

LIS 3793

Information Architecture

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COURSE SURVIVAL GUIDE AND MAP

Basic Course Info

- Term: Fall 2008
- Course Section: 01
- Course Credit: 3 credit hours

- Course Schedule: 11 a.m.-12:15 p.m. TR
- Location: HSB 308
- Course Website: <http://campus.fsu.edu>

Introducing Your Learning Facilitator Course Description

- Professor: [Dr. Mia Liza A. Lustria](#)
- Office: Rm. 270 Louis Shores Building
- Voice: (850) 644-6237
- Fax: (850) 644-9763

- E-mail: mlustria@ci.fsu.edu
- Consultation Hours: 1-2 p.m. TR or by appointment
- Availability by e-mail: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. M-F

This course provides an introduction to the scope and methods of **information architecture**, including project strategy; project scope; audience research; organization schemes, categories, and labels; identifying functional and content requirements; and interface design. The course will emphasize the interrelationships of these components and stress the importance of developing communication skills within teams and with clients.

Course Goals

At the end of this course, successful students can be expected to...

1. Understand the emergence of **information architecture** as a discipline and area of practice.
2. Learn various models of design process and practice.
3. Apply one or more of these models to **information architecture** through project-oriented analysis and exercises with real or hypothetical clients.
4. Develop and analyze functional and content requirements based on audience research and be able to integrate those requirements into design solutions.
5. Understand the importance of design team and client communication in the **information architecture** design practice and be able to apply specific techniques to improve that communication, including design presentation skills.

Specific Learning Objectives

At the end of this course (if you ensure your full and thoughtful engagement in all class activities), you should be able to...

1. Discuss intelligently what **information architecture** is and what **information architects** do.
2. Discuss the process by which an **information architecture** project should proceed.
3. Work closely with a client (i.e., community organization) to re-design an existing website based on the principles of good **information architecture**, organization and design.
4. Use appropriate research methods to better understand the environment within which a website will be created or revised.
5. Use appropriate methods to determine and visualize the specific needs of the organization/client for an **information architecture** project through needs analysis reports, personas, and scenarios.
6. Develop navigation systems, labeling systems, and taxonomies for web sites.
7. Visualize recommendations for the **information architecture** of a website through various formats such as sitemaps and wireframes.
8. Critically evaluate the **information architecture** and design of websites using a user-centered approach.
9. Implement and present the prototype website to the intended client.

Course Pre-Requisites

Before taking this course, you will have had to successfully completed the following courses:

- LIS 3267: Information Science for Information Professionals
- LIS 3353: Technologies for Information Professionals
- LIS 3021: Technical Communication for Information Professionals
- LIS 3784: Information Organization and Communication

- Other Pre-requisites**
- ❑ Prior experience or training in html, web design or graphics design is **required** for this course.
 - ❑ Experience or training in creating dynamic, database-driven websites is also desirable, but is not a pre-requisite of this course.

Course Outline See Course Schedule for a more detailed version.

Topics

- What is Information Architecture?
- Core Process Overview
- Phase 1: Research and Preparation
- Basic Principles of IA: Organization Schemes
- Basic Principles of IA: Labeling Systems
- Basic Principles of IA: Navigation Systems
- Phase 2: Developing Site Structure (Site mapping and Wireframing)
- Basic Principles of IA: Search Systems, Thesauri, Controlled Vocabularies, and Metadata
- Designing Functionality
- Phase 3: Designing the Interface
- Phase 4: Build and Integrate
- Usability Testing
- System Modification
- Phase 5: Launch and Beyond
- Information Architecture in Practice

Team-Based Learning

This course uses a team-based approach to learning. Team-based learning is an instructional strategy that emphasizes the development of cohesive teams that promote peer learning. More importantly, working in teams will provide you with an opportunity to develop communication and organizational skills crucial to your development as an IT professional. Most of the activities and requirements in this course will be completed as part of a team effort and your ability to contribute to that team effort will be evaluated at the end of the semester through peer evaluation.

