Introduction to Web Design
MIT 2570B (Winter 2024)

Faculty of Information and Media Studies ~ The University of Western Ontario

Times:	Tuesday, 2:30 - 5:15 pm
	Tutorials: *online, asynchronous*
Location:	FNB 2070 & Online (OWL, YouTube)
Lecturer:	Mark Rayner
Contact:	Please message me on OWL
	Office Hours: after class on Tuesday, or by appointment
Anti-requisite:	CS 2033A/B

Description

This course focuses on the design and production of information for websites, which communicate through the integrated use of text, images and media elements. Secondly, it concentrates on developing digital imaging skills for the web and introduces HTML5 and CSS3. The theoretical implications of this medium will be explored. Brackets, Filezilla & Photoshop are the main tools we will use.

Objectives:

By the end of this course, you will have the technical ability to produce a basic static website, and will be able to critique current practices related to web design. You will also gain an understanding of:

- site architecture and planning
- writing for the web & web typography
- usability issues
- technological issues, especially the importance of file structure
- visual communication & design theory
- creating digital images and web pages
- communications planning & industry requirements

Course Materials:

There are no required textbooks for this course, but a subscription to Adobe Creative Cloud is really helpful so you can use Photoshop and Dreamweaver. You will also need to download Brackets and FileZilla, which are both open source (free) software. You could also use similar open sources software if you prefer, but the instruction is done with those two. Except for the lectures, all of the course materials are available via OWL. (I will post PDFs of the lecture slides on OWL. Note that you cannot miss the key four lectures early in the term!)

Course Structure:

This is actually a hybrid class. I've moved all the technical tutorials online to OWL because frankly, they are better than trying to lead everyone in a class setting. That also means we have lots of time for individual help during the class.

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, all remaining course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their

convenience). The grading scheme will not change.

Deadlines

- Everything is due by 11:55pm on Tuesday nights, via OWL.

- If you're having trouble meeting the deadlines, **please talk to me instead of ghosting the course**. I want you to succeed! (**I highly recommend you do the exercises week-by-week; it's difficult to catch up if you get behind**.) Also note, there's a bit of a grace period on the deadlines except for the quizzes, so if you're a few minutes late, don't freak out.

- Late assessments <u>without</u> academic consideration will be subject to a late penalty 5%/day
- Late assessments <u>with</u> academic consideration require the student to work with the Academic Advising unit in their Faculty of registration; once that has been approved, students need to contact the instructor to arrange for an alternate submission date.

Communication

- Students should contact me using OWL messages
- Please check the OWL site every 24 – 48 hours
- Any updates to the course will be provided on the OWL announcements
- Messages will be monitored twice daily during the week; students will receive a response in 24 – 48 hours

Evaluation:
Your final mark will be based on an evaluation of:
1. Attendance for the required lectures on Jan. 16-30 & Feb. 6 (5 points)
2. Your work on the exercises (10 points)
3. Three quizzes (25 points)
4. Your understanding of the relevant issues and theory introduced in the class, as demonstrated by your integration of them into your assignments and the quality of your assignments (60).

A Note on Plagiarism:
Students in this class are reminded that plagiarism – using another's work, ideas, or words without giving credit -- is a serious scholastic offence. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized use of generative artificial intelligence to create content that is submitted as one's own. **Students who use AI-content generators (such as ChatGPT) to complete assignments without attribution or permission from the instructor are committing a scholastic offence**. See my notes on OWL for how to use these tools in your final project legitimately.

Attendance: **Due: Jan. 16, 23, 30 and Feb. 6**
We are covering critical theory and praxis during the required lectures. I will ask you to leave the course if you miss more than one of these classes without accommodation.

Exercises: *Due: Feb. 6, Mar. 5, Mar.19, 11:55 pm*
These will be worth 10 percent of your grade in total. Exercises are worth a variety of points and will be marked on a pass/fail basis — in other words, if you tackle the

exercise, you will get the points. NOTE: An integral part of complete the exercises for them to count is getting it posted to your website, and linking from your home page to the exercise. So, double-check those links are working! Exercises are listed on the assignments page on OWL, and on the week's lesson. They're due in three batches.

