LIS 861: Information Architecture (Form and Content in Theory and Practice)
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Spring 2013
Mondays 1:30-4pm, 4191F Helen C. White Hall

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Office Hours: T/Tr : 1:30-2:30, or by appointment

Course Description

This is a graduate course studying the relationship between form and content in the structure and transmission of information. We will approach information architecture not only as a set of practices for web development and implementation, but also as a prompt to think about how and why information is structured as it is in print and digital formats. Therefore, we will explore practical issues in web design such as usability, navigation, and web evaluation while situating these skills within the larger (and sometimes theoretical) contexts of paratextuality, genre, accessibility, and print/digital culture. Our exploration of form and content in theory and practice will culminate in the collaborative creation of a beta digital edition of a literary text, putting material covered in the course into practice in a digital academic library context.

Course Objectives, Program Level Learning Outcomes, and Assignments

The course is designed to further a number of the program-level learning outcomes of the School of Library and Information Studies Master of Arts degree program. Several assignments will provide evidence of those outcomes, as per the following table. Other outcomes, such as life-long engagement with complicated problems and ideas and developing habits of critical thought are encouraged and modeled in the course but evidence of their outcome, while visible in work done during the course, cannot be fully assessed within the timeframe of a semester.

Course Learning Objective	**Official Program-Level Learning Outcomes(s)**	**Evidence of Learning Outcomes**	**Assessing Mastery of Learning Outcome**
Students develop an understanding of theoretical and historical perspectives that draw on research in other fields of knowledge as well as on LIS.	1a. Students apply key concepts with respect to the relationship between power, knowledge, and information. 1b. Students apply key concepts with respect to theories and practices of literacies, reading, and information use.	Digital Edition Reading presentations	Students effectively incorporate some theoretical or historical concept(s) into presentations on assigned reading and in developing/implementing the digital edition project.
Students acquire a strong and informed service ethic grounded in knowledge of local, national, and global information policies and processes, including scholarly processes.	2b. Students apply core ethical principles to professional practice.	Accessibility Evaluations	Students evaluate digital resources according to best practices for accessible and inclusive design.
Students develop core skills in providing information services, analyzing	3a. Students organize and describe print and digital information resources.	Digital Edition Site Mapping XHTML/CSS	Students use appropriate coding and metadata techniques to organize information on the web.

information resources, and analyzing information needs of diverse individuals and communities.	3d. Students understand and use appropriate information technologies.	Coding	
		Digital Edition XHTML/CSS coding Wordpress Use	Students will gain practice creating sites and manage content in Omeka, XHTML/CSS, and Wordpress with special focus on library and academic uses.
	3c. Students analyze information needs of diverse individuals and communities.	Digital Edition	Students will work with "student clients" at Rice University in the creation of the digital edition, determine their information/design needs, and work together to create the final product.
		Accessibility Evaluations	Students evaluate digital resources according to best practices for accessible and inclusive design.
Students develop critical thinking and writing abilities in order to become more reflective, creative, problem-solving leaders.	4a. Students participate effectively as team members to solve problems.	Digital Edition	Peer evaluations reflect commitment to shared work product, collegiality, and initiative.
	4b. Students demonstrate good oral and written communication skills.	In class participation and presentations	Students articulate questions and criticisms of readings effectively and communicate results of in-class work clearly.
		Data Visualization	Students use visual rhetoric skills to practice presenting data in visual forms.

Grading Policy

A: 94 - 100
Outstanding achievement. Student performance demonstrates full command of course materials and evinces a high degree of originality and/or creativity that far surpasses course expectations.

AB: 88 – 93
Very good achievement. Student performance demonstrates thorough knowledge of course materials and exceeds course expectations by completing all course requirements in a superior manner.

B: 82 - 87
Good work. Student performance meets designated course expectations, demonstrates understanding of the course materials, and performs at an acceptable level.

BC: 77 - 81
Marginal work. Student performance demonstrates incomplete understanding of course materials.

