

ITLS Writing for Design Syllabus 4320

Course Description

In this course, students will simulate working as User Experience (UX) writers! In this course we will use human centered design and user experience principles to write and design a written (project 1) and demo (project 2) how to guide. Then, you will justify your design decisions to the client in a paper (project 3), and present to the software company (project 4). The software should be one that you are comfortable sharing with a diverse audience, does not have inappropriate content, and is not harmful to anyone's identity or culture. You will work through an iterative design process toward these two projects to develop your writing, design, and presentation skills. Students will examine the elements of good writing in the areas of technical communication, information design, and user experience. Students learn to write effective technical documentation and to apply design techniques in written content to enhance reader experiences and comprehension.

Cross-listed as: ITLS 6320

Course Objectives

IDEA objectives:

- Objective 6: Developing creative capacities (designing and writing)
- Objective 11: Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view
- Objective 4: Developing specific skills, competencies, and points of view by professionals in the field most closely related to this course

Course objectives:

1. Understand principles of user experience and human-centered design and apply them to writing
2. Identify and demonstrate elements of good technical writing
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the visual and textual aspects of information design
4. Apply rhetoric, technical writing, and information design to a practical, real-world scenario
5. Demonstrate an understanding of an iterative writing cycle and give and apply constructive feedback

Course Resources

There is no textbook for the course, but there are articles, blogs, and book excerpts that are required each week. We will be reading excerpts and chapters from a range of texts. PDFs or links of the readings can be found on Canvas. Additional resources and videos will be posted as we progress through the semester.

Course Requirements

Each week you will:

1. Read a short article, book, or blog that is relevant to your weekly topic
2. Watch a lecture on the week's content
3. Submit an assignment toward one of your projects
4. Provide constructive feedback to two of your peers

Course Structure

- Our due dates in this class are not arbitrary. The course's pacing is designed to help you make steady and productive progress toward the learning objectives while also leaving time to provide feedback to each other, so all work should ideally be submitted by the specified due dates.
- Please keep me updated with how you are doing and if you need extensions or other support. I don't need any specifics about what is going on, I just need you to tell me what you need. If you do not reach out, a 10% per day penalty will be applied to any work not submitted at the specified due date unless I have been emailed (lu.lawrence@usu.edu) in advance of the due date (or as soon as possible after the due date if there are extenuating circumstances). If you have not contacted me the assignment may receive a zero after a full week.
- **IMPORTANT:** We all come to this course with a variety of experiences, responsibilities, needs, and emotions. We are also attempting to have as normal of a semester as possible during a global pandemic. The pandemic will affect us all in different ways and at different points in time throughout the semester. It is important to remember that there are many things happening in the background of our learning this semester. This means that all learners in our classroom (myself included) are not just students/instructors, but people with outside lives that will both inform and sometimes interfere with this class. **I want to be very clear:** Your health and the health of your family, classmates, and your community is the most important thing. This includes both your physical and mental health. **The course policies offer options for flexibility, but also ask for accountability.** Both are integral to creating a productive learning experience for our entire classroom community. If you need support, reach out.

Project Overviews

Project 1 Written How to Guide: The goal of project 1 is to create a written guide to use the software you have chosen. Your target audience will be the software users. Your guide needs to be original written instructional content. You can choose any aspect of the software interaction to describe (e.g., how to get started, how to perform a specific action). Your final guide needs to include at least 5 steps (more is fine), easy to follow directions, intentionally designed for your audience, and apply the concepts and principles learned through the semester. (Please note you will be giving a presentation about your guide in Project 2).

Project 2 Demo How to Guide: The goal of project 2 is to create a demo how to guide for your target audience. Your target audience will be the software users. Your demo needs to be in video format describing your guide steps to your target audience. Your demo must be 3 to 4 minutes long, include your introduction and all steps, have a clear narrative, use visuals that compliment your narrative, and be delivered in a style that is appropriate for your audience.

Project 3 Design Justification Paper: It's a common practice for designers to justify their decisions to their clients. The goal of project 3 is to justify the design decisions that you made in your how-to guide to your target audience. Your target audience will be the client that created the software. In the paper

you will explain why you chose to design your guide the way you did using the readings and resources from the course. Your final paper needs to be 1,000 to 3,000 words long, APA format, discuss at least 4 decisions in your writing and design, and apply concepts and principles learned in the course.

Project 4 Presentation to your Client: It's a common practice for designers to justify their decisions to their clients. After writing your justification, you will create a presentation video describing the justification to your target audience. Your presentation must be 4 to 5 minutes long, have a clear narrative, use visuals that compliment your narrative, and be delivered in a style that is appropriate for your audience.

Evaluation Methods and Criteria

You will be evaluated on the successful completion of your assignments and your participation in critique. There will be no tests or quizzes assigned in this course. If you do the work and constructively participate in the course, you will receive a grade that reflects your effort. You will not be graded on your writing skills per say, but rather on the practice of writing, applying feedback, and the demonstration of understanding how to apply content in the course.

The best way to improve your writing is to write! You will draft, write, and edit every week throughout the semester and receive and apply feedback.

- You will be required to post your assignment in Canvas by 11:59 PM every Saturday.
- You ARE NOT required to have made comments on others' posts at this point (although you can).
- You will need to post on two of your peers' entries by 11:59 PM on the Tuesday AFTER the due date. This gives time to get feedback so that it can be applied in the next iteration of your writing!
 - Part of writing is sharing work in progress. Throughout the semester you will be asked to share outlines and drafts of your work – these are not meant to be polished or finalized! Sharing work in progress is part of the process to help iterate on your ideas and writing.
- ALL assignments must be name "Lastname_Project#_Assignment#" For instance, my first assignment would be named Lawrence_Project0_Assignment1

Interaction Policy

You are expected to have good behavior throughout your online interaction with classmates/instructors. Harmful feedback or harassment will not be tolerated in any form. Everyone will be respectful of each other's writing, process, chosen software, identities, etc. Any offense after the first warning will result in a 5-points penalty per occasion.

