

# CID May Term Syllabus

Late update: 4/16/18

The course will run May 7 - 24

Students would visit City Hall on Wednesdays (5/9, 5/16, and 5/23)

## **Title**

UX Field Research in the Public Sector

## **Course Description**

In this course, students will work with partners in governmental departments and nonprofit agencies to conduct user research around an information need determined by their partner organization. Students will spend one day a week working directly with their clients, and then a day each week in intensive studio and discussion sessions.

Students will have the opportunity to work in teams to collect direct user data, using multiple UX research methods. The deliverable for each team will be a professionally constructed report that provides recommendations supported by evidence to our partner organizations.

## **Format**

This is a three-week, intensive course (15 contact hours/week) offered to undergraduates during the Spring term. The course will involve extensive group work sessions and regular travel to communities for engagement with client organizations and end-users. The class will meet three times a week for 5 hours/day on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

Because this is intended as an intensive experience, we are also providing details on how time spent out of class should be allocated.

## **Attendance**

This course will have a strict attendance policy due to the condensed schedule and emphasis on engagement in the community and in the classroom experience. Participation in the classroom and the community activities are essential to the learning objectives of this course. It is also the main method for evaluating your understanding of course material. As a result, students are advised to attend the full period of every scheduled class meeting.

- Michigan time formally ends on May 1, 2018. As a result, this class will begin at 12pm, and end at 4:50pm. We will take short breaks, but you should plan to bring snacks to eat during class time.
- Attendance will be taken, formally, in each class meeting. Absence, late arrival, early departure, and other missed class time will be recorded.
- Absence from class will result in a zero participation grade for that day. Missing more than 30 minutes of any class meeting will result in a corresponding reduction in the participation grade for that day. Participation is a significant portion of the overall grade for this course (see "evaluation" below for details).

- Make-up assignments will be available for up to two missed class meetings. The assignments will be designed to address the topics and activities in the missed class, and sufficient to ensure that the student is prepared for activities in the next class meeting. These make-up assignments are only available for emergency absence and absence with prior notice. It is always better to attend class than to do make-up assignments.
- It is always in your best interest to notify the instructor as soon as you know you will miss any part of a class meeting.
- Assignment deadlines will not be extended as a result of absence from class.

### **Work Process**

Students will be working with a community client who will present them with an interaction design problem. Examples of these problems could include:

- “Our organization makes datasets available, but we feel they are underutilized by the public.”
- “We are planning a new initiative and we want community input. How do we get a younger audience to participate?”

### **Learning Objectives**

As a result of this course, students will demonstrate:

- Competence in communicating professionally with an external client.
- Competence in working in a fast-paced team context.
- Literacy in organizational processes that affect user research.
- Literacy in UX research methods appropriate for organizational settings.
- Awareness of current topics for information technology in the public sector and civic technology.

### **Outline of Topics/Schedule**

[NB: A “block” in this framework is one learning module, or topic in the course.]

- Week One- UX in the Field
  - Day 1 - campus
    - Block 1: What is special about working in the public sector. How to engage communities.
    - Block 2: Research methods specific to UX in the field.
    - Block 3: Effectively working in teams - agile methodology, project management.
    - Block 4: Researching your client and problem.
  - Day 2 - field
    - Block 1: Meeting with the client
    - Block 2: Discovery process for the design problem
    - Block 3: Initial research plan
    - Block 4: Reflection and feedback with client

