



Social Sciences

Communication, Popular Culture & Film

Course Number: COMM 4V57

Term/Year/Duration: Fall 2015 D2

Course Title: Contemporary Research in Communication Studies: User Experience Research

Instructor Name: Dr. Karen Louise Smith
Email: karen.louise.smith@brocku.ca
Office Location: Scotiabank Hall Rm. 307
Contact: 905-688-5550, Ext. 6497
Liaison Librarian: Justine Cotton justine.cotton@brocku.ca

Times and Locations:

Seminar on Wednesdays 12:00-15:00, TH149, beginning September 9, 2015

Course Calendar Description:

Special topics in contemporary communication research.

Supplemental Description:

User Experience Research will introduce students to the user centered design methods that can inform the design of digital interfaces and services. This course begins by introducing students to the theories, which inform the design process. This course emphasizes a design approach that responds to the 'human' needs of users and communities. This course includes a group design project with multiple phases of design research including problem definition, ideating, prototyping and testing to create a design solution for users in a specific context of use.

In 2015, students will be challenged to conduct research to design web literacy applications (apps), in alignment with the Mozilla web literacy map (see: <https://teach.mozilla.org/teach-like-mozilla/web-literacy/>).

Course Prerequisites (if any):

Open to BCMN, COMM and MCMN majors with approval to year 4 (honours) or permission of the instructor.

Learning Objectives/Outcomes:

The learning objectives for this course are for students to:

1. Gain exposure to and knowledge of the scholarly literature pertaining to user experience research, design research and user centered design
2. Develop their abilities to practice and implement user experience research within a user centered design process

3. Produce and iterate upon sketches and prototypes for an application (app) as part of a project team
4. Respond to stakeholder or user needs within a design project
5. Conduct user experience research within the ethical boundaries established for the course
6. Demonstrate communication skills in relation to design projects and their critique (verbal and written)

Required Readings or Texts:

The major text is:

- Goodman, E., Kuniavsky, M., and Moed, A. (2012). *Observing the user experience: a practitioner's guide to user research*. Morgan Kaufmann.
 - Assigned readings are listed in the week-to-week schedule under Goodman et al.

Additional required readings are assigned in the week-to-week course schedule. You are expected to have completed these readings prior to each week's lecture.

Course Communications:

Essential course information will be shared in class, via Sakai and by Brock email. Questions that are of interest to the entire class should be send via the Sakai discussion board. Email should be used for individual issues and the instructor will attempt to reply within 2 business days. In-depth questions need to be addressed through office hours, or an individual appointment.

Evaluation Components and Due Dates

Assignments and evaluation components of the course will be discussed in class and more detailed guidelines will be posted to Sakai.

Evaluation Component	Grade Weight	Due Date
Heuristics Presentation	15%	Sept. 23 or Sept. 30
ACM Reading Review and Presentation	10%	Oct. 21 or Oct. 28
Group App Design Project:		
Proposal	10%	Oct. 7
Interim report	10%	Nov. 4
Final report + presentation	25%	Dec. 2
Test	20%	Nov. 18
Participation Report	10%	Ongoing and report due Dec. 2
TOTAL	100%	

Assignment Submission Instructions

In addition to following assignment instructions, students are expected to follow the CPCF departmental guidelines for essays when handing in written work (see: <http://www.brocku.ca/social-sciences/departments-and-centres/cpcf/student-success/essay-style-guidelines>).

Written components of assignments for COMM 4V57 require that a hard copy be submitted on the due date, along with an electronic copy on Sakai.

Assignment	Electronic Copy on Sakai	Duplicate Hard Copy in class	In Class Participation Component
Heuristics Presentation *	X	X	X
ACM Reading Review and Presentation*	X	X	X
Group App Design Project: Proposal ** Interim report ** Final report + Presentation*	X X X	X X X	X X X
Participation Report	X	X	X

Most assignments for COMM 4V57 requires in class presentation or discussion with your peers. Assignments marked with a single asterisk include a formal presentation. Assignments marked with a double asterisk include an informal discussion with your peers (i.e., be prepared to discuss your ideas and plans). The participation report will be based on your weekly participation.

Late Submission Policy:

As per the submission instructions Chart, most written assignments are due at the start of class, and **at the latest by 12:30 pm on the due date**. Presentations assignment will occur within class time, when your group is called forward. No late work will be accepted, unless accompanied by medical documentation. See Medical Exemption Policy and the medical health certificate at <http://www.brocku.ca/health-services/policies/exemption>

Relationship between attendance and grades:

Students are expected to attend class regularly and to show up on time. Attending class on weeks when you are presenting is critical.

