

## **COMM 363: Advanced Web Design**

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5:30 – 6:45 p.m. – Quentin Burdick Building (IACC) 132 –  
Fall 2014 – 3 credits

Instructor: Dennis Owen Frohlich, Ph.D.

Office: Minard 338C16

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:00-5:15 p.m. Also by appointment (please email me three times that work for you).

Email: dennis.o.frohlich@ndsu.edu

### **Bulletin Description**

Students build advanced competence in developing and maintaining websites using advanced web design programming.

### **Course Objectives and Description**

In this course you will advance your skills in developing and maintaining websites. In this course you will learn new skills and hone your existing skills by applying them to a team-focused, semester-long web project. You will plan and design a large website requiring the dedication and effort of your entire team. Because of the small class size, you will have ample opportunity to meet with your instructor and classmates to discuss ideas and address any issues you have.

No one class can teach you everything you need to know about web design. In fact, some of the coding and programming concepts you learn in college may already be outdated by the time you graduate. One goal of the course, then, is to help you teach yourself. You will be expected to take the initiative in your own learning. This course provides a safe environment for you to practice new techniques and launch new creative ideas without the pressure of working for a paying client or employer.

By the time the course is finished, you should have enough knowledge about the web design process that when you are faced with new challenges in your professional career, you can feel competent in your ability to teach yourself what you need to know.

In this course you will:

- Work in a team to plan and design a website
- Implement your design plan throughout the semester, which will include the website launch and a month-long post-launch strategic content plan
- Set measurable goals for your website's growth and evaluate the success of your website by semester's end
- Apply new HTML, CSS, JavaScript and other coding techniques to your website
- Solve a design problem for your website and teach others the same technique

**Required Text**

Garrett, J. J. (2011). *The elements of user experience: second edition*. Berkeley, CA: New Riders.

Halvorson, K., & Rach, M. (2012). *Content strategy for the web: Second edition*. Berkeley, CA: New Riders.

Marcotte, E. (2011). *Responsive web design*. A Book Apart.

<http://www.abookapart.com/products/responsive-web-design>

Wroblewski, L. (2011). *Mobile first*. A Book Apart.

<http://www.abookapart.com/products/mobile-first>

Additional online readings will also be available. Check the course calendar for online readings each week. This list may change throughout the semester; if it does, you will be notified through email or Blackboard.

**Required Materials**

The major project this semester will be a team-constructed professional website. You will build this website in a group of 2-3 students, and when the semester is over, it is up to your team to decide what to do with your website: it's entirely yours! Your team will be required to purchase web hosting and a domain name for this project. Details will be provided in class. Domain names typically cost \$10-12 per year, and hosting can range from \$5-10 per month. You only need hosting for the duration of the semester (the minimum you'll be able to purchase from many hosting companies is probably 3 months of hosting), though web hosting companies often give you discounts if you purchase more months of hosting. It will be up to your team to decide what to purchase and how to pay for it.

You will also need some way to store your website files, such as through a USB device or online file storage website.

**Prerequisites**

COMM 260: Principles of Internet Web-Based Design; COMM 261: Introduction to Web Development. You should already have a good understanding of HTML, CSS, FTP, WordPress, editing images for the web, and using social media. If it has been some time since you've designed websites, please review your notes or textbooks from previous semesters. I have high expectations for you this semester; I want to minimize the use of class time for concepts you should already know.

**Class Meetings**

The class will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:30 to 6:45 p.m. in the Quentin Burdick Building (IACC), room 132. The majority of the course will be spent working on a team website project. Class time will be divided between lectures, labs, and group work time as indicated in the course schedule.

**Attendance**

Because discussion and group work are major components of the class, attendance is required and will be taken 12 times throughout the semester via a sign-in sheet. Leaving class after you've signed in does not count as attendance for that day: staying the entire class period is considered attendance, unless other arrangements have been made. Should you come into class late, it is your responsibility to sign-in. You may miss 2 attendance days (unexcused) throughout the semester, after which point each additional day absent will result in a 10-point deduction in your final grade.

If you miss class due to illness or any other EXCUSED reason, email me BEFORE class starts. If this is not possible, email me as soon as possible. You are responsible for all material missed. For more information about missing class due to illness, see the section on Special Needs.

