

JC659: Communication Systems and Society

Autumn, 2001	Prof: Eric S. Fredin	TA: Yang Dai
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Office hours: Tuesday: 10-11:30; Wednesday, 2-3:30.

Bulletin course-description: Advanced study of a current topic in the relationship between telecommunication and electronic media systems and society.

What's the course about? In a sentence: It is about factors in the design of hypermedia systems, and psychological aspects of their use. We will look at the interaction between individuals and hypermedia. To do so we will draw research, concepts, and ideas from several fields as well as your experiences.

Texts

Lynch, Patrick J., & Horton, Sarah (1999). *Web style guide: Basic design principles for creating web sites*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

(You can purchase this book from amazon.com or other book sites. See also <http://info.med.yale.edu.caim.manual>).

Alan Cooper (1999). *The Inmates Are Running The Asylum: Why High-Tech Products Drive Us Crazy and How to Restore the Sanity*. Indianapolis: SAMS Publishing

Donald A. Norman (1990). *The Design of Everyday Things* (Previously Published as *The Psychology of Everyday Things*). New York: Currency Doubleday

Occasional articles handed out in class.

Reading packet. We will announce when it is ready

Material found on the web.

Class Procedures

In several ways this class will be highly interactive. That means that you must contribute regularly, and that your contributions will help shape the direction of the course. The idea here is to further your own thinking about the new media. There will be concepts, ideas, and facts for you to learn and use, but exactly how this is done will depend in considerable part upon your own interests, values and knowledge. Some of the readings, particularly later in the course, will depend in part upon your contributions to the class.

Assignments and grading

The dates for the assignments are in the course schedule. The schedule may change, but I will give you reasonable notice, and the volume of work will remain about the same.

Commentaries and discussions

There will be three commentaries and three sets of threaded discussions. The topics will be up to you to a large extent. All will be required to make substantive contributions to the discussions.

Quizzes

These are marked. Some may be in class, some on the class website that is being constructed. In-class quizzes will be short, but they will involve major concepts from the readings..

Tests

There are none – no tests, no final exam -- unless there is widespread demand for them.

Projects

There are two group projects both due in the last week in order to give you maximum time. One project will be the evaluation of a sophisticated website or of some software application. The other will be a design proposal for a website or software application. The design will be basically paper and pencil in form. You will not be asked to make a prototype or the like on the web, though you may if you wish.

Distribution of grades

Quizzes: 20%, Commentaries and discussions: 30%, Projects, 20% each; Web critique 5% Project updates, a total of 5%. You can also earn extra credit by participating in experiments.

Graduate Students

Graduate students will have an additional reading. Each graduate student must also complete a project that includes a 15- 25-page paper or related project. Readings will be somewhat different from those in the class.

Experiments

Extra credit will be given for participating in one or two experiments in the department. You will be able to gain the extra credit by doing one or two extra-credit assignments instead of participating in the experiments. Details and procedures will be discussed in detail in later weeks.

Honesty

It is your responsibility to complete your own work as best you can in the time provided.

Faking, plagiarizing, and duplicating work will result in disciplinary action as stipulated by University rules. This means filing a complaint with the University Committee on Academic Misconduct as outlined in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities. If the complaint is upheld, the committee may recommend a variety of punishments.

1. Faking refers to making up facts or quotes.
2. Plagiarizing, as defined by Webster, is "to steal and pass off as one's own the ideas or words of another." Often this problem starts to emerge when ideas are not referenced adequately. Note that "plagiarizing" refers to ideas as well as words. Paraphrasing someone else's work without referencing it is plagiarizing.
3. Duplicating work is defined as submitting the same work to more than one instructor without the prior knowledge and agreement of both.

PLEASE NOTE: This syllabus can be made available in alternate formats for students who require this assistance. Please let me know as soon as possible if you require an alternative format so that I can facilitate your needs.

Course Calendar

This is subject to change, but the volume of readings and the timing of the assignments will stay about the same.

Week 0

Thursday September 20

Week1

Tuesday September 25

Norman: Chapters 1-2

Thursday September 27

Norman: Chapters 3-4; Quiz

Week2

Tuesday October 2

Norman: Chapter 5; Lynch and Horton: Chapters 1-2

Thursday October 4

Lynch and Horton: Chapter 3; Norman: Chapter 6; Quiz

Week3

Tuesday October 9

Cooper: Chapters 1, 2, 9; Norman: Chapter 7;

Commentary Due; discussion s tart.

Thursday October 11

Cooper: Chapters 3, 10; Quiz

Week4

Tuesday October 16

Cooper: Chapters 4-6, 11; Lynch and Horton: Chapter 4

Thursday October 18

Cooper: Chapter 12; Groups formed by this date.

Week5**Tuesday October 23**

Cooper: Chapters 13, 14, 7

Thursday October 25

Cooper: Chapter 8; Quiz.

Week6**Tuesday October 30**

Evaluation Proposal due.

Thursday November 1

RTBA.

Week7**Tuesday November 6**

Design proposal due, Commentary due, new discussions start

Thursday November 8

Website Critique; RTBA; Quiz.

Week8**Tuesday November 13**

RTBA.

Thursday November 15

RTBA; Quiz.

Week9**Tuesday November 20**

Thursday November 22 Thanksgiving – No class.

Week10**Tuesday November 27**

First Project Due; Project presentations; Commentary & Discussion

Thursday November 29

Second Project Due; Project presentations