

SYLLABUS | COMM 225: WEB WORKSHOP | SPRING 2013

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Class Website <http://claudiajacques.com/home/comm225>

Section 01 Tuesday, 11:30 am – 2:20 pm

Section 02 Wednesday, 7:20 pm – 10:00 pm

Course Description

Literacy in any medium is the ability to both access (read) materials created by others and to generate (write) materials for others. In this course you will learn to “speak” the language of the web and to become conversant with the web as an expressive medium.

Through hands- on training, you will be introduced to creative approaches to web production and to a range of software.

The format of this class is designed to bridge practice and theory. Topics will include Net History, Information Architecture, Design Principles, Typography, Interface Design, Accessibility, Digital Media Theory, Search Engines, Identity and Intellectual Property, Blogging, Social Network Theory, Net Art, Activism, HTML, CSS, JavaScript, PHP.

We will concern ourselves with “how” and “why” the virtual world is constructed the way it is.

Students will be challenged to deconstruct this world and to develop an ability to analyze and critique the cultural implications of virtual/web-based media in our lives.

Learning Goals

- Analyze your relationship with web technology, the role it plays in your life, in our local community, our state and our globe.
- Research relevant social, political, historic, and/or economic contexts applicable to a project BEFORE generating media.
- Make informed choices about color, composition, typography and interface design in creative and technical projects.
- Solve technical problems using the help menu, course resources, similar past experiences, experimentation, and user forums.
- Implement a consistent planning and editing practice.
- Critique website using the following criteria: audience, purpose, message, interface, visual hierarchy, and composition.
- Write HTML and CSS (using the proper syntax, structure, vocabulary, and best practices) to create and edit a website.

Required Materials

- USB Flash Drive (1 GB+) or a portable Hard Drive.
- Purchase access to Lynda.com for \$34 for the semester (details will be provided on the first day of class.)
- Create a free account with Wordpress.org (details will be provided on the first day of class.)

Recommended Materials

- Purchase a domain name/provider (\$80 for the year, details will be provided later in the semester.)
- Additional materials and resources will be provided in class and on the class website.

Course Methodology

This course is workshop based, with many hands-on activities and opportunities to put theory into practice. The workshops and exercises completed in class cannot be substituted with textbook readings, so please make every effort to be present and active in class.

This course will consist of:

In Class:

- . Presentations
- . Discussions
- . Studio Time

At Home:

- . Readings & Viewings
- . Blog Postings
- . Exercises/Tutorials
- . Journals
- . Quizzes
- . Projects

The intention of this course is to develop web literacy and fluency through practice. This means that many of your assignments are public and live on the web and come with the responsibility of having an audience beyond the classroom.

Course Requirements

Students are expected **to be present to every class** and actively participate in the discussions. Students are also expected to use the studio time productively towards the exercise or project being developed.

You are also required to do weekly reading assignments and post your reaction to the readings in weekly blogs, as well as complete tutorials and exercises related to the technical content. These resources will help you develop your projects.

Course Content Overview

Projects

Projects are long term and unravel over the course of the semester. Projects are an opportunity to put the ideas/concepts/skills discussed in class into action. Students will complete three interconnected projects that will be presented on the first day of classes.

Reading/Viewing Assignments

Weekly reading assignments with viewing of related resources are required for class participation, weekly blog discussions and to complete the projects effectively.

Blogs

Students will do weekly blogs related to the topics covered and comment on their peers' blogs. Specifically, they will be looking at the daily news and / or researching books or other resources related to the subject in addition to the resources offered in the course website.

The blog will be reviewed weekly and graded according to content adequacy and research involved. Blogs should be reflective of the understanding of the material presented in the lectures and readings.

Each blog should be between no less than 200 and no more than 400 words and required to have at least 3 embedded images and/or videos, 5 sources/links each and citation of the resources.

Blog posts will be evaluated on:

- use of language;
- quality/depth of the response;
- demonstrated understanding of the blog platform;
- “clean” code;
- demonstrated understanding of course concepts and course readings (provide evidence that you have read!);
- and appropriate connections to ideas from outside of class.

Students are expected to post writings that follow guidelines set by the faculty. Posts should be written using complete sentences, and proper grammar (and avoid slang). Posts should also take advantage of the “multi-media” functionality of the web by including appropriate hyperlinks, images and videos. Media “borrowed” from other individuals should link back to the original source when possible and should always include credit to the author/creator. Blog posts are public and should be written for an audience beyond the class. Students will be expected to create tags for each writing, to assist readers (the public) to effectively search the blog content.

Quizzes & Self Assessments

Quizzes and/or Self Assessments will be given throughout the semester testing students on the content. This will cover major vocabulary and specifics of code syntax/grammar.

