

# MMC 3260 / 5015: Your Digital Life

Online | 3 credits | Spring 2015

## Instructor

Dennis Owen Frohlich, Ph.D.

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Phone: 701-541-3608. Please try to call between 10 a.m. and 9 p.m. (EST) Mondays-Fridays. If I don't answer, please leave a message and your phone number and I will get back to you as soon as possible.

Office Hours: I will hold virtual office hours on Skype on Tuesdays from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. (EST) and Wednesdays from 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. (EST). My username is "dennis\_frohlich" and it'll list me as living in North Dakota. I prefer meeting students over Skype, as then you can share with me your desktop and I can look at your code directly if we need to troubleshoot something. I am also available by appointment (please email me three times that work for you).

## Course Overview

This is a course about building and maintaining your online presence—your digital identity, so to speak. Your digital identity includes everything you read, write and do online—email, social media, blogging, personal websites, shopping, archiving your professional work, and gaming. Your digital life is becoming more and more important as the internet and the web permeate every facet of our lives.

## Course Objectives

This class will teach you how to build and maintain a professional and personal online presence that will help you in your career. By the end of this semester you will:

- Establish your own online brand
- Build a personal website from the ground up
- Create an online portfolio and resume that can be used for professional purposes

This course includes significant content about building websites, but it is *not* a course solely about the web. You will learn introductory web design using HyperText Markup Language (HTML5), Cascading Style Sheets (CSS3) and basic Photoshop. You will be able to create web pages by hand, but you will *not* be taught Flash, JavaScript, CGI scripting or the like, although you are free to experiment with them.

### **Class Meeting Time**

Because this class is online, there are no set meeting times. There are, however, assignments, readings, and lectures every week. This course requires a lot of work and it's easy to fall behind if you take a week off. I recommend that you set aside 2-3 blocks of time each week to devote to this course. If you can develop a routine, you will be most successful in this course.

### **Course Difficulty**

If you've talked to other students from previous semesters about this course, then you've probably already heard that this course is a lot of work. **This is true: this is not an easy class.** While the concepts of good website design seem straight forward, applying those concepts correctly and professionally is not. You will spend many hours on this course. This course will likely take more time than you anticipate.

This course may appear daunting, but we assume that you are entering this course with little to no web design experience. We will guide you through the process of web design, but the most successful students are those that take initiative and responsibility for their learning, and seek out knowledge and skills beyond what we can cover in class.

### **Readings**

Every week there will be several online readings. Some of these readings address the latest thinking about web design. Some of these readings are a few years old, yet address principles of web design and online identity management that are still relevant today. These readings will be listed under each Module page.

The following textbook is *recommended*:

- HTML5 & CSS3 Visual QuickStart Guide (8th Edition) by Elizabeth Castro and Bruce Hyslop, ISBN: 0321928830.

You can find many HTML and CSS references online, and some of these will be included in the modules. But for those who prefer a book, the Castro and Hyslop book is one of the best and easiest to understand.

**Note:** If you get this book, or any HTML or CSS book, make sure you get the MOST RECENT EDITION possible. HTML and CSS code frequently changes, as do the best practices for how to implement it. Even a book three years old might be out of date already.

## Course Requirements

Your semester grade will be calculated as follows:

Short Essays:	75 points
Quizzes:	70 points
HTML and CSS Practice:	180 points
Discussion and Peer Critiques:	175 points
Draft Work on Website:	200 points
<u>Final Website:</u>	<u>300 points</u>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>1,000 points</b>

## Grading Scale

A	920-1,000
A-	900-919
B+	880-899
B	820-879
B-	800-819
C+	780-799
C	720-779
C-	700-719
D+	680-699
D	620-679
D-	600-619
E	0-599

The grading scale is non-negotiable. A final grade of 879, for instance, is a B. All grades are final unless questions about grades are addressed **in writing within 1 week after the grade is posted**. If you have concerns about your grades please check with me sooner in the semester rather than later.

More information about UF grading policies can be found here:  
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

## Assignments

Almost every week, you will have some assignment to turn in. This is a very hands-on course, so you will learn best by doing. When this class has been offered face-to-face in the past, there was usually a two-hour lab component each week in addition to lecture periods. So expect to spend some time on assignments every week.

Assignments will consist of short essays, quizzes, design documents, and coding practice. You are encouraged to work on long-term projects, such as your Personal Website, throughout the semester. You are also encouraged to spend time playing around with code on your own. You will watch many technical lectures throughout the semester which will teach you how to code your websites. While it is encouraged that you follow along with the lectures, it is highly recommended that you spend some time going beyond what the lectures teach you. This is the best way to learn code, through trial and error: try something and see what happens!

