AR-217

Introduction to Web Design

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Our exploration of current trends, history, techniques and tools used on the web will center around a series of applied projects that introduce key concepts and practices in the field of web design and welcome experimentation, frustration, failure, research, and discovery as natural parts of the creative process.

The class will be a mix of demonstrations, discussion, critiques, and studio working sessions while investigating design principles and practices for screen-based experiences.

Projects are student-driven, using prompts as the starting points for more extensive research, asking students to create their own content and to supply their own point of view.

The goals of Introduction to Web Design are to:

- Gain hands-on experience in webpage/website planning, design, and layout
- Learn and follow a design process that involves research, ideation, implementation and refinement
- Design interactive, engaging, expressive, and accessible websites
- Take a typographic, content-centered approach to designing web sites
- Develop problem solving and organizational skills
- Time-permitting, learn basic foundations of front-end web coding with HTML and CSS

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Discuss and identify the difference between effective and ineffective web design including accessibility, navigation, pacing, information organization, and design principles
- Research questions about technical and design issues
- Become competent in the use of Figma and other web design tools to create expressive and engaging experiences
- Create conceptually-rich pieces of web design using the design process
- Develop a basic understanding of HTML and CSS and how code and design interact and inform each other.
- Understand responsive web design
- Understand and create within accessible design standards

ENGAGEMENT EXPECTATIONS

Be present in both mind and body: Show up! Don't answer calls or texts during class. If you must, use your cell phone for research only. Don't use computers for online chatting, social networking, leisure browsing or completion of assignments for other courses while in our class.

Respect yourself and each other: *Step up* and use your voice; *step back* to make space for others. Acknowledge your lived experiences and how they differ from other's. Actively listen to suggestions, concerns, stories, perspectives and take the time to process them. Invest in yourself and others. Ask for and offer help.

Respect the equipment and provided space: Food is not allowed in the studio or in the computer labs. Any drinks should be in containers with lids and left in the front of the computer lab, away from the computers.

Come prepared to do work: arrive to class with all materials, files, notebooks, etc. necessary to work on all aspects of a project in class. Make sure you save files in multiple locations to prevent the accidental loss of your work. Accidental erasure is not grounds for a deadline extension.

Check communication channels regularly: Check Canvas on a daily basis for any updates, announcements, or changes to course and work expectations.

You're engagement with the class and the assignments will effect your grade and by extension the quality of your work. You are expected to actively and passionately take part in our class:

- Attend class meetings both in-person and online

- Actively participate in discussions and critique sessions both in-person and online

- Do the classwork and homework and be prepared to show them to the class for discussion at the designated time

- Create with thought, intention, and intensity

- Meet deadlines for handing in work and process steps, including delivering requested documentation via Canvas

- Be curious about making things and the things your classmates make

- Come prepared to do work

- Care about yourself and your work, your classmates and their work, this class and art & design as a discipline

If you are not able to attend class in-person for an extended period of time, email me to create a plan together.

TEXTBOOKS

REQUIRED:

Don't Make Me Think, Revisited: A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability, 3rd Edition by Steve Krug; available in the school store and on hold in the Library.

NOT REQUIRED BUT WILL HAVE SELECT READINGS FROM:

Accessibility for Everyone by Laura Kalbag. Available on hold in the Library and at abookapart.com; use code SMCPAL15 for 15% off any order in the ABA store. There are lots if great books at ABA!

OFFICE HOURS & EMAIL

Office hours:
Tuesdays, 3:30-4:30, in the MacLab **|** Wednesdays, 12:30-1:30 in my office, Sloane 150
Or by appointment.

Contact: I can be reached via email at rgurney@smcvt.edu. Please allow 24 hours for a response.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Your work belongs to you; what you make is the outcome of your creative decisions. However, Saint Michael's College and the Art & Design program reserve the right to show, to the public, work produced in classes. When doing so, credit will be given to you as creator and owner of the work.

AI

No assignments or projects generated entirely by AI tools will be accepted, unless otherwise explained and allowed for in writing by the instructor.

In line with any plagiarism guidelines, If you didn't write it (or draw it), don't put your name on it and claim that you did. Do not modify a few words (colors) here and there and claim it, either.

