

# Web Design

Site Development

COMM 327 COURSE SYLLABUS – SPRING 2013

**INSTRUCTOR** Curtis Newbold

**OFFICE** Jewett E

**PHONE** [REDACTED]

**EMAIL** [REDACTED]

**CLASSROOM** [REDACTED]

**SCHEDULE** T/TH 10:00AM – 11:50AM

**OFFICE HOURS** M/W 10:00AM – 12:00noon, or by appointment

## Course

This course builds on the topics learned in *COMM 326: Intro to Web Writing & Design*. Utilizing the basic principles of usability, HTML, CSS, and other internet know-how, *COMM 327: Web Design & Site Development* focuses on building and maintaining websites for real clients. Using a content management system known as WordPress, students in this class will learn to plan, theme, build, and launch websites using a real web host and server and then transfer that website to a non-profit organization. By the end of this course, students can expect to learn how to do the following:

- Collaborate with real clients and coworkers on a complex project
- Interview and consult with clients to discover needs, concerns, and realistic expectations
- Exhibit project management skills, including planning, scheduling, and implementing
- Develop and maintain a website using a content management system
- Launch a website using a real web host
- Train clients on how to use the developed website so that it can be easily transferred and used

## Textbooks

***Web Designer's Guide to WordPress: Plan, Theme, Build, Launch***, by Jesse Friedman.

ISBN #978-0-321-83281-8

***Letting Go of the Words: Writing Web Content that Works, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition***, by Janice (Ginny)

Redish. ISBN# 978-0-12-385930-3

## Costs

Because of the nature of this course, beyond textbooks you will need to purchase a subscription to a web hosting service for roughly 4 months. Most web hosting services cost roughly \$10/month if you choose to pay month-to-month, or they can cost as little as \$2/month if you pay for extended periods.

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## Daily Materials

As the semester progresses, it will be important that you have your textbooks to class each day. Each book is designed to help you with different parts of the website development process and you will likely need to refer to them in class. As you begin working on content for the client, it will be expected that you bring the necessary information (whether it be text, images, or video) to class so that you can work on it. As a general practice, it is also expect that you have a pen and paper ready for taking notes each class period.

## Project

For the duration of this semester, you will be working towards the completion of one major project. As such, the course is designed around “benchmarks,” which function like assignments but have time-sensitive implications. Some benchmarks require collaboration, while others require that you work and complete components on your own. You will be assigned, in small groups, to work with a particular client and, throughout the semester, you will intermittently be expected to collaborate and coordinate with your group member(s). It will also be necessary that you maintain a good relationship with your client and its constituents. This will require periodic emails, site visits, interviews, and/or phone calls.

## Benchmarks

### **Project Proposal and Time Management Plan, *collaborative* (January 31) – 100 points**

After choosing the client with whom you will be working, you will be expected to put together a comprehensive plan for implementing your client's website. To do this, you will be expected to meet with someone from your organization, interview them about their expectations, and develop a plan for gathering, editing, and developing content. You will also determine what options are likely and/or feasible for this organization and what types of web designs will be appropriate. Using WordPress templates, you will collectively determine which templates you think will be most appropriate and which one each of you will work on. You will compile a proposal for me (instructor, not client) that will delineate your expected timeline for collecting and editing material and designing the website.

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**Web Content Collection, collaborative (February 14) – 100 points**

After your initial interview with your client and the developing of your project proposal, you should have a good idea what content you will need to collect for your website. This may include (but is not limited to) text, images, videos, logos, style guides, and/or audio clips. Content will vary depending on client needs; therefore, for this benchmark, you will simply need to turn in a CD or DVD that contains the content collected and a printed list of what you gathered and how it will be worked into the website. You will also determine what content may need to be developed from scratch and/or edited.

**Site Thumbnail and Wireframe, individual (March 5) – 100 points**

By this point, you will have a working knowledge of how WordPress works and how you can choose themes and plug-ins. It will be your next task to develop, on paper, your site's organization, look, and hierarchy. Considering the principles of usability (breadcrumbs, utilities, 'happy talk,' you-are-here indicators, and so forth) in conjunction with your client's needs and expectations, you will draw up thumbnails and wireframe sketches of how your website will work. You will write brief summary of your design and organizational choices.

**Web Writing Exercises, individual (Intermittently, throughout February and March) – 100 points**

As you are learning about putting your website together, and while you are working with your client to develop content, we will be working on writing and editing appropriate text for the web. You will be given various writing/editing tasks that you will turn in.

**Website Usability Report, individual (April 4) – 150 points**

By this point, you will be expected to have a functioning website, complete with a homepage, content, utilities, and linking pages. In class on March 28, you will conduct a usability test on your website (at least three users will use it). After conducting this test, you will determine what works well, what needs improvement, and what is feasible to fix. You will then write a brief memo in which you describe to me (instructor, not client) what you feel needs to be fixed before showing it to your client. You will also turn in a link to your website.

**Website Launch and Content Management Instructions, individual (April 16) – 200 points**

One of the most important parts of designing a website for a non-profit organization is creating something that they can use, on their own, with little or no help. As you complete your website and make adjustments after the usability test, you will write up (and professionally design) instructions that will be given to your client. The instructions will include information about how to edit content using WordPress, how to launch the site using a web host, and any other information related specifically to the content on the site.

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**Website Showcase and Presentation, collaborative (April 24) – 200 points**

As a culmination to the course, you will work again with your groups to compile a collective 15 – 20 minute presentation that you will give to your client(s). As a group, you will be expected to showcase each of your designs and discuss each site's strengths and weaknesses. You may wish to address your usability concerns, important information about content, and what you recommend to your client going forward. You will then present your "Website Launch and Content Management Instructions" to them as well as give them a CD/DVD of all the content and information for the website. All documents must be done professionally.

**Attendance & Participation – 50 points**

This course is designed to be a collaborative learning environment, where the sharing of ideas and experiences is an important part of the learning process. As such, it is important that you are in class to share ideas with others and to help each other troubleshoot and give feedback. For this reason, attendance is mandatory (see policy below). Participation will be graded in large part on your participation in group projects. If you fail to do your part in group work, you will lose participation points as well as be docked on your benchmark scores.

## Grading

Your grade for the semester is calculated strictly on a point-based, percentage system. There are 1000 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.

<b>A = 93%</b> 1000 – 925	<b>B+ = 87%</b> 894 – 865	<b>C+ = 77%</b> 794 – 765	<b>D+ = 67%</b> 694 – 665	<b>F = &lt;60%</b> 594 – 0
<b>A- = 90%</b> 924 – 895	<b>B = 83%</b> 864 – 825	<b>C = 73%</b> 764 – 725	<b>D = 63%</b> 664 – 625	
	<b>B- = 80%</b> 824 – 795	<b>C- = 70%</b> 724 – 695	<b>D- = 60%</b> 624 – 595	

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## Policies

**Late Work:** All assignments are due on the due date; late assignments will be docked 10% per day, not including weekends. *For example, if an assignment is due on Wednesday and you turn it in on Monday, it is 3 days late and will only receive 70% of its value after being graded.* 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 will result in a deduction of 10 points per day up to 50 points. **If you miss more than 8 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, 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 [REDACTED].

The [REDACTED] of *Undergraduate Academic Catalog* (2012) states:

[REDACTED] operates on the assumption that all academic work is the honest product of each student's own endeavors. The faculty and staff at [REDACTED] 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.

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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:** [REDACTED] 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.