CMS.842 Playful and Social Interaction Design Exploration
Graduate Elective
Spring 2016
Version 2

Wednesday 7pm-10, room: 56-167
Instructor: Mikael Jakobsson (mjson@mit.edu), E15-320C
Office hours by appointment.
Course website: http://stellar.mit.edu/S/course/CMS/sp16/CMS.842/

Course Content & Learning Objectives
This course invites students to explore research questions that are best studied through the design, evaluation, and use of playful prototypes. The overall objective of the course is a richer understanding of the potential and limitations of using iterative design and rapid prototyping as research methods. Students will familiarize themselves with the theoretical foundations of interaction design and explorative design research, as well as practice methods applied to working with the physical and digital design materials they choose. By the end of the course, the student should:
  • Have a fundamental understanding of the different forms of inquiry through design as applied to playful and social experiences.
  • Be able to apply interaction design methods to the exploration of design spaces related to their interests.
  • Understand how concepts from play and games can be utilized in the design of a wide variety of social systems, and be able to reflect on problems and limitations related to these practices.
  • Be able to work creatively with physical and digital design materials.

Learning Activities
Students will be working throughout the semester on one individual project encompassing a complete cycle of formulating a research question, design conceptualization, development, testing, and dissemination of findings. In addition, students will be working in class on short design exercises and be assigned readings and other exercises to be done between sessions. Class sessions will be dedicated reading seminars, presentations, exercises, and continuous feedback and discussion of the different stages of the main projects (often referred to as “crits”).

Requirements and Grading
The performance on the main assignment as expressed through its deliverables (one or more prototypes, an oral presentation and a written report) together with the performance during the crit sessions will be the basis for student assessment. Fulfillment of the learning objectives will be evaluