Creative Multimedia: Tools, Design, and Application
AD670 D1
Course Format (Blended)

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Office hours: by Appointment

Introduction

In this course, you will be introduced to concepts and approaches that will enable you to create an effective web site. The goal here is create or improve a website where users will have a pleasant experience and are encourage to return to the website in the future. This course will discuss concepts such as web usability and the principles of a good web design. Also, this course will look at the production aspect in creating multimedia materials.

As a result, you will be able to develop skills that enable you to be aware, discern, and be critical when building or reviewing websites or multimedia materials. Secondly, through this course, you will get hands-on experience of the different professional software applications, such as Adobe Photoshop and Flash. Each software program has its respective use for building your website.

This course assumes that you are not intimidated by technology, and that you are ready to face the seeming complexities that come with these software programs. This course also assumes that you have the patience and enthusiasm to not only learn how to get through technical challenges in building a website, but also keeping in mind what constitutes a good multimedia project.

Course Design

The emphasis of this course is on the concepts of web usability and user experience. As the web matures, designing a site means more than creating aesthetically pleasing site. Designers have to consider functionality as well. As you design your own site or if you find yourself modifying an existing site, you must find the balance between aesthetic and function.

In the past, the impression that people get as they enroll in this course was that they would be learning production software such as Adobe Dreamweaver or Adobe
Photoshop. If you want to learn any of these programs, this is not the course for you. Learning these software programs are courses in themselves as the features presented in these programs are complex and people need to spend some time in getting to know these features. You may want to take classes on your preferred software program. At best, this course will introduce to you these programs as we progress through the semester. In some cases, some students may already know a thing or two about a program especially, Adobe Photoshop. This is well and good. However, one thing to keep in mind that as we use these programs, they should be considered more as a means than an end. They are there to improve the look and functionality of a site.

Goals and Objectives

In this light, by the end of this course, you will:

- Be aware and understand what constitutes a good multimedia design
- Be aware and understand the Principle of Web Usability and User Experience
- Understand the role of Web Usability in relation to web design
- Understand the role of each software program in building a website

Tools

We will be using the following tools:

1. Weebly.com
   - I designated this site for all web projects for this course. It is a website where one can create, design, and publish a site. Give certain limitations, the site is free. I suggest that you get to know the site as you will use this site for your final project.
   - Like everything in this world, each has its own strengths and weaknesses. This applies to Weebly, Wordpress, Dreamweaver, and all other web designing software tools or site. The challenge here is to take advantage of its strengths and avoid or minimize its weaknesses.
   - The site is free. Anyone paying for the site will get a grade deduction for his or her final project. If you are a present subscriber, create a new account.

2. Adobe Photoshop
3. Adobe Flash
4. Blackboard
Readings

To start, I suggest you get Steve Krug’s “Don’t Make Me Think” 2nd Edition. For people who will be designing and evaluating websites, this is a good book to have as it discusses the principles of web design.

I will also be posting articles as the course progress. You are expected to read these assigned articles.

Grading

Your grades will be composed of the following:

1. Papers (12 %)
   - User’s Critique #1 (3 %)
   - User’s Critique #2 (3 %)
   - User’s Critique #3 (3 %)
   - Project Proposal (3 %)

2. Exercises (30.5 %)
   - Photoshop #1: Cropping (2 %)
   - Photoshop #2: Adjustment (2.5 %)
   - Photoshop #3: Selective Adjustment (3 %)
   - Photoshop #4: Retouching (4 %)
   - Photoshop #5: Tattoo (4 %)
   - Photoshop #6: Stamp (5 %)
   - Flash #1: Simple Animation (2 %)
   - Flash #2: Animation (4 %)
   - Flash #3: Slideshow (4 %)

