**COMM-603 Web Portfolio**

**Summer 2021 | Location: The Infinity of Cyberspace**

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**Office Hours**: To schedule an appointment with me, please contact Meredith Fender at the AU Game Center

**Pronoun**: He/Him/His

**1. Course Description and Logistics:**

Students learn an overview of the theoretical structures behind informational design for the Internet. In addition, they learn basic HTML programming and static site development, as well as how the skills can be applied as a communication medium. This course provides students with an overview of web development using code and development tools. Students create their own online content and website with the objective of creating a professional portfolio for their own work in the context of their creative discipline. **Course (3), Credit (3). Usually Offered: Summer. Compressed 6 week course, online.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Wk | Date | Topic | Notes | Assignments & Readings Due |
| 1 | May17-May23 | **HTML INTRO** |  | Chapters 1-5\* |
| 2 | May24-May30 | **HTML & CSS** |  | Chapters 6-8, 14-16\*, HW1 due |
| 3 | May31-Jun 6 | **CMS & Community Approaches** |  | \*, HW2 due |
| 4 | Jun7-June13 | **Javascript I** |  | \*, HW3 due |
| 5 | Jun14-Jun20 | **Javascript II, PHP, Node, Server Langs** |  | \*, HW4 due |
| 6 | Jun21-Jun26 | **Course Wrap-up and Final Crit**  NOTE: Homework (HW) assignments are due on the Sunday prior to the start of the next week (i.e. May 23, May 30, etc.) at 11:59pm EDT, You should submit a single link to me via email at phelps@american.edu. | 19 | \*, no HW (work on final) |
| **FINAL PROJECT DUE Jun 26** |

\* See week-by-week breakdown at the end of this document for additional readings, assignments, tools, and resources.

**OBJECTIVES**

After completing this class, students will be able to:

* Create an HTML page using validated mark-up
* Style an HTML page with validated CSS style rules
* Prepare optimized images and graphics for presentation on a web page
* Create a layout for a Web page with a basic understanding of website usability
* Publish a website to the World Wide Web

**2. Textbook:**

Niederst Robbins, J. (2007). *Learning Web design: A beginner’s guide to (X)HTML, style sheets, and web graphics* (3rd ed). O’Reilly. (Note: This is available freely online, and also through the AU Library access to O’Reilly books, so please utilize these resources.)

**3. Optional Texts:**

Duckett, J. (2014). *HTML & CSS: Design and build websites*. John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Flanagan, D. (2020). *Javascript: The definitive guide: master the world’s most-used programming language.* O’Reilly Media, Incorporated. (this is the book \*I\* learned javascript from, way back in the first edition)

**4. Additional Materials:**

Developing and designing a website does not require a lot of complicated software. A simple text editor and graphics and photo editing software like Adobe Photoshop are all that is needed. You will also want to have an FTP program like Cyberduck, FileZilla, etc., which are free and easy to use. You may also use FTP add-ons to Firefox such as FireFTP. **You are required to purchase a domain name and have a hosting configuration.** Students in the past have had good experiences with Bluehost.com, Dreamhost and HostGator.com.

Access to an Apple or PC computer. Code will not require top specifications, but you will need to be able to install software relevant to coursework, so the operating system on your machine should still be supported by the maker (Microsoft/Apple) as that increases the likelihood the tools we use will be compatible.

**5. Course Sessions:**

**Synchronous Sessions** Not all synchronous sessions are required - however attendance is strongly encouraged, as this is a way for you to raise questions as I cover course material. All sessions will be recorded for later review and posted to the Canvas course area.

**Zoom Instructor Sessions** You may find at different points during the course that you will want an online appointment with me to cover specific topics as they relate to assignments or your final project. These are both welcome and encouraged to help supplement your learning, and can be scheduled on an as-needed basis. The dates/times for these sessions are listed in section 8.