Missing or being late to class up to twice on weeks when you are not scheduled to present, will not impact your participation grade. Students who need to miss class for reasons consistent with accessibility, medical or religious exemption purposes can consult with the instructor for accommodations.

Important dates: (check the section on sessional or important dates in the relevant online University calendar at <http://brocku.ca/webcal/>)

Tuesday, November 10 is the date for withdrawal from the course without academic penalty.

Tuesday, November 3 is the date you will be notified of 15% of your course grade.

Tuesday, October 13 - Friday October 16 is the scheduled reading week.

No dates are set aside for makeup days due to holidays. Please consult with the instructor at the beginning of the term if you require accommodation to arrange makeup dates.

Wednesday, December 9 to Thursday, December 10 are set aside for designated reading days (these may be used to cover classes missed because of adverse weather).

Friday, December 11 to Tuesday, December 22 are set aside for formal examination periods.

Academic Policies

Academic Integrity:

Academic misconduct is a serious offence. The principle of academic integrity, particularly of doing one's own work, documenting properly (including use of quotation marks, appropriate paraphrasing and referencing/citation), collaborating appropriately, and avoiding misrepresentation, is a core principle in university study. Students should consult Section VII, "Academic Misconduct", in the "Academic Regulations and University Polices" entry in the Undergraduate Calendar, available at <http://brocku.ca/webcal> to view a fuller description of prohibited actions, and the procedures and penalties.

Please see the CPCF in-depth statement on Academic Integrity at the end of this syllabus. Each student in COMM 4V57 will be expected to submit a signed copy of the CPCF Pledge of Academic Integrity before work will be graded and returned (see: http://www.brocku.ca/webfm_send/4333 or the copy at the end of this document).

Ethics:

The user experience research that students carry out for COMM 4V57, must adhere to the research ethics protocols established for the course through the Research Ethics Office at Brock. Students must sign a copy of the ethics form, indicating they understand their obligations before the Group App Design project work will be graded and returned to you. Students must have their research plans approved by the instructor, and no unreviewed protocols should be used.

Academic Accommodation:

As part of Brock University's commitment to a respectful work and learning environment, the University will make every reasonable effort to accommodate all members of the university community with disabilities. If you require academic accommodations related to a documented disability to participate in this course, you are encouraged to contact Services for Students with Disabilities in the Student Development Centre (4th floor Schmon Tower, ex. 3240). You are also encouraged to discuss any accommodations with the instructor well in advance of due dates and scheduled assessments.

Academic Accommodation due to Religious Obligations:

Brock University acknowledges the pluralistic nature of the undergraduate and graduate communities such that accommodations will be made for students who, by reason of religious obligation, must miss an examination, test, assignment deadline, laboratory or other compulsory academic event. Students requesting academic accommodation on the basis of religious obligation should make a formal, written request to their instructor(s) for alternative dates and/or means of satisfying requirements.

Medical Exemption Policy:

The University requires that a student be medically examined in Health Services, or by an off-campus physician prior to an absence due to medical reasons from an exam, lab, test, quiz, seminar, assignment, etc. The Medical Certificate can be found at: <http://www.brocku.ca/health-services/policies/exemption>.

