Overview

The birth of web pages occurred in 1994 with the appearance of a simple browser called Mosaic. At that time, web pages were nothing more than modestly formatted blocks of Times New Roman in a variety of garish colors. The technology had already been in use by the military and academics alike, but the simple little browser from a company that would later be called Netscape opened the door to the public’s awareness of the burgeoning online community.

Since then, it has rapidly evolved into one of the most powerful and broad-reaching mediums available. Compared to such distribution technologies as publication and broadcasting, the web has very little overhead and a virtually unlimited reach. For just a little over $200 a year, any company or individual can broadcast messages of their choosing to a near-global audience.

It should come as no surprise that the popularity of the internet blossomed more rapidly than anyone could have predicted. In just a few short years, a dizzying array of features were added to browsers and HTML and regulatory organizations were formed to try and established a sense of order in the virtual maelstrom that was beginning to form.

Today, the web permeates all facets of our everyday lives. We purchase books, clothing and airline tickets online; we register for university classes online; we pay bills and monitor our bank accounts online; even the venerated tradition of the garage sale has been moved into virtual reality (see eBay). There is a plethora of web sites out there (and many businesses who need/want them), but somebody must design these. That’s where you come in.

Course Description

This course will be split into two parts. The first half of the semester will focus on creating traditional interactive experiences using HTML along with the following applications: Dreamweaver MX, Photoshop CS and ImageReady CS. The second half of the semester will focus on creating more dynamic interactive experiences using sound and motion with Macromedia Flash MX. In both parts of the semester our main concern will be on designing for the interactive experience and the considerations/problems unique to the medium. Your value as a designer on an interactive project will lie in your capability to think holistically and put yourself into the shoes of your potential audience. This encompasses more than just mere visual styling. Issues such as information design, way-finding, functionality and information architecture must all be considered. Your ability to consider and effectively deal with each of these simultaneously is what your grade in this class will be based on.

Project expectations:

A successful design solution will require constant refinement and critique. It will also be important to be diverse in your explorations and not limit yourself to one solution at the beginning of the design process. Keep in mind the process will play a significant role in determining whether or not you thoroughly explored the problem.

At the completion of each project, all of the following materials must be placed in a report cover and given to the instructor:

1. Documentation of all visual research materials (color swatches, typography samples, photography samples, screenshots of other websites, etc.); these should be neatly arranged on 8.5 x 11 sheets of paper. The presentation of these materials must be as neat as possible.
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2. 8.5 x 11" sheets of thumbnails.

3. laser print of the site map.

4. CD containing the files for the completed project

All work must be submitted in the condition set forth above and during the time indicated by the instructor. Failure to meet these obligations will result in a failing grade for the project submitted. Late work will NOT be accepted. Exceptions to this rule will only be made in extreme circumstances (natural disasters, death in the family, global thermonuclear war). If you are ill and cannot make it to class to turn in a project, arrange for someone to submit your work for you and contact the instructor before class begins.

Thumbnails:
Thumbnails must be drawn in pencil on the 8.5 x 11 template (see ClassWorkSpace folder). Thumbnail Groups consist of three thumbs; each group must explain/show a completely different idea and/or concept. These sketches should be simple, but need little explanation. A few scribbles in a box says nothing about the concept or functionality of the design.

Comps:
Comps in this class will be flattened, full-sized, 72 dpi Photoshop documents showing different pages of your site design. All content shown in the comp should be the same as will be used when the site is built and posted. For all intents and purposes, these design should be final and ready to be used to build out the website.

Sitemaps:
Generally, a sitemap should fit on a single 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper. The descriptions of content shown for each page of the site should be as brief as possible; this map is nothing more than a guide to keep you on track while building the site. There is a sample sitemap within the ClassWorkSpace folder for you to download. Any sitemap you turn in must be a laser print; hand-drawn sitemaps will not be accepted!

The importance of email:
The primary method of disseminating information in this class will be e-mail. It will be your responsibility to check your email regularly to receive notices and information from the instructor regarding the class. If you need help with this, please see the instructor as soon as possible.