Exercises & Tutorials

Students will need to complete weekly exercises related to the content in order to build their technological knowledge and implement the course projects.

Course Website

The class website hosts all pertinent course information, and should be referred to when needed. The syllabus and schedule are available as downloadable PDFs and as a web page. Readings are hosted on the site, but require the creation of a user account.

WordPress Site

You will be required to create a WordPress site to document your journey in this class. The site environment will also be used as a testing and implementation environment for your ideas, concepts and skills.

Journal

You are expected to document your process in this class through a journal in your WordPress site. Students will be expected to create tags for each journal entry, to assist readers (the public) to effectively search the post content.

Extra Credit

You can earn three (3) extra credit points for attending or participating in events at MMC or outside the school related to the course topics and posting a journal entry about it in your WordPress journal.

Course Outline

Class 1 | W 01/30 | T 02/05

Intro to course
Project 1: Worst of the Web

Class 2 | W 02/06 | T 02/12

Net History | WordPress

Class 3 | W 02/13 | T 02/19

Information Architecture | Links | Images

Class 4 | W 02/20 | T 02/26

Design Principles | Typography

Class 5 | W 02/27 | T 03/05

Interface Design | HTML+CSS

Project 2: Net Pong

Class 6 | W 03/06 | T 02/12

Accessibility | HTML+ CSS

Class 7 | W 03/13 | T 02/19

Digital Media Theory | HTML+CSS

Class 8 | W 03/20 | T 04/02

Social Network Theory | HTML+CSS

March 25 to 31: Spring Break | No classes

Class 9 | W 04/03 | T 04/09

Project 3: The White Box | HTML+CSS

Wednesday, April 10 – No class

Tuesday, April 16 – No class

Class 10 | W 04/17 | T 04/23

Identity + Intellectual Property | HTML+CSS+JS

Class 11 | W 04/24 | T 04/30

Net Art + Activism | HTML+CSS+JS

Class 12 | W 05/01 | T 05/07

Blogging | HTML+CSS+JS+PHP

Class 13 | W 05/08 | T 05/14

Tags + Search Engine | HTML+CSS+JS+PHP

Class 14 | W 05/15 | T 05/21

Final Projects Presentations

Grading Criteria

Your final course grade will be an average of 100-point scale based on the following:

Assignment	Points
Readings and Blog Postings	18
Quizzes & Self Assessments	10
WordPress Journal	9
Exercises & Tutorials	18
Project 1 :Worst of the Web	12
Project 2: Net Pong	15
Project 3: White Box	18
Extra Credit	3

- Each of the assignments will be evaluated according to a specific list of required criteria given to you with the assignment.
- Class participation and in class productivity portion of your score will be based on promptness, your participation in discussions and critiques, and in class work ethic (ex: no parallel talk, no cell or electronic device usage, no ipod listening, or working on anything not related to class work, disappearing from class, etc...)
- Readings do count. Evidence of reading should be visible in blog posts, projects and class discussion. Failure to carefully read will impact these components of your grade.
- Student grades will be negatively affected by late assignments, poor attendance (including arriving late and leaving early), and lack of participation or preparedness.
- Many assignments have a writing component – in fact, about 1/3 of your grade is based on written work. Clear communication through words is just as important for artist as communication through visuals. Please take writing/speaking seriously and work to improve your verbal skills.

Grading Policy

Assignments must be turned in complete and **ON TIME** to earn an A in the course. Assignments more than 3 days (M-F, excluding weekends) late will **NOT** be accepted. Late assignments will lose 1/3 of a letter grade (e.g. an A becomes an A-).

All work should be submitted to the course online Dropbox before the beginning of class whether you are there or not. **No emailed assignments are accepted – they are deleted.**

At the first sign of struggle with the course material the student should contact and meet with the instructor to develop a plan for continuing success. Those who demonstrate honest effort and commitment will receive the support they need to succeed. Students who do not meet this standard will not do well in this course.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is REQUIRED. Many assignments and activities do occur IN CLASS; you are responsible for all material (including in-class activities) and assignments missed due to an absence. To allow for illness and family emergencies, all students are allotted 1 absence without penalty. Each additional absence will reduce your grade by one-half letter grade (i.e. B+ → B). Late arrivals and early departures more than 15 minutes will count as an absence. Three late arrivals or early departures less than 15 minutes will count as an absence.

Emails & Appointments

If you are confused please ask for help! The instructor is willing and able to clarify course concepts and assignments if the student is willing to ask. Students may ask short and specific questions by email, providing they put “COMM 225: Web Workshop” in the subject line and provide all relevant information in the body of the email (like which section you are in, web address to the project in question, assignment name). Students are also welcome to request an appointment to address more complicated questions or inquiries by putting “COMM 225 Appointment Request” in the subject heading. The instructor can be available for meetings before class.