Details for every assignment will be available from the beginning of the semester. If assignment requirements change, you will be notified promptly.

### **Personal Website**

Most of your course grade will come from a personal website that you design throughout the semester. Many of your weekly assignments will contribute to the overall development of your website. Details about what is required of your personal website can be found in Module 10.

### **Late Work**

Assignments may be turned in late up to 24 hours after the due date for half credit. This is half credit of the grade you would've gotten had you turned in the assignment on time. For example, if your assignment was only good enough to earn an 80% and you turned it in 12 hours after the due date, you will only get 40% credit.

Assignments will always be due at 11:55 p.m., usually on Fridays though not exclusively. The IT help desk closes at 10 p.m., so if you are having technical issues submitting your assignment, send the instructor the assignment via email with a note explaining your issue.

Make-up work is not permitted past 24 hours after the due date. Make-up work is also not permitted if you are dissatisfied with your score. However, under an extreme circumstance, if you have an excused absence AND the instructor was notified in advance, an exception may be made.

### **Technical Help, Web Design Help, and Extra Credit**

If you have questions about Canvas, such as how to submit assignments, how to post on the discussion boards, how to upload files, or if you find that videos or links aren't working, please post your question to the **Technical Issues and Course Material Errors** discussion board.

If you have any questions about coding your website, please submit them first to the **Web Design Help** discussion board **before** you email me. If you have a question, likely others in the class have a similar question. Please be as specific as possible, detailing what you are struggling with and what you are trying to accomplish. It will also help if you can upload a snippet of code or even the HTML and/or CSS documents in question.

I will try to answer these questions promptly. However, I encourage all students to check the Web Design Help discussion board frequently, and to try their hand at answering classmates' questions. When learning a new markup language like HTML, one of the best ways to learn the limits of the code is to troubleshoot: find mistakes and fix them.

To earn extra credit, then, sufficiently address another student's questions before I do. Depending on the complexity of the question, you can earn between **3-6 extra credit points**. Throughout the entire semester, you can earn **30 extra credit points**, which amounts to a 3% increase in your final grade.

Other extra credit opportunities may be offered throughout the semester, but answering technical questions is the primary way to earn extra credit. These opportunities will be announced in via Announcements or email.

### **Academic Honesty**

All work completed for this course must respect the intellectual property of others. When using somebody else's copyrighted material, whether words, images, media, or ideas, proper credit must be given. If direct quotations are used, they must be enclosed in quotation marks and properly cited. If copyrighted material is used indirectly, it must still be properly cited!

If in doubt, include a citation. If you have any questions at all, ask your instructor before the project is submitted. Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism is not an excuse!

The following is the UF Honor Code:

"I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University."

When submitting work for this course, the following honor pledge is implied:

"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

If you are aware of academic dishonesty, please notify the instructor or contact the Student Honor Court (392-1631) or Cheating Hotline (392-6999).

### **Special Notes Concerning Plagiarism on the Web**

Stealing another person's content is painfully easy on the web. I'm positive that nearly all of us have at some point downloaded pirated music, watched movies or television shows uploaded illegally to foreign websites, or found other ways of getting free stuff online that normally should be paid for. Perhaps you even think it is ethical to download copyrighted material.

Whatever you do online outside of class is your own business, but when it comes to turning in work for this class, we strongly expect you to credit anything you get from somebody else.

If you get an image or clip art from another website, you must have permission and give credit. If you get audio or video from another website, you must give credit. Over the course of this semester, you'll likely find many websites that provide tutorials on how to design websites, or tutorials on how to do something cool on your website. Even if you borrow code from another website, you must still provide credit.

Just because it is easy to steal somebody's content doesn't mean it is ethical. Internet behavior is dictated more by developing cultural norms than by law. You can right click on any image or multimedia and click "Save Target As" to download that image. You can also right click on any webpage and click "View Source Code" to get the HTML code for that page. The web was built (and is still being built) through a culture of collaboration and open sourcing. Many people even want you to use their code and templates in your own websites. But most of them also expect credit to be given where credit is due.

We will be discussing ethical issues like this later in the semester, but if you have any doubt, ask your instructor.

