

# Advanced Website Design

MPC 639 | Spring 2014

**Instructor:** Dr. Curtis Newbold

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**Classroom:** MALF 203

**Meeting Times:** M 5:30 – 8:20

**Office Hours:** M/W 2 - 5, or by  
appointment

## Course

Advanced Website Design introduces students to industry-standard website development practices, including the use of content management systems, search engine optimization, content strategy and development, identity branding, web analytics, site monetization, user experience design, and website launching logistics. Students in this class are expected to have a fundamental understanding of HTML, CSS, and basic web usability knowledge and should have taken MPC 637: Web Design & Production previously. Over the course of the semester, students can expect to learn how to

- +use a content management system to create versatile and professional websites for both personal use and for clients;
- +strategically develop content for client and customer use while being aware of search engine optimization, site monetization, usability, and user experience practices;
- +modify code to adapt pre-developed themes for specific client needs;
- +test and launch websites using a real web host and professional domain name; and
- +use web analytics and web ad generators in order to increase traffic and profitability of websites.

## Textbooks

*Search Engine Optimization*, by Kristopher Jones and Jim Boykin | ISBN# 9781118551745

*Seductive Interaction Design*, by Stephen P. Anderson | ISBN# 9780321725523

*Letting Go of the Words*, by Ginny Redish | ISBN# 9780123859303

**OPTIONAL:** *WordPress Domination: Beginner to Ninja in 7 Days*, By Lambert Klein | ISBN# 1480245607

## Materials

Because this course is taught in a computer classroom, you will not be required to bring your laptops to class. However, you will need to be prepared to take and save notes as well as save any documents we work on in class. While saving documents through your email or (H:) drive is possible, you are encouraged to bring an external storage device, such as a thumb drive. We will also, on occasion, hand-draw designs. Thus, for each class period, please bring the following:

- Your textbooks
- An external storage device
- A notepad and pen

## Costs

Other than your costs for textbooks, you will need to purchase two domain names and at least four months of a web hosting service (Bluehost is recommended). In order for you to fully understand how website development works, and in order to create live sites that can be tracked with analytics, it is required that you make these purchases for the semester. You can expect to pay roughly \$7/month for the hosting service and roughly \$10 – \$15 for the domain names. Most hosting services provide you with one free domain name when you register with them. Thus, your web hosting costs for the semester will likely run between \$35 and \$50.

## Assignments

You will be working on two major website projects over the course of the semester: a monetized blog and a client website. Each of the two projects requires that you accomplish specific tasks (or benchmarks) by assigned dates. You will also complete an HTML/CSS exam in class and you will give presentations on User Experience Design. Below you'll see the descriptions of each assignment and benchmark.

### **MONETIZED BLOG – 300 POINTS**

Your first major project requires you to create a blog with a very specific theme and target audience. You will be expected to create well-written, targeted content that can be tracked by Google Analytics. You will be expected to create a Google AdSense account and monetize your website.

#### ***Benchmark #1: Set Up Site – 50 points (Week 2)***

Your first task is to set up your blog on WordPress.org. For this assignment, you'll contact a web host, purchase a domain name, and install WordPress on the domain. You will then install an "under construction" plugin on the website.

***Benchmark #2: Site Proposal – 50 points (Week 3)***

Once you have created your account to begin your blog, you will write a proposal that identifies your site's purpose. You will be expected to identify the site's target audience, content subject matter, design and layout, intended theme, expected plugins, layout and placement of widgets, and so forth.

***\*HTML/CSS Exam during Week 4***

***Benchmark #3: Site Design, Utilities, and Pathway Pages Development – 50 points (Week 5)***

For this benchmark, you will create the skeleton of your website. You will be expected to develop pathway pages for your main menu, utilities pages for contact information, a search bar, and any widgets or plugins critical to the navigation of your website. You will also be expected to have a site ID in the header space.

***Benchmark #4: Keyword Research and Content (Week 6) – 50 points***

For this benchmark, you will write a short report on your keyword and site optimization research strategies. You will then create your first page of content, developed with keywords, images, and links you drew from research. You will also write a short white paper or blog entry that utilizes the SEO techniques from *Search Engine Optimization*, chapters 1 – 4.