3. Assignments (31 %)
   - Photoshop: Cropping and Adjusting Part 1 (2.5 %)
   - Photoshop: Cropping and Adjusting Part 2 (2.5 %)
   - Photoshop: YOU (4 %)
   - Photoshop: Postcard (8 %)
   - Flash: Animation (6 %)
   - Flash: Slideshow (8 %)

4. Midterm (10 %)
5. Final Project (12 %)
6. Discussion (4.5 %)

Important Note:

In previous semesters, I grade based wholly on objectivity. Students who satisfy the objectives place in a task or assignment are given a high grade. However, one of the problems with this system, as I discovered, is that it does not reward students who took time to being creative as they do these assignments. I do not think this should be the case. So I thought of raising the bar for excellent work. This will be made soon clear to you as you start working on the assignments. In the meantime, my line of thinking for grading your work will be as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Line of thinking</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Student submitted work. S/he added some creative elements beyond what is asked in the assignment or tasks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Student submitted work. S/he fulfilled all goals set in the assignment or task. However, student did only the minimum requirement. There is no sign of creativity in the work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Student submitted work, but s/he missed one or two goals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Student submitted work, but s/he did not fulfill some or most of the requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Student did not submit work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given that you have fulfilled all the objectives set in an assignment or task, the level of creativity will be graded in the range between B – A. This means B, B+, A-, A. This is the subjective part. As an instructor, I hope that you trust me enough to evaluate your work.

Second, often students come to me complaining that the grade I have given does not match the amount of time and effort they placed when doing their assignment and task. I understand how long it takes for people to do the work, especially for those who are just learning the software. I appreciate the effort and time the students put into the task at hand. Unfortunately, I grade based on the work itself. I will consider it, but it will not be significant when it comes to grading.

Advice:

As much as possible, I want to students to have an enjoyable experience as they go through my course. At the same time, I want to minimize the frustrations that come with learning the software programs among others. So:
Make sure you know what the objectives are before doing the assignment or task. There have been students doing tasks that are not part of the assignment or work.

Keep in mind that I will never assign anything or make you do anything without showing you first how it is done. So if you find yourself in a situation that you have no idea on how to do it, ask me or your classmates.

If you find the task too difficult, ask for help.

Discussion

Asynchronous Discussions is the newest feature for this course. Normally, I would open the floor for discussion during class time. However, there are not that many students who participate in the discussion. Maybe, this is because they are either tired, shy, too short a time to think about the topic, or something. By doing an asynchronous discussion, this will give you enough time to think about the topic at hand. You may learn a thing or two from you classmates. So every week, there will be at least one discussion topic. You are welcome to suggest some topics for discussions that related to what we are doing and that you deemed relevant.

Netiquette+

In a discussion, there are some things to keep in mind. First, please make you comment thoughtful and meaningful. Do not just write anything just to get a grade.

Second, please do not just say, "I like your idea," "I hate your idea," or "I agree with you," or "I disagree with you." This is not enough. You have to explain why you agree or disagree.

Third, one of the things I noticed when it comes to online discussions especially in a very public forum is that people tend to drop civility and start insulting people especially those who disagree with them. This is probably because of the sense of anonymity that the internet afford to the user. Although in this course, you will get to meet the people you will be working or studying with, please always remember to be patient, courteous, and respectful at all times.

If you disagree with certain ideas and thoughts in the course of the discussion, please be polite. Please always be constructive in your criticism. If you think there is something wrong with the thought presented or that there is something wrong in the design, it is not enough to focus on the flaws of the thoughts or designs presented. You have to provide suggestions that may help remedy these flaws.
Fourth, it is good if you put in your comments as early as possible. One of the points of having a discussion is that you should be able to contribute to the conversation. You cannot repeat what already has been said. You have to write something that will move the conversation forward. This does not mean all participants should open a new thread in the discussion. If you find that your classmate already wrote in a comment that you thought of writing. Simply add to that thought.

Fifth, please make your comments short and straight to the point as necessary. Do not ramble. The idea here is to have a meaningful and helpful conversation. I hope that the discussions we will be having will help in the process of designing your web.

