Interaction Design (Art 479)

Winter 2008
Annabelle Gould | 685.0547 | agould@u.washington.edu
Office hours: Tuesdays 12-1pm, Art 251

Writer and experience design pioneer Nathan Shedroff states that "*Interaction design is the art of effectively creating interesting and compelling experiences for others.*"

Course Overview

Technology has changed the way we interact with our environment. From our mobile phones and TV remote controls to the email and instant messaging services we use on a daily basis, digital devices are prevalent in all aspects of our life. As these technological experiences become increasingly more complex, and the public more demanding and discerning, so to does the job of the interaction designer.

The field of interaction design is about making technological experiences useful and engaging. Rather than just connecting to the product itself, interaction designers work to connect people through various products or services. Interaction designers contribute in many areas including designing software interfaces, information systems, online tools and websites, physical products, environments and technological services. Interaction design is an interdisciplinary field where a variety of people including industrial designers, human factors specialists, information architects and visual designers work together. The primary job of any interaction designer is to approach design from a user-centered perspective and put the end goals and needs of the user above all else.

Course Structure + Requirements

This course will focus on learning the fundamental theories of interaction design as they pertain to visual designers. The first few weeks will consist of several readings, lectures and quick exercises. The remainder of the quarter will focus on one large project. Class time will be divided between lectures, critiques, workdays and tutorials. For large class critiques you will be split into two groups. One group will present on Tuesdays, the other group on Thursdays. Mid-way through the quarter the Catalyst Group will be conducting a series of Flash workshops for the class. These will take place in the SOACC lab. Attendance is required for those workshops.

Strongly Recommended Reading (on two-hour reserve in the SOA library)

Designing Interactions by Bill Moggridge
Universal Principles of Design by William Lidwell, Kritina Holden and Jill Butler

Additional Reading

The Design of Everyday Things by Donald Norman
Understanding Comics by Scott McCloud
About Face 2.0: The Essentials of Interaction Design by Alan Cooper and Robert M. Reimann
Designing for Interaction: Creating Smart Applications and Clever Devices by Dan Saffer
For more titles, refer to the Reading List on the IxD website.

Students with Disabilities

If you would like to request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disabled Student Services, 448 Schmitz, 543.8924 (V/TTY). If you have a letter from Disabled Student Services indicating you have a disability that requires academic accommodations, please present it to me so we can discuss any accommodations you might need for class.

Interaction design touches you on a daily basis:

Mobile phone interface
Wii gaming system
Tivo interface
ATM interface
Airline E-ticket kiosk
Remote control interface
Vehicle navigation system
iPod interface
Adobe Creative Suite
Movie ticket kiosks
Slot machines in casinos
Blackberry
Digital camera
PDA applications
Cockpit controls
Instant messaging
MacOSX platform
Thermostat controls
DVD interface
GPS system
Email
MyUW
Digital watch interface
Stovetop controls
iTunes Library
Inflight entertainment system
Medical devices
Web applications
Kitchen appliances
Retail websites

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Policies + Evaluation

Attendance is required for all class sessions. Please make every effort to be on time. All work (process and final) should be completed and ready by the beginning of class. Late work is heavily discouraged and will not be accepted without prior permission. Grading is based on the quality of your work during the quarter (both visually and conceptually); your design process (the extent of exploration and variation completed with each assignment) and class participation in group discussions and critiques.

A 3.8–4.0 is given to a student whose final work is of exceptional quality. The work produced has been supported by numerous variations and explorations throughout the quarter. This student actively participates during every critique and group discussion.

A 3.5–3.7 is given to a student who presents work of good quality, along with a thorough number of variations conducted throughout the quarter. This student often participates during critiques and group discussions.

A 3.0–3.4 is given to a student who presents work of average quality, along with the minimum amount of exploration and variation needed to complete the course. This student occasionally participates during critiques and group discussions.

A 0.0–2.9 is given to a student who presents work of poor quality, where projects are incomplete or missing. This student has failed to complete the minimum design process during the quarter, and rarely participates in critiques or group discussions.