Attendance Policy
You are expected to attend class each time it meets. If you are not present at the time I take attendance you will be marked absent. It is your responsibility to inform me directly after class that you arrived late. Exams and projects may be moved up or postponed according to the pace of the course, so you are responsible for being present at each class meeting to hear announcements as well as learn the ideas presented. Numerous absences and/or late arrivals will negatively effect your final grade.

You will be given 3 excused or unexcused absences for the entire semester. For each additional absence 10 points will be deducted from your final grade.
Projects and Assignments:
What follows is a basic description of the assignments you will complete over the course of the first half of the semester. You will be given a more detailed project brief as each is assigned. The exact dates these will be given and due will be determined as the semester unfolds.

Project 1
Assignment #1:
Part A: Locate 3 websites that you consider to be designed well. Write a brief paragraph for each site explaining why.
Part B: Locate 3 websites that you consider to be designed poorly. Write a brief paragraph for each site explaining why.
Assignment #2:
Creating a new sitemap.
Assignment #3:
Fifteen (15) thumbnail groups.
Assignment #4:
Three (3) Photoshop comps of the new website design.

Project 2
New Website Design; http://www.fatpossum.com/home.html
Assignment #5:
Research client, begin gathering visual resources, generate sitemap.
Assignment #6:
Fifteen (15) thumbnail groups.
Assignment #7:
Three (3) Photoshop comps of the new website design.
Assignment #8:
Build website based on comps from Assignment 7. Site must be fully functional with all content in place.

Grading
A description of total points for the second half of the semester will be distributed at a later date.

Take-Home-Quizzes
#1, TH 1-26-06 20pts
Veen chapters 1 and 3 (on reserve)
#2, TH 2-09-06 20pts
Veen chapters 2 and 4 (on reserve)

Quizzes
#1, T, 1-31-06 20pts
Intro to HTML
http://www.webmonkey.com
The Basic, Basic Table
http://www.webmonkey.com
#2, TH, 2-2-06 20pts
Typography on the Web (lesson 2, page1-10)
http://www.webmonkey.com

Performance Quiz
#3, T, 2-7-06, 100 pts
This quiz will test your ability to use Dreamweaver MX to build a simple website with functioning links. Completing the lessons from "Macromedia Dreamweaver MX: Training from the Source" and in-class demos will give you sufficient knowledge to ace this exam.

Sub Total 180pts

Project 1
Assignment 1 25 pts
Assignment 2 25 pts
Assignment 3 50 pts
Assignment 4 75 pts
Sub Total 175 pts

Project 2
Assignment 5 25 pts
Assignment 6 25 pts
Assignment 7 75 pts
Assignment 8 100 pts
Sub Total 225 pts

Total 580 pts (1st half of semester)
Extra Credit
You may receive up to 50pts of extra credit for documenting the completion of tutorials from the websites listed below. 5 points will be given for each successfully completed tutorial. All extra credit will need to be submitted by Thursday May 4, 2006.

Web Design Tutorials
http://www.w3schools.com

Flash MX tutorials
http://www.layersmagazine.com/design/fl-index.php
http://www.flashkit.com/tutorials/
http://www.w3schools.com/flash/default.asp
http://www.macromedia.com/support/flash/tutorial_index.html
http://www.actionscripts.org/tutorials.shtml

Accommodations
Every attempt will be made to accommodate qualified students with disabilities. If you are a student with a documented disability, please see the instructor as early in the semester as possible to discuss the necessary arrangements, and/or contact the Disability Services Office at 507.389.2825 (V) or 1.800.627.3529 (MRS/TTY).

Note: The information contained in this document is subject to change per instructor’s request.

tutorials/resources
Web designers Tools:
http://wellstyled.com/tools/

Web Typography:
http://webtypography.net/

Inspirational
The Designer’s Lunchbox:
http://www.k10k.net

Site of the Week:
http://www.designinteract.com

Second Story Interactive:
http://www.secondstory.com

Peel Interactive:
http://www.peelinteractive.com

FOUO:
http://forofficeuseonly.com

blogs
Design Observer:
http://www.designobserver.com