The University of Western Ontario

Faculty of Information and Media Studies

GRADLIS 9706-650 User Experience Research

Summer 2024

Instructor

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Course Information

Time: Wednesday 1:30 – 4:30pm, delivered asynchronously via recorded lectures
Course Website: GRADLIS 9706 650 in OWL
Prerequisites: MLIS 9004

0.5 course

Course Description

This course offers an overview of models and theories of how users interact with information technology. Students will practice these understandings through the study of information systems in a real world context, e.g., digital libraries, the university's library web site, etc. This course will touch on usability through the lens of accessibility and inclusion.

On successful completion of this course, students will be able to,

1. Engage in a critical analysis of principles and techniques of research in human-computer interaction (PLLO 1, 2, 7);
2. Analyze major problems in the area of human-computer interaction in a spirit of creativity and critical inquiry (PLLO 4, 6, 8);
3. Identify, select, acquire, organize, describe and provide access to recorded digital information through user-centered design (PLLO 2, 6, 7);
4. employ appropriate technologies in library and information applications (PLLO 4, 6).

Enrolment

Enrolment in this course is limited to students in the MLIS program.

Readings

Weekly materials are assigned on a weekly basis and are available through OWL or Western Libraries. Required and recommended readings are listed below as well.

Successful Course completion

To complete this course, you must,
- Engage with required readings and demonstrate your knowledge of this content via assignments as applicable.
- Practice inclusive and respectful communications with your peers and the instructor.
- Be flexible and open to learning, being challenged by your learning and demonstrate critical thought.
- You must also complete assignments assigned to you.

Methods of Evaluation

Student will be evaluated based on their timely completion of assignments below. There are not requirements for posts or comments in addition to these assignments.

Assignment	Weight	Type of Work	Deadline
Usability Testing Methods	15%	groups of 2-4 or independent	May 22
Terms of Reference (TOR)	10%	groups of 3-4	June 5
Website Audit Project	30%	independent	June 26
UX Librarian Job Description	10%	groups of 2-4 or independent	July 17
Final Group Project	35%	groups of 3-4	August 7

Assignment Details

Usability Testing Methods (15%)

(Attachment submission on OWL – Word or PDF)

- Identify TWO user testing methods drawn from literature and independent research which you find interesting;

- Prepare a paper which explores each method in detail and possible areas of practical application in the context of user interaction with technology (ie. website testing and design, digital libraries, IT management, etc.);
- Explain why you think that these methods are effective in understanding user experience;
- Attach a bibliography of resources consulted.

Terms of Reference for Working Group (10%)

(Attachment submission on OWL – Word or PDF)

The final project focuses on developing a user testing proposal to conduct user experience research to solve a specific issue your library is looking to address. In order to get this work done a working group is being struck which will develop this proposal to be sent to the Management Committee for review and approval. Before this group starts its work, members are asked to,

- Develop a Terms of Reference (TOR) by identifying a clear mandate for this working group;
- Define composition of your members, unique skills and responsibilities to support this work;
- Define group norms or values, and meeting schedules;
- You may include tools for collaboration which you plan to use between meetings to work asynchronously;
- You may also choose to identify specific project planning tools and templates to organize your work which can be identified in this document.

Website Audit & Redesign Project (30%)

(Attachment submission on OWL – Word or PDF)

- Choose a website of your choice (public, academic, special, museums, galleries…)
- Focus on one area of the website (ie. main/index page, services page, room booking page etc)
- Conduct literature review about best practices in web design & user experience
- Evaluate your given page to create a report of elements which you think work and those that don't
- Look and document a number of other organizational websites to compare layout, what content is presented and how and the effectiveness of the overall user experience;
- Develop a proposal of how you would redesign the page you are evaluating. You may be as creative as you like – feel free to include lists, visuals, mock-ups of your better version
- Organize your content in an accessible and easy to navigate way as if you are writing a proposal to your manager to secure support for this project. Focus on making persuasive arguments which can be supported by facts and literature.
- Include your evidence and any information you find may be helpful. Remember a good website is navigable and useful to a broad range of audiences which means it is accessible and uses inclusive terminology.
- Include a bibliography of resources you consulted.

UX Librarian Job Description (10%)

(Attachment submission on OWL – Word or PDF)

UX work touches on all aspects of libraries impacting work across most teams. To effectively coordinate these activities system-wide libraries sometimes create UX Librarian roles to guide these activities.

- Conduct research to develop an understanding of UX Librarian competencies by looking at standards which may guide this work and job descriptions.
- Consider what you have learned so far in terms of how libraries support user experience research, reflecting on skills which a UX Librarian may need to have or acquire to successfully lead this work.
- Create a mock-up of a job posting identifying your organization (ie. Harvard Library), library context, required and desired skills, and terms of employment.
- If you wish you may look at your library's collective agreement or policies for librarians to determine the rank and appointment procedures to make this job description as believable as it can be.
- Make this an interesting posting which would catch the eye of prospective candidates.
- Include a list of consulted resources such as job postings, organizational pages and any other relevant information.

