

# User Research & Evaluation Studio

## Syllabus

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### TECHIN 523 | Spring 2019

- Studio Day: Mondays
- Studio Time: 10:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m. (with 30 minute lunch break)
- Class Location: GIX Room 250
- Credit Hours: 3

### Class Canvas Site

The class Canvas site will be your main stop for the most up-to-date information on the course schedule, assignment descriptions, and links to important resources. Canvas site is located at: <https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1290573>

### Instructor

**Dr. Julie Kientz**, Associate Professor, Human Centered Design & Engineering

- Email: [jkientz@uw.edu](mailto:jkientz@uw.edu)
- Website: <http://faculty.washington.edu/jkientz/>
- Office: Sieg Hall, Room 423C
- Office Phone: 206-221-0614
- Office Hours: Thursdays after class

### Teaching Assistants

**Kai Lukoff**, Ph.D. Student, Human Centered Design & Engineering

- Email: [kai1@uw.edu](mailto:kai1@uw.edu)

### Course Description

This project-based course focuses on the user research and evaluation components of the design process. Students learn methods to engage stakeholders and elicit their needs to provide insight for defining requirements for ethically-grounded designs and aspects of evaluation of technology designs with potential users, including usability and user experience evaluation techniques.

## Course Overview

User research and user evaluation are fundamental skills in the design of useful, usable innovative technology solutions. This studio-based course provides students with a hands-on overview of practical methods to learn how to engage with users in the context of a technology design project and to conduct both formative and summative evaluations of designs. Emphasis is placed on both empirical and analytical evaluation techniques for web, mobile, and hardware-based user interfaces.

## Learning Objectives

On the successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Appreciate the importance of engaging users at all stages of the technology design process
2. Develop and justify a plan for conducting user research that triangulates across a number of dimensions (e.g., attitudinal vs. behavioral, qualitative vs. quantitative, small scale vs. large scale, breadth vs. depth)
3. Conduct a variety of data collection and analysis methods for both formative and summative user research and evaluations at a basic level
4. Understand the difference between empirical and analytical evaluations
5. Design and conduct an empirical evaluation, such as a usability test or a field deployment
6. Design and conduct an analytical evaluation, such as heuristic evaluation or cognitive walkthrough
7. Draw conclusions from and document the results of user research and evaluations

## Books & Materials

### Textbook (required):

- Martin, B., Hanington, B. (2012) *Universal Methods of Design: 100 Ways to Research Complex Problems, Develop Innovative Ideas, and Design Effective Solutions*. Rockport Publishers.

### Other Optional Textbooks:

- Moggridge, B., & Atkinson, B. (2007) *Designing interactions* (Vol. 17). Cambridge, MA: MIT press.
- Robson, C. (2011) *Real World Research: A Resource for Users of Social Research Methods in Applied Settings*. Edition 3. John Wiley and Sons Ltd.
- Barnum, C.M. (2010) *Usability Testing Essentials*. Edition 1. Morgan Kaufman.
- Rubin, J. & Chisnell, D. (2008) *Handbook of Usability Testing: How to Plan, Design, and Conduct Effective Tests*. Edition 2. Wiley.
- Albert, W. and Tullis, T. (2013) *Measuring the User Experience, Second Edition: Collecting, Analyzing, and Presenting Usability Metrics*. Second Edition. Morgan Kaufmann Publishers
- Kumar, V., (2012) *101 Design Methods: A Structured Approach for Driving Innovation in Your Organization*. John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- IDEO. (2003) *IDEO Method Cards: 51 Ways to Inspire Design*. William Stout.

## Mailing List

We will have a class mailing list, which you can reach via [techin523a\\_sp19@uw.edu](mailto:techin523a_sp19@uw.edu). Feel free to post links relevant to class or questions about assignments that may pertain to the whole class. Please note that your UW email is automatically added to this list and is the only authorized email that can post, so please ensure you have access to your UW email for this purpose.

## Slack Channel

Students will be invited to a Slack channel for the class that can be used for more efficient communication with and ask questions of the instructor or TAs and share announcements and resources with the class. This form of communication is optional but is provided for quicker access to the teaching team and as a place to communicate with project teams. All important announcements for class will also be communicated through Canvas and/or the mailing list.