**6. Student Expectations & Evaluation**

**Expectations:**

It is my expectation that each student come prepared for the course, excited to learn, and interested in the topic. Students are expected to read the assigned readings, to discuss them as a class and also with each other, to reference the materials provided as needed in order to complete their own assignments and associated deliverables. This course is specifically intended to provide an opportunity to explore creating websites in the context of creating a portfolio to help you as a professional, to engage students in finding what pathways and processes will work for them on an individual basis. There is no single ‘right answer’ to this, and as such it is my expectation that students approach the subject, and the course, with the maturity, self-honesty, and diligence required to create effective work.

**Assignments:**

There are five small homework assignments and one major final project to be completed individually. These are intended to provide a stepwise process to explore the subject of the course and to guide you in creating a small online portfolio. In a six-week compressed course it is simply impossible to teach in detail all of the potential things you might need to know, and as such this course is intended more as a detailed overview, with ramping off points for additional exploration and learning opportunities.

**7. Grading:**

Grades will be assigned based on the homework assignments, the final project, and for participation in reading discussions, critiques, online and offline chats and discussions, etc., as shown:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Points Available |
| Participation in the course and required meetings | 10 |
| Homework 1 | 10 |
| Homework 2 | 10 |
| Homework 3 | 10 |
| Homework 4 | 10 |
| Final Project Deliverable | 50 |
|  |  |
| **TOTAL for COMBINED ASSIGNMENTS:** | **100** |
| LETTER GRADE | X |

In reference to the points chart above, the following grade scheme is employed to arrive at a letter grade for the course:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Points | Letter Grade |
| 93-100 | A |
| 90-92 | A- |
| 88-89 | B+ |
| 83-87 | B |
| 80-82 | B- |
| 78-79 | C+ |
| 73-77 | C |
| 70-72 | C- |
| 65-69 | D |
| 0-64 | F |

It's important to understand that if you complete all the requirements for an assignment, that is only sufficient for a grade of "B" (i.e. "satisfactory work"). To receive an A for an assignment, you must go beyond the basic requirements, and show some creativity, initiative, and excellence--the grade of A is intended for work that is superior, rather than average.

**It is also important to note that the point chart and grade scale are intended as a guide**. I reserve the right as faculty to assign final grades for the course as I feel best represent my review of your academic work, and may make adjustments as necessary in order to achieve that goal. While I generally adhere to the underlying ‘weight’ of the assignments as expressed, I have been known to make modifications as needed on a case-by-case basis.

**Assignments submitted after the due date/time, without prior approval from me, will not be graded**, and will therefore receive zero points. If you know that a situation will prevent you from turning something in, contact me in advance of the deadline to make alternate arrangements. Assignments will be discussed in class, and / or posted online on a regular basis, **and are due at the end of each week, on Sunday evening at 11:59PM EDT unless noted otherwise**.

If you wish to dispute your final course grade, you must do so before the end of the semester following this one; otherwise, documentation of your work may not be available. The policy on challenging grades is available for your review online: <https://www.american.edu/policies/upload/academic-grade-grievances-policy.pdf>

**"Incomplete" Grades**: You may request an incomplete, or "I" grade, only in cases where exceptional conditions beyond your control, such as accidents, severe illness, family problems, etc., have kept you from completing the course. You must alert me to these circumstances as soon as possible. If your request for an incomplete is granted, you must complete the work for the course within the time limits set. Incomplete grades are not given to students who have simply fallen behind in their work. Section 3.7 of the academic regulations for graduate students has additional information on incomplete grades: <https://www.american.edu/provost/grad/upload/graduate-academic-regulations.pdf>

**Participation:**

Students in the course are expected to participate in all aspects of the course, including discussion of the readings, discussions during the course lectures, peer-assessment of websites and media, and formal and informal critique (see below). Failure to engage in these activities, to engage with the class, and to actively contribute to the group both as a developer and a scholar will result in not only the failure of the course, but in diminishing the experience of the rest of the participants.

**Critique Culture:**

As a part of course participation, students in the course are expected to participate in engaged critique of each others work, as well as of examples brought to the classroom by either faculty, colleagues, peers, or guests, as well as those assigned as a part of the reading. In such cases, careful and respectful criticism is both encouraged and required. The ‘rule’ of critique is that criticism of the *work* is not (and should never be) criticism of the *person*. Lazy critiques of ‘likes’ and ‘dislikes’ will not be tolerated, and it is expected that students in the class will instead engage in meaningful, constructive dialogue about how to produce the strongest work possible both for themselves and their peers.

