

# ITLS 4320: WRITING FOR DESIGN

**Course Time:** Online, Asynchronous

**Instructor:** Dr. Lawrence ([lu.lawrence@usu.edu](mailto:lu.lawrence@usu.edu))

**LMS:** Canvas

## Course Description

In this course, students will work as User Experience (UX) writers! In this course students will use human centered design and user experience principles to write and design a how-to guide and present it to the software's target audience (project 1) and justify your design decisions in a paper and presentation to the software company (project 2). 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 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

# Instructor & Contact Information

Hello! I'm **Dr. Lawrence**, an assistant professor in ITLS. I use she/her pronouns. I'm really excited about the course! I've been writing about design, including software, interactions, and processes, for years – it's one of my favorite things! You can check out my work (both research and design) [on my website, LuEttaMae.com](http://LuEttaMae.com). I'm a trained designer and now leverage those skills into my research focused on how we design learning environments with communities.

The best way to reach me is by emailing me ([lu.lawrence@usu.edu](mailto:lu.lawrence@usu.edu)), messaging me in Canvas, or scheduling a meeting with me. My work schedule is Monday through Friday 9-5. I will not be available to respond on nights and weekends – you can find me hiking, baking, or playing with my dogs during those times. :) If you have questions, please send me a message whenever it's convenient for you and I will do my best to get back to you when I'm back to my computer.

A little note: Your assignments will all be due on Saturdays to accommodate those who are working full time or are busy during the week. If you have questions or need assistance, please reach out to me during the week before the assignment is due. I am more than happy to give feedback, answer questions, or discuss challenges, but I am not available on Saturdays to do so.

## 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](mailto: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:** UX How To Guide & Presentation. The goal of project 1 is to create a guide to use the software you have chosen and present it to your target audience. 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, easy to follow directions, intentionally designed for your audience, and apply the concepts and principles learned through the semester. After writing your guide, you will create a presentation video describing your how to guide to your target audience. Your presentation must be 3 to 15 minutes long, include your introduction and all 5 steps, have a clear narrative, use visuals that compliment your narrative, and be delivered in a style that is appropriate for your audience.

**Project 2:** Design Justification Paper & Presentation. It's a common practice for designers to justify their decisions to their clients. The goal of project 2 is to justify the design decisions that you made in your how-to guide and present it 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 3,000 to 4,000 words long, APA format, discuss at least 4 decisions in your writing

and design, and apply concepts and principles learned in the course. 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.
  - Harmful feedback and harassment through critique (or any part of the course) will not be tolerated in any form. Everyone will be respectful of each other's writing, process, chosen software, identities, etc.
- 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.

# Diversity and Inclusion Statement

We Value:

- Inclusion of all races, ethnicities, cultures, genders, sexualities, religions, abilities, ages, and socioeconomic statuses to create a community where everyone feels safe.
- Developing and maintaining a shared understanding of and responsibility for diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice.
- Designing inclusive, equitable, and accessible learning environments where a multiplicity of perspectives, opinions, and beliefs enriches our professional, educational, and personal experiences.
- Respectful, intentional, and purposeful engagement with diverse students, staff, faculty, alumni, and community members.
- The continuous improvement of our efforts to recruit and retain students, staff, and faculty from historically minoritized communities and identities.

We recognize that we all have work to do to enact these values. We share a commitment to equitable treatment to all members of our community including faculty, staff, and students. Therefore, we are committed to working toward them by educating ourselves and, in response, taking appropriate action to improve our community. This especially includes teaching, mentorship, advising, and our relationships with one another. We recognize that words and actions matter just as much as the absence of words and actions matters.

## Course Schedule/Outline

Week	Project	Reading & Lecture Topics	Assignment Due
1	UX Design Writing	HCD & UX Design Writing Intro How to give feedback	Choose a design product, identify a target audience, build an empathy map Provide feedback to two peers
2		Procedures and Task Analysis	Outline the procedure of design interactions Provide feedback to two peers
3	Project 1: UX How To Guide	Simplification of Document Design Design software options	Draft your guide content Provide feedback to two peers
4		Survival of the Layout & Signposting	Draft the layout of your Guide Provide feedback to two peers

