COM 459

Spring 2009 - Syllabus

COMPUTER MEDIATED COMMUNICATION

Instructor: Marc A. Le Pape
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Office Hours: Wednesday and Friday 1:30 to 2:30 and by appointment

COM 459 – Special Topics- This course will examine computer mediated communication from a human-computer interaction (HCI) perspective. In particular, this course will consider how issues grounded in the fields of communication and human-computer interaction inform computer mediated communication. Specific information and communications technologies (ICT) such as technology supported collaboration, online communities, virtual reality systems, and messaging systems will be discussed from both the communication and human-computer interaction perspectives.

CLASS SCHEDULE
This is an online class taught from Jan 12, 2009 - May 15, 2009 on the Laulima website.
The URL to login on the site is:
<https://laulima.hawaii.edu/portal>

REQUIRED TEXTS
There are the two books, both classics in the field, that we will be using in COM 459:

1 - Designing Interactions by Bill Moggridge
Publisher: MIT Press; 1 edition 2007
ISBN-10: 0262134748
This book comes with its own website: <http://www.designinginteractions.com/>

2 - Sketching User Experiences Bill Buxton
Publisher: Morgan Kaufmann (2007)
ISBN-10: 0123740371

The instructor will also provide additional material, mostly in the form of papers, articles and videos.

EXAMINATIONS & GRADES ALLOCATION

Midterms
• There will be 2 midterms exams in this class. Exams questions are likely to reach deep into the course material.
• You cannot hope to do well on the midterms unless you keep up with all readings and assignments from the very beginning of the course.
Final Exam
- The final will be taken online as a comprehensive, open book, opened notes exam. Specifically, the final will be in the form of a well-organized written essay, answering in depth two out of three substantial questions covering general issues germane to computer mediated communication.

Grading
- The instructor believes that assigning grades should be done as objectively as possible and that grades should measure a student's performance in a class, nothing more, and nothing less. To help make letter grades as objective as possible, the instructor does not grade on a curve. A curve implements a relative grading system. When a curve is used, there is no fixed score that earns an "A", "B", etc. Instead, the letter grade becomes an expression of how well any one student performs relative to the rest of the class. In assigning grades for the class the instructor uses fixed scores exclusively.
- Your final letter grade is based on a cumulative score computed from a weighted average of your homework, and your exams. Please realize that you determine your own grade, not the instructor.

Grades Allocation
- Your score on the following items will determine your final grade based on a maximum possible score of 100 Points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graded Items</th>
<th>Points Allocation</th>
<th>Grade Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>25 Points</td>
<td>25% of Total Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Midterm Exams</td>
<td>50 Points (25 points each * 2)</td>
<td>50% of Total Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25% of Total Grade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As recommended by the University of Hawaii at Manoa the +/- grading scale will be used. Specifically, the grades will be allocated as follow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Grade Point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>98-100</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-97</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-66</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note that the final letter grade is a measure of how well a student meets the objectives of a particular class taught during a particular academic term and reflects the following academic achievements standards:

- A  Excellent
- B  Superior
- C  Average
- D  Inferior
- F  Failure

MISCELLANEOUS

- Incomplete
  Students requesting an incomplete must meet two criteria:
  
  1. They must at the time of the request be passing the course with a grade of B or better.
  
  2. They must provide the instructor with compelling proof of either a legal, medical, or family obligation of an emergency nature as objective and legitimate grounds for the request.

- Withdraw
  It is your responsibility to know all deadlines and modalities for withdrawal from the class with or without a “W” on your transcripts. An academic officer must approve requests for course withdrawal made after the drop deadlines. Please check with your advisor for more information.

- Academic Honesty
  The instructor strictly enforces the policies of the University of Hawaii regarding academic dishonesty. There is zero tolerance for plagiarism and cheating. Cheating or plagiarism on any assignment or exam will result in a grade of F for the assignment or the exam and the offense will be documented in your student file. Second instance will result in a grade of F for the class and immediate referral to the Dean of the College of Social Sciences. Don’t do it.

- Disclaimer
  The instructor reserves the right to change any part of this syllabus at anytime.