**8. Course Policies and Statements**

**Extra Credit Policy:**

There is no extra credit assigned, nor will any be offered.

**Attendance Policy:**

Students are expected to attend each class and arrive on time. Any student arriving late may not be able to adequately participate in class activities, and repeated and substantial tardiness will result in failure of the course. Note that only two of the online meetings are required-the rest are optional, although they are highly encouraged. 

**Late Assignment Policy:**

Late assignments are not accepted unless they result from an excused absence. Excused absences are limited to documented medical emergencies and events for which the instructor has given approval. All students are expected to communicate planned or unplanned absence to the instructor’s email as soon as possible.

**Correspondence Policy:**

All electronic correspondence relative to this course directed to supervising faculty should occur through my official email address ([phelps@american.edu](mailto:phelps@american.edu)), and/or in the course shell provided by the university (i.e. Canvas), despite any other official channels for the course as supplied by the instructor (Zoom, Discord, etc.). Other communication mechanisms are to be considered informal, and are not acceptable for official correspondence. When in doubt as to whether a communication can be considered ‘official’, copying the information to my university email is preferred.

**Cheating and Plagiarism Policy:**

This course is bound by the American University Standards on Academic Conduct, as described online: <https://www.american.edu/academics/integrity/code.cfm>

Note (from the above policy): “Academic integrity stands at the heart of intellectual life. The academic community is bound by a fundamental trust that professors and students alike undertake and present their work honestly. As a community of the mind, we respect the work of others, paying our intellectual debts as we craft our own work.”

**Students with Disabilities:**

**If you wish to receive accommodations for a disability, please notify me with a letter from the Academic Support and Access Center. As accommodations are not retroactive, timely notification at the beginning of the semester, if possible, is strongly recommended.**To register with a disability or for questions about disability accommodations, contact the Academic Support and Access Center at 202-885-3360 or [asac@american.edu](mailto:asac@american.edu), or drop by the ASAC in MGC 243.

**Academic Support:**

**All students may take advantage of the Academic Support and Access Center (ASAC) for individual academic skills counseling, workshops, Tutoring, peer tutor referrals, and Supplemental Instruction. The ASAC is located in Mary Graydon Center 243.  Additional academic support resources available at AU include the Bender Library, the Writing Center (located in the Library), the Math Lab (located in Don Meyers Technology and Innovation Building), and the Center for Language Exploration, Acquisition, & Research (CLEAR) in Anderson Hall. A more complete list of campus-wide resources is available in the ASAC.**

**Changes to the Syllabus:**

**This syllabus is subject to change at any time. You will be notified of changes, or additions, and specific requirements for assignments either online or in class. It is unlikely that this piece of paper will update itself.**

**Special Notes for 2021 COVID-19**

**Please note that this course was developed and is being offered during the continuation of the COVID-19 global pandemic. This means, in essence, that we all need to be patient with one another, and that the core reflection of that patience is communication. If you are ill or dealing with family issues or other situations related to the pandemic, I am here to help, and I would ask for the same patience and flexibility in return. While we have all read it perhaps too often, we are, in fact, all in this together. All I ask is that as issues arise you communicate them to me as best you are able, and we will work through it together. I would also point out my hope that this course will be a joyful and fun learning experience, and perhaps provide an outlet to focus on things besides the pandemic, at least in part.**

**Also note that the AU Game Center is working hard to make our systems, software, and resources available to you during these difficult times, and information on the exact procedures for equipment checkout, and for making appointments to work in the lab in a socially distanced, safe environment will be provided in a separate communication from Meredith Fender, Senior Administrative Assistant for the AU Game Center. Finally, note that there are several resources and information sets available at the AU COVID-19 portal, including a copy of all campus communications and the AU Forward plan at:** [**https://www.american.edu/coronavirus/**](https://www.american.edu/coronavirus/)

**9. Course Schedule:**

**Week 1 May 17 - May 23**

**Synchronous meeting Monday May 17 /9:30PM EDT (required)**

We will cover class structure, review expectations, and address any initial questions and concerns. During our synchronous meeting, we will talk about purchasing a domain, web hosting, and setting up a local testing environment, as well as review tools you will be using throughout the course.