Textbooks and Other Course Materials

Two textbooks are required for this class:

1. Brown, Dan M.. 2007 . *Communicating Design: Developing Web Site Documentation for Design and Planning*. Berkeley, CA: New Riders Press. [ISBN: 0321392353]
2. Goto K, Cotler E. 2004. *Web ReDesign 2.0: Workflow that Works* Berkeley, CA: New Riders Press. [ISBN: 0735714339]

Additional readings will also be provided on the course website and on reserve at the Goldstein Library. You will have 1-3 readings per topic. You are expected to study these materials prior to coming to class in preparation for individual and team-based quizzes.

This class is for you if you agree that ...

1. **Class participation is essential.** By thoughtfully engaging yourself in class activities, by keeping up with the readings, sharing your ideas and experiences with others in the class, you are ensuring a fruitful semester ahead of you.
2. **You will get the most out this course only if you come to class prepared and on time and if you work consistently during the week to complete all learning activities.** There are no shortcuts to learning and you will only be short-changing yourself if you think that the bare minimum effort will be sufficient for this course.
3. **Learning happens just as much outside of the classroom as it does inside the classroom.** Most of your learning will occur when you start applying the knowledge you've gleaned within the four walls of this institution to real-world problems.
4. **Collaborative work encourages peer learning and support and has been shown to directly enhance learning.** It is every team members' responsibility to make sure that the team is productive. To make group work meaningful, **each** member should be held accountable for: accomplishing the tasks assigned to them, learning all the material, contributing to in-class or online discussions, and helping ensure that overall group tasks are accomplished.
5. **Group work enhances the development of skills that would be of value in the actual workplace.** This includes: teamwork skills, collaborative skills, analytical and cognitive skills, and organizational and time management skills.
6. **Open, tolerant, and respectful communication is the key to maintaining a positive learning environment.** Individuals in this class need not always agree with one another, but there is always a respectful way to address issues.

7. **You are a student who takes responsibility for your own learning.** You will talk to me if you think something is not working and we will work to try to make it better.

Grading Criteria

Grades will be based on a 1000-point scale, distributed in the following manner:

INDIVIDUAL REQUIREMENTS	Points	%
Readiness Assessment Quizzes (10; 5 pts. @)	50	5.0
Midterm Exam	125	12.5
Personas & Scenarios	50	5.0
Wireframe	100	10.0
Web Critique	50	5.0
Peer Evaluation 1	50	5.0
Peer Evaluation 2	50	5.0
Client Evaluation	25	2.5
Personal Project Blog (10 entries; 1/week)	100	10.0
SUBTOTAL	600	60
TEAM REQUIREMENTS	Points	%
Team Quizzes (5; 10pts. @)	50	5.0
Project Plan & Schedule	50	5.0
Signed Service Learning Agreement	25	2.5
Client & Audience Analysis	50	5.0
Site Map	50	5.0
Usability Test & Report	50	5.0
Final Prototype Website	125	12.5
SUBTOTAL	400	40
TOTAL	1000	100

Grading Attendance

Attendance is required and will be checked regularly. Excessive unexcused absences will be penalized in the following manner: **3-percentage points for every unexcused absence over 3 will be deducted from the final grade.** Here's an idea of how this policy could affect your final grade:

No. of Unexcused Absences	Points Off	% of Class Missed	Highest possible letter grade	No. of Unexcused Absences	Points Off	% of Class Missed	Highest possible letter grade
4	30	9	A	10	210	23	C+
5	60	12	A	11	240	26	C
6	90	14	A-	12	270	28	C
7	120	16	B+	13	300	30	C-
8	150	19	B	14	330	33	D+
9	180	21	B-	>14			Failing

Letter Grade

Your final letter grade will be based on the standard grading scales for CI courses:

