

## **STS 331: Re-imagining the User Interface**

Instructor: Tonya Browning

Fall 2006

Unique Number: 46690

Class times: W 5-8 PM

Class Location: FAC 9

Class website & IM times: tbd

E-mail address of instructor: [tonya@texas.net](mailto:tonya@texas.net)

IM handle: toomanytonyas

### **Required Texts**

*The Diamond Age* by Neal Stephenson

*Envisioning Information* by Edward Tufte

On-line readings as detailed in the syllabus and class website

### **Other required materials**

IF or similar account: <http://www.utexas.edu/its/account/>

USB drive, labeled with your name, phone number and course

### **Recommended materials**

Student Resources in the CWRL: <http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu>

## **Policy Statement**

### **Objectives**

This course will ask the question: What does the future hold for User Interface (UI) design? We will examine how extrapolative technologies may inform our next generation of UI design. Virtual interfaces are leaving the desktop and re-emerging in phones, PDAs and ordinary objects like refrigerators. What do we think the next step will be?

The first part, or definitional phase, of the course will consist of an investigation of the construct of UI. To discover the future of UI, we must first understand its past and current status. We'll also spend time identifying the criteria of a good design a la Ed Tufte. The second part of the course revolves around the future of UI. We'll review UI technologies as proposed by a number of different visionaries in several fields: technical, literary and entertainment.

This course will use computer-assisted instructional technology in the furthering of class objectives. The LAN (local area network) in FAC 9 will provide another resource for the discussion of coursework as well as provide a medium for group project work.

### **Attendance**

This course *requires* participation by class members, and you will be receiving a participation grade for the course. Since it only meets once a week, attendance will count for 15% of your grade. Attendance is required and will be recorded. Three unexcused absences will be reported in writing to the student's dean and four unexcused absences are grounds for failure. Accepted excused absences are those due to religious holiday observances (notify me in advance that you will be absent) and illness (provide me with a note from a doctor). Tardiness can also disrupt class proceedings, and if you are not there when the roll is taken, you are counted as absent.

### **Assignments**

All assigned work is mandatory. Homework is due according to the times and days specified on the syllabus. Any work handed in late will automatically be penalized. If you are unable

to hand in an assignment in class, you may email me or turn it in to the teacher folder if possible. Do not ask staff in the CWRL to take your work. Computer problems will NOT excuse turning in work late.

NOTE: I do realize that sometimes issues arise over which you have no control — if you are not able to complete an assignment by a scheduled date, know that I can be reasonable with students who have evidenced an honest and attentive effort in class.

### **Scholastic Honesty**

Turning in work written by someone else, or any other form of scholastic dishonesty is not acceptable and may result in a failing grade for the course. A report of the incident will be made to the Office of the Dean of Students. If you have any questions about source materials you are using, talk with me about those sources/problems before turning in the assignment in question. Do not use editing services other than those offered by the Undergraduate Writing Center or the Learning Skills Center. The UWC is free to students and available anytime you have a writing question (for any UT course).

### **Technology Policy**

We will use technology frequently in this class. Although I am assuming that you have some basic knowledge of computers, such as how to use the keyboard and mouse, and how to use the web and check e-mail, most things will be explained in class. If you don't understand what we are doing, please ask for help. If you are familiar with the technology we are using please be patient and lend a helping hand to your classmates.

You are free to use the computers prior to class, but please make sure that the content you are accessing is appropriate. Also, if we are not using the computers for an in-class activity please log off the computer when class begins.

**Please turn off all cell phones and pagers prior to entering the classroom.**

### **Grades**

Students will be responsible for posting emails to the class lists and contributing to class discussion by the deadlines set in the syllabus. Assignments will be given in class as well as posted on the website, which will be updated on a regular basis. There will be a midterm and final project assigned as part of course requirements.

Mid-term Project 30%

Final Project 40%

Class assignments 10%

Other assignments, email responses and participation 5%

Attendance 15%

Paper or assignment not turned in: 0.

### **Complaints**

If you have question or concerns about a grade, please come by and discuss it with me. If you have any further concerns or complaints, speak with someone in the STS office down the hall.

### **Advice**

**SAVE! SAVE! SAVE! SAVE** frequently. You never know when a power flux may kill your work. Also, please back up your work. If you have a question or problem, don't hesitate to set up an appointment or IM me during set times. I also have an e-mail account that I check frequently.