COURSE SYLLABUS

Introduction

Although the representation and organization of information resources has long been a focus of the information profession, the recent explosive growth in both the number and the variety of information resources has dramatically underscored the inability of free-text searching (e.g., string-matching) to retrieve materials based upon shared intellectual content. In the digital environment of the World Wide Web, the lack of any explicit physical presence has similarly highlighted the need for information structures that facilitate user understanding and navigation in conceptual space. Faced with the need to construct information architectures that not only provide for effective and efficient retrieval but also promote understanding, information professionals have returned to the basic principles that have provided a foundation for traditional systematic structures such as classification schemes, ontologies, controlled vocabularies and thesauri.

Effective information systems depend upon a comprehensive awareness of formal structures and a deep understanding of human social, technological and cognitive environments. Accordingly, this course also reviews research in information science, cognitive science, semiotics, and computer science that has contributed to an understanding of how communities represent, organize, retrieve and ultimately use information and examines how this research can inform current practices of representation and organization in the design of more effective information systems.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, participants will

1. Understand the objectives, functions and applications of information architectures in a variety of environments.
2. Become familiar with a range of structured models of information representation and organization and discern the implications for effective retrieval and/or navigation inherent in each type of system.
3. Be able to identify and analyze the problems of a given information architecture and to suggest a more effective and efficient architecture based on the framework of representation and organization.
Course Organization
Each class session will cover the topic(s) indicated on the syllabus for that day. Class sessions will include lectures by the instructor, class discussions of assigned readings and/or in-class activities designed to illustrate the principles and theories presented in readings and lectures. Students may also be asked to work in small groups and to report to the class on the results of small-group activities.

Readings
Required readings have been selected to encourage participation in class discussions and in-class group activities. The Schedule of Lectures and Required Readings lists session topics and required readings. Assigned readings are subject to amendment by the instructor.

There is one required textbook for this class: The Elements of User Experience by Jesse James Garrett. 2nd ed. (ISBN: 0-321-68368-4).

Required readings other than those from the required textbook will be available on the Oncourse worksite for Z515.

Grading and assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Numerical Equivalent</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Outstanding achievement. Student performance demonstrates full command of the course materials and evinces a high level of originality and/or creativity that far surpasses course expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Excellent achievement. Student performance demonstrates thorough knowledge of the course materials and exceeds course expectations by completing all requirements in a superior manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Very good work. Student performance demonstrates above-average comprehension of the course materials and exceeds course expectations on all tasks as defined in the course syllabus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Good work. Student performance meets designated course expectations, demonstrates understanding of the course materials and is at an acceptable level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Marginal work. Student performance demonstrates incomplete understanding of course materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory work. Student performance demonstrates incomplete and inadequate understanding of course materials. Coursework performed at this level or below will not count toward the MLS or MIS degree. For the course to count towards the degree, the student must repeat the course with a passing grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory work. Student performance demonstrates incomplete and inadequate understanding of course materials. Coursework performed at this level or below will not count toward the MLS or MIS degree. For the course to count towards the degree, the student must repeat the course with a passing grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>Unacceptable work. Coursework performed at this level will not count toward the MLS or MIS degree. For the course to count toward the degree, the student must repeat the course with a passing grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Unacceptable work. Coursework performed at this level will not count toward the MLS or MIS degree. For the course to count toward the degree, the student must repeat the course with a passing grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Unacceptable work. Coursework performed at this level will not count toward the MLS or MIS degree. For the course to count toward the degree, the student must repeat the course with a passing grade.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Assignments and percentage of the final grade:

1) Warm-up questions 14%
2) Blog 16%
3) Project assignment:
   a) Choose a client website 0%
   b) Create and submit strategy and scope documents 15%
   c) Evaluate the website’s information architecture 20%
   d) Project fair (in class 5-min. presentations) 5%
   e) Final report 30%

1) Warm-up Questions
Warm-up questions are intended to assess student comprehension of the content of readings, to provide an opportunity for application of the material covered in class and to encourage the integration of conceptual material and practical experience.

Responses to warm-up questions will constitute 14% of the student's final course grade. Each response will be assigned a numerical grade on a scale of 0 to 2:

0 = no response
1 = Response indicates some understanding of readings but demonstrates no original thought
2 = Response indicates good understanding of readings and demonstrates original thought

Warm-up questions will be posted on Oncourse. Responses are to be submitted only via Oncourse no later than 5:00 pm on Monday before class. Late submissions will not be accepted. No email submissions.

