills.

Most of the class, particularly later in the semester, will be devoted to students working independently on creating their own websites. This is a real-world, hands-on workshop course that requires students to learn by doing. We’ll have plenty of time in class to devote to working on your assignments and collaborate coding exercises, so that you’ll always have help when you get stuck.

So, if you do your homework, attend class, pay attention, follow along, take a few risks, and ask questions when you are lost, then there’s no way you won’t do well. You can do this.

**JMC Learning Outcomes**

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication is committed to your academic and professional success. In line with this commitment, we have identified particular learning outcomes that every student should obtain by the time they earn a JMC degree. You can find more information about these learning outcomes here: http://clas.uiowa.edu/sjmc/undergraduate-programs/assessment. We regularly assess the curriculum to determine whether students are achieving these outcomes.

This course contributes to these learning outcomes by helping you achieve proficiency in understanding and applying the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press in real space and cyberspace. Achieving these outcomes means the ability to:

**Media Literacy**: Understand the principles of media literacy and develop the skills necessary to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media messages across multiple media domains.

- Students will develop critical thinking skills to analyze and interpret media messages through an understanding of media practices and institutions.

**Writing and Storytelling**: Understand that clear, concise, correct writing is at the heart of journalistic expression and that reporting and communicating it effectively requires a knowledge and achievement of the highest, professionally-accepted standards in all work.
Students will demonstrate the ability to gather factual story elements, and to evaluate and express them in logical, narrative forms for multiple media and audiences.

Students will display the ability to access and analyze data, report facts accurately, research and edit information responsibly and in a manner commensurate with professional standards.

Other Learning Outcomes

- Strong HTML / CSS skills with some Javascript
- You should feel adept at layout and design of an article space for journalistic purposes
- You should have gained a deeper understanding and appreciation for a variety of digital storytelling techniques.
- Gain portfolio pieces focused on audio/visual storytelling, data analysis, and social media interactions.
- Be able to demonstrate an understanding of not only how to execute those techniques, but how to put them together into a cohesive, and informative piece of journalism.

Assignments

Projects (500 points of your class grade)

The majority of your grade will come from three projects that will be completed over the course of the semester. These projects will be individual pieces of journalism that fit within a topic area you select.

These projects will also be the key pieces of content within your website.

What makes a project successful is the marriage between good storytelling and strong web development. The Internet is a toolbox, and as journalists, we have a variety of tools available to tell our stories. And while this is a student course, everyone will have gone through prior classes that provided experience with multiple storytelling techniques (text, photos, videos, audio, charts, maps).

This class aims to take those storytelling techniques and add to a student’s toolbox the ability to design a narrative using code. The order, layout, functionality, and aesthetics of a site will lend a hand to the storytelling, and can be just as impactful as the words that are written.

The first two projects will be worth 150 points each. The third and final project will be worth 200 points.
Grading rubrics for each project will be handed out prior to beginning work.

**Test (150 points of your class grade) (Midterm on Sept. 20)**

There will be one test in this class. This test will be an in-class, closed notes test of HTML and CSS concepts. The test will be prior to the project portion of the class, and this is because it will give me a stronger understanding of what key concepts have been digested, and which ones need a bit of review before diving directly into development.

**Homework (100 points of your class grade)**

While the projects are the major component of the class, minor homework assignments will be given throughout the course. These will be things such as building your first web page, or completing the site navigation. Specific requirements and expectations for these will be given at the time of assignment.

**Code Academy (50 points of your class grade)**

Code Academy is an online tool for learning web development. While this is a powerful tool, we will be using it primarily as a resource for practice and review. A variety of Code Academy assignments will be given in the earlier part of the course to reaffirm your knowledge of what was taught during the previous class.

There is no limit on how many attempts you can have at individual lessons, and therefore, these lessons are essentially free points. I suggest that you take the time to get them!

**Attendance and Participation (200 points of your class grade)**

To receive full points for attendance and participation, you must be present for every class and be attentive, and engaged in that class’s content.

To obtain full points for participating, you must be vocal and contribute during class. Web development at times can be complex and confusing. I will have no idea if or when a topic is confusing if you do not speak up. In addition, many class periods will be spent critiquing work and brainstorming project ideas. Collaboration is the best way to identify great ideas, and therefore the contribution of all class members is expected.

Regarding attendance. You will begin the course with a full 100 points given for attendance.

**Unexcused Absences**

Things come up, I get it. Everyone get’s one free one.
After your first, for each unexcused absence you will be docked 15 points from your 100 points allocated to attendance.

If you have four unexcused absences total from class, you will receive a 0 for your attendance and your participation portion of your grade will also suffer severely.

If you continue to miss classes beyond four classes, you will be subject to a 1 on 1 review during office hours, and possible automatic failure of the course.

**Excused Absences**

There will be no loss of points for excused absences, however, assignments that are due on the date of an excused absence will still need to be turned in that day, unless other arrangements are made.

Excused absences must be discussed on an individual basis, and will most likely be granted for family emergencies or serious illnesses.

Something else to remember....

The majority of the homework and project’s grading rubric will be based off of demonstrating a mastery of the lessons taught in class. Therefore, if you choose to not attend class, it is unlikely you will be equipped with the development and storytelling techniques necessary to obtain a good grade on projects.

In short, come to class. You (or your parents) are paying for this education, let’s have fun together and learn some cool stuff. I promise, it will be worth it.

(Thumbs up)

**Regarding late work**

Deadlines are real. That is true in the business world, as well as the academic. If an assignment is turned in one day late, there will be an automatic 25% reduction of your grade. After two days, the automatic reduction will be 50%. Beyond two days, the assignment is forfeited, and you will receive a 0 for the assignment.

**The class will be graded out of 1000 points.**

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<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Point Value</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>(960 – 1000)</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>(770 – 799)</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>(930 – 959)</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>(900 – 929)</td>
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Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Percentages and point totals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance / Participation</td>
<td>(200 points)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Code Academy Assignments</td>
<td>(50 points)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>(150 points)</td>
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<td>Minor Homework</td>
<td>(100 points)</td>
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<td>Projects (2)</td>
<td>(300 points)</td>
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<td>Final Project</td>
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<td>Extra Credit</td>
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Class Schedule

A breakdown of the class schedule, including topics for each lecture and the dates for homework and other assignments is available at this location http://tinyurl.com/ow6ppxq

Note: This schedule is an approximation of what will be covered. As the semester progresses, lecture subject matter may change. If there is a change in the due date of a homework assignment listed on the schedule, that change will be announced in class.

Class Collaboration

Web development and journalism can at times be viewed as independent activities. Whether it is the cliché view of the developer who puts their headphones on, pounds Mountain Dew, and codes in a dimly lit room, or the go-it-alone reporter who pounds the pavement to find the next big story, these disciplines can at times be solitary ones.

While that is often the case, I want this course to be a space for inclusionary conversation. Web development and journalism are artistic endeavors, and with anything artistic there are varying ways of completing tasks.

One solution you might identify, while perfectly correct in application, could be completely different from another classmate’s chosen path.

We will strive to share these differences and learn from each other. This is why we will have multiple instances of “collaborate coding” exercises where two people work on the same computer. This requires open dialogue and a chance to see the inner workings of another person’s processes. And don’t worry, if you are a shy
person and fearful your ideas may fall by the wayside, you share turns taking control of the keyboard.

That being said, collaboration on individual assignments is not allowed. It is your responsibility to develop your own stories and build your own websites. If I see instances of repeated code across multiple students’ assignments, this will be considered academically dishonest.

**Outside of class**

As a 4-hour course, the CLAS guidelines recommend 2 hours of outside work per semester hour, per week. Therefore your 4-hour course should equate to roughly 8 hours of outside work and study per week.

While assignments will make up a large portion of this time, this course is filled with concepts that are ripe for self-exploration. The students who take it upon themselves to build their skills outside the classroom will strengthen their abilities and make a higher grade a more attainable reality.

**Now all extra bits!**

The Iowa Dozen

We learn to...
1. Write correctly, clearly and well.
2. Conduct research and gather information responsibly.
3. Edit and evaluate carefully.
4. Use media technologies thoughtfully.
5. Apply statistical concepts accurately.

We value...
6. Free speech and First Amendment principles for all individuals and groups.
7. A diverse global community.
8. Creativity and independence.

We explore...
10. Theories and concepts.
11. The history, structure and economy of media institutions
12. The role of media in shaping cultures.

This course particularly covers **#4, #8, and #10.**

**College of Liberal Arts Policy and Procedures**
**Administrative Home**
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall, or see the CLAS Academic Policies Handbook at [https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook](https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook).

**Electronic Communication**
University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty and students should use this account for correspondences ([Operations Manual, III.15.2, k.11](https://lascl.class.uiowa.edu/)).

**Accommodations for Disabilities**
The University of Iowa is committed to providing an educational experience that is accessible to all students. A student may request academic accommodations for a disability (which includes but is not limited to mental health, attention, learning, vision, and physical or health-related conditions). A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet with the course instructor privately in the instructor's office to make particular arrangements. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between the student, instructor, and SDS. See [https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/](https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/) for information.

**Nondiscrimination in the Classroom**
The University of Iowa is committed to making the classroom a respectful and inclusive space for all people irrespective of their gender, sexual, racial, religious or other identities. Toward this goal, students are invited to optionally share their preferred names and pronouns with their instructors and classmates. The University of Iowa prohibits discrimination and harassment against individuals on the basis of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, and other identity categories set forth in the University’s Human Rights policy. For more information, contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity, [diversity@uiowa.edu](mailto:diversity@uiowa.edu), or visit [diversity.uiowa.edu](http://diversity.uiowa.edu).
Academic Honesty
All CLAS students or students taking classes offered by CLAS have, in essence, agreed to the College's Code of Academic Honesty: "I pledge to do my own academic work and to excel to the best of my abilities, upholding the IOWA Challenge. I promise not to lie about my academic work, to cheat, or to steal the words or ideas of others; nor will I help fellow students to violate the Code of Academic Honesty." Any student committing academic misconduct is reported to the College and placed on disciplinary probation or may be suspended or expelled (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook).

CLAS Final Examination Policies
The final examination schedule for each class is announced by the Registrar generally by the fifth week of classes. Final exams are offered only during the official final examination period. No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes. All students should plan on being at the UI through the final examination period. Once the Registrar has announced the date, time, and location of each final exam, the complete schedule will be published on the Registrar's web site and will be shared with instructors and students. It is the student's responsibility to know the date, time, and place of a final exam.

Making a Suggestion or a Complaint
Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit with the instructor (and the course supervisor), and then with the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook).

Understanding Sexual Harassment
Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the UI Office of the Sexual Misconduct Response Coordinator for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.

Reacting Safely to Severe Weather
In severe weather, class members should seek appropriate shelter immediately, leaving the classroom if necessary. The class will continue if possible when the event
is over. For more information on Hawk Alert and the siren warning system, visit the Department of Public Safety website.