5		<b>Project Due</b>	<b>Project 1 How to Guide Due</b>
6		Introduction to design presentations and communication styles	Outline presentation script Provide feedback to two peers
7		Gestalt Principles of Design Design software options	Revise script and create visuals for presentation Provide feedback to two peers
8		<b>Project Due</b>	<b>Project 1 Presentation Due</b>
9	<i>Technical Design Writing</i>  <i>Project 2: Design Justification Paper</i>	The Writing Process and Rhetoric Analysis	Rhetoric analysis of someone's project 1 how to guide Outline Design Justification paper
10		Professional Writing Overview Writing in a Technical Communication Style	Draft Design Justification paper Provide feedback to two peers
11		Writing with Precision De-Jargonizer	Draft Design Justification paper Provide feedback to two peers
12		<b>Project Due</b>	<b>Project 2 Justification Paper Due</b>
13		Communication styles Continued	Outline presentation script Provide feedback to two peers
14		Gestalt Principles of Design Continued	Revise script and create visuals for presentation Provide feedback to two peers
Finals		<b>Project Due</b>	<b>Project 2 Presentation Due</b>

## 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%

## Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that USU and all in-state USU Institutions reside on the original territory of the eight federally recognized Tribes of Utah. Tribes that have been living, working and residing on this land from time immemorial. These Tribes are the: Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Indians, Navajo Nation, Northern Ute Tribe, Northwestern Band of Shoshone, Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah, San Juan Southern Paiute, Skull Valley Band of Goshute, and White Mesa Band of the Ute Mountain Ute. We acknowledge the painful history of genocide and forced removal from this land, and we honor and respect the Indigenous peoples still connected to the land on which we gather

## 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 run into 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. You can sign up for time on my Calendly link. Please reach out if none of these times work for you.

## 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/riskmgmt/>

## 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/rc](http://libguides.usu.edu/rc).

## 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](#) for more information.

## University Policies & Procedures

### Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibilities

Academic freedom is the right to teach, study, discuss, investigate, discover, create, and publish freely. Academic freedom protects the rights of faculty members in teaching and of students in learning. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Faculty members are entitled to full freedom in teaching, research, and creative activities, subject to the limitations imposed by professional responsibility. [Faculty Code Policy #403](#) further defines academic freedom and professional responsibilities.

### Academic Integrity – "The Honor System"



Each student has the right and duty to pursue his or her academic experience free of dishonesty. To enhance the learning environment at Utah State University and to develop student academic integrity, each student agrees to the following Honor Pledge:

"I pledge, on my honor, to conduct myself with the foremost level of academic integrity."

A student who lives by the Honor Pledge is a student who does more than not cheat, falsify, or plagiarize. A student who lives by the Honor Pledge:

- Espouses academic integrity as an underlying and essential principle of the Utah State University community;
- Understands that each act of academic dishonesty devalues every degree that is awarded by this institution; and
- Is a welcomed and valued member of Utah State University.

### Academic Dishonesty

The instructor of this course will take appropriate actions in response to Academic Dishonesty, as defined the University's Student Code. Acts of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to:

- Cheating: using, attempting to use, or providing others with any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, examinations, or in any other academic exercise or activity.  
Unauthorized assistance includes:
  - Working in a group when the instructor has designated that the quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity be done "individually;"
  - Depending on the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments;
  - Substituting for another student, or permitting another student to substitute for oneself, in taking an examination or preparing academic work;
  - Acquiring tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty member, staff member, or another student without express permission;
  - Continuing to write after time has been called on a quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity;
  - Submitting substantially the same work for credit in more than one class, except with prior approval of the instructor; or engaging in any form of research fraud.
- Falsification: altering or fabricating any information or citation in an academic exercise or activity.
- Plagiarism: representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one's own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes using materials prepared by

another person or by an agency engaged in the sale of term papers or other academic materials.

For additional information go to: [ARTICLE VI. University Regulations Regarding Academic Integrity](#)

## Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct

### General Overview

USU strives to provide an environment for students and employees that is free from [discrimination](#) and [sexual misconduct](#). If you experience sexual misconduct or discrimination at any point during the semester inside or outside of class, you are encouraged to contact the [USU Title IX Coordinator](#) via Old Main room 161 in Logan, 435-797-1266, [titleix@usu.edu](mailto:titleix@usu.edu), or at [equity.usu.edu/report](http://equity.usu.edu/report). You can learn more about the USU resources available for individuals who have experienced sexual misconduct at [sexualrespect.usu.edu](http://sexualrespect.usu.edu). Resources for individuals who have experienced discrimination are listed at [equity.usu.edu/resources](http://equity.usu.edu/resources).