Coding & File Structure Quizzes: *Due: Jan. 23, Feb. 13, Mar. 7, 11:55 pm*
These will be worth 25 percent of your grade. They are online tests that will show you understand the syllabus, the basics of how file structure, relative linking, HTML and CSS code work. They will be available for a week, and there's no time limit, so you can take them slowly and check things as you go, so as stress-free as I can make them. They are linear, however, which means **you can't move backwards in the quiz.**

Assignments:
1. Web Proposal *(20 percent)*   *Due: Feb. 27, 11:55 pm*
To complete this assignment, use the following process:
- write a communications plan (comms plan)
- figure out what content your site will have, and arrange it in a reasonable architecture (blueprint)
- map your content onto an exact file structure (content map)
- create wireframes of how you think the main sections of the site will be laid out.

At this point you can also decide on the design/navigational elements and consider the overall tone, color, and layout. This is your best chance to get the site right — it should be fully planned before you begin creating it.
Required elements: Hand in a **single PDF** of your communications plan (one or two pages, point form), the blueprint, the content map and page layout ideas — also referred to in class as wireframes.
To get a higher grade: Include the website content and other elements that will flesh out your plan: color palettes, images you have created for the site, storyboards, a full mock-up and anything else that explains what the site will look and feel like, such as scenarios or audience research.

2. Web Production *(40 percent)*   *Due: Apr. 2, 11:55 pm*
Produce a website that you created from scratch. Check to ensure the links are not broken and ask your peers to Beta test the site. Remember that the content of your site must be original. This means that *you must write it* — you cannot use content from other websites, books, magazines, or generative AI, and so on. Material copied from other sources is plagiarism. You can quote other material if you cite it. You can incorporate generative AI material if you include the prompt you used, the text generated, and your edits you made to the material to make it work for your communications goal and audience. There should be a minimum of 13 *static html* pages, with an average of 100 word/page.
Required elements and tips: Check out the OWL site for a complete list of the required elements and marking criteria for this final project. I'd recommend reading it before you even begin designing your site! Web Production projects will not be accepted after Apr. 9, without arranging an INC.

Tentative Schedule (see OWL for actual)

Week 1 & 2* (Jan. 16)
- Elements of the web.
- How to critiquing a website
- How HTML works
- Writing Basic HTML (Brackets)
- File structure
- Using FTP (FileZilla)

Exercise 1: Create your homepage

Week 3* (Jan. 23)
- Usability & UX
- Critique a site for usability
- Semantic HTML
- Semantic Tagging (Brackets)
- Images, Relative Linking & Jump Links (Brackets)

Exercise 2: Semantic Tags

Week 4* (Jan. 30)
- Conceptual Design Process
- How CSS works
- Writing CSS (Brackets)
- The Box Model
- Lines, Colors, Fonts, Background Images (Brackets)

Exercise 3: Emulate a layout
Syllabus Quiz Due

Week 5* (Feb. 6)
- Using CSS to create basic layouts (Brackets)
- Writing for the web
- Web typography (Brackets)

Exercise 4: Create a two-column layout
Exercise 5: Scannable text with original typography

Week 6
- Floats & clearing floats (Brackets)
- Logos & image floating (Brackets)
- Linking Styles (Brackets)
- Compound CSS (Brackets)
- Rounded edges, drop shadows, CSS3 (Brackets)

Exercise 6: Create an original 3-col. layout
Exercise 7: Robot Uprising

Reading Week: Feb. 18-25

Week 7
- File Structure (review)
- Externalizing CSS (Brackets)
- CSS style organization (Brackets)
- Horizontal menu (Brackets)

Exercise 8: Big Red Dot
Coding Quiz Due
Assignment 1: Web Proposal

Week 8
- 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

Week 9
- Graphic Types
- Color Theory
- Photoshop Intro (Photoshop)
- Optimizing Graphics (Photoshop, Online Tools)

Week 10
- Adjusting Images (Photoshop)
- Refining Edges, Layer Styles, Filters (Photoshop)

Relative Linking Quiz Due

Week 11 – Bonus tutorials
- Responsive Design (Brackets)
- Responsive Images (Brackets)
- Accessible Dropdowns

Final Weeks:
- Work time on final project

* required lecture for attendance

Rights and Responsibilities

The conditions governing a student's ability to pursue their undergraduate education at Western are ratified by Senate and can be found on the Academic Policies section of the Academic Calendar.