C: 72-76
Unsatisfactory work and inadequate understanding of course materials. Course work at this level triggers probationary status unless balanced by an A earned in another course during the same semester.

Academic Integrity

Please see http://students.wisc.edu/doso/acadintegrity.html and http://students.wisc.edu/doso/students.html for the University's policies on academic integrity and misconduct, including plagiarism.

Accommodations

It is my intention to fully include persons with disabilities in this course. Please let me know immediately if you need any special accommodations to enable you to fully participate. I will try to maintain confidentiality of the information you share with me to the fullest extent possible, given that we may need to speak with your site supervisor. To request academic accommodations, you must register as soon as possible with McBurney Disability Resource Center (1305 Linden Drive; 263-2741; www.mcburney.wisc.edu.)

Late Assignments

Assignments are due on the dates listed on assignment sheets or in the syllabus calendar. In fairness to your classmates, assignments will be marked down if turned in late. Only catastrophic emergencies will be considered justifiable exceptions to this policy. Late work will incur a penalty of one percentage point a day, unless you contact me on or before the due date, to negotiate an alternative reduction.

Absence Policy

Class attendance is mandatory. Attendance is defined as being present for the entire class meeting. Anything substantially less than that, e.g., leaving at break, will be considered an absence. If illness or an emergency prevents you from attending class, please notify me, and any team members for group projects, by email or telephone before class begins. You should also make arrangements with another student to get her or his notes. An absence will be excused only if the absent student notifies me in advance of the class, or if the absent student can clearly demonstrate that such notification was not possible. If a student does not notify me of an absence prior to the start of class, students should assume that the absence will be considered unexcused.

Description of Assignments and Grading –
Complete information on each assignment will be circulated via an assignment sheet at least two weeks before a due date.

Digital Edition (40%): Working in collaboration with students in Dr. Melissa Gniadek's class at Rice University (who will fill the role of "clients"), everyone in our class (working one a task-specific team) will use Omeka to produce a beta model digital edition of selected chapters of Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel, *The Marble Faun*.

XHTML/CSS (20%): You will create a personal website using strict XHTML 1 and CSS 2 to demonstrate proficiency in the basic practices of creating standards-compliant markup and styling. The XHTML should be hand coded, the CSS may be hand coded or based on an existing template.
Site Maps (10%): You will analyze/map existing website structures and then propose/describe a redesigned map or navigational system.

Accessibility Evaluation (10%): You will analyze and critique an existing website according to its accessibility using Federal guidelines and other recommendations for best practices.

Information Visualization: (10%): You will create a visual representation of data/information that meaningfully informs the reader/viewer.

Reading Presentations (10%): At least once during the semester you will be formally responsible for opening the discussion of a reading or an issue by pointing the class to specific passages or issues that might offer multiple inroads for class discussion.

Calendar

Monday, January 28th

- Introduction and course goals/outline.
- Information, Form, and Content

Monday, February 4th Theorizing "Architecture"

- Bonnie Mak, *How the Page Matters*

Monday, February 11th Paratext and Genre: Frames of Meaning

- Gerard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (excerpts)
- John Frow, *Genre* (excerpts)

Monday, February 18th Information Architecture for the Web

- Rosenfeld and Morville, *Information Architecture for the World Wide Web*
  Available via library in Safari TechBooks:
  http://proquest.safaribooksonline.com/0596527349
  - Beginning to page 145, pages 291-334.
- "113 Guidelines for Homepage Usability" http://www.nngroup.com/articles/113-design-guidelines-homepage-usability/
- DUE: Map of existing site and and proposed remapping.