- Day 3 - campus
  - Block 1: Informal problem presentations
  - Block 2: Round robin feedback
  - Block 3: Research methods specific to UX in the field, participatory design
  - Block 4: Peer feedback on SoW plans
- Work plan for outside of class
  - Before Day 2
    - Meet as a team to define project management plan
    - Research your client and problem - for these processes, you want to be able to walk in to the client meeting fully aware of their larger needs and goals, organizational capacity, etc. You also want to know quite a bit about the domain of the problem. For example, if the project is about disability services, you'll need to research current statutes, best practices, etc. Take notes
- Deliverables for this week:
  - Complete assigned readings
  - Project management plan (due beginning of day 2)
  - Problem definition and research (due midnight before day 2)
  - Statement of Work (due Friday 5pm)
  - Individual Reflection
- Week Two- Citizen-Centered Design
  - Day 1 - campus
    - Block 1: Presentation of problem and research plan
    - Block 2: Peer critique of research plans
    - Block 3: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in civic tech (participatory design)
    - Block 4: Presenting professionally
  - Day 2 - field
    - Block 1: "Stand up" with client
    - Block 2: "User" research - collect data from stakeholders
    - Block 3: Draft findings
    - Block 4: Present initial findings to client and receive feedback
  - Day 3 - campus
    - Block 1: Discussion of civic technology
    - Block 2: Pivoting in the design process
    - Block 3: Workshop on interpreting user data
    - Block 4: Effective presentations
  - Work plan for outside of class
    - Before Day 1
      - Work on the presentation as a group
      - Meet to flesh out user methods plan - this will include a need for very detailed protocols as part of the deliverable.

- Work with your client to set up availability of users for your research protocol - WARNING: this will be challenging.
      - Review the protocols of other teams and provide initial feedback.
      - Compare your recommendations against best practices adopted by comparable cities/organizations.
    - Before Day 2
      - Revise the user research protocols based on peer and instructor feedback.
      - Contact client to make sure plans for your research are set for Day 2.
      - Meet as a group to stage a “dress rehearsal” for the methods and practice
    - Before Day 3
      - Review, clean and summarize your user data.
      - Complete readings for this week - individual
      - Begin working on client presentation
  - Deliverable for this week
    - Presentation of initial findings - Day 1
    - All materials needed for user research - Day 2
    - Draft of recommendations - 5pm Friday
    - Individual Reflection - 5pm Friday
- Week Three- Delivering professional content
  - Day 1 - campus
    - Block 1: Present refined findings and peer feedback
    - Block 2: Practice client presentations.
    - Block 3: Presenting professional reports.
  - Day 2 - field
    - Block 1: Presenting recommendations to the client and public.
    - Block 2: User feedback sessions on the recommendations.
    - Block 3: Client-centered conversation on implementing sustainable civic technology.
  - Day 3 - campus
    - Block 1: Reflection on user research in the field (fishbowl exercise)
    - Block 2: Reflection on civic technology and civic engagement.
    - Block 3: Final peer review of client reports and recommendations.
    - Block 4: Reflection on class process and learning outcomes.
  - Work plan for outside of class
    - Before Day 1
      - Revise recommendation based on feedback
      - Provide individual feedback to other groups
    - Before Day 2
      - Finalize presentation.

- Print handouts or other materials for client meeting
- Practice presentation
- Create plan for eliciting feedback on recommendations
- Finalize plans for handing off recommendations for client
- Finalize thank yous for client and participants
- Before Day 3
  - Revise recommendation report based on client and stakeholder feedback
  - Complete readings
- Deliverables
  - Peer feedback on recommendations (before Day 1)
  - Presentation of refined findings (Day 2)
  - Final reflection
  - Final Recommendation report (emailed to client copy instructor by 5pm on Friday)

The finalized report will be sent to the client by the end of week 3.

### **Resources & Readings**

[Sample readings. The plan is to focus on Civic Tech and IxD methods with an emphasis on organizations.]

Preece, Sharp and Rogers (2015) "Interaction Design: Beyond Human-Computer Interaction".

DiSalvo and LeDantec (2017) "Civic Design".

Allied Media Project (2014) Detroit Future Media Guide to Digital Literacy",

[https://www.alliedmedia.org/files/dfm\\_final\\_web.pdf](https://www.alliedmedia.org/files/dfm_final_web.pdf).

<http://interactions.acm.org/archive/view/november-december-2017/civic-design>

### **Assignments**

- 30% Participation (measured by class attendance, participation, and delivery of intermediary deliverables)
- 10% Reflection papers (short papers of ~750 words integrating personal experience with learning outcomes.
- 40% (Team) Final UX recommendation report
- 20% (Team) Final Presentation