

Tentative Syllabus

**CS 4317: Human-Computer Interaction**

Spring 2017

Tuesday & Thursday, 9:00 - 10:20, Psychology Building, room 308

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Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays 2:30-3:30, or by appointment, and usually when the door is open

**Course Objectives**

Acquire the knowledge and skills needed to create highly usable software systems.

**Main Topics** Human Perception, Ergonomics, Cognition, and Psychology  
Task Analysis  
User Interface Design  
Interface Programming  
System Evaluation

**Format** Lectures, student presentations, discussions, in-class design exercises, lab time, project activities, project presentations, etc.

**Textbook** *Designing the User Interface, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition*. Ben Shneiderman, Catherine Plaisant, *et al.*, Addison Wesley, 2017 (hereunder “sp”). We will be skipping back and forth in the book as we follow the topics listed above.

This will be supplemented by readings handed out in class. Some other good books to own are listed at the course website.

**Course Website:** <http://www.cs.utep.edu/nigel/hci/>

**Assignments** There will be a number of structured assignments, designed to give experience with various usability engineering activities. Most assignments will be done in teams. Assignments due at the start of class will be collected after a one minute grace period; late assignments will receive at most two-thirds credit. Assignments are to be handed in as hardcopy unless otherwise specified. Writing quality is important, and rework may be required if it is not up to standard.

Cooperation among students and among teams is encouraged, but not to the extent that it interferes with each individual’s understanding or with learning-by-doing. Help given to and received from other students and sources should be noted in the assignment write-up.

**Materials** Bring the textbook to class. Also bring unlined paper and pens or pencils of different thickness, darknesses or colors, for sketches and designs.

**Grading**            Approximate weighting:  
                         assignments 40%  
                         final 20%  
                         tests 25%  
                         quizzes 10%  
                         participation 5%

To achieve these weights, a point on an assignment will typically be worth slightly more than a point on a quiz or test. Assignments and tests will be challenging; as a result no one will ever feel completely satisfied with their achievements, but this is the nature of HCI. Grading will be on a points-earned basis (points above zero), rather than a points-off basis (points below expectation). Letter grades will be assigned accordingly; in the past, the A/B break has been around 80% and the B/C break around 70%. Grading of design projects unavoidably involves subjective judgments, but these will not be a major influence on the overall grade.

**Conduct, etc.**    Students are expected to be punctual, and to follow the spirit and letter of the UTEP Standards of Student Conduct <http://admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=73922>. If you have or suspect a disability and need accommodation you should contact CASS at 747-5148 or at [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu) or visit Room 106 Union East Building.

Tests will be closed-book, except that one page of hand-written notes may be brought in for the first test, two for the second test, and three for the final. If you leave the classroom for any reason, your test will be graded on only what you did up until that time. No make-up exams or assignments will be given except under the conditions set forth in the University Catalog. Students are free to attend class or not, bearing in mind that absence may annoy other students, interfere with learning, and result in a lower grade.

### **Important Dates**

August 29: Class begins  
September 26: Test 1  
October 26: Test 2  
November 23: Thanksgiving  
December 12: Final Exam, 10:00-12:45

### **Tentative Schedule**

- 1. Course Overview** (Chapter 1) (1 day)  
1. Why Design for Usability?  
2. Historical Perspective: machinery, computers, PCs and GUIs, networks, mobile  
3. Possible Futures  
*Assignment A: Analyze a Usability Problem (1hr)*

### Part II Foundations

- 2. Human Perception, Information Presentation and Layout** (Chapters 8, 12, 16) (3 days)  
1. Perception, gestalt perception, typography  
2. Color  
3. Graphic design (sp 11.4, in-class exercise; hand-outs)  
4. Displays, Paper, and other Output Devices  
5. Information Visualization

*Exercise B1: Static Information Presentation (1.5hr)*

*Exercise B2: Information Visualization (1 hr).*

- 3. The Human Body and Device Design** (3 days)
1. Input Devices and Ergonomics (Chapter 10, Section 2.2)
  2. Virtual Reality (Sections 7.5-7.6)
- Exercise D: A Time-and-Motion study of GUI Use (2hr)*
- 4. Low-Level Human Cognition** (Chapter 13, Section 2.3) (1 day)
1. GOMS Keystroke-Level Modeling (in-class exercise)
  2. Time-scales and the Illusion of Multi-Tasking
  3. Hypothesis Testing and Statistical Significance (Section 5.7)
- 5. Higher Cognition, Interaction Styles** (Chapters 3, 7, 9) (2 days)
1. Metaphor (in-class exercise)
  2. Direct Manipulation
  3. Widget Survey
  4. Command Languages
  5. Other Interaction Styles
  6. Choosing Among Interaction Styles
- Exercise Q: The Unix Command Line (1.5 hr)*