**Note:** This is the week to make sure you have all of the tools you will need for the course, including a code editor, FTP program, a domain name and web hosting.

**Tools/Assignments:**

<https://www.codecademy.com/learn/learn-html>

Please Complete: Unit 1: Elements and Structure, and Unit 4: Semantic HTML (you can do the others if you wish)

<https://www.codecademy.com/learn/learn-css>

Please Complete: Unit 1: Selectors and Visual Rules, and Unit 2: The Box Model

**Readings:** Chapters 1-5

**Homework 1**: Make a basic resume as a web page.

**Week 2 May 24 - May 30**

**Synchronous meeting Monday May 24 / 9:30PM EDT (optional)**

A review of HTML5 basics and learning how to manipulate the appearance of those elements with CSS, building on lessons from the previous week. We will also look at responsive design as one approach to reach a mobile audience.

**Note:** You will be submitting a proposal for your final project by next class for review.

**Tools/Assignments:**

<https://www.codecademy.com/learn/learn-css>

Please Complete: Unit 3: Display and Positioning, and Unit 4: Colors, and Unit 5: Typography

**Readings:** Chapters 6-8, 14-16

**Homework 2:** Reformat your basic resume as a bio with pictures, sample work, and colors to provide a look and feel that speaks to you and your target audience.

**Week 3 May 31 - June 6**

**Synchronous meeting Monday May 31 / 9:30PM EDT (optional)**

We will be looking at meta tags and how they affect search engine optimization and social media sharing. We will also begin exploring various ‘platforms’ for pre-built template sites including Wordpress, BeHance, Wix, Deviant Art, ArtStation, Squarespace (paid), Shopify (paid), etc.

**Note:** You should have a basic site set up in one of these platforms (with some customization) by next class.

**Tools/Assignments:**

<https://www.wpbeginner.com/how-to-install-wordpress/>

<https://www.behance.net/>

<https://www.wix.com/blog/2013/04/how-to-create-your-own-website/>

<https://www.squarespace.com/>

<https://www.freelancevideocollective.com/how-to-create-a-filmmaker-portfolio-website/>

**Homework 3:** Create a small professional page of your work in one of the CMS platforms above (or another of your choice with instructor permission).

**Week 4 June 7 - June 13**

**Synchronous meeting Monday June 7 / 9:30PM EDT (optional)**

A look at Javascript and jQuery as tools to help make site more engaging, interactive, and “app-like.”

**Note:** From here on out, you can use either a custom site of your own design, or work on modifying one in one of the CMS platforms. (I personally, and strongly, always opt for making my own as it provides complete control over look and feel, analytics, etc.)

**Tools/Assignments:**

<https://www.w3schools.com/js/js_intro.asp>

<https://vegibit.com/javascript/>

<https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Web/JavaScript>

<https://www.codecademy.com/learn/introduction-to-javascript>

Please Complete: Units 1-5 in the Codecademy resource.

**Homework 4:** Create a basic webpage illustrating at least 5 different instances of using javascript to alter CSS and/or HTML properties such as visibility/opacity, size, image src, color, etc. Challenge: the page could also have either an image carousel or a multi-frame animation using window.requestAnimationFrame().

**Week 5 June 14 - June 20**

**Synchronous meeting Monday June 14 / 9:30PM EDT (optional)**

Javascript continued, and a brief look at server-side programming, includes, PHP, and Node. Also, a discussion of packaging web pages and local sites as desktop and mobile apps (nwjs and electron).

**Tools/Assignments:**

<https://www.w3schools.com/php/php_intro.asp>

<https://www.codecademy.com/articles/what-is-node>

**Homework 5:** There is no homework 5, this is final project work time.

**Week 6 June 21 – June 26**

**Synchronous meeting Monday June 21 / 9:30PM EDT (required)**

This week we will wrap up class with student critiques, a review of the tools we have learned and resources for future learning. Final projects are due at the end of this week.

**Final Projects are due by no later than 11:59pm EDT on June 26.**