### **How to Give Credit to Others**

Designing websites is not like writing an academic paper: there are far fewer rules, and you have much more freedom in how you present your content. Many students have asked over the years how to give credit on their websites. While there's no right answer or best answer, below are some of the ways students give credit to others whenever they borrow or reference their work:

- Provide a simple text link back to the website.
- Leave a comment in your HTML or CSS code acknowledging where the code came from (you will be shown how to do this).
- Include a reference page on your website that lists where everything came from.
- Include a reference section at the bottom on every single webpage, perhaps in smaller print, telling people where your information comes from.

There are likely many more ways to give credit to others. We take plagiarism very seriously, and students from previous semesters have been known to fail a project or the course for plagiarizing another's work.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students requesting course accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students will provide documentation of the necessary accommodation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor within the first two weeks of the semester. Please expect to discuss with your instructor through virtual office hours or

email what your needs are. This course conforms to all requirements of the ADA and handles with sensitivity all matters related to gender, race, sexual orientation, age, religion or disability. Please alert the instructor if any issues arise.

### **Emergencies and Illness**

Despite our best-laid plans, semesters don't always finish as strong as they start. Family emergencies, personal struggles, and illness can come up suddenly and seriously disrupt your coursework. Should an emergency happen that hinders your ability to complete your schoolwork, please let the instructor know as soon as possible so that we can help you complete your schoolwork in a timely manner.

If any emergency comes up this semester, please let your instructors (in your other classes as well) know as soon as possible. You don't have to fully reveal the nature of your emergency, but the more upfront you are with your instructors, the more willing they are to work with you. If you wait until the end of the semester to address an issue that's been growing all semester, it will be much harder to accommodate your needs.

### Module Outline

This course is broken into 16 modules, corresponding with the standard 16-week semester. While it is possible to work ahead to some degree, if you fall behind, it will be difficult to catch up. You will likely have to log into the course several times a week to stay on top of the assignments, readings, and lectures.

**Module 1:** Taking Stock of Your Online Identity

Assignment: Online Identity Audit, due Friday, January 9 at 11:55 p.m.

**Module 2:** The Web Design Process

Assignment: Goal Analysis, due Friday, January 16 at 11:55 p.m.

**Module 3:** Introduction to HTML

Assignment: Module Quiz, due Friday, January 23 at 11:55 p.m.

Assignment: HTML Practice, due Friday, January 23 at 11:55 p.m.

**Module 4:** Web Design Do's and Don'ts

Assignment: Website evaluations, due Friday, January 30 at 11:55 p.m.

**Module 5:** Introduction to CSS

Assignment: Module Quiz, due Friday, February 6 at 11:55 p.m.

Assignment: CSS Practice, due Friday, February 6 at 11:55 p.m.

**Module 6:** Visual Web Design, or, How *Not* to Make Your Page Look Like it was Designed by a Five-Year-Old

Assignment: Website evaluations and group discussion, due Friday, February 13 at 11:55 p.m.

**Module 7:** Wireframes and Sitemaps

Assignment: Post wireframe and sitemap drafts, due Wednesday, February 18 at 11:55 p.m.

Assignment: Critique classmates' wireframes and sitemap drafts, due Friday, February 20 at 11:55 p.m.

Assignment: Post revised wireframes and sitemaps for instructor review, due Sunday, February 22 at 11:55 p.m.

**Module 8:** Basic Layout with HTML and CSS

Assignment: Module Quiz, due Friday, February 27 at 11:55 p.m.

Assignment: Layout Practice, due Friday, February 27 at 11:55 p.m.

**Module 9: Mobile Web Design**

Assignment: Mobile Design Practice, due Friday, March 13 at 11:55 p.m.

**Module 10: Work Week: Design First Draft of Website**

Assignment: Website Draft, due Friday, March 20 at 11:55 p.m.

**Module 11: Building Your Online Identity**

Assignment: Critique classmates' website draft, due Friday, March 27 at 11:55 p.m.

**Module 12: Multimedia and Plugins: Making Your Website Interactive**

Assignment: Multimedia Plan, due Friday, April 3 at 11:55 p.m.

**Module 13: Revision Week: Finalizing Your Website Template**

Assignment: Website Revision, due Friday, April 10 at 11:55 p.m.

**Module 14: Search Engine Optimization and Marketing with Social Media**

No assignment. Working on final website.

**Module 15: Work Week: Launching Your Final Website**

Assignment: Final Website, due Wednesday, April 22 at 11:55 p.m.

**Module 16: Finalization Week**

Assignment: Critique classmates' final website, due Monday, April 27 at 11:55 p.m.