**Assignments**

Your grade will be based on a combination of individual and group work. All members of the group will receive the same grade for each assignment unless the instructor was notified according to the procedure listed later in the syllabus.

**\*\*\*Individual work\*\*\***

Attendance (total of 10 days):	100 points
<u>Final Exam:</u>	<u>250 points</u>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>350 points</b>

**\*\*\*Group work\*\*\***

Development Schedule:	25 points
Wireframes and Sitemap:	25 points
Group Teaching Lab:	100 points
Website Templates:	75 points
Site Launch:	150 points
Strategic Content Plan:	25 points
Content Package 1:	50 points
Content Package 2:	50 points
Content Package 3:	50 points
Content Package 4:	50 points
<u>Final Presentations:</u>	<u>50 points</u>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>650 points</b>

### **Group Project: Local Interest Website**

Throughout the semester, you will be working in groups of 2-3 on a website. This is a large web development project that requires a team to successfully pull off. In your previous courses, you've learned the fundamentals of HTML, CSS, and other web technologies, and you've tried your hand at developing simple websites.

In this class we are tackling a much larger project. In the professional world, websites are often designed and maintained by a group of people. This class will give you applicable experience in working in a team to accomplish a large web project. Your team will see this website from initial creation through launch and then a month of maintenance on the website. The assignments are flexible, so you have a lot of freedom in how you execute the project.

So what kind of website will you design? For lack of a better title, you will be designing a Local Interest website. And what exactly is a local interest website? It can really be anything you want it to be, but it's a website about some topic or phenomenon of interest to the NDSU, Fargo-Moorhead, or North Dakota-Minnesota community. This is **not** a website for a business, non-profit, government agency, club, church, interest group, or personality.

Instead, choose a topic that, a) the members of your team are interested in; b) you think people of the NDSU or F-M communities would be interested in; c) and that is multifaceted enough that you'll have plenty of ideas for content creation. You could make a website about: surviving ND winters; homeless people in Fargo; or a history of the Red River floods. You could make a website about a specific community in the F-M area, such as a religious, ethnic, or hobbyist community. Or you could make a website about some topic of interest to NDSU students.

Or if your team really doesn't want to make a website associated with anything NDSU- or Fargo-related, that's fine. If all the members of your team want to make a website about some other topic of interest, I'll hear your proposal.

Once you settle on a topic, your team will go through the six stages of web development, which we'll talk about in class and through your readings. All of your work for the Local Interest website will be turned in and graded as a group. 65% of your grade will come from group work. The remaining 35% of your grade will come from individual work, namely class attendance and a final examination, which will be an essay test on core concepts covered throughout the semester.

Details about each assignment can be found on Blackboard.

### **Group Grievance Policy**

Students often get nervous about group work, largely for two reasons: they hate relying on other people for assignments, and two, they worry about a lazy group member dragging down the entire project. To the first concern, I say: tough. Many people work as part of a team, and even self-employed individuals have to rely on other people for at least some of their work.

While conflicts can arise within teams, successful teams can accomplish feats much larger than any individual is capable of. In the span of a semester, the website you are capable of creating is rather limited. But in a group, you'll complete a website far more robust than anything you've created in your classes thus far.

To the second concern, though, I do sympathize. Most everybody has had a bad experience working in a group before. For the most part, on each group assignment everybody will receive the same grade. However, periodically throughout the semester you will be asked to **evaluate** the contributions of your team on each assignment. If it is clear that one team member was not pulling their weight, or one team member went above and beyond the rest of the team, grades for those assignments may be adjusted to reflect each group member's contributions.

Finally, if there is a severe problem with your team that needs addressing immediately, please let me know or speak to me during office hours and we can try to find a solution for your conflict.

### **Grading**

Grading will be based on the standard NDSU grading scale:

A	900-1,000 points
B	800-899 points
C	700-799 points
D	600-699 points
F	0-599 points

The grading scale is non-negotiable. A final grade of 899, for instance, is a B. All grades are final unless questions about grades are addressed in writing within **2 weeks** after the grade is posted. If you have concerns about your grades please check with me *sooner* in the semester rather than *later*.