FINAL GRADING SCALE ^a		
%	Grade	Score ^b
93-100	A	930-1000
90-92	A-	900-920
87-89	B+	870-890
83-86	B	830-860
80-82	B-	800-820
77-79	C+	770-790
73-76	C	730-760
70-72	C-	700-720
67-69	D+	670-690
63-66	D	630-660
60-62	D-	600-620
0-59	F	0-590

Important Notes:

- a. I will not be grading on the curve, so you can assume that everyone has an equal opportunity to earn an A for this course. However, this will depend on how much you have participated in the class activities and the quality/accuracy of your work. However, you must complete all major requirements to get a passing grade in this course. No Incomplete grades will be assigned, except under documented extenuating circumstances.
- b. Final scores will be rounded off to three significant figures.
- c. Any points over 100 points on the peer evaluation will be counted as extra credit.

EVALUATION & ASSESSMENT

The following section briefly outlines the activities and requirements that will be used to assess your mastery of the concepts covered in this course. More detailed instructions will be posted online.

Quizzes **Readiness Assessment Quizzes** are online quizzes which will be made available on the Blackboard site prior to each major topic discussion. These are timed quizzes that can only be taken once and are designed to test whether you have done the reading assignments for a particular class. RAQs will be given throughout the semester. You are responsible for making sure you take these scheduled quizzes during the times allotted – no make-up RAQs will be given.

Team Quizzes are 10-point (5-item) quizzes that will be done by groups in class prior to each lecture. These quizzes are designed to do three things: encourage group discussion of the assigned reading; help me identify gaps in your knowledge; and help build team cohesiveness in preparation for the final project and other major assignments.

Midterm Exam The first half of the semester will be devoted to learning basic concepts in information science and related disciplines. The second half is more practical in nature, covering topics that will help you complete the final project requirements. Because of this, only one major exam will be given in this course during the midterm. The midterm exam may include multiple choice, true or false, or matching items, and short-answer essay questions.

Web Critique At the end of the semester, you will have the individual opportunity to assess and score another team's website using specific rubrics, and also make suggestions on how this can be improved. This exercise will not only demonstrate your analytical and critical skills, but will also be used to calculate each team's final project grade.

Final Project Your team will plan, design, and develop a prototype website demonstrating the principles of good information representation, organization, and design. Your teams will be assigned to work with actual community organizations as part of the Service Learning component of this course. As such, you will have the opportunity to learn important skills needed to carry out an actual IT project. The Final Project will be broken up into several deliverables, some of these will be done in teams, some individually:

Personal Project Blog – You will be required to keep track of your project activities and individual contributions to the team project via a personal project blog starting the 3rd week of classes. You will need at least one entry per week detailing: (1) your activities for the week in relation to the team project; (2) things you might have learned in class or by doing the project. Entries need not be too long, but must be substantive and self-reflective – these should give the reader a sense of your progress/learning in this class and contributions to the team project.

Project Plan and Schedule – Your team will be required to develop a project plan that includes a breakdown of all activities (e.g., initiating, planning, executing, monitoring and controlling, and closing activities) needed to complete the entire project including when each activity should be accomplished. Your plan should include a Gantt chart that indicates deadlines for all project deliverables and milestones and a breakdown of member roles and responsibilities.

Signed Service Learning Agreement – During your initial meeting with your client, your team will be required to go over the student deliverables for the project. The Signed Service Learning Agreement is a contract between you and your client that specifies that you both agree to the terms of the final project and your responsibilities.

Client & Audience Analysis – Your team will be required to conduct a thorough analysis of your client organization and their intended audience. You will summarize your findings in a report that includes all the research procedures your team conducted as well as a list of your interview schedules, surveys, task analysis questions, etc.

Personas and Scenarios – As part of the Client and Audience Analysis, you will individually be required to create personas and scenarios. A persona is a hypothetical individual who represents the targeted demographic for your prototype website. Scenarios are narratives that might explain the context within which a particular personal might interact with your prototype site.

Site Map – Your team will produce a prototype site map for a proposed complete site. This site map should show how you intend to categorize and organize all the information on the website for your intended audience and client.

