

CS486

Interaction Design – Course Syllabus

Course Objectives

Interaction design (IxD) is an interdisciplinary field integrating theories, methods, and knowledge from computer science, cognitive psychology, and design thinking. We use the required book and the teaching notes as the main content source. We also organize many class-room activities during the four hours on Monday mornings to help students finish a capstone project. It's very important that you are there on Mondays during the whole four hours.

We highly recommend that you form a team of three students as soon as possible. You will receive 25%, 25%, and 30% respectively for the three-phase capstone project. 20% of the total grade will be based on a written mid-term exam (individual work). Further details will be given and explained in Moodle.

Suggestions and tips:

- **A pitfall to avoid:** some students believe that because they use an interface or interact with technology on a daily basis, they can easily build an interface and design a user experience. However, it's not always easy to transfer our evaluation skills to design skills. Most people can tell what is a good meal vs a bad one. That doesn't mean all of us would know how to prepare a good meal. It requires the right training and effort to become a designer.
- **Evaluation:** some students think that as a teacher, I or my teaching assistants have the freedom to apply personal judgement or taste while grading your solutions. Design is a science and engineering matter. We teach design principles, knowledge, and methods. We use them to evaluate your work. So it's important to explain your design solutions with what we teach. More below.
- **Arguing for your design solutions:** explaining how you arrive at your solutions and sharing your point of views are just as important as presenting a solution. In many grading rubrics, we ask you to briefly show us design rationales. One of the tips for presenting a convincing argument for your solution is to discuss alternative solutions you have considered and why you have chosen the one you have presented.
- **Reading:** Besides my lectures, reading the text book (About Face by Cooper) is crucial for acquiring the design principles, knowledge, and methods. This book is a heavy book, but we only cover the most essential chapters (chapter 1-7), leaving others as a reference should you need them in the future.
- **Creation with constraints:** design is about creating a solution among thousands of options. It's overwhelming in the beginning. This is why we teach design thinking. But design is also about looking for requirements and constraints to help you reduce this space of choices. These requirements and constraints come from your users, technology feasibility, and stake holders. Pay attention to the constraints.

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Required book

About Face 3 by Alan Cooper et al.

Reference book

100 Things Every Designer Needs to Know About People by Susan Weinschenk

Main Milestones

These milestones are set as guidelines. Please refer to moodle for more precise due dates.

Wednesday on the 4th week before 5pm

Submit the results of your domain and competitive product analysis, and design problem statement

Wednesday on the 8th week before 5pm

Submit the results of your user interviews and user modeling work

Wednesday on the 10th week before 5pm (optional)

Submit the results of requirement analysis and context scenario

Friday on the 14th week before 5pm

Submit the interactive prototype, visual framework, and the video

Word of caution on plagiarism

Research on the internet and sharing ideas is part of the work we do for this course. However, your submitted written material must be entirely your own work and in your own words. If you want to quote someone, please do so explicitly by showing the source. Also, copying solutions from your peer groups is plagiarism. Reproducing solutions are allowed in carefully instructed circumstances. Otherwise this practice is in strong violation of EPFL's rules and policies.