

Web Design and Architecture

MASTERS IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

Western University

Course: LIS 9723A, Web Design and Architecture (Fall 2020 Online)

Lecturer: Mark Rayner

Contact: OWL Messenger strongly preferred. Otherwise, email:
marayner@uwo.ca or DM me on Twitter: @markarayner

Time: Asynchronous, Optional Q&A Zoom: Thursday, 1:30-2:15pm

Location: OWL, and Zoom for in-person consults (by appointment)

Websites: OWL & <http://instruct.uwo.ca/fim-lis/9723/>

Description

In this online studio course, you will learn about web design and architecture at two levels. In our lectures we'll discuss the elements, theory and disciplines required to produce enterprise-level websites. In the lab we will use Brackets to code HTML5 and CSS. By the end of the course, you will be able to create a basic, static website. This specific practical work will further illuminate the deeper principles of web design and enrich your overall understanding of the web.

Objectives

Web Design and Architecture has several objectives. In addition to the primary goal of helping you acquire the basic skills you will need to produce a good website, you will learn about:

- ◆ information architecture
- ◆ communications planning
- ◆ navigation and search systems
- ◆ usability, UX & accessibility
- ◆ semantics, writing and typography for the web
- ◆ how to learn new software
- ◆ principles of ethical, user-centered design
- ◆ syntax of HTML5 and CSS
- ◆ understanding of file structures
- ◆ colour theory & Gestalt design principles

Evaluation

Coding Tests (15%) are online test that will show you understand the basics of how file structure, HTML and CSS code works.

Exercises (20%) will be based on the number of exercises you have completed -- note, lessons and tutorials are not graded, only the exercises, listed on OWL under "Assessments". For the most part, these are pass/fail exercises (if you complete the exercise — even imperfectly — you get the points). However, they must be posted to your webpage by the deadline or you will not receive the points. So I urge you to double-check to ensure that you can see the exercise on the web after you've completed and published the exercise. You should also include the URL in OWL.

Website Proposal (25%)

Write a communications plan to address how you will reach your audience for a subject of your choosing. Design the architectural blueprints for the website, and

create a detailed content map – what information needs to be available at what point on the site. Include the file structure with this map. Also, make some wireframes or mock-ups to show what you believe the site will look like. What design elements will best communicate your ideas? Consider the overall tone, colour, and layout. This is your best chance to get the site right – it should be fully planned before you begin creating it. Keep form and content in mind. Required elements:

- ◆ communications plan (one page is okay)
- ◆ architectural blueprint
- ◆ detailed content map, including file structure
- ◆ wireframes

To get a higher mark:

- ◆ other relevant materials such as content, mock-ups, graphic elements, color palette, SWOT analyses, brainstorming, scenarios, etc.

Please submit as a single PDF. You may refer to web pages for color palettes, images, etc.

Due date: Nov. 5 (11:55pm)

Website Production (40%)

Produce the site that you have envisioned, proposed and designed. Keep everything that we have discussed in class in mind, but remember that we are focusing on creating original sites that are easy to use. The site will be a minimum of 15 web pages in size (separate static html files) and a maximum of 25 pages (you can build a bigger site, but I'll stop reading at 25 pages). There should be a minimum of 200 words per page (on average – some pages will be longer and some shorter). A complete marking criteria will be provided on OWL, but the following factors will weigh heavily in the final mark:

- ◆ originality and effectiveness of content (**NB: NO verbatim content from other sources!**)
- ◆ content that is written for the web
- ◆ download times
- ◆ ease of use
- ◆ browser compatibility
- ◆ persistent navigation & local navigation
- ◆ basic accessibility (alt tags) and good page title information
- ◆ sensible file structure and good semantics.

Please submit your project URL on OWL. (And please email me if you opt to submit for the early deadline on Nov. 19)

Due date: Dec. 10 (11:55pm)

Lateness penalties and bonus marks:

I will set all your deadlines for Thursdays at 11:55pm. If you need some extra time to complete assignments, that's usually not a problem, but please ask me well before the due date. Assignments that are late will be penalized at 5% per day. For Website Production, sites cannot be accepted after the 13th. There is a 10% bonus if you can submit your final project site by Nov. 19 at 11:55pm.