Advice:

One use of a discussion forum is not limited only to discussing the different concepts concerning web design and usability. Another use is making it a source to help and/or seek help in navigating the different tasks contained in this course. Your classmates may have an idea for a website, but s/he does not know how to do it. You may know. Sometimes, a little help goes a long way.

Class Policies

1) Attendance & Absences – As this is a blended course, I will not be checking attendance. All course materials are online. We will be using the lab for its purpose, that is, to do the required exercises and assignments. In this regard, it will be your responsibility to be abreast with the topics and tasks for that week and for the upcoming weeks.

2) Assignment Completion & Late Work – Please submit your completed assignments and, in some cases, completed exercises, on time. All works and paper should be submitted online. In case of group work, all members will receive the same grade. Please do not submit to me any paper as I may lose them or forget them. With regards to paper, please no cover page. Late submission will receive a half a grade point deduction. Each week that you fail to submit an assignment or exercise that work will be deducted half a grade point.

3) Academic Conduct Code – Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated in any Metropolitan College course. They will result in no credit for the assignment or examination and may lead to disciplinary actions. Please take the time to review the Student Academic Conduct Code:

Boston University Metropolitan College
http://www.bu.edu/met/metropolitan_college_people/student/resources/conduct/code.html. This should not be understood as a discouragement for discussing the material or your particular approach to a problem with other students in the class. On the contrary – you should share your thoughts, questions and solutions.
Naturally, if you choose to work in a group, you will be expected to come up with more than one and highly original solutions rather than the same mistakes.”

**Schedule**

This schedule is tentative and is subject to change depending on the circumstances.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Exercises</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1/17</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1/24</td>
<td>Web Principles</td>
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<td>Project Proposal</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1/31</td>
<td>Simulation: Usability Testing</td>
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<td>User’s Critique #1</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>2/7</td>
<td>Paper Prototype</td>
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<td>Paper Prototype</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2/14</td>
<td>Photoshop Cropping &amp; Adjustment</td>
<td>Photoshop #1: Cropping</td>
<td>User’s Critique #2</td>
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<td>Photoshop #2: Adjustment I</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2/21</td>
<td>Photoshop Selective Adjustment &amp; Manipulation</td>
<td>Photoshop #3: Adjustment II</td>
<td>Photoshop: Cropping and Adjusting Part 1</td>
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<td>Photoshop #3: Retouching</td>
<td>Photoshop: Cropping and Adjusting Part 2</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>2/28</td>
<td>Photoshop Blending Modes &amp; Filters</td>
<td>Photoshop #5: Tattoo</td>
<td>Selective Adjustment</td>
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<td>Photo Manipulation</td>
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<td>Photoshop #6: Stamp</td>
<td>Photoshop: YOU</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>3/7</td>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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<td>Photoshop: Postcard</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>3/21</td>
<td>Project Presentation: Usability testing</td>
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<td>Midterm</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>3/28</td>
<td>Flash: Introduction</td>
<td>Flash #1: Simple Animation</td>
<td>User’s Critique #3</td>
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<td>4/4</td>
<td>Flash: Animation</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4/11 Flash: Programming</td>
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<td>Flash #2: Animation</td>
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<td>Flash #3: Slideshow</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>4/11</td>
<td>Flash: Programming</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4/25 Lab Time</td>
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<td>Flash: Animation</td>
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<td>Flash: Slideshow</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>4/25</td>
<td>Lab Time</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5/2 Presentation: Final Product</td>
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<td>Flash: Slideshow</td>
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<td>Final Project</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>4/18</td>
<td>No Class – Substitute Monday Schedule</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>4/28</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>5/2 Presentation: Final Project</td>
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<td>Flash: Slideshow</td>
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<td>Final Project</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>5/2</td>
<td>Presentation: Final Product</td>
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<td>Final Project</td>
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