IMM EU Socrates Erasmus Program
Master Program
Syllabus
Course Outline and Facilitator Guide

Course Title: Web Interactivity and Usability
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Purpose	The goal for this course is to enable participants to evaluate and improve the usability of Web sites in order to offer the optimal user experience.
Learning Outcomes	Upon completion of this course, participants will be able to evaluate and improve the **usability** of Web sites through effective: o organization, o presentation and o interactivity
Course Summary	Focused on teaching how to create **user-centered design**, this course will provide participants with a variety of techniques that enhance the usability of a Web site and consequently the user experience.
Course Structure	The Interactivity and Usability course will progress along a continuum that research considers optimal for online learning: • Access and motivation (setting up and accessing the online system used for instruction; welcoming and encouraging students) • Online socialization (sending and receiving messages) • Information exchange (searching, personalizing software; helping users get acquainted with the resources used in class) • Knowledge construction (diverse instructional activities conducted in individual and group formats) • Development (provide links, reading materials, assignments, and personalized feedback to students) **Introduction (2 weeks): Access, motivation, online socialization** The purpose of this week is to find out who the students are, what they are looking for in the course, and give them a chance to socialize with each other via a welcome blog and personal online space. **Module 1: The User Experience (1 week)** o What is usability on the Web? o What are elements that contribute to Web usability? o How do we design the optimal user experience?

o Examples of web design that accommodates users' needs
o Presentation versus speed and clarity
Sample reading: http://spareroom.org/webclass/924.html,
http://www.useit.com/papers/heuristic/heuristic_list.html

Module 2: The Role of the Information Architect (1 week)
o Analysis phase
o User profile
o Context for site usage
o Content development
o Roles and responsibilities in the Web design team
Sample reading: http://www.asis.org/Bulletin/Oct-00/parolek1.html

Module 3: Organization (2 weeks)
o Chunking
o Sequencing
o Navigation
o Screen Layout (text, graphics, borders/dividers, animation, style sheets, alignment)
Sample reading: http://www.ahref.com/guides/design/199808/0831jef.html,
http://webmonkey.wired.com/webmonkey/98/28/index4a.html

Module 4: Presentation (2 weeks)
o Inverted pyramid style
o Writing for the Web
o Text length
o Scanability
o Language/tone
o Content archives
Sample reading: http://www.alistapart.com/articles/writeliving/

Module 5: Interactivity (2 weeks)
o What is interactivity on the Web
o Contexts for interaction
o Mechanisms for users interacting with computers
o Mechanisms for users interacting with one another via computers
o User tasks
o User feedback
Sample reading: http://icl-
server.ucsd.edu/~kirsh/Articles/Interactivity/brock-single.html

Module 6: Web Analytics (2 weeks)
o Components of a usability log: time accessed, time spent, pages viewed, path through the site, elements of effective design, etc.
o Types of usability metrics
o Evaluating elements viewed and links clicked

| | Sample reading: http://www.boxesandarrows.com/archives/web_traffic_analytics_and_user_experience.php

Module 7: Final Project (2 weeks)
Comprehensive usability analysis |
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| **Learning Assignments** | Students will be asked each week to perform various usability studies of different Web sites and report on suggested improvements, based on elements learned in class and acquired from reading relevant online resources.

Assignments may include and are not limited to the following ideas:

1. Share your own successes and failures while navigating the web in order to accomplish a task (e.g.; buying a book, sending virtual flowers, locating a movie theatre, making airline reservations, reading the news, etc.).
2. Develop 3 user profiles for different Web sites. Describe who the person is (demographics) and how/why they would use these particular sites.
3. Locate 5 Web sites where users could find answers to questions such as: Where am I?; Where can I go?; How will get there?; How can I get back where I once was? Explain the techniques used for displaying effective navigational elements.
4. Select a publication that is available in both print and online format. Submit a report in which you compare the table of contents for the printed version and the navigation for the Web version. Explain advantages/disadvantages from the users' perspective regarding browsing through the two document formats and finding relevant information. Which was a more satisfying experience and why?
5. Re-format text to reflect online writing and reading principles.
6. Locate examples of Web sites that make effective use of multimedia elements (graphics, animation, audio, and video). Explain.
7. Select your favourite e-commerce/telecommunications site and analyze their hyperlinks system. Explain the link usage in terms of nature, description, colors, and overall functionality.
8. Select a target audience for whom you will sell a new product via an e-commerce site. Comment on techniques you will use to find out the characteristics of your target audience. What impact will these characteristics have upon your design?
9. Your boss asks you to supervise the design of an e-commerce site, whose purpose is to sell the new product of your company. Select a new product and write a proposal, in which you explain guidelines for designing the site in terms of user profiles, roles necessary to create the site, the context in which it will be used, the content it will |

	contain, its organization, presentation, and interactivity ideas. Use what you have learned in class and justify your plans. Continuous online discussion included in the forum and personal student blogs will accompany all the assignments.
Successful completion	Successful completion of the course is based on: • Completion of assignments for modules 2-6: 45% • Completion of comprehensive assignment (module 7): 45% • Participation in online discussion forum and personal blogs: 10%
Tutorials Structure	The Usability and Interactivity course will consist of a balanced combination between independent study, online reading, blogging, wikis, Web site evaluation, business interview, and written assignments.
Interactive or Multimedia content	The course will contain ample examples provided by the instructor. These examples result from real-life Web sites, and will be presented in the form of static screen shots or live Web sites/Web projects, containing various media (text, graphics, animations, audio, and video). Examples of multimedia applications provided by students and which exemplify the usability/interactivity concepts covered in class are welcomed.
Software needed	This course will have several pre-requisites. In order to be successful in this course, students should to have the following skills: o Grasp of the Internet and World Wide Web in terms of purpose, functionality, native Web technologies o Familiarity with popular Web authoring tools such as Dreamweaver, Flash, HomeSite, etc. o Ability to program in popular scripting languages such as HTML, JavaScript, ColdFusion, PHP, etc, is a plus.
References	Students will be asked to review a variety of references, ranging from book excerpts, peer-reviewed journal articles, online publications related to interactivity and usability, etc. Specific reading samples have been included in each major session proposed for this course (see Course Structure).