Readings:

The *Information Architecture* text is on reserve in the GRC, and the rest of the the readings are on OWL, or available online.

Information Architecture for the World Wide Web, 3/e (IA)
By Louis Rosenfeld, Peter Morville
O'Reilly & Associates; ISBN: 0596000359

Optional:

Don't Make Me Think: Common Sense Approach to Web Usability, 3/e (Think)
By: Steve Krug, Roger Black
New Riders; ISBN: 0321344758

Note: I highly recommend you get a copy of this book – it's tremendous fun, easy to read, and the best book on usability you will find. The GRC has digitized the two most important chapters for us, but then you'd be missing out on the whole thing.

Schedule

Week 1

- Elements of the web (lecture)
- How HTML works (Lecture, Brackets)
- Writing Basic HTML (Brackets)
- Using FTP (FileZilla)
- How to critiquing a website (lecture)

Readings:

Understanding File Structure (PDF on OWL)

Exercise 1: Create and personalize your homepage

Week 2

- Usability & UX (Lecture)
- Critique a site for usability (Lecture)
- Semantic HTML (Lecture, Brackets)
- Semantic Tagging (Brackets)

- Images, Relative Linking & Jump Links (Brackets)

Readings:

Information Architecture, chap. 3-4
Don't Make Me Think, chap. 11

Quiz 1: HTML Basics

Exercise 2: Semantic Tags

Week 3

- Conceptual Design Process (Lecture, handouts)
- How CSS works (Brackets)
- Writing CSS (Brackets)
- Lines, Colors, Fonts, Background Images (Brackets)

Readings:

Don't Make Me Think, chap. 7
Information Architecture, chap. 5-7

Exercise 3: Emulate a layout

Week 4

- Using CSS to create basic layouts (Brackets)
- Writing for the web (Lecture)
- Web typography (Brackets)

Readings:

["Reading revolutions: Online digital text and implications for reading in academe."](#) *First Monday*

["The Reading Brain in the Digital Age: The Science of Paper vs Screens."](#)

Scientific American

Quiz 2: CSS

Exercise 4: Create a two-column layout

Exercise 5: Scannable text with original typography

Week 5

- Navigation (Lecture)
- Floats & clearing floats (Brackets)
- Logos & image floating (Brackets)
- Linking Styles (Brackets)
- Compound CSS (Brackets)
- Rounded edges, drop shadows, CSS3 (Brackets)

Readings:

Information Architecture, chap. 8

Exercise 6: Create an original three-column layout

Exercise 7: Robot Uprising

Week 6

- The Search Engines (lecture)
- File Structure (lecture/review)
- Externalizing CSS (Brackets)
- CSS style organization (Brackets)
- Horizontal menu (Brackets)

Readings:

Information Architecture, chap. 9-10

Quiz 3: Relative Linking

Exercise 8: Big Red Dot

Week 7

- Drop Down Menu (Brackets)
- Using Dreamweaver's Templates (Dreamweaver)
- Suggestions for easiest building in Brackets (Brackets and Finder/Explorer)

Exercise 9: Excelsior Designs Mini-Site

Reading Week

Week 8

- Color, Perception and Image Compression (Lecture)
- Creating Images (Canva – online tool)
- Compressing Images (Online tools)

Readings:

[Gestalt Principles: How Your Designs Are Perceived](#), *vanseodesign.com*

Exercise 10: Hybrid Image

Week 9

- Accessibility (Lecture)
- Accessible Dropdowns (Brackets)

Readings:

[Introduction to Web Accessibility](#) (Webaim.org)

Exercise 11: Make Excelsior Designs more accessible

Week 10 – Bonus (optional) tutorials

- Responsive Design (Brackets)
- Responsive Images (Brackets)

Weeks 11-13

- Work time on final project

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

Support Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Western's "Health and Wellness" http://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Land Acknowledgement

Western University is situated on the traditional territories of the *Anishinaabeg*, *Haudenosaunee*, *Lunaapeewak* and *Attawandaron* peoples who have longstanding relationships to the land and region of southwestern Ontario and the City of London. The local First Nation communities of this area include Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Munsee Delaware Nation. In the region, there are eleven First Nation communities and a growing Indigenous urban population. Western values the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America).