## Assessment

### Grade Distribution

| Component                                    | Worth |
|----------------------------------------------|-------|
| Mini Project Deliverables - 5 x 8% + 1 x 12% | 52%   |
| Final Project Deliverables                   | 28%   |
| Distinction                                  | 10%   |
| Class Participation                          | 10%   |

### Graded Components

#### Mini Project Deliverables (52%)

Each week for the first 7 weeks, you will be given an assignment that will allow you to practice the methods you learn in studio that week, worth 8% of your grade each. There is one exception (P5) which is a 2-week long project worth 12%. Each mini project will allow for flexibility of topics and many will be done as small groups. They will be independent each week, so you are welcome to work on different topics and with different people each week. Each mini project will have a set of deliverables associated with it.

The descriptions for the mini project prompts and deliverables will be posted on the course Canvas site (P1-P6). Each component must be conducted and submitted online on their designated due date via Canvas.

#### Final Project Deliverables (28%)

The final two weeks of the class will culminate in a larger project that will allow you to choose from the previous methods you have learned and practice them in more depth. This will allow

you to practice the task of choosing the appropriate method for a topic and justifying it. You will have a lot of flexibility in this assignment in terms of the topic, the methods you use, and the people you work with. You might consider using this as an opportunity to explore a topic you are interested in for your launch projects.

The full description for the final project prompt and deliverables will be posted on the course Canvas site (P7) and due online on its designated due date via Canvas.

### **Distinction (10%)**

Design is an inherently subjective process, and it is not always apparent before a project is started what constitutes excellence. To allow for excellent work to be rewarded, for each assignment, the instructor and TAs will award a subset of submissions "distinction" in addition to the "complete" grade. Each distinction awarded for a mini assignment will be worth 2 points, and distinction on the final project will be worth 3 out of a total of 10. There will be 8 opportunities for distinction – the 6 mini projects, the final project, and for participation (worth 1 point). Receiving 10 distinction points will result in full credit for this portion of your grade. Additional distinction points can be awarded, but do not affect your final grade. For more information about what constitutes, please see the Distinction page on Canvas.

### **Class Participation (10%)**

By actively participating in class, you can develop your skills for research, networking, design, and critical thinking. Here are some examples of how you can participate:

1. Treat all with respect – be constructive in all discussions
2. Come to class prepared – read any materials carefully prior to class meetings
3. Be an active listener – be attentive, be engaged, use in-class technology with discretion
4. Ask challenging questions
5. Comment, build on, or clarify others' contributions
6. Conduct peer assessments and critiques of others' assignments
7. Help your classmates use course technologies or skill share
8. Post useful or interesting information to the class discussion list
9. Visit the instructor during office hours to chat, to ask questions, or to give feedback

You will have the option to submit a short (300 words or less) self-advocacy statement on how you contributed to the class. If you submit a statement, it is due during finals week via Canvas.

## **Class Policies**

### **Respect**

If there were only one policy allowed in a course syllabus, we would choose the word respect to represent our goals for a healthy and engaging educational environment. Treating each other respectfully, in the broadest sense and in all ways, is a necessary and probably suffi-

cient condition for a successful experience together. But since we are not limited to one policy, some other, more specific ones, can be stated.

## Inclusion

The diversity of our students, who come from all backgrounds and who have different perspectives, is a resource and strength to this class. Therefore, our classroom environment should be mutually respectful and inclusive of all students. The classroom is an environment with no discrimination, where we intend for everyone to be comfortable and at liberty to contribute to and benefit from the entire learning experience. Any suggestions to improve the inclusiveness of class interactions or any concerns are encouraged and appreciated and should be brought to the instructor's attention. Your interactions with your peers in lecture and studios are a good way to adopt this attitude of inclusion and enhance positive interactions of the class.

## Grading

In this course, learning comes primarily from practicing the skills and from qualitative and constructive feedback from the instructors and peers, and the skills that you learn from both of these will benefit you much more than any numeric grade in this course. Thus, grading on the mini project deliverables and the final project deliverables will be done as **complete / incomplete** so long as the student has completed all of the assignment requirements and the instructors perceive that the student is putting in their best effort and is engaging in the learning process.

The UW standards for grading are used to convert the final percentage score to the 4.0 scale. Detailed explanations of these standards may be found on the UW website for graduate students: <https://grad.uw.edu/policies-procedures/graduate-school-memoranda/memo-19-grading-system-for-graduate-students/>

Assignments for any group projects will be assessed and graded based on the entire team's work. Each member of the project team will receive the same grade for those assignments. However, in the event of continuing evidence of a team member not fully contributing to the team effort, being a disruptive influence on group dynamics, or otherwise negatively affecting team efforts, we reserve the right to selectively lower that team member's grade on group assignments, or to consider this in the overall participation grade for the course.

