

### **Course Overview**

This is an advanced, project-based course designed to provide you with the knowledge and practical experience of usability testing. The course is jointly offered to graduate and undergraduate students in TCOM/IDC.

In this course, you will learn usability testing principles and strategies for planning and conducting a test in a state-of-the-art usability lab. Once the basics are established through early class meetings and online discussion, you will focus your efforts on working with your team to plan, prepare, and conduct a usability test, then analyze and present the results in a written report, oral presentation, and highlights tape or embedded video clips.

This course centers on a “sponsored” project, which comes from a real company with a real product. You will be introduced to the sponsor and the project early in the semester. The important project deliverables will be directed to your sponsor and your instructor.

### **Learning Outcomes**

- Collaborate effectively as a team to plan and conduct a usability test
- Demonstrate the ability to analyze the results
- Communicate the results in both oral and written forms

### **Assessment Strategies**

- Plan and conduct a usability test
- Analyze the results of a usability test
- Demonstrate the ability to communicate the results in both oral and written forms

### **Class meetings/Online Course Support**

This is a “hybrid” course, structured with limited class meetings, regular online activities, and testing in our lab (and using other methods, according to team wants and needs). This semester, the scheduled class meetings will be on Tuesday evenings, 6 PM to 8:30 PM, in J160, the Executive Viewing Room for the Usability Center. Check the course calendar for dates for class meetings.

As a project-based course, much of the work will be done with your team and in the usability lab. However, the foundation for doing good work in the lab and making sense of the findings from testing will be established in a mix of classroom meetings and online support and discussions.

Attendance is expected at all scheduled class meetings. If special circumstances require an exception, please discuss the situation with me and receive permission *in advance*.

Please make every effort to be on time for class meetings. If you know you are running late, please let me or one of your team members know before class starts.

### **GeorgiaVIEW Vista 8**

Our new online course management system is called GeorgiaVIEW Vista 8. For those of you who are used to WebCT Vista, some things will be the same and others will be different. Familiarize yourself with the course setup and the content for this course right away.

The link to the course homepage is on the home page for SPSU or at <http://spsu8.view.usg.edu>

After successful log in, confirm that you can access the course without problems from any computer that you may use. If you experience any technical difficulties, contact the SPSU help desk: 678-915-4357. Or the online support center for the University System of Georgia: <http://help.view.usg.edu>

### **Online discussion**

We will use the discussion tool in GeorgiaVIEW Vista 8 to communicate with each other as a class and to communicate within your teams. I will keep an eye on your progress this way, even during the weeks when you are working independently. You will have a designated area for your team's discussions, which will help you (and me) see the progress, or problems, as you work on the project.

### **Team meetings**

(1) Your team will need to set up regular communication and regular *meetings* to plan and test the product. Effective, timely communication is essential to success with this project. We can set up a private discussion forum for your team within Vista8, including a team chat room, or Live Classroom.

(2) Your team can request meetings with me at a mutually convenient time. I am available to help you succeed in your project in whatever way you find most appropriate. This includes reading early drafts of reports, sorting out differences of opinion about processes and approaches, and helping your team make sense of the findings. We can meet face to face or in Live Classroom.

### **Usability Testing Options**

Ideally, everyone on the team should participate in all of the tests. However, to provide the flexibility some of you may need, I can offer up the following options for testing:

- **Required:** one test in the usability lab with full team participation (this needs to be scheduled on your own, so the pilot test—or walkthrough—does not count for satisfying this requirement.
- **Flexible options:** if needed, your team can devise a plan among the following options:
  - Partial team testing in the usability lab—this might mean changing up roles, which is not the best situation, but can be done with proper coordination.
  - Testing online/remotely—you can use meeting software, such as GoToMeeting, to set this up and observe from different locations. However, you won't have Morae for logging, so you need to figure out a logging system to capture the findings. And you won't have video of the participant, only audio. These restrictions limit the impact of your findings, but not the outcome.

**My recommendation:** Plan ahead to work as a team doing the testing together and in our usability center. If any schedule changes are required and cannot be accommodated by the whole team, use one of the options I've offered.

For access to the usability lab, contact Russ Hunt, Dean of Extended University. Dr. Hunt ([rhunt@spsu.edu](mailto:rhunt@spsu.edu)) keeps the usability center calendar.

### **Text/Materials**

*Usability Testing and Research*, Barnum. Longman, 2002 (companion website at <http://www.ablongman.com/barnum>)

DVDs (RW format) for taping sessions in the lab. This is a backup, as you also get a recording, using Morae logging software.

### **Grading**

Personas

10%

Heuristic evaluation	15%
Test plan	25%
Oral report including clips/highlights	25%
Final report, including appendices	25%

---

All work must be turned in on time. Late work will not be accepted, except under unusual circumstances and only with prior permission for late submission. A loss of a letter grade for the late assignment may result. The final report and presentation must be submitted on time; late work on the final report/presentation will not be accepted.

Note: Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the counselor working with disabilities at 678-915-7361 as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are made.

### **Weekly Schedule (5 scheduled class meetings, Tuesdays, 6 PM-8:30 PM)**

See the course calendar for due dates for all scheduled activities.

#### Week 1 Aug. 25 (class meets)

Introduction and overview of course/resources in GeorgiaVIEW Vista 8

Discuss project

*Reading: Chapter 1*

#### Week 2 Sept. 1 (class meets)

Project sponsor presents project.

Discuss project deliverables/outcomes.

Lab orientation

*Reading: Appendix*

#### Week 3 Sept. 8

Get information about users for personas

Draft personas.

(use Course Support Resources)

*Reading: Chapter 2*

#### Week 4 Sept. 15

Personas due.

Conduct independent heuristic evaluation (HE)

#### Week 5 Sept. 22

Coordinate findings from HE. Draft HE report.

#### Week 6 Sept. 29 (class meets)

Guest lecture—usability consultant

HE due.

*Reading: Chapter 5*

#### Week 7 Oct. 6

Begin development of test plan

*Reading: Chapter 6*

#### Week 8 Oct. 13

Draft test plan for review.

#### Week 9 Oct. 20

Test plan due. Prepare for walkthrough

Week 10 Oct. 27

Teams conduct walkthrough with “tolerant” user  
*Reading: Chapter 7*

Week 11 Nov. 3 (class meets)

Teams conduct pilot test  
Revise test materials, as needed

Week 12 Nov. 10

Teams work independently on testing  
*Reading: Chapter 8*

Week 13 Nov. 17

Conclude testing. Conduct findings meeting to collate data from tests.

Week 14 Nov. 24 (Thanksgiving Thursday)

Continue analysis, prioritize findings.

Week 15 Dec. 1

Draft final report. Prepare oral report with highlights.

Week 16 Dec. 8 (class meets)

Teams make oral presentations with highlights/clips to sponsor  
Submit project deliverables