

HOW PEOPLE WORK

Design 51-271 | Fall 2017 | Monday + Wednesday | 2:30-4:20 pm | MM A-11

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COURSE OVERVIEW

Whether you are designing products, communications, environments, systems or services, you are designing for interactions: between people, between people and things, and between people mediated by things. It therefore makes sense that you need to know something about people: how they exist as part of a larger whole within social systems; how they feel; how they see, hear, touch, smell and taste; how they perceive and think; and how they are characterized and function physically. This knowledge can empower designers to create things and environments that look good, fit well, feel good to use, please the human senses, provide intuitive information through graphics and form, and enhance life through beauty, intrigue, satisfaction and fun. More importantly, the decisions we make as designers can actually impact how people live their lives, safely, productively, with fulfillment and self worth, and with care for others and the planet.

This course will expose you to principles of human centered design; providing the basis for asking good questions, gathering information, drawing conclusions, and utilizing the perspectives of human centricity in the design process.

The course will be organized around four primary themes relevant to how people work. Each theme focuses on things that designers consider when making decisions, taking into account:

- How people feel: worldview; design and emotion
- How people think: cognition, perception, processing and learning
- How people can be researched, to help designers understand them
- How people physically interact with design

It is notable that this course is offered to and required of all design students, regardless of career intention. The School of Design believes that an understanding and use of the course content is fundamental to all of the design disciplines that our students pursue, for every context and scale of design for interactions.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To gain a basic understanding of design principles relevant to human interactions with the designed world
- To gain a basic understanding of human principles of emotion, behavior, sensation, perception, cognition, and physicality
- To articulate what you have learned from others through reflective written work
- To develop a constructive and intelligent language for critiquing design from a human centered perspective
- To collect information through basic methods of human centered research, design and testing
- To apply human principles and research findings to the creation and evaluation of your own design work

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COURSE STRUCTURE AND EXPECTATIONS

The course meets twice a week, on Monday and Wednesday afternoons. The normal meeting time is from 2:30 to 4:20pm. Any exceptions to this will be announced in advance. During class you'll listen to lectures and participate in discussions, workshops and labs. Various faculty, the teaching assistants, and guests will conduct the sessions, which will enable you to work with a range of people with diverse backgrounds and expertise.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

There is an emphasis on in-class participation and work for this course. The simple acts of attendance and engagement will prove to help you the most. Be here, listen, think, and ask questions, read the assigned readings, do the assigned projects. There will be design activities, but most of the work will be short-term exercises, rather than large projects typical of a studio course.

You will be assigned short reflection essays for each section of the course. Details and due dates will be announced in class.

Building on the in-class exercises, you will complete a team project to be presented at the end of the semester. The project will involve research, testing, and redesign of a product, communication, environment, system or service. This assignment will be detailed separately.

EVALUATION AND GRADING

You will receive feedback for each assignment that you complete throughout the semester. Evaluation will be based on how well you articulate and utilize the skills and knowledge that you acquire, relative to each assignment. Your mid-term and final grades will also take into account your attitude and participation during class activities. Work that is incomplete, improperly done, or turned in late due to missed or misunderstood information will result in a lower grade. Work that is not turned in will be graded as failing.

COMMUNICATION

The questions and comments received from students are often relevant to everyone, so you are encouraged to ask things in class. If you have questions outside of class please email the TAs and instructor. One of us will respond to you as soon as possible. We frequently use email as a means of distributing pertinent project information to all of you. It is your responsibility to check email often to obtain this information.

ATTENDANCE

Your timely presence and participation in class are necessary. Frequent absences and late arrivals are disruptive and inconsiderate to the rest of the class. If you can't attend class, please inform us in advance either by e-mail or by calling the School of Design office at 268-2828. After three unexcused absences your grade will drop one letter grade. Three late arrivals will count as one absence. You are responsible for information you miss through absences or lateness.

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REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Universal Principles of Design, Revised and Updated: 125 Ways to Enhance Usability, Influence Perception, Increase Appeal, Make Better Design Decisions, and Teach through Design.
William Lidwell, Kritina Holden, Jill Butler. Rockport Publishers 2010.

Or previous edition:

Universal Principles of Design: 100 Ways to Enhance Usability, Influence Perception, Increase Appeal, Make Better Design Decisions, and Teach through Design.
William Lidwell, Kritina Holden, Jill Butler. Rockport Publishers 2003.

CANVAS

How People Work is on Canvas. You should not rely solely on this source for course information; however, please check it for regular handouts and assignments, particularly if you have missed a class for any reason. Essays may also be submitted and graded through the Canvas system.

PLAGIARISM

The University and the School of Design regard plagiarism as a serious academic offense. Depending on the content and context of the offense, and at the recommendation of the course instructor, the penalty shall be either failure of the assignment or failure of the course. There's more information online at:

www.cmu.edu/policies/documents/Cheating.html.

Here's the gist of what it says: Plagiarism includes but is not limited to, failure to indicate the source with quotation marks or footnotes where appropriate if any of the following are reproduced in the work submitted by a student: 1. a phrase, written or musical; 2. a graphic element; 3. a proof; 4. specific language; 5. an idea derived from the work, published or unpublished, of another person.

Note that plagiarism does not only refer to copying portions of written text, but also includes copying designs and other visuals such as photographs without proper attribution. While less obvious than written plagiarism, design plagiarism is often characterized as copying both the design (type, color, composition, image style, etc.) and the concept/communication goal of a project. With design examples easy to find online, it is important to use what you find as references and not copy them directly.

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TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

Take care of yourself this semester. Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle by eating well, exercising, avoiding drugs and alcohol, getting enough sleep and taking some time to relax. This will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress.

All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone. There are many helpful resources available on campus and an important part of the college experience is learning how to ask for help. Asking for support sooner rather than later is often helpful.

If you or anyone you know experiences any academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings like anxiety or depression, we strongly encourage you to seek support. Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS) is here to help: call 412-268-2922 and visit their website at <http://www.cmu.edu/counseling/>. Consider reaching out to a friend, faculty or family member you trust for help getting connected to the support that can help.

If you or someone you know is feeling suicidal or in danger of self-harm, call someone immediately, day or night:

CaPS: 412-268-2922

Re:solve Crisis Network: 888-796-8226

If the situation is life threatening, call the police:

On campus: CMU Police: 412-268-2323

Off campus: 911