For graduate students, 1.7 is the minimum passing grade. Grades between that and 4.0 are scaled linearly. Note that even though a grade of 1.7 is considered passing, a minimum grade of 2.7 is required for the course to be counted toward a graduate degree. Below is the percentage conversion for how your final grade will be calculated.

| Grade Point | Percentage |
|-------------|------------|
| 4.0         | 99         |
| 3.9         | 97         |

|     |     |
|-----|-----|
| 3.8 | 95  |
| 3.7 | 93  |
| 3.6 | 91  |
| 3.5 | 90  |
| 3.3 | 88  |
| 3.0 | 85  |
| 2.5 | 80  |
| 2.0 | 75  |
| 1.7 | 70  |
| 0.0 | <70 |

## Academic Integrity

The essence of academic life revolves around respect not only for the ideas of others, but also their rights to those ideas and their promulgation. It is therefore essential that all of us engaged in the life of the mind take the utmost care that the ideas and expressions of ideas of other people always be appropriately handled, and, where necessary, cited. For writing assignments, when ideas or materials of others are used, they must be cited. The format is not that important as long as it is consistent, the source material can be located, and the citation can be verified. In any situation, if you have a question, please feel free to ask the instructor or teaching assistant. Such attention to ideas and acknowledgment of their sources is central not only to academic life, but life in general.

Please acquaint yourself with the [University of Washington's resources on academic honesty](#).

## Copyright

All of the expressions of ideas in this class that are fixed in any tangible medium such as digital and physical documents are protected by copyright law as embodied in title 17 of the United States Code. These expressions include the work product of both: (1) your student colleagues (e.g., any assignments published here in the course environment or statements committed to text in a discussion forum); and, (2) your instructors (e.g., the syllabus, assignments, reading lists, and lectures). Within the constraints of "fair use," you may download or copy slides, recordings or notes for your personal intellectual use in support of your education as part of your HCDE education. All of these examples are copyrighted expressions, and fair use by you does not include further distribution by any means of copying, performance, or presentation beyond the circle of your student colleagues in this class. If you have any questions regarding whether a use to which you wish to put one of these expressions violates the creator's copyright interests, please feel free to ask the instructor for guidance.

## Privacy

To support an academic environment of rigorous discussion and open expression of personal thoughts and feelings, we, as members of the academic community, must be committed to the inviolate right of privacy of our student and instructor colleagues. As a result, we must

forego sharing personally identifiable information about any member of our community including information about the ideas they express, their families, lifestyles, and their political and social affiliations. If you have any questions regarding whether a disclosure you wish to make regarding anyone in this course violates that person's privacy interests, please feel free to ask the instructor for guidance.

Knowing violations of these principles of academic conduct, privacy, or copyright may result in University disciplinary action under the Student Code of Conduct.

### Students with Disabilities

To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disabled Student Services: 448 Schmitz, 206-543-8924 (V/TTY). If you have a letter from DSS indicating that you have a disability that requires academic accommodations, please present the letter to the instructor so you can discuss the accommodations you might need in the class.

In fairness to your classmates, academic accommodations due to disability will not be made unless the student has a letter from DSS specifying the type and nature of accommodations needed. However, if there is anything that we can do to help make class more accessible for you that is not stated on your DRS accommodations, please reach out and we will do what we can to accommodate as long as it does not negatively impact your classmates.

### Student Code of Conduct

Good student conduct is important for maintaining a healthy course environment. Please familiarize yourself with the [University of Washington's Student Code of Conduct](#).

### Quality of Written Assignments

As a graduate student in a field that requires excellent communication skills, this course has high expectations on the written quality and presentation of completed assignments and reports. Reports should be well organized, be thoroughly proofread, and free from grammatical errors. The use of appropriate, clear titles, figure captions, and headings is also important. Each assignment will have "quality of written assignment" as a graded component worth at least 10%. You can use whichever format you would like for your assignments, but please adhere to the recommended word counts (e.g., 400-600 words). If English is not your first language, I recommend you check out the UW Writing Center at Odegaard Library: <http://depts.washington.edu/owrc/>

In addition to the above recommendations, **all assignments should include your full name and email address.**

### Attendance

Students are expected to attend class regularly. Although attendance is not specifically graded, missing a significant number of classes will likely have a negative impact your class participation grade and opportunities to earn distinction, especially given the studio format of the

class. If you must miss a class, due to an illness or other extenuating circumstance, please send an email to the instructor as soon as possible to make arrangements for a makeup of in-class activities.

## **Late Assignments**

1. Each student is allotted 3 free “late days” to account for the unexpected. This automatically gives you 24 hours to complete for each late day you expend. You do not have to request these in advance nor give a reason for using them. Remaining late days will be automatically tracked via Canvas.
2. Once your 3 late days are expended, late work will be deducted by 10% per day the assignment is turned in late (always rounding up to the next day for partial days). If you have a documented excuse (e.g., doctor’s note, funeral notice, etc.).

Work that is handed in late is penalized for two reasons. First, to be fair, all students should be given the same time limits. Second, if you spend too much time on one assignment, it is quite likely that you will have insufficient time to spend on subsequent assignments.

## **Student Mental Health and Safety**

Being a graduate student can be a stressful experience. While this course has high expectations for student work quality, we have explicitly included features of the course to reduce stress and encourage self-care where we can. This includes 10 PM deadlines to discourage all-nighters and late nights, 3 free no-questions-asked late days to account for the unexpected, and complete/incomplete grading for the majority of the assignments.

If you need support or are feeling overly stressed, you are welcome to reach out to the instructional team at any time. We will do our best to listen and support you, but you should also realize that we are not trained professionals in counseling. The UW Counseling Center (<http://www.washington.edu/counseling/about/how-to-get-help/>) provides a number of options for receiving support, including self-help, workshops, and short-term and long-term counseling. If you are experiencing a crisis situation after hours and cannot wait until the UW Counseling Center is open, please call the Crisis Clinic at (206) 461-3222 or toll-free at 1-866-427-4747. If you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency, dial 911. If you feel unsafe, please contact UW Safe Campus at (206) 523-7233 (SAFE).

## **Contacting the Instructors**

You are welcome to give the instructional team feedback about the course, to ask a question about an assignment, to share an interesting article or resource, to report that you will be absent from a class/lab, to request additional time for an assignment (because of significant health, personal, or educational matter), or similar communication. Please note the following guidelines:

- Slack, email, or speaking to the instructor or TAs before/after class are the preferred and most reliable methods of contact



- Whenever appropriate, please copy the class mailing list or use a public Slack channel with your question or comment if it is about an assignment, since you are likely not the only one having that question.
- Email concerning assignments might not be replied to if sent within 36 hours of an assignment due date.
- As per university policy, please email the instructors using your uw.edu email address for any grading or registration related questions. Casual questions and comments are free to come from a non-uw.edu email address.
- The instructors receive a lot of email from students – in your email, please be sure to mention the course number and give appropriate context for your question (e.g., question about TECHIN 523 Assignment #2).
- If your question concerns your grade, please follow the re-grading policy (see below).
- Email or Slack messages that are sent on Friday afternoon or over the weekend is not likely to be replied to until Monday or Tuesday of the following week.
- If you do not receive a reply within 2 days, please resend your email or ask about it during class.

### **Re-grading Policy**

To have work re-graded, you must submit a Re-grade Request within one week of when your work was returned. The request must be a single page sent by email. It should contain the following information:

- Re-grade Request
- Full name and email address
- Assignment name
- An explanation for why you believe you deserve a higher grade.

The instructor will consider your request. If the instructor is convinced by your argument, your work will be re-graded. If not, the instructor will send you an email explaining why your grade was not changed. No re-grades will be considered for late work.

### **Connecting via Social Media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn)**

Social networks and emerging forms of media offer new opportunities for interacting with instructors. You are welcome to follow Professor Kientz on Twitter (@juliekientz), as she uses Twitter for primarily professional reasons (e.g., to post links to new research, comments on professional conferences, etc.). She will only accept a LinkedIn request from a student after the quarter has ended and grades have been posted, and she does encourage you to connect with her through that source. She reserves Facebook primarily for personal use, and thus friend requests will not be accepted until after the quarter and usually only for students who work with her beyond the course.

### **Permission to Share Your Submitted Work in Future Courses**

Unless you notify us otherwise in writing via email, the instructional team assumes that you are willing to allow us to use samples from your work in this course in future instructional settings (e.g., excerpts or examples in presentations). Any work shared would be attributed to you where appropriate unless you specifically request your name to be removed.

### **Right to Revise**

The instructor reserves the right to revise this syllabus.