Final Group Project (35%)

(Attachment submission on OWL – Word or PDF)

- This user testing proposal for a specific library is intended for your future manager – an administrator who needs to see context clearly articulated to understand what needs to be done, what resources are required and what support you may need from them.
- Your proposal will:
  - Identify the problem you are looking to solve (ie. inadequate website, low uptake in reference services, low occupancy of study spaces etc.)
  - Define your goal
  - Define your desired outcomes
  - Identify your tools for conducting user testing
  - Define your roles & timelines
  - Determine how you will analyze your results (quantitative/qualitative methods)
  - Consider your demographics and how you can make user testing accessible and inclusive
- Guide the reader through your testing objectives, how you will collect information and analyze it, and what will the outcome of your testing be.

MLIS Student Handbook & Grade Guidelines

The MLIS Student Handbook includes criteria used to grade assignments. Late assignments are generally penalized at 5% unless an explicit extension has been granted by the course instructor. Assignments which are over 5 days late are generally not accepted.

Course Schedule

Timeline	Topic	Readings & Activities
Week 1, May 8	Introduction to User Experience (UX) Research	Hicks, A., Nicholson, P.K. & Seale, Maura., (2022) "Towards a Critical Turn in Library UX", College & Research Libraries. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.83.1.6 Young, S.W.H., Chao, Z. & Chandler, A., (2020) "User Experience Methods and Maturity in Academic Libraries", *Information Technology and Libraries* 39(1) doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.6017/ital.v39i1.11787
Week 2, May 15	Prototyping & Role of User Experience Researcher	Marquez, J. & Downey, A., (2015) "Service Design: An Introduction to a Holistic Assessment Methodology of Library Services", *Weave: Journal of Library User Experience* 1(2). doi: https://doi.org/10.3998/weave.12535642.0001.201
Week 3, May 22	Accessibility & Universal Design for Learning	**Usability Testing Assignment Due** Rayl, R., (2021) "How to Audit Your Library Website for WCAG 2.1 Compliance", *Weave: Journal of Library User Experience* 4(1). doi: https://doi.org/10.3998/weaveux.218
Week 4, May 29	User Led Design	Bergart, R., (2023) "How to Teach Yourself About Behavioral Insights—and Why You Should", *Weave: Journal of Library User Experience* 6(2). doi: https://doi.org/10.3998/weaveux.3222
<td colspan="3" align="center">**Note: Deadline to drop courses is May 31**</td>
Week 5, June 5	UX & Assessment	**Terms of Reference Due**
Week 6, June 12	UX & Project Management	Coco, P. & Reidsma, M., (2015) "The UX Moment: A Weave Digital Panel, Part One", *Weave: Journal of Library User Experience* 1(2). doi: https://doi.org/10.3998/weave.12535642.0001.203
Week 7, June 19	UX & Library Websites	Deschenes, A., (2014) "Improving the Library Homepage through User Research -- Without a Total Redesign", *Weave: Journal of Library User*

		Experience 1(1). doi: https://doi.org/10.3998/weave.12535642.0001.102 Valenti, A., (2024) "Usability Testing Best Practices for Academic Library Websites & DIY Usability Testing Toolkit", *Weave: Journal of Library User Experience* 7(1). doi: https://doi.org/10.3998/weaveux.4396 Rayl, R., (2021) "How to Audit Your Library Website for WCAG 2.1 Compliance", *Weave: Journal of Library User Experience*4(1). doi: https://doi.org/10.3998/weaveux.218
Week 8, June 26	Creating a Culture of UX	**Website Audit Due** Rettig, M., (2014) "Grassroots UXD in the Library: A Review Essay.", *Weave: Journal of Library User Experience* 1(1). doi: https://doi.org/10.3998/weave.12535642.0001.103
	READING WEEK	
Week 9, July 10	Designing inclusive learning spaces	Becksford, L., Hammer, K. & McNabb, K. B., (2021) ""I Think It Could Be Better": Incorporating User Testing Into Learning Experience Design", *Weave: Journal of Library User Experience* 4(2). doi: https://doi.org/10.3998/weaveux.216
Week 10, July 17	Accessible User Experience	**UX Librarian Job Posting due** Campbell, L. B. & Kester, B., (2023) "Centering Students with Disabilities: An Accessible User Experience Study of a Library Research Guide", *Weave: Journal of Library User Experience* 6(1). doi: https://doi.org/10.3998/weaveux.1067
Week 11, July 24	User Experience & Online Chat	Dease, N. E., (2024) "User Expectations and Preferences Regarding Library Chat Widgets", *Weave: Journal of Library User Experience* 7(1). doi: https://doi.org/10.3998/weaveux.2743
Week 12, July 31	User Experience Research & Bias	Wilkinson, J. (2022). The "tender technicians" of Nielsen Norman Group videos. *Weave: Journal of Library User Experience,* *5*(1). https://doi.org/10.3998/weaveux.2131 Confirmation Bias and How Does it affect UX Research

Week 13, August 7	The Future of Digital Libraries	**Final Project Due** Kenfield, A. S. & Tracy, D. G., (2022) "Power and Politics of User Experience: Implications of Different User Roles for Next-Gen Repository Services", *Weave: Journal of Library User Experience* 5(2). doi: https://doi.org/10.3998/weaveux.530

Academic Integrity

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

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism-detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (http://www.turnitin.com).

Student Wellness Resources

- Mental Health@Western
- Writing Support Centre at Western
- Learning Development & Success
- FIMS Graduate Library staff
- Chris Circelli, Manager, Graduate Student Services at FIMS

Accessibility & Accommodation

Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program.

Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with Accessible Education Western (AEW), a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate

documentation, the student will work with both AEW and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged.

These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.