Test 1

### Part III Usability Engineering

- 6. Observing Users** (Sections 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.7) (2 days)
1. Mindset
  2. Subject-Running Techniques
  3. Usability Studies
- Exercise E: Observe Users with a GUI; Presentation (4hr)*
- 7. Usability Analysis** (Chapter 3, Section 5.2) (2 days)
1. Error Handling, Error Prevention (section 3.4.2)
  2. Cognitive Walkthroughs (Sections 5.2, 3.3.4)
  3. Heuristic Evaluation
  4. Usability Guidelines
  5. Choosing Among Usability Methods
- Exercise F: Evaluate the GUI Again (2hr)*
- 8. Specifying and Prototyping** (Sections 4.1-4.3) (2 days)
1. Low-Fidelity Prototyping
  2. Transition Diagrams
  3. Visual Basic Prototyping
- Exercise H: Propose a Better GUI; Presentation (2hr)*
- 9. Task Analysis, User-Centered Design** (Sections 4.4 - 4.8, 5.1, 5.6, Chapter 6) (3 days)
1. Systems Analysis
  2. Techniques: Task Decomposition, CARD, Ethnographic Observation
  3. Allocation of Functions (Section 3.3.6)
  4. Usability Engineering in the Business Context
- Exercise J: Sketch People-Icons (.5 hr)*  
*Exercise K: Task Decomposition (1.5 hr)*  
*Exercise I: Ethnographic Observation (1 hr)*  
*Exercise X: Allocation of Functions (1 hr)*

Part IV: User Interface Programming

**10. Interface Implementation**

(3 days)

1. Events and Handlers
2. Development Tools
3. Responsiveness Issues

*Exercise M: GUI Design (2 hrs)*

*Exercise L1: GUI Architecture (2 hrs)*

*Exercise L2: GUI Implementation (5 hours)*

Part V: Topics, Review

(1 day)

**11. Topics**

(Chapters 11, 14, 15, 2s; Afterword)

(3 days)

Web, Mobile, Speech and Multimodal, Groupware, Games, etc.

**12. Review**

(1 day)

*Exercise Y: A Question for the Final Exam (1 hr)*

*Exercise Z: Evaluate the Course*

(Note that the above time estimates for the exercises are for an efficient person working with a well-organized team)  
(A suffix of “s” on a reading means that that chapter or section need only be skimmed)

**Target Learning Outcomes**

**Level 3** (Outcomes in which the student can apply the material in new situations. This is the highest level of mastery.) Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to ...

*Evaluation*

- 3a1. Evaluate user interfaces and detect usability problems by doing usability studies (observations) with human subjects
- 3a2. Visualize/simulate how a user would understand and attempt to use an interface using an analytical method such as the cognitive walkthrough
- 3a3. Find likely usability issues quickly using heuristic evaluation
- 3a4. Communicate usability findings and concerns both in writing and orally

*Analysis*

- 3b1. Break down a complex activity sequence into its component actions using hierarchical task decomposition
- 3b2. Assign functions appropriately to the human and to the machine
- 3b3. Break down a graphical user interface (GUI) activity sequence into the component actions, identify these actions, and use the GOMS keystroke-level model to estimate the time required

*Interface Design*

- 3c1. Choose an appropriate interaction style for a given need (GUI, command-line, natural language, etc.)
- 3c2. Choose appropriate widgets for a GUI
- 3c3. Come up with a suitable layout of widgets and display elements for a GUI window
- 3c4. Convey a proposed design with a low-fidelity prototype
- 3c5. Develop high-fidelity prototypes using at least one development tool

*Implementation*

- 3d1. Be able to implement simple widget-based GUIs both for desktop applications and for the Web
- 3d2. Be able to write handlers for user input events in at least one language
- 3d3. Be able to use simple 2D graphics in at least one language

**Level 2** (Outcomes in which the student can apply the material in familiar situations, e.g., can work a problem of familiar structure with minor changes in the details.) Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to ...

- 2a. Decompose a complex interactive system into simpler components, using appropriate design patterns including client-server and model-view-controller
- 2b. Convey a software design with diagrams and words
- 2c. Select and combine appropriate colors, fonts, and layouts for a specific information-presentation need
- 2d. Develop a suitable organization and navigation scheme for a moderate-sized Website
- 2e. Select an appropriate hardware input device, for a given task and user population, from among various text entry, pointing and drawing devices
- 2f. Select an appropriate hardware output device for a given task and user population
- 2g. Perform a comprehensive task analysis, including ethnographic observation and use case development, for a single-user task of moderate complexity

**Level 1** (Outcomes in which the student has been exposed to the terms and concepts at a basic level and can supply basic definitions. The material has been presented only at a superficial level.) Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to

- 1a. Explain how interface design is ultimately dependent on human perception and cognition
- 1b. Explain the role of well-designed, usable interfaces in market success, reliability, and accessibility
- 1c. Explain the roles of HCI professionals and practitioners of related disciplines in the workplace
- 1d. Explain the role of systems software, distributed systems design, and GUI program efficiency in achieving acceptable system response times
- 1e. Explain how much trust can be placed in the various types of knowledge that HCI practitioners commonly deal with, for example facts established by controlled experiments, theoretical models such as Fitts' Law, guidelines, analysis methods, heuristics, and hunches
- 1f. Specify the desired behavior of an interface or interface component with a state-transition diagram