There will be a total of seven (7) warm-up questions (for Sessions 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10 and 11), each associated with the topic of the class session for which the warm-up question is posted.

2) Blog
This blog will serve as an online space to discuss class readings and spur class discussions. For each session (except Sessions 1, 13 and 14) a student will write a 200-word blog on a topic relevant to that week’s session. Suggested blog topics:

- Take a favorite example from the readings and provide personal thoughts or applications
- Find an article in current events which relates to the session’s topic and write about it, drawing from the week’s readings to give added insight
- Discuss how one or more of the readings/authors dealt with a particular topic
- Take an example from the reading and apply the principles to an Information Science job that you currently hold, or hope to hold in the future
- Take a quote from the readings which is a point of debate, and discuss all sides

Photographs, comics, YouTube clips, or even sound clips might contribute to your blog discussions. Creative Commons Search is a great resource for this.
In addition to supplementing class discussion, this blog is a good place to practice writing and thinking about information architecture. The blogs should be written with proper spelling, capitalization, punctuation and grammar. Also, take some time to read what other students are writing and comment on their posts. Your involvement in the blog will account for 16% of your final grade.

**The blogs should be posted by 10 am on Tuesday preceding the class.**

3) **Project assignment: analysis of information architecture and proposals to restructure an existing website**

The project assignment consists of five tasks that will be result in a coherent report at the end of the semester. The goal of the project is to perform detailed analysis and evaluation of information architecture of an existing website and to propose its new structure and design. Although the students will choose an existing website as a “client”, the students will NOT actually contact the owners of the site or have them as an actual client.

a) **Choose a website**

Students are to choose a website (preferably a small-business or small non-profit) and notify the instructor of their choice (providing the name of the “client”, the URL, and a brief description). Also provide a rationale why this web site would benefit from “re-design” (in the sense of information architecture, not visual appearance, of course). The suggested website is subject to approval.

**The assignment is to be submitted via Oncourse no later than September 1st at 12:30 pm.**

b) **Strategy and scope documents**

Strategy and scope documents will constitute 15% of the student’s final course grade. Detailed instructions will be posted on Oncourse.

**The strategy and scope documents are to be submitted via Oncourse no later than September 29th at 12:30 pm. Late submissions will not be accepted. No email submissions.**

c) **Evaluation of website’s information architecture**

The website evaluation will constitute 20% of the student’s final course grade. Detailed instructions will be posted on Oncourse.

**The website evaluation is to be submitted via Oncourse no later than October 20th at 12:30 pm. Late submissions will not be accepted. No email submissions.**

d) **Project fair**

Each student will give an informal presentation sharing one or two unresolved problems with the redesign. The purpose of the fair is to share work and get instant feedback. The students should choose to share deliverables they are still struggling with, so that they can get suggestions on how to improve those. The project fair will constitute 5% of the student’s final course grade.
The project fair will be held on December 1st & 8th.

e) Final project
The final project will constitute 30% of the student's final course grade. Detailed instructions will be posted on Oncourse.

The final project is to be submitted only via Oncourse no later than December 15th at 5 pm. Late submissions will not be accepted. No email submissions.

Calendar of due dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Due date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 31 at 5 p.m.</td>
<td>Warmup Session 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1 at 12:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Choose a website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 7 at 5 p.m.</td>
<td>Warmup Session 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 21 at 5 p.m.</td>
<td>Warmup Session 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 28 at 5 p.m.</td>
<td>Warmup Session 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 29 at 12:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Strategy and scope documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 12 at 5 p.m.</td>
<td>Warmup Session 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 20 at 12:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Evaluation of website’s information architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 26 at 5 p.m.</td>
<td>Warmup Session 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2 at 5 p.m.</td>
<td>Warmup Session 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1 and 8</td>
<td>Project fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 15 at 5 p.m.</td>
<td>Final report</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Late Submissions
In fairness to students who turn in assignments on time, late papers will not be accepted unless arrangements have been made with the instructor prior to the submission date.

Incompletes
Each student is expected to complete all coursework by the end of the term. A grade of incomplete [ I ] will be assigned only when exceptional circumstances warrant. In such cases timely notification is critical.