### Required Reporting of Sexual Misconduct

The instructor is designated by USU as a "[reporting employee](#)." This means that if you share information about [sexual misconduct](#) (sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, or sex-based stalking) with the instructor, they will report that information to the [USU Title IX Coordinator](#). The instructor is also required to tell you about [designated confidential resources](#), [supportive measures](#), and [how you can file a report](#) with the USU Title IX Coordinator.

### Withdrawal Policy and "I" Grade Policy

Students are required to complete all courses for which they are registered by the end of the semester. In some cases, a student may be unable to complete all of the coursework because of extenuating circumstances, but not due to poor performance or to retain financial aid. The term 'extenuating' circumstances includes: (1) incapacitating illness which prevents a student from attending classes for a minimum period of two weeks, (2) a death in the immediate family, (3) financial responsibilities requiring a student to alter a work schedule to secure employment, (4) change in work schedule as required by an employer, or (5) other emergencies deemed appropriate by the instructor.

### Students with Disabilities

USU welcomes students with disabilities. If you have, or suspect you may have, a physical, mental health, or learning disability that may require accommodations in this course, please

contact the [Disability Resource Center \(DRC\)](#) as early in the semester as possible (University Inn # 101, (435) 797-2444, [drc@usu.edu](mailto:drc@usu.edu) ). All disability related accommodations must be approved by the DRC. Once approved, the DRC will coordinate with faculty to provide accommodations.

Students who are at a higher risk for complications from COVID-19 or who contract COVID-19 may also be eligible for accommodations.

## Respect for Diversity

Regardless of intent, careless or ill-informed remarks can be offensive and hurtful to others and detract from the learning climate. If you feel uncomfortable in a classroom due to offensive language or actions by an instructor or student(s) regarding ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, contact:

- Division of Student Affairs: <https://studentaffairs.usu.edu>, (435) 797-1712, [studentservices@usu.edu](mailto:studentservices@usu.edu), TSC 220
- Student Legal Services: <https://ususa.usu.edu/student-association/student-advocacy/legal-services>, (435) 797-2912, TSC 326,
- Access and Diversity: <http://accesscenter.usu.edu>, (435) 797-1728, [access@usu.edu](mailto:access@usu.edu); TSC 315
- Multicultural Programs: <http://accesscenter.usu.edu/multiculture>, (435) 797-1728, TSC 315
- LGBTQA Programs: <http://accesscenter.usu.edu/lgbtqa>, (435) 797-1728, TSC 3145
- Provost's Office Diversity Resources: <https://www.usu.edu/provost/diversity>, (435) 797-8176

You can learn about your student rights by visiting:

The Code of Policies and Procedures for Students at Utah State University:

<https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode>

## Grievance Process

Students who feel they have been unfairly treated may file a grievance through the channels and procedures described in the Student Code: [Article VII](#).

Full details for USU Academic Policies and Procedures can be found at:

- [Student Conduct](#)
- [Student Code](#)
- [Academic Integrity](#)

- [USU Academic Policies and Procedures](#)
- [Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibility Policy](#)

## Emergency Procedures

In the case of a drill or real emergency, classes will be notified to evacuate the building by the sound of the fire/emergency alarm system or by a building representative. In the event of a disaster that may interfere with either notification, evacuate as the situation dictates (i.e., in an earthquake when shaking ceases or immediately when a fire is discovered). Turn off computers and take any personal items with you. Elevators should not be used; instead, use the closest stairs.

## General Health Protocols

The cold, flu, COVID-19, and other illnesses can have an impact on the health of our university community. USU welcomes the wearing of masks in all university buildings and encourages taking measures to mitigate risk as recommended by federal and state public health officials: getting vaccinated, staying home if you are sick (even with mild symptoms), and frequent hand washing.

## Mental Health

Mental health is critically important for the success of USU students. As a student, you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. Utah State University provides free services for students to assist them with addressing these and other concerns. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus at [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#).

Students are also encouraged to download the [“SafeUT App”](#) to their smartphones. The SafeUT application is a 24/7 statewide crisis text and tip service that provides real-time crisis intervention to students through texting and a confidential tip program that can help anyone with emotional crises, bullying, relationship problems, mental health, or suicide related issues.