AI Policy

Many of you may be aware of the increasing notoriety of artificial intelligence tools, like ChatGPT, used in higher education and other areas. Although AI has many positive and creative uses in higher education, I believe in reflecting and recognizing our use.

You may use tools in this class to provide you with information, generate ideas, revise your writing, or reflect on your design decisions, but I ask you to cite acknowledge it and consider how you balance the use of direct quotes with your own, original content. Please use the below table to reference how you use AI in your project.

Type of Use	Description
No AI use	I did not use AI in my writing.
Brainstorming	I used AI tools to generate ideas, but did not copy any AI-generated text into the draft. AI ideas were used as inspiration only.
Planning	I used AI to help organize my ideas into an outline, but the actual writing and phrasing were my own. AI suggestions were used to guide planning.
Grammar	I used AI tools like grammar checkers (e.g., Grammarly) to improve sentence clarity, grammar, or style. AI may have suggested edits or alternatives, but I reviewed and approved all changes.
Feedback	I put my full or partial draft into an AI tool to get feedback. I revised based on this feedback but retained control over all writing.
Co-writing with my ideas	I put my ideas or outline into an AI tool and used it to generate sections. I reviewed, edited, and integrated the AI-generated text into my writing.
Co-writing with AI ideas	I prompted the AI to generate specific sections. I reviewed, edited, and integrated the AI-generated text into my writing. Not advised in this course.
Full AI use	I used AI to produce large portions of the draft or an entire version with a prompt but none of my ideas. Not advised in this course.

Grade Scheme

The following grading standards will be used in this class:

Grade Range

- A 100 % to 93.0%
- A- < 93.0 % to 90.0%
- B+ < 90.0 % to 87.0%
- B < 87.0 % to 83.0%

- B- < 83.0 % to 80.0%
- C+ < 80.0 % to 77.0%
- C < 77.0 % to 73.0%
- C- < 73.0 % to 70.0%
- D+ < 70.0 % to 67.0%
- D < 67.0 % to 60.0%
- F < 59.0 % to 0.0%

Course Schedule/Outline

Please note, details about projects and assignments are below.

Week	Project	Title	Assign Title
1	Project 1: Written How to Guide	Week 1: What is User Experience Design?	Project 1 Assignment 1: Describe your Tech + Empathy Map
2		Week 2: Task Analysis	Project 1 Assignment 2: Task Analysis
3		Week 3: Simplifying Complex Information	Project 1 Assignment 3: How To Guide Outline
4		Week 4: Signposting & Taxonomy	Project 1 Assignment 4: Sketch & Draft your How to Guide
5		Week 5: How to Guide Due	Project 1: How to Guide Due
6	Project 2: Demo How to Guide	Week 6: Presenting to your Target Audience	Project 2 Assignment 1: Presentation Script
7		Week 7: Gestalt Principles of Design	Project 2 Assignment 2: Presentation Slides
8		Week 8: Presentations Due	Project 2: Presentation Due
9	Project 3: Design Justification Paper	Week 9: Defending your Designs	Project 3 Assignment 1: Client & Design Decisions
10		Week 10: Technical Communication	Project 3 Assignment 2: Write a Draft
11		Week 11: Writing for Clarity	Project 3 Assignment 3: Revise your Paper
12		Week 12: Design Justification Paper Due	Project 3: Design Justification Paper Due

Week	Project	Title	Assign Title
13	Project 4: Presentation to your Client	Week 13: Professional Presentations	Project 4 Assignment 1: Presentation Script
14		Week 14: Presentation Designs	Project 4 Assignment 2: Presentation Slides
15		Week 15: Client Presentation Due	Project 4: Client Presentation Due

Attendance and Excused Absences Policy

This course is an asynchronous course without a set meeting time. There will be regular due dates for assignments and critiques. Having been in your position as a student, I understand that life can unexpectedly "happen". If you should run into any issues that would prohibit you from participating fully in the class at any point, please contact me as soon as you are able, and we can work out a solution. If you have questions about this please schedule a time to get in touch via Zoom.

Assumption of Risk

All classes, programs, and extracurricular activities within the University involve some risk, and certain ones involve travel. The University provides opportunities to participate in these programs on a voluntary basis. Therefore, students should not participate in them if they do not care to assume the risks. Students can ask the respective program leaders/sponsors about the possible risks a program may generate, and if students are not willing to assume the risks, they should not select that program. By voluntarily participating in classes, programs, and extracurricular activities, a student does so at his or her own risk. General information about University Risk Management policies, insurance coverage, vehicle use policies, and risk management forms can be found at: <http://www.usu.edu/riskmgt> (<http://www.usu.edu/riskmgt>)

Library Services

All USU students attending classes in Logan, at our Regional Campuses, or online can access all databases, e-journals, and e-books regardless of location. Additionally, the library will mail printed books to students, at no charge to them. Students can also borrow books from any Utah academic library. Take advantage of all library services and learn more at libguides.usu.edu/statewide. (<http://libguides.usu.edu/statewide>)

Online Course Fee

A fee of \$15 per credit is applied to all online courses to sustain current digital technologies and support services required for engaging and effective online learning.

Classroom Civility

Utah State University supports the principle of freedom of expression for both faculty and students. The University respects the rights of faculty to teach and students to learn. Maintenance of these rights requires classroom conditions that do not impede the learning process. Disruptive classroom behavior will not be tolerated. An

individual engaging in such behavior may be subject to disciplinary action. Read Student Code Article V Section V-3 (<https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode/article5>) for more information.