Academic Dishonesty
As Dr. Alice Robbin observes in her Fall 2008 syllabus for S506, there is more to avoiding plagiarism than simply citing a reference. Dr. Robbin points out that, in order to aid students both in recognizing plagiarism and in avoiding the appearance of plagiarism, Indiana University’s Writing Tutorial Services has prepared a short guide entitled "Plagiarism: what it is and how to recognize and avoid it". This guide is available at: <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html>. The guide provides explicit examples of plagiarism and offers strategies for avoiding it. Each student should be familiar with this document and use it as a guide when completing assignments.
Dr. Robbin offers three "rules" for avoiding inadvertent plagiarism -- rules that she gleaned from Ralph Brower, a colleague at Florida State University:

1. Whenever you "borrow" material, from any resource whatsoever, for inclusion in a document you are writing, you must provide a footnote, endnote or parenthetical reference (with accompanying bibliographic citation) identifying the original resource. If you have any questions about how to do this, review the guidelines set out in the 5th edition of the APA Style Manual.

2. Any time that you quote any resource verbatim, you must enclose the text in quotation marks and identify the original resource, as indicated in (1).

3. Text that you paraphrase and ideas that you "borrow" must also be attributed, as indicated in (1), even if you do not quote the original source verbatim.

Policies on academic dishonesty have been established by Indiana University and the School of Library and Information Science. These policies, which have been set out in the Code of Student Ethics, will be adhered to in this class. Any assignment that contains plagiarized material or indicates any other form of academic dishonesty will receive, at a minimum, a grade of F. A second instance will result in an automatic grade of F for the course. Penalties may be harsher depending on the severity of the offense.

Notice
If you are a student with a special need, please feel free to discuss it with the instructor.
SCHEDULE OF LECTURES AND REQUIRED READINGS

NOTE: For each class session, the following schedule includes a topic statement and a list of required readings. Required readings are listed in the order in which they should be read.

Session 1 -- August 25
Topic: Introduction to z515.

Session 2 -- September 1
Topic: IA and user experience

Required readings for Session 2:

Recommended:

Session 3 -- September 8
Topic: Representation and Mental Models.

Required readings for Session 3:

Session 4 -- September 15
Guest speaker: COURTNEY GREENE MCDONALD
Topic: IA Research, evaluation & design.
Required readings for Session 4:
Levin, M. (2014). An ecosystem of connected devices (pp. 1-20) and The consistent design approach (pp. 21-51). In Designing Multi-Device Experiences: An Ecosystem Approach to User Experiences Across Devices. Beijing: O'Reilly.

Recommended:

Session 5 -- September 22
Required readings for Session 5:
Cooper, A., et. al. (2014). Modeling users: Personas and goals (pp.61-99) and Setting the vision: Scenarios and design requirements (pp. 101-117). In About Face: The essentials of interaction design. Indianapolis: Wiley.


**Recommended:**


**Session 6 -- September 29**

**Topic:** Order versus Organization.

**Required readings for Session 6:**


**Recommended:**


**Session 7 -- October 6**

**Topic:** Order and organization for navigation.

**Required readings for Session 7:**


Krug, S. (2014). How we really use the Web (pp. 21-27), Billboard design 101 (pp. 29-41) and Street signs and breadcrumbs: Designing navigation (pp. 55-83). In *Don’t make me think: A common sense approach to web usability*. Indianapolis: New Riders.
Kalbach, J. (2007). Mechanisms of navigation (pp. 54-84) and Types of navigation (pp. 84-118). In Designing web navigation. Beijing: O'Reilly.

Recommended:

Session 8 -- October 13
Topic: Metadata and tagging.
Required readings for Session 8:

Recommended:

Session 9 -- October 20
Topic: Controlled vocabularies, facets, and labeling systems.
Required readings for Session 10:

Recommended:


Session 10 -- October 27
Topic: Site maps and flow charts
Required readings for Session 10:
Brown, D.M. (2011). Site maps (pp. 94-123) and Flowcharts (pp. 124-164). In Communicating design: Developing web site documentation for design and planning. 2nd ed. Berkeley: New Riders.

Session 11 -- November 3
Guest speaker: KATE MESSING
Topic: Wireframes
Required readings for Session 11:

November 10 - NO CLASS (Work on projects)

Session 12 -- November 17
Workshop by: CLINTON MCKAY
Topic: Prototyping
Required readings for Session 12:

November 24 - NO CLASS (Thanksgiving break)

Session 13 -- December 1
Project fair.

Session 14 -- December 8
Project fair.