Monday, February 25th XHTML and CSS

- Freeman and Freeman, *Head First HTML with CSS and XHTML*
  Available via library in Safari TechBooks:
  http://proquest.safaribooksonline.com/059610197X
- Lab in Class: XHTML site

Monday, March 4th XHTML and CSS

- Freeman and Freeman, *Head First HTML with CSS and XHTML*
  Available via library in Safari TechBooks:
  http://proquest.safaribooksonline.com/059610197X

- Lab in Class: CSS site

Monday, March 11th Accessibility

- Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, "Expanding the Concept of Accessible Technology," Berkman Center for Internet and Society, Harvard University, http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/events/luncheon/2012/06/garland-thomson
- Usability.gov on Section 508 - www.usability.gov/pdfs/chapter3.pdf
- "Web Accessibility Tutorial for Section 508" - http://jimthatcher.com/webcourse1.htm
- Simpson, Jennifer. "Inclusive Information and Communication Technologies for People with Disabilities" *Disability Studies Quarterly* 29.1 (2009): http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/167/167
- Williams, George H. "Disability, Universal Design, and the Digital Humanities." *Debates in the Digital Humanities*. Minneapolis, MN: U of Minnesota Press, 2012. http://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/debates/text/44
- Best, Kirsty and Stephanie Butler. "Disability and communication: A consideration of cross-disability communication and technology." *Disability Studies Quarterly* 32.4 (2012): http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/3290/3179
- Online Projects and Resources
    - http://apps.lib.ua.edu/blogs/adhc/2013/01/18/accessibility-in-digital-humanities/
    - http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/collaboration/focus/nui/
    - http://a11yproject.com
- Hat tip to George H. Williams of University of South Carolina Upstate for suggesting many of these resources to me.
- DUE: Accessibility Evaluation

Monday, March 18th Catch Up Week, Chat with IA Professionals, or Students' Choice

- Depending on where we are by mid semester we will use this week for one of three purposes: to play catch up with material that has run over from previous weeks, to chat with one or more IA professionals over Skype, or to hold a session covering topics/readings that are entirely of the students' choosing (or a combination of these possibilities).

Monday, March 25th *No Meeting – Spring Break*

Monday, April 1st Information Visualization

- Lev Manovich, "What Is Visualization?" http://goo.gl/byzTa
- Lev Manovich, "Media Visualization: Visual Techniques for Exploring Large Collections of Images and Video, 2011," http://manovich.net/DOCS/media_visualization.2011.pdf
- Edward Tufte, "Graphical Excellence" and "Graphical Integrity," from *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*
- Malcolm Gladwell, "The Picture Problem" http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2004/12/13/041213fa_fact
- "A Periodic Table of Visualization Methods" http://www.visual-literacy.org/periodic_table/periodic_table.html
- http://theoatmeal.com/

- "10 Things You Can Learn from the New York Times' Data Visualizations" http://blog.visual.ly/10-things-you-can-learn-from-the-new-york-times-data-visualizations/
- http://www.nytimes.com/pages/multimedia/index.html
- Hat tip to Lauren Klein of Georgia Tech from whose syllabus I drew many readings. http://lkleincourses.lmc.gatech.edu/data13/schedule/
- DUE: Information Visualization

Monday, April 8th Information Architecture in Motion: Project Management, Implementation

- Rosenfeld and Morville, *Information Architecture for the World Wide Web*
  Available via library in Safari TechBooks:
  http://proquest.safaribooksonline.com/0596527349
  - Pages 231-290, 345-364.

Monday, April 15th Out of the Box Solutions for Library/Info Agencies: Omeka & Wordpress And Information Architecture for Library/Info Agencies

- http://omeka.org/codex/Documentation
- http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/tag/wordpress
- Nicol and O'English, "Rising Tide: Faculty Expectations of Library Websites" *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 12.4, 371-386.
- Aaron Schmidt and Amanda Etches, *User Experience (UX) Design for Libraries*

Monday, April 22nd Preparing for a Digital Edition

- Peter L. Shillingsburg, *From Gutenberg to Google: Electronic Representations of Literary Texts* (excerpts)
- *Clotel by William Wells Brown: An Electronic Scholarly Edition* (browse, use, experiment with, no need to read entire novel.)
  - Available online through library.

Monday, April 29th Digital Edition Lab Day

Monday, May 6th Digital Edition Lab Day (evaluations, goodbyes)