### **Late Work**

Assignments turned in late will be accepted for half-credit. Due dates are clearly listed in the course calendar, and you will be reminded on them in class. Late work will **only** be accepted for **24 hours** after the due date. Because this class requires you to make frequent progress on your project, and because other members of your group are relying on you, work turned in later than 24 hours will not be accepted.

Under an extreme circumstance, if you have an excused absence AND the instructor was notified in advance, an exception may be made.

**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 academic community is operated on the basis of honesty, integrity, and fair play. NDSU Policy 335: Code of Academic Responsibility and Conduct applies to cases in which cheating, plagiarism, or other academic misconduct have occurred in an instructional context. Students found guilty of academic misconduct are subject to penalties, up to and possibly including suspension and/or expulsion. Student academic misconduct records are maintained by the Office of Registration and Records. Informational resources about academic honesty for students and instructional staff members can be found at [www.ndsu.edu/academichonesty](http://www.ndsu.edu/academichonesty)

**Special Needs**

Any students with disabilities or other special needs, who need special accommodations in this course are invited to share these concerns or requests with the instructor and contact the Disability Services office ([www.ndsu.edu/disabilityservices](http://www.ndsu.edu/disabilityservices)) as soon as possible.

If you become sick during the course of the semester, or have some major personal crisis going on, please let me know as soon as possible so I can help you work around it. When I was an undergraduate, I was very sick one semester and missed a lot of classes, but my professors were willing to work with me. I'm sensitive to these issues and am willing to work with you, but if you don't tell me there's a problem I can't help you.

### Tentative Course Schedule

**\*The current version of the course syllabus will be uploaded to Blackboard with the revision date included in the file name\***

Week	Date	Topic	Assignments/Readings
<b>Phase 1: Project Conceptualization</b>			
1	Aug. 26 (Tu)	LECTURE: Course and Syllabus Overview	<b>In-class:</b> Web Skills Survey
	Aug. 28 (Th)	LECTURE: Project Overview; The Web Design Process	<b>Read:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Garrett, Chapters 1 and 2</li> <li>• <a href="#">6 phases of the website design and development process</a></li> </ul>
2	Sept. 2 (Tu)	LECTURE: Color and Typography; Meet in project groups	<b>Read:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Visual decision making</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Whitespace</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Contrast is king</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Contrast rebellion</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">On web typography</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">More meaningful typography</a></li> </ul> <b>Review:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">HTML Element Reference</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">HTML Attribute Reference</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">CSS Reference</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">HTML Color Codes</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">HTML Validator</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">CSS Validator</a></li> </ul> <b>In-class:</b> Exchange contact information, make preliminary plans for the semester
	Sept. 4 (Th)	LECTURE: Managing a Web Project	<b>Read:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Garrett, Chapters 3 and 4</li> </ul> <b>In-class:</b> Sign up for GitHub
<b>Phase 2: Planning</b>			
3	Sept. 9 (Tu)	LECTURE: Mobile First design philosophy	<b>Read:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Mobile First</i></li> </ul>
	Sept. 11 (Th)	LECTURE: Audience analysis	<b>Read:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Audiences, outcomes, and determining user needs</a></li> </ul> <b>Assign:</b> Submit via Blackboard development schedule by Sunday (9/14) at 11:59 p.m.
4	Sept. 16 (Tu)	LECTURE: Wireframes, mockups, and sitemaps	<b>Read:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Garrett, Chapters 5 and 6</li> <li>• <a href="#">Ultimate guide to website</a></li> </ul>

			<a href="#">wireframing</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Responsive design with mockups</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Why you should build a sitemap before designing your site</a></li> </ul>
	Sept. 18 (Th)	WORK DAY: Finalize website topic, create sitemap, create wireframe for mobile and desktop version	<b>Assign:</b> Submit via Blackboard sitemap and wireframes by Sunday (9/21) at 11:59 p.m.
<b>Phase 3: Design</b>			
5	Sept. 23 (Tu)	LAB: Group teaching assignment requirements; Responsive web design techniques	<b>Read:</b> <i>Responsive Web Design</i>
	Sept. 25 (Th)	LAB: Responsive web design techniques	
6	Sept. 30 (Tu)	LAB: JavaScript and JQuery	<b>Read:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Personality in design</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Designing fun</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Design choices can cripple a website</a></li> </ul>
	Oct. 2 (Th)	LAB: JavaScript and JQuery	<b>Assign:</b> Submit via Blackboard group teaching plan by Sunday (10/5) at 11:59 p.m.
7	Oct. 7 (Tu)	LAB: Group Teaching Assignment	<b>In-class:</b> Group teaching lab demonstrations
	Oct. 9 (Th)	LAB: JavaScript and JQuery	<b>Read:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Design criticism and the creative process</a></li> </ul>
<b>Phase 4: Site Development</b>			
8	Oct. 14 (Tu)	LECTURE: Developing a website template	<b>Read:</b> Garrett, Chapter 7
	Oct. 16 (Th)	LAB: Using SASS	<b>Assign:</b> Submit via Blackboard group evaluations by Sunday (10/19) by 11:59 p.m.
9	Oct. 21 (Tu)	LAB: Using a content management system	<b>Read:</b> Garrett, Chapter 8
	Oct. 23 (Th)	LAB: Using a content management system	<b>Assign:</b> Website templates are due, including HTML file, CSS, and any images needed for design by Sunday (10/26) at 11:59 p.m. Post to GitHub.
10	Oct. 28 (Tu)	LECTURE: Web analytics and SEO	<a href="#">Search engine optimization starter guide</a> (pdf)
	Oct. 30 (Th)	WORK DAY: Work on coding website, developing content. I will be available in-class to address any questions you have.	
11	Nov. 4 (Tu)	LECTURE: Designing a strategic content plan	<b>Read:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Halvorson &amp; Rach, Chapters 1-3</li> </ul>



	Nov. 6 (Th)	WORK DAY: Work on coding website, developing content. I will be available in-class to address any questions you have.	<b>Read:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Testing content</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Usability testing demystified</a></li> </ul>
<b>Phase 5: Testing and Site Launch</b>			
12	Nov. 11 (Tu)	<b>VETERAN'S DAY: NO CLASS</b>	<b>Read:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Following through with post-launch strategy</a></li> </ul>
	Nov. 13 (Th)	WORK DAY: I will be available in-class to address any questions, issues your group is having with site launch.	<b>Assign:</b> Launch website by 11:59 p.m. Thursday, 11/13 <b>Assign:</b> Submit via Blackboard Month-Long Strategic Content Plan by 11:59 p.m. 11/13
<b>Phase 6: Site Maintenance</b>			
13	Nov. 18 (Tu)	LECTURE: Using social media to generate buzz for your website	<b>Read:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Halvorson &amp; Rach, Chapters 7-9</li> </ul>
	Nov. 20 (Th)	LECTURE: Website case studies: Learning from the successes and failures of other websites.	<b>Assign:</b> By Friday (11/21) at 11:59 p.m., have your first Content Package completed.
14	Nov. 25 (Tu)	WORK DAY. Work on website content. I will be available in-class to address any questions you have.	
	Nov. 27 (Th)	<b>THANKSGIVING: NO CLASS</b>	<b>Assign:</b> By Friday (11/28) at 11:59 p.m., have your second Content Package completed.
15	Dec. 2 (Tu)	WORK DAY. Work on website content. I will be available in-class to address any questions you have.	<b>Read:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Halvorson &amp; Rach, Chapters 4-6</li> </ul>
	Dec. 4 (Th)	LECTURE: Adapting to the changing face of the web.	<b>Assign:</b> By Friday (12/5) at 11:59 p.m., have your third Content Package completed.
16	Dec. 9 (Tu)	WORK DAY: Work on group presentations, website content.	<b>Read:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Halvorson &amp; Rach, Chapters 10-12 (optional)</li> </ul>
	Dec. 11 (Th)	FINAL PRESENTATIONS: Evaluate the success of your month-long strategic content plan	<b>In-class:</b> 10 minute group presentations with 5 minute question-answer period <b>Assign:</b> By Friday (12/12) at 11:59 p.m., have your last Content Package completed. <b>Assign:</b> Complete team evaluations and submit via Blackboard by Sunday (12/14) by 11:59 p.m.
17	Dec. 16	<b>FINALS WEEK</b>	

		Individual Final Exam, 5:30 p.m. in our normal classroom	
18	Dec. 26	Final grades are viewable online	