Week-to-Week Schedule

Week	Focus	Activities/ Assessments	Readings
1 - Wed. Sept. 9	Introduction to User Experience Research		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goodman et al. Chapter 1 Introduction, Chapter 2 Do a Usability Test Now! And Chapter 3 Balancing Needs Through Iterative Development
2 - Wed. Sept. 16	Usability Heuristics and Diary Studies	Guest Presentation: Laura de Reynal, Mozilla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belshaw, D. & Smith, K. L. (2014). Why Mozilla Cares About Web Literacy. Available online: https://mozilla.github.io/webmaker-whitepaper/ Nielsen, N. (1995). 10 Usability Heuristics for User Interface Design. Available online: http://www.nngroup.com/articles/ten-usability-heuristics/ Goodman et al. Chapter 10 Diary Studies
3 - Wed. Sept. 23	Research Planning, Competitive Research & Ethics	Heuristics Presentation (15%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goodman et al. Chapter 4 Research Planning, and Chapter 5 Competitive Research
4 - Wed. Sept. 30	Recruiting, Interviewing & Participant Observation	Heuristics Presentation (15%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goodman et al. Chapter 6 Universal Tools, Chapter 9 Field Visits
5 - Wed. Oct. 7	User Research Examples	Proposal (10%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brewer, J., Bassoli, A., Martin, K., Dourish, P., and Mainwaring, S. (2007). Underground Aesthetics: Rethinking Urban Computing. <i>IEEE Pervasive Computing</i>, 6(3), July-September, 39-45. Available online at: http://resolver.scholarsportal.info.proxy.library.brocku.ca/resolve/15361268/v06i0003/39_uaruc.xml de Reynal, Laura. (2014). Webmaker User Research (Bangladesh). Available online: https://webmaker-dist.s3.amazonaws.com/reports/bangladesh.pdf <i>Optional:</i>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review http://lauradereynal.com/research-reports/ Institute for Citizen Centered Service. (n.d.) Case Study - User-Centred Design of the City of Hamilton's Immigration Portal. Available online from: http://www.iccs-isac.org/en/msd/casestudies/msd_hamilton_immigration_portal.htm
6 - Wed. Oct. 14	Reading Week No Class		
7 - Wed. Oct. 21	Usability Tests	ACM Presentations (10%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goodman et al. Chapter 11 Usability Tests
8 - Wed. Oct. 28	Sketching and Prototyping	ACM Presentations (10%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sanders, E. B. N & Stappers, P. J. (2008). Co-creation and the new landscapes of design. Co-design, 4(1), 5-18. Available online: http://proxy.library.brocku.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=30050091&site=eds-live&scope=site Turner, F. (2014). Prototype [draft] [#digitalkeywords]. Available online: http://culturedigitally.org/2014/06/prototype-draft-digitalkeyword/
9 - Wed. Nov. 4	Analyzing Qualitative Data	Interim Report (10%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goodman et al. Chapter 15 Analyzing Qualitative Data
10 - Wed. Nov. 11	Asynchronous Class (no class meeting)		
11 - Wed. Nov. 18	In Class Test	In Class Test (20 %)	
12 - Wed. Nov. 25	In Class Usability Session		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goodman et al. Chapter 18 Reports, Presentation and Workshops
13 - Wed. Dec. 2	Final Presentations	Final Presentations and Report (25 %); Participation Report (10%)	

Department of Communication, Popular Culture and Film

Pledge of Academic Integrity [Adapted for COMM 4V57]

Please read the following statement, sign it, and submit. Your assignments will not be graded unless this form is attached or received earlier in the term.

I, the undersigned, understand that all the following practices constitute academic misconduct according to Brock University's policy on academic misconduct and general academic practice:

- Quoting someone else's words without using quotation marks
- Quoting someone else's words without acknowledging the source
- Using someone else's ideas in my own words without acknowledging the source
- Using someone else's argument in my own words without acknowledging the source
- Fabricating data or sources of information for an assignment, bibliography or list of works cited
- Having or employing someone else to write all or part of my assignment, or do all or some of the preparatory work for me. There are two exceptions to this rule: I may have or employ someone to type the final assignment make editorial comments. However, I take full responsibility for any errors introduced by a typist or editor
- Allowing another student to use material from my assignment when drafting his or her own assignment
- Writing all or part of an assignment for another student, or doing all or some of the preparatory work for him or her. Such preparatory work includes (but is not limited to) reading and note-taking from required books and articles.
- Submitting any work for credit in two or more courses

I confirm that I have not committed any form of academic misconduct for COMM 4V57 and will uphold academic integrity throughout the course.

Name (please print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____



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Statement on: Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is a serious offence. The principle of academic integrity, particularly of doing one's own work, documenting properly (including use of quotation marks, appropriate paraphrasing and referencing/citation), collaborating appropriately, and avoiding misrepresentation, is a core principle in university study. Students should consult Section VII, "Academic Misconduct", in the "Academic Regulations and University Policies" entry in the Undergraduate Calendar, available at brocku.ca/webcal, to view a fuller description of prohibited actions, and the procedures and penalties which may be applied.

Academic misconduct includes plagiarism (presenting the words and ideas of another person as if they were your own), submitting the same work for two different assignments, and other forms of cheating such as using crib notes during a test or fabricating data for a lab assignment.

Instructors and teaching assistants in the Department thoroughly investigate all suspected cases of academic misconduct.

The penalties for documented cases of academic misconduct can be severe. The Department may recommend that a grade of zero be given for the assignment, and a failing grade if not a grade of zero be given for the course. In addition, a note will be attached to the student's academic transcript. A second offence can result in suspension from the University. The disciplinary process is administered initially at the Department level and in cases where academic penalty is assigned will be referred to the offices of the Dean of Social Sciences.

Make yourself aware of the issues involved. Read the section of the Undergraduate Calendar that pertains to academic misconduct. You are reminded that the Student Development Centre (Schmon Tower, Room 400) offers workshops on writing skills, and issues surrounding plagiarism.

For further information on all aspects of your academic program, including course planning, you may consult with the Department's Academic Advisor:

Penni Lafleur, SBH 344, ext. 5308 , plafleur@brocku.ca>