The instructor generally responds to emails between 9am – 5pm Monday – Friday (when not in class or in meetings) and responds in the order they are received in.

Please allow 24 hours for a response (longer if it is a weekend or holiday).

If you haven't received a response within 48 hours, feel free to follow up (instructors are human and make mistakes).

Tutoring Center

This semester you can also get help at the Tutoring Center. More detailed information will be posted on the course site.

Tips for Success

- Plan your time – web projects are time consuming and technically involved. Plan at least three hours a week to spend in the Digital Media Lab or on your own computer. You will spend MORE time in the lab if you are not prepared to start on your project when you arrive – research, materials, sketches and site maps all need to be done before you arrive. The open lab schedule is posted on the lab door.
- Work with a friend—two heads are better than one when you run into technical, conceptual or creative roadblocks. Many students work in the Digital Media Lab—you shouldn't have trouble finding a buddy there.
- Save and save again. Back up your work in MULTIPLE locations. Attend class – each week builds on the previous one. Missing class will severely impact your grade. Ask for help when you have trouble – don't allow yourself to get behind on new material.

Health & Safety

Only beverages with a lid are allowed in the lab. Be especially careful around computers, one spilled drink can result in electrical shock and/or expensive damaged equipment. Please keep foodstuffs on tables in the center of the room away from equipment.

Staring at a glowing monitor for extended periods of time can cause headaches, eyestrain and problems with your eyesight. Remember to take frequent short breaks by looking away from the monitor and focusing on something in the distance, or close your eyes for a moment. Your eyes need a break!

Repetitive stress injuries like carpal tunnel syndrome, ulnar tunnel syndrome, and tendonitis can develop with excessive keyboarding, mouse-ing, etc. Use good form and stretch your muscles regularly to reduce your risk. If you have wrist pain use one of the mouse pads with a wrist pad available in the lab.

Use good posture! Try not to slouch: sit upright, maintaining the natural curves of your back and keep your shoulders relaxed. Take time to properly adjust your chair and workspace. If you have troubles reaching the floor comfortably place a book under your feet. Stand up and stretch occasionally.

Policies

Germ: Computer labs breed illness. Please be conscientious and wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before (and after) using the computers, particularly if you have been sick.

Food & Drink: Our class is long, and it is understandable that you may need food or drink. Please keep your snacks and beverages on the center tables and FAR AWAY from digital equipment. Please also don't touch the computers with sticky or food-covered fingers... please wash your hands first, we want to keep our lab clean.

Cell Phones: Be respectful to the learning environment. Cell phones should only be visible or audible when it specifically relates to class content. Please do not distract others by texting, taking calls or surfing.

Equipment Access: Some assignments require you to take photos using a digital camera. If you do not have access to a camera, or the quality of your camera isn't great, please let me know and I will put you on the check-out list in the media center where we have a few cameras available for student use. In addition we have video cameras and sound recording equipment that can be made available on a case by case basis.

Lab Access: Students enrolled in a digital media course are permitted to access the classroom during school hours when classes are not meeting. The class schedule is posted on the lab door. If you would like to use the lab and the door is locked bring your MMC ID to the Media Center (2nd Floor of Nugent, in the Library) to check out a key. Please also check the library schedule in advance to insure access to a key, particularly on nights and weekends.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities (learning, physical or psychological) who require reasonable accommodations or academic adjustments for a course must be registered with the Office of Disability Services or enrolled in the Academic Access Program. For any accommodation, the instructor must be presented with either a letter from the Director of the Program for Academic Access or an Accommodations Card from the Office of Disabilities during the first week of classes. With students' permission, faculty members are notified each semester by CONFIDENTIAL email that a student with documented disabilities is in their class and is eligible for accommodations.

Students with questions regarding the Office of Disability Services or accommodations should contact Diana Nash, Director of Academic Access & Disability Services, Room 706i, 7th floor Main Building, dnash@mmm.edu or 212-774-0724.

Academic Honesty

MMC fosters an academic community where students and faculty work together to create learning experience that imparts knowledge and forms character. To achieve this, the College requires all members of the community to adhere to the policy of Academic Honesty that can be found in the Student Handbook, the College Catalogue and on the College website.

Digital Media is an academic subject. If you are using digital resources or images in your digital work you MUST cite the source (hyperlinks are acceptable in this medium). Stealing and taking credit for work that is not your own is dishonest and may also be ILLEGAL. Images, songs, text and video can only be used in their entirety if they are in the public domain. Parts of images, songs, text and video may be legal if an argument for "fair use" can be made. If you have specific concerns related to digital media please contact your instructor immediately.