- AI tools like ChatGPT are useful for research and ideation. When using any AI (verbal or visual) for ideation, provide the source(s) and answers found. Be sure to research those answers—AI often gets things wrong!

- If any visual AI tools are used, they must be approved by the instructor and be cited when turning in the assignment. For example if you use AI generative backgrounds in artwork, they must be credited.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

This course is modeled on the rigor of the graphic/web design industry and requires students to work and progress both in and outside of class time.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR PROJECT GRADES

Process and progress are key: each project will go through the design process. Students are expected to present each stage to the class for feedback: ideation, sketches, design, final.

Completion and documentation of process steps	60-70%
Execution & Design of final piece	30-40%

Additional considerations for project grades include:

- Developmental process and progression that leads to execution of turned-in project

- Concept development, critical and innovative thinking

- Effective information organization, interface /UX design

- Meeting deadlines, including homework, reading assignments

- Active participation in online and in-person discussions and feedback sessions.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR COURSE GRADE

Exercises	10%
Icon Set Project	15%
Landing Page Project	15%
Story Project	20%
Event Project	25%
Readings, Reaction Responses, Active Participation	15%

GRADE SCALE

A 100-90	This grade indicates work and engagement that reflect an excellent understanding and communication of the material. Projects and exercises show clear conceptual thinking and effective use of all of design principles with great attention to detail.
B 89-80	This grade indicates work and engagement that reflects a good (above average) understanding and communication of the material. Work shows effective use of design principles that may contain minor errors but shows some attention to detail.
C 79-70	This grade indicates work that reflects understanding of most of the material covered. Work shows attempts at conceptual thinking and use of design principles but contains errors.
D 69-60	This grade indicates work that does not fulfill the specifications of the assignments. Work contains serious errors in craft and technique with little or no attention to detail.
F Below 60	This grade indicates a lack of work and engagement.

SOFTWARE & COMPUTERS

Macs are industry standard: Instruction will be for and in-class work will be on a Mac.

For web design, discussions and feedback sessions:

- Collaborative prototyping and whiteboard—Figma (free educational version)
- Adobe Photoshop (or other photo editor)
- Collaborative visual coding tool - CodePen.io

The computers in the MacLab have access to Figma and the Adobe CC suite, including Photoshop .

For communication and course management we will use Canvas.

SUPPLIES

You must save any work not in Figma to personal storage devices after each session on a lab computer. You must have at least 2 methods of saving/storing your work available to you at all times; one should be an external drive (USB flash drive, external hard drive with the correct connections for use, etc.). One can be your OneDrive, which is free cloud storage provided by SMC.

SCHEDULE

Deadlines are on Canvas. Any changes will be announced in class and on Canvas.
Projects and papers are due in their entirety at the beginning of class.

Week 1	**Hello and Pixel art icons**
	Into to Figma with Class Cards
	Intro to Web Design & abbreviated history
	Intro to icons
Week 2-3	**Project: Hobby Icon Set**
	Drawing in Figma
	Principles of Design: Contrast & Alignment
Weeks 3-4	**Exercise: Type Hierarchy - Fable**
	Exercise: Image and type interaction - Emoji
	Type hierarchy and typographic units
Weeks 4-5	**Exercise: Expressive Type and Image - Movie Card**
	Choosing and compressing images
	Color models and transparency
Weeks 6-7	**Project: Landing Page**
	Creating interactive elements in Figma
Week 7	**Exercise: Components & Systems & more Hierarchy - Eye On Design**
	Principles of Design: Proximity & Repetition
	Reusing components in Figma
	Creating and saving type styles in Figma
Weeks 8-11	**Project: Story**
	Planning & Content Collection
	Exercise: Wireframing (Figma)
	Design (Figma)
	Accessibility
Weeks 11-15	**Project: Event**
	Responsive design
	Information architecture

	Navigation
	Interactive prototypes (Figma)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

These books are recommended:

On Web Typography by Jason Santa Maria

Flexible Typesetting by Tim Brown

Webfont Handbook by Bram Stein

The New CSS Layout by Rachel Andrew

Image Performance by Mat Marqius

Type on Screen by Ellen Lupton

Many of these are available at abookapart.com, use code SMCPAL15 for 15% off any order in the ABA store.