Wireframe – Individually, you will be required to create a wireframe to represent how YOU intend to visualize the proposed functions, structure and content of your client's homepage. The

wireframe should include: (1) key page elements and their location, such as header, footer, navigation, content objects, branding elements, (2) grouping of elements, such as side bars, navigation bars, content areas, (3) labeling, page title, navigation links, headings to content objects, and (4) place holders, content text and images.

Usability Test & Analysis – Once your team has a draft site, you will be required to conduct a standard usability test using an appropriate usability protocol. This test should focus on both performance and preference measures. Your team will submit a report that summarizes the steps you took to conduct the usability test including all instruments and protocols used as well as your analysis of the results and its implications on the site design.

Final Prototype Website – The final prototype site design should consider the intended client's needs, the main purpose of the site, and the needs of the intended users/audience. Moreover, the site will be judged on the following criteria: information organization, information representation, navigation, interface design, and usability. The grade for this final project will be based not only on my evaluation of the quality of the group output, but also on the evaluation of your website by another team as well as your client.

Presentations – At the end of the semester, teams will present the results of your final project to the class and to your clients. You will be required to do an 8-10 minute PowerPoint presentation that discusses the process your team went through to complete the final project; results of the client and audience analysis; results of the usability testing; your final prototype; and other lessons learned.

NOTE: More detailed instructions and guidelines for these deliverables will be provided as the class progresses. For the Final Group Project, you may use **ANY** html editor or web publishing software to create your websites. Prototypes will be hosted on iSpace accounts that will be specially created for your teams. Thus, you must make sure that any web technologies you decide to use for your site will be compatible with the iSpace server.

Peer & Client Evaluations

You will submit a peer evaluation for each member of your team: once before the midterm and finally at the end of the semester. This will help us determine the amount of work each member has contributed toward team efforts. You will also be required to give narrative comments regarding the extent to which each member contributes to the team effort, takes responsibility for team success, and contributes towards building a productive and positive atmosphere within the team. Your clients will also be asked to evaluate the performance of each team member.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance and Tardiness

Attendance will be checked every class meeting. Excessive absences and frequent tardiness signal the lack of professionalism and will be duly noted. You will be allowed up to 3 unexcused absences without penalty, but every unexcused absence over this limit will result in 3-percentage points deducted from your overall score.

According to University Policy: excused absences are those due to documented illness, deaths in the immediate family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness. All students are expected to abide by this class attendance policy. You must also provide, when possible, advance notice of absences as well as relevant documentation regarding absences to the instructor as soon as possible following the illness or event that led to an absence.

Please provide the necessary documentation at least 1 week prior to your scheduled activity/excused absence or not more than 3 days after the excusable absence. Regardless of whether an absence is excused or unexcused, you should assume full responsibility for missing any material in class. Keep in contact with fellow classmates or teammates and regularly monitor the course website on Blackboard.

Please try to be in class on time as once roll is taken, students who are more than 15 minutes late will be counted as absent for that day. Student tardiness is not only disruptive to the rest of the class but is also counter-productive as you may miss the chance to participate in learning activities given at the beginning of class. You are also expected to remain in the classroom for the entire duration of the class. If you will need to leave prior to the end of the class period, please have the courtesy to inform me before the class starts.

University-wide policy requires all students to attend the first class meeting of all classes for which they are registered. Students who do not attend the first class meeting of a course for

which they are registered will be dropped from the course by the academic department that offers the course. In order to enforce this policy, instructors are required to take attendance at the first class meeting and report absences to the appropriate person in their department or school/college. For further information, consult the FSU General Bulletin at: <http://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/undergrad/apdefault.htm>. Please note that some schools, colleges and special programs have more stringent requirements for class attendance. Also, see "Medical Excuses" in Section "m" of this chapter.

