

Designing for *Experience*

51478 - 51878

Monday - Wednesday
1:30 - 3:20 PM
MM121

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Introduction

The story of human-computer interaction began with command lines, followed by graphical and tangible user interfaces, and continues now with hybrid interfaces, where physical and virtual modalities merge. These interaction and interface models are based on cognitive and physical models that ask the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of interactions. However, they often fall short of considering the emotional and social qualities of human experiences. This course will approach interface design from a holistic stance. In particular, we will ask the ‘why’ of interactions by exploring the themes of routine, performance, narrative, and ritual.

Experiences are built upon human actions. ‘Action’ can be merely physical, such as the motion of raising a hand, which depends on basic motors skills. It can also be enhanced into more complex gestures, and even the ability to handle routines, such as eating, cleaning, running. As our actions are developing, so are our conceptual thinking capabilities. A child first learns to perform social roles during pretend-playing. This performance is a blend of motor skills and thought, where there is a purpose. Stories, or narratives, which are unified wholes that include beginnings, developments, and closures, are further formed through progressively more mature physical and conceptual actions. Finally, we start to think in terms of symbols and social values, and our actions become rituals.

This course will introduce the above themes of routine, performance, narrative, and ritual for designing interfaces and interactions in mobile, home, and on-line community domains. It will also introduce related work from the state-of-the-art research and relevant design methods and techniques, including low-fidelity and experiential prototyping. Students will learn how to apply the course material to design work through three projects.

Goals of the course

- Exploring the nature of experiences with technology through the themes of routine, performance, narrative and ritual.
- Developing a design process for rich interaction and interface modalities that can be reapplied in future contexts of home, mobile, and on-line community domains.
- Becoming proficient in the fundamentals of graphical and tangible user interfaces as applied to visual, gestural, haptic modalities. This course will consist of three projects, as follows:

Project overviews

E1 Designing for Home

This is a five-week project to develop a GUI interface, particularly exploring communication routines in the home domain. The project will start with a Ritual workshop that aims to develop a better understanding of the transition between routines and rituals. In the workshop, students will come up with a theme (e.g., to celebrate) and a ritual based on their own routine, which in return will inform their design.

E2 Designing for Mobile

This is a five-week project to develop a TUI interface, particularly exploring video experience in the mobile domain. The project will start with a Narrative workshop that will help students grasp the nature of fiction.

E3 Designing for On-line Community

This is a five-week group project to develop a hybrid interface, particularly aiming to enhance social interaction within a neighborhood by exploring the on-line community domain. Projects will target a local neighborhood in Pittsburgh (e.g., Southside).

Evaluation Criteria

There will be three criteria for evaluation: process, resolution and your attitude in class. Sketches, conceptual development of ideas, and your participation will be basis for the process; conceptual, utilitarian, and aesthetic qualities of your design will be basis for the resolution. This is a studio course, which means working sessions, interim and final critiques are important part of your performance. Your participation and willingness will be the criteria for attitude. Attendance and punctuality is also critical in this class. Please be in class on time, and notify me if you need to come in late.

Resources

There is not one book that covers all the topics of this course, but the following books will be a good start for your interaction design library.

- Sketching User Experiences , by Bill Buxton
- Computers as Theatre, by Brenda Laurel
- Design Noir: The Secret Life of Electronic Objects
by Anthony Dunne (Author), Fiona Raby (Author)