***Benchmark #5: Content Development, Google AdSense, and Google Analytics – 50 points (Week 9)***

With your keyword and content plan firmly in place, for this benchmark you will develop several more pages (posts) of content. You will then set up a Google AdSense and Google Analytics account and place ads on your website. You will monitor any traffic and profits.

***Benchmark #6: Content and Social Media Optimization – 50 points (Week 9)***

As a final benchmark for this first project, you will write several more posts and optimize the content links, images, and keyword text. You will set up social media platforms in order to create a community and start advertising your blog. You will write a short memo that highlights the techniques you used to make your website ready and effective for generating readership and revenue.

**CLIENT WEBSITE – 500 POINTS**

Your second major project for the course requires you to create a website for a client with specific needs. You will generate a design plan, a well-designed website with effective search engine optimization, and appropriate content for your client. You will then write instructions for your client about how the website works and how the client can edit and add new content to the site. In essence, you will produce a fully-functioning website for a real small business.

***Benchmark #1: Website Recommendation Report, Style Guide, Wireframe, and Thumbnail – 100 points (Week 10)***

You will be assigned a new business client in need of a website. The first task you will accomplish is to evaluate your client's needs. You will research the company, target audience, competitor's websites, and current branding of the company. You will then write a brief recommendation report in which you recommend a website theme (WordPress), design (including UXD), pages, and content. You will produce a basic style guide for branding purposes, and a wireframe and thumbnail of the site you intend to create for your client. You will also produce a persona that identifies your client's typical website visitor.

***Benchmark #2: Website Skeleton & Design – 50 points (Week 11)***

After writing the recommendation report, you will be ready to create the skeleton of your client's website. You will need to have a site ID, utilities, and all pathway pages necessary for the site. You will be expected to update the theme's color scheme and any other CSS.

***Benchmark #3: Website Content – 150 points (Week 13)***

With your client's site's framework in place, you will develop strong content for at least 10 pages. For search engine optimization purposes, you will be expected to create white papers, a blog, or other content that is useful to your client's target audience. Content will be expected to be SEO-ready. You will write a short memo describing your content and SEO choices.

***Benchmark #4: Website Inspection Reports and Usability Tests – 50 points (Week 14)***

After creating your website, you will have your website inspected by multiple people as well as have it tested by multiple users. You will then write up a short report identifying the problems you encountered and what you intend to fix for your client.

***Benchmark #5: Website Administrator Instructions – 100 points (Week 16)***

After you complete your website for your client, you will need to provide the client with instructions for using the website. You will develop a full set of instructions that informs your client how to get a host, where to purchase a domain name, how to transfer the site you created to their domain, how to log in to WordPress, and how to update simple content, like images, text, and hyperlinks.

***Benchmark #6: Website Presentation – 50 points (Week 16)***

On the final day of class, you will present your website to your client. You will provide explanations and justifications for the design and content choices you made. You will then present your client with a CD of all the content you created and a physical copy of your instructions.

## HTML/CSS TEST – 100 POINTS

Personalizing a WordPress website requires basic understanding of how HTML and CSS works. You will be expected to review your knowledge of these coding languages and you will be tested on your ability to write and edit code.

## USER EXPERIENCE DESIGN PRESENTATIONS – 50 POINTS

Throughout the semester, you will be reading about user experience design, an aspect of web usability that further investigates the emotional reactions of users to digital content. For this assignment, you will give two 10-minute presentations at different points in the semester, teaching the class about user experience through examples you find.

## ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION – 50 POINTS

Many of the activities we work on in class will be collaborative. In order to improve your learning of the material, and to help facilitate the learning environment for your classmates, it is important that you are in class every week. Attendance and participation will be graded on you being there, being on time, and engaging in course material. Please see my attendance policy below.

## Grading

Your grade for the semester is calculated strictly on a point-based, percentage system. There are 1,200 points total for the course. It is my policy that every student starts at a '0' and then earns his/her grade by accumulating points during the semester.