Make-up Quizzes/Exam

Make-up quizzes or make-up for other in-class activities will not be routinely administered, unless there are extenuating circumstances. Decisions will be made on a case-to-case basis and will be brought to the attention of the Academic Dean for further evaluation. Make-up exams may be permitted when justified by illness, conflicting exams, more than three exams in a 24-hour period (in the case of the Final Exam) or for certain emergencies. In such cases, **you should contact me immediately, preferably at least one week prior to the scheduled exam for foreseeable circumstances and at least three days after the exam for emergencies.**

Late Assignments or Group Work

It is your responsibility to turn in all requirements on time (due dates and times are clearly specified on the attached class schedule). **Five percentage-points will be deducted for every day you are late with an assignment or project.** At the most, assignments and projects should be submitted two-days before the next assignment is due or they will not be graded.

Class Decorum

Kindly be on time and orderly in entering the classroom. Late arrivals and early departures do not only disrupt the concentration of your classmates, but can also be detrimental to your learning. If for some reason you must be late, try to enter the room quietly.

During class I request that all students, as a matter of courtesy, **turn off their cellphones, refrain from disruptive behavior, refrain from eating, and refrain from using your laptops for other uses other than class work (e.g., playing games; listening to/downloading music; chatting; e-mailing).** Disagreements on the subjects under discussion will not be allowed to evolve into arguments or personal criticisms. **Common courtesy, tolerance, and respect** are strongly encouraged to promote a positive learning environment for everyone. Overall, these are all marks of professionalism as well.

Class Communication

I will be using e-mail and the course website on Blackboard extensively to communicate with the class. You are responsible for checking the course site (by viewing Discussion Boards and Announcements under the Communications menu) and your e-mail on a daily basis.

I strongly encourage you to use the communication tools on the course site to communicate with me by using the Send E-mail function or by posting a question on the Online Office Discussion Board (both are available under Communication). Group pages have also been set up to facilitate communication among groups. This is a terrific way to facilitate group work, especially if you cannot meet face-to-face outside of class often. Through the group pages, you can send e-mail to teammates, post messages on the discussion board, chat, and share files.

E-mail and File Sharing Conventions

Please identify yourself in all your e-mails and **always preface the course no. and the topic in the subject line of your message.** I get a lot of legitimate e-mail daily, so I will not answer e-mails that do not have LIS 3793 prefaced in the subject line and that do not specify the sender. If you send your e-mail via Blackboard, please make sure you put LIS 3793 in the subject line and also identify yourself clearly in the body of your e-mail. General questions that would benefit the rest of the class should be posted on the Online Office Discussion Board. I may also take the liberty of posting your question on the Discussion Board if I deem it important for the whole class to know the answer to the inquiry. This way I won't need to address common questions repetitively.

All files submitted should either be in Word (*.doc) or rich text (*.rtf) formats. Name all your files appropriately with your last name. Moreover, make sure you also have identifying information within the document itself: Your name, teammates, date submitted, and assignment/project name and number.

FSU Academic Honor Code & Plagiarism

The **Florida State University Academic Honor Policy** outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to ". . . be honest and truthful and . . . [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at <http://www.fsu.edu/~dof/honorpolicy.htm>).

Please note that violations of this Academic Honor System will **NOT** be tolerated in this class. Cases of academic dishonesty such as cheating will be investigated & pursued vigorously according to departmental and (if needed) university procedures.

Plagiarism of any type, including material from Internet sources, can be grounds for suspension from the university, as well as for failure in this course. **It will not be tolerated.** Before submitting any work for this class, please read the "Academic Honor System" in its entirety (see link above) and ask me to clarify any of its expectations that you do not understand.

For this course, we may submit required assignments to Turnitin.com for review and to generate an "Originality Report." Written assignments with low originality scores (<40%) indicating potential plagiarism will be rigorously investigated according to departmental procedures.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should:

- register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and
- bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class.

This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

Student Disability Resource Center
97 Woodward Avenue, South
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167
(850) 644-9566 (voice)
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)
<mailto:sdrc@admin.fsu.edu>
<http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/>

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Syllabus Change Policy

This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.