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 here.

Plagiarism

Students in this class are reminded that plagiarism – using another's work, ideas, or words without giving credit -- is a serious scholastic offence. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized use of generative artificial intelligence to create content that is submitted as one's own. **Students who use AI-content generators (such as ChatGPT) to complete assignments without attribution or permission from the instructor are committing a scholastic offence.**

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software Turnitin 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.

Accommodation Policies

Academic Accommodation

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (AE) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing.

Medical Consideration

Students who have medical grounds for academic consideration for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth **10% or more of their final grade** must apply to the Academic Advising office of their home Faculty (for FIMS students this is Undergraduate Student Services).

Students are required to provide

documentation in the form of a Student Medical Certificate. It will be the Dean's Office that will determine if consideration is warranted.

For work worth less than 10% of the final grade, the instructor will consider requests for academic consideration on medical grounds made in a timely manner in writing or during office hours. Such requests need not be accompanied by documentation. The instructor may decide to require documentation be submitted to the appropriate Academic Advising office.

Students should also note that **individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student**, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. **All documentation must be submitted to the Academic Advising office of a student's home Faculty.**

Compassionate Accommodation

Academic accommodation (extensions, makeup tests and exams, additional assignments etc.) may be given to students on compassionate grounds. The situations for which compassionate accommodation can be given must be serious, including significant events such as death in the immediate family, trauma (fire, robbery, harassment, muggings, car accidents, etc.) or emergency situations. Documentation is required.

If a member of your immediate family is seriously ill, obtain a medical certificate from the family member's physician and submit the documentation to your Academic Advisor.

If you have been involved in a severe accident, fire, or some other exceptional crisis, obtain a copy of the police report or be prepared to provide the necessary documentation upon request.

Generally, for deaths within a student's immediate family (parents, guardians, caregivers, siblings, spouses), bereavement leave is granted, upon provision of documentation. For deaths within a student's extended family, academic accommodation is given for one to three days, upon provision of documentation. Students seeking additional bereavement leave should contact their Academic Advisors with valid documentation.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Advisor. Additional information is given in the Western Academic Calendar.

Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone

through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence, you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts, here. The gender-based violence and survivor support case managers are located in Thames Hall (3114-3127 office suite.) To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Support Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Health and Wellness for a complete list of supports.

FIMS Grading Policy

FIMS Undergraduate programs now have the following class average policy: ***First year courses required*** for entry into a FIMS module (MIT 1020E; MIT 1025F/G) have an expected course average between 68-72%. ***Second year required courses*** (MIT 2000, 2025, 2100, 2200, 2500) have an expected course average between 70 and 75%. The ***third year required course*** (MIT 3100) is expected to have a course average between 72 and 77%. **Elective courses and 4th year seminars have no recommended *course averages.***

Appendix A: Suggested Grade Ranges in MIT, MPI and MTP

Guidelines to the MIT Grade Range

These guidelines are benchmarks, and are not to be followed as rigid regulations. They will be adjusted as appropriate to take into account the level of the course and any specific instructions given by a professor. As well, competency in English language usage (including spelling and grammar) may be taken into account in the assignment of grades by individual instructors. Note that the 70-79 grade range is broken into two divisions, as this is the grade range into which a large number of students fall.

90-100 (Outstanding, A+)

The report shows sparkling originality and exhibits a high degree of critical analysis of the topic. Sophisticated synthesis and analysis of the theoretical and conceptual dimensions of the topic are demonstrated. Mastery of complex material and ideas is immediately evident. The topic is treated with sensitivity and subtlety of thought. The quality of the writing and background research is exemplary.

80-89 (Excellent, A)

The report shows originality and exhibits a high degree of critical analysis of the topic; it gets to the heart of the matter with comments and/or questions. It is clearly focused and logically organized. The quality of writing makes the report immediately understandable. Mastery of complex material and ideas is demonstrated. The report is of appropriate length, while preserving the priorities and emphasis of the material, so that the result is meaningful, not simplistic.

75-79 (Very Good, B+)

The report shows above average analysis, critical thinking and independent thought. Claims are supported by ample evidence and the components of the topic are well-researched and presented. The topic is addressed in reasonable depth and/or breadth and covers material appropriate to the course. The analysis is organized around focal points and the argument is easily followed. The report demonstrates an above average ability to write in an intelligible style and to condense material meaningfully and with a concern for priorities of that material.

70-74 (Good, B)

The report shows an attempt at analysis and critical thinking. Claims are supported by reasonable evidence. The topic is addressed in some depth and/or breadth, with references to the appropriate literature and course material. The analysis is organized around focal points. The report is generally well written and well argued.

60-69 (Competent, C)

The report demonstrates adequate comprehension of the topic. The report is on topic and is a reasonable summary of material covered in the course, but goes no further. Facts are stated accurately; the quality of writing is sufficiently intelligible with enough elaboration and enough connections made between ideas to permit a reader to understand the point of the report.

50-59 (Marginal, D)

The report shows less than adequate comprehension of the topic and of the material covered by the course. The report is a less than adequate summary of sources and/or is considerably off-topic. Facts are stated inaccurately or ambiguously; the writing style is difficult to follow; there is insufficient elaboration to permit reader's comprehension of relations among ideas; little judgment is shown in selecting detail for inclusion in the report.

Below 50 (Unacceptable, F)

The report demonstrates a failure to comprehend the topic. The material is disorganized and unintelligible. The report clearly does not meet the minimal requirements of the assignment.

Appendix B: Guidelines of Academic Appeals for FIMS Students

Grounds for Appeal:

The Faculty of Information and Media Studies does not view the appeals process as an opportunity for students to solicit a second opinion on a grade assigned to a particular piece of work. Appeals must pertain to the final grade in a course, and will only be entertained if sufficient grounds for appeal can be met, including: medical or compassionate circumstances, a defect in the evaluation process, bias, inaccuracy or unfairness.

Stages in the Appeals Process:

The first stage of the process is a discussion of the disputed grade with the appropriate Teaching Assistant (if applicable), and subsequently, the course Instructor. For grades assigned to individual assignments, essays, lab reports, projects and tests completed throughout the term, the student first must appeal to the Teaching Assistant or Instructor of the course, within three weeks of the date on which the Instructor or Teaching Assistant returned the assignments to the class. The Appeals Committee will not hear any further appeals about the final grade in any course unless this first step has been taken.

If completion of the first stage has not resolved the matter, the student may appeal the final grade in the course to the FIMS Appeals Committee. Appeals of final grades must be **within the time frame indicated in the Undergraduate Calendar.** It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the appeal is submitted within the deadline. The student shall submit a formal letter to the FIMS Appeals Committee outlining the grounds for the appeal, the remedy sought and relevant materials including the information about when and with whom (Teaching Assistant and/or Instructor) the student met, as described in Stage 1. If the appeal involves a request for work to be regraded, the original marked work and a clean copy (if possible) must be included. If the appeal is commenced once the deadline has passed, it will not be considered either by the Appeals Committee or by the Associate Dean.

The FIMS Appeals Committee has the discretion to determine whether the grounds for appeal have been met.
If the Committee deems that the reasons for the appeal are not legitimate, the Associate Dean will be informed. The appeal will be terminated and the student will be informed.

If the Committee decides that the grounds for appeal have been met, the following steps will be taken:
1. the course Instructor will be shown the appeal letter and offered an opportunity to make a written response;
2..if work is to be regraded, a reader will be appointed who is competent in the area in question and was not involved in the assignment of the original mark. The reader will consider the work in question and will arrive at an independent evaluation. If there is a large discrepancy between the original mark and the regraded mark, a second reader may be appointed by the Committee. **If the appointed reader(s) arrive at a grade within five marks of the original, the original grade will stand.**

The FIMS Appeals Committee will review the evidence and will make a recommendation on the case to the Associate Dean Undergraduate.
The Associate Dean Undergraduate will consider the recommendation from the Appeals Committee, and will make a decision. The student and the instructor will be notified promptly and in writing by the Associate Dean of the decision and of the change in grade, if any. Within the Faculty of Information and Media Studies, the Associate Dean's decision on the matter is final.
Further appeals are possible under certain circumstances to the Senate Review Board Academic (for Undergraduate students) or to the Faculty of Graduate Studies (for Graduate students) but the student should carefully consult the guidelines regarding such Appeals.