A 93% 1200 – 1110	B+ 87% 1079 – 1038	C+ 77% 959 – 918	D+ 67% 833 – 798
A- 90% 1109 – 1080	B 83% 1037 – 990	C 73% 917 – 870	D 63% 797 – 750
	B- 80% 989 – 960	C- 70% 869 – 834	D- 60% 749 – 714
			F <60% 713 – 0

## Policies

### *Late Work*

All assignments are due on the due date. Late assignments will be accepted at 50% credit, but only up until one week after the due date. After one week past the due date, assignments will not be accepted for credit. Extensions (in rare, serious circumstances and for school-excused absences) must be approved PRIOR to the due date.

### *Attendance and Participation*

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class period. If you arrive late to class, it is your responsibility to come talk to me after class to be sure that you were not marked absent. You are allowed to miss 2 days, for any reason, without penalty during the semester. Other than for school-excused absences, each day missed beyond the two days (regardless of

reason, including being sick) will result in a deduction of 15 points per day up to 75 points. If you miss more than 7 days during the semester, you will fail the course. Participation will be measured by your attentiveness and participation during discussions and workshops. Reading, sleeping, listening to music, surfing the web, or playing video games during class will result in a reduction of your participation grade.

### ***Questions Concerning a Grade***

If you have any questions concerning a grade on any assignment, I will be happy to talk with you about it. Typically, it is best to wait 24 hours after receiving the grade so that you can mull it over; however, you must wait no longer than 7 days after receiving the grade to talk with me. After 7 days, the grade will be considered final.

### ***Academic Integrity***

Cheating will not be tolerated. As a college student, you are expected to know and understand plagiarism and ethics guidelines concerning copyrights and the borrowing and citing of information. If you have questions about whether or not you are plagiarizing, please come talk with me before you turn in an assignment. Depending on the seriousness of an incident, cheating will result in a reduction of a grade, failure of an assignment, failure of the course, or even expulsion from Westminster College.

The Westminster College of Undergraduate Academic Catalog (2012) states:

Westminster College of Salt Lake City operates on the assumption that all academic work is the honest product of each student's own endeavors. The faculty and staff at Westminster expect such integrity from the students, and violations are cause for disciplinary action, including suspension, probation, loss of credit, or expulsion from the college.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and furnishing false or misleading information to any faculty or staff member.

Cheating on written assignments includes plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration with others or submitting the same material for more than one class without authorization of the instructor.

Plagiarism includes borrowing information or ideas, whether directly quoted or paraphrased, from any source beyond one's first-hand experience and not acknowledging the source. The student must give credit for the material by identifying the source, using one of the generally accepted citation methods.

### ***Students with Disabilities***

Westminster College complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1972 and the Disabilities Act and Amendments of 2009 (ADA AA) and does not discriminate against persons with disabilities. The college provides equal access in higher education to academically qualified students with physical, learning, and psychiatric disabilities. The

Disability Services Program works with departments throughout the college to ensure that programs and facilities are accessible to all members of the college community. The college must provide reasonable accommodations to students who, by nature of the disability, are limited in accessing academic opportunities. In order to be eligible to receive services through the program, students need to complete the following steps:

- Disclose the nature of the disability to the program coordinator in the START Center.
- Provide current documentation from a qualified source verifying the impact of the disability. Appropriate documentation is necessary to verify eligibility and support requires for accommodations, academic modifications and/or other aids. Information is kept confidential according to federal guidelines.
- Once eligibility is established, students meet with the program coordinator to determine individualized accommodations. Students must provide reasonable notice to allow time for arrangement of accommodations.

## Resources

### *Images and Clip Art*

iStockphoto: <http://www.istockphoto.com/index.php>

Veer: <http://www.veer.com/>

Artbitz: <http://artbitz.com/>

FotoSearch: <http://www.fotosearch.com/>

Jupiterimages.com: <http://www.jupiterimages.com/>

Getty Images: <http://www.gettyimages.com/>

Clipart: <http://www.clipart.com/en/index>

Web Clip Art (About.com): <http://webclipart.about.com/>

Sprixi: <http://www.sprixi.com/>

### *Graphic Design*

Adobe Photoshop Support: <http://helpx.adobe.com/photoshop.html>

Layers Magazine (Photoshop Tutorials): <http://layersmagazine.com/category/photoshop>

Layers Magazine (InDesign Tutorials): <http://layersmagazine.com/category/indesign>

Absolute Cross (Photoshop Tutorials): <http://www.absolutecross.com/tutorials/photoshop>

Photoshop UserTV: <http://kelbytv.com/photoshopusertv/>

The Visual Communication Guy: <http://thevisualcommunicationguy.com>

# Course Calendar

## January

<p><i>Week 1</i></p> <p>January 6</p>	<p><b>In class</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Welcome to class, get to know you.</li> <li>-Syllabus and schedule, familiarity with computers and classroom</li> <li>-Assignment description: UXD Presentations and sign-up</li> <li>-Assignment description: Monetized Blog, Benchmark #1</li> <li>-Discussion/Lecture: WordPress, web hosts, domain names, blogs, monetization, analytics, social media, etc.</li> </ul> <p><b>Homework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+Monetized Blog, Benchmark #1</li> <li>+Read Anderson, chapters 1 and 2</li> </ul>
<p><i>Week 2</i></p> <p>January 13</p>	<p><b>In class</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Review Benchmark #1, questions</li> <li>-UXD Presentations 1 &amp; 2</li> <li>-WordPress exploration: Dashboard, widgets, plugins, themes, editor</li> <li>-Writing a website proposal</li> <li>-Discuss Benchmark #2</li> </ul> <p><b>Homework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+Monetized Blog, Benchmark #2</li> <li>+Read Anderson, chapters 3 and 4</li> <li>+Read Krug, Chapters 3, 6, &amp; 7 (On Canvas)</li> </ul>



# Course Calendar

<p><b>Week 3</b></p> <p>January 20/21</p> <p>MLK Day</p> <p><b>**Academic Monday**</b></p> <p>Class held on Tuesday,</p> <p>Jan. 21</p>	<p><b>In class</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Review Benchmark #2, questions</li> <li>-UXD Presentations, 3 &amp; 4</li> <li>-Site design, conventions, utilities, pathway pages</li> <li>-WordPress posts vs. pages, menus</li> <li>-WordPress: Using HTML &amp; CSS to modify page themes</li> <li>-HTML and CSS review</li> </ul> <p><b>Homework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+Review HTML and CSS for exam</li> <li>+Read Anderson, chapters 5 and 6</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 4</b></p> <p>January 27</p>	<p><b>In class</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Review Benchmark #3, questions</li> <li>-UXD Presentations 5 &amp; 6</li> <li>-HTML/CSS exam in class</li> </ul> <p><b>Homework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+Monetized Blog, Benchmark #3</li> <li>+Read Anderson, chapters 7 and 8</li> <li>+Read Jones/Boykin, chapters 1 – 4</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 5</b></p> <p>February 3</p>	<p><b>In class</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Review Benchmark #3, questions</li> <li>-UXD Presentations 7 &amp; 8</li> <li>-SEO, keyword generation, creating pages, and basic website structure</li> <li>-WordPress SEO, page names, meta descriptions</li> <li>-Discuss Benchmark #4</li> </ul> <p><b>Homework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+Monetized Blog, Benchmark #4</li> <li>+Read Anderson, chapters 9 and 10</li> <li>+Read Jones/Boykin, chapters 6, 7, 8, &amp; 9</li> </ul>

# Course Calendar

<p><b>Week 6</b> February 10</p>	<p><b>In class</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Review Benchmark #4 questions</li> <li>-UXD Presentations 9 &amp; 10</li> <li>-Creating content, creating communities, building links, using Google Analytics</li> <li>-Good AdSense and WordPress</li> <li>-Social Media Optimization and campaigns</li> <li>-Discuss Benchmark #5 and #6</li> </ul> <p><b>Homework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+Monetized Blog, Benchmark #5 and #6</li> <li>+Read Anderson, chapters 11 and 12</li> <li>+Read Jones/Boykin, chapters 10 &amp; 11</li> <li>+Read Redish, chapters 1 &amp; 2</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 7</b> February 17</p>	<p><b>In class</b></p> <p>*PRESIDENT'S DAY*</p> <p>No Class</p> <p><b>Homework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+Monetized Blog, Benchmark #5 and #6</li> <li>+Read Anderson, chapters 11 and 12</li> <li>+Read Jones/Boykin, chapters 10 &amp; 11</li> <li>+Read Redish, chapters 1 &amp; 2</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 8</b> February 24</p> <p>*Spring Break*</p>	<p><b>In class</b></p> <p>*SPRING BREAK*</p> <p>No class</p> <p><b>Homework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+Monetized Blog, Benchmark #5 and #6</li> <li>+Read Anderson, chapters 11 and 12</li> <li>+Read Jones/Boykin, chapters 10 &amp; 11</li> <li>+Read Redish, chapters 1 &amp; 2</li> </ul>

# Course Calendar

## March

<p><i><b>Week 9</b></i> March 3</p>	<p><b>In class</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Review Benchmarks #5 and #6 questions</li> <li>-UXD Presentations 11 &amp; 12</li> <li>-Introduction to Project #2: Client Website</li> <li>-Meet the clients</li> <li>-Recommendation reports, style guides, wireframes, thumbnails</li> <li>-Discuss Client Website: Benchmark #1</li> </ul> <p><b>Homework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+Client Website, Benchmark #1</li> <li>+Read Anderson, chapters 13 &amp; 14</li> <li>+Read Redish, chapters 3 – 5</li> </ul>
<p><i><b>Week 10</b></i> March 10</p>	<p><b>In class</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Review Benchmark #1 questions</li> <li>-UXD Presentations 13 &amp; 14</li> <li>-Design, homepages, and pathway pages</li> <li>-Discuss Benchmark #2</li> <li>-Workshop Benchmark #2</li> </ul> <p><b>Homework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+Client Website, Benchmark #2</li> <li>+Read Anderson, chapters 15 &amp; 16</li> <li>+Read Redish, chapters 6 – 9</li> </ul>
<p><i><b>Week 11</b></i> March 17</p>	<p><b>In class</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Review Benchmark #2 questions</li> <li>-UXD Presentations 15 &amp; 16</li> <li>-Content organization, key messages, headlines, headings</li> <li>-Discuss Benchmark #3</li> <li>-Workshop Benchmark #3</li> </ul> <p><b>Homework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+Client Website, Benchmark #3 (due Week 13)</li> <li>+Read Anderson, chapters 17 &amp; 18</li> <li>+Read Redish, chapters 10 – 12, 14</li> </ul>

# Course Calendar

<p><b>Week 12</b> March 24</p>	<p><b>In class</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Review Benchmark #3 questions</li><li>-UXD Presentations 17 &amp; 18</li><li>-Tuning up sentences, lists and tables, meaningful links, draft to final</li><li>-Workshop Benchmark #3</li></ul> <p><b>Homework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>+Client Website, Benchmark #3 (due Week 13)</li><li>+Read Anderson, chapters 19 &amp; 20</li><li>+Read Krug, chapter 10 (on Canvas)</li></ul>
<p><b>Week 13</b> March 31</p>	<p><b>In class</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Review Benchmark #3 questions</li><li>-UXD Presentations 19 &amp; 20</li><li>-Developing website inspection reports, usability tests</li><li>-Discuss Benchmark #4</li></ul> <p><b>Homework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>+Client Website, Benchmark #4</li><li>+Read Anderson, chapters 21 &amp; 22</li></ul>
<p><b>Week 14</b> April 7</p>	<p><b>In class</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Review Benchmark #4 questions</li><li>-UXD Presentations 21 &amp; 22</li><li>-Website inspection reports, in-class usability tests</li><li>-Discuss Benchmark #5</li><li>-Writing Instructions</li></ul> <p><b>Homework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>+Client Website, Benchmark #5 (Due Week 16)</li><li>+Read Anderson, chapters 23 &amp; 24</li></ul>

# Course Calendar

<p><b>Week 15</b> April 14</p>	<p><b>In class</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Review Benchmark #5 questions</li><li>-UXD Presentations 23 &amp; 24</li><li>-Client presentations</li><li>-Discuss Benchmark #6</li><li>-Workshop Benchmarks #5 and #6</li></ul> <p><b>Homework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>+Client Website, Benchmark #5 and #6</li></ul>
<p><b>Week 16</b> April 21</p>	<p><b>In class</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Website presentations</li></ul> <p><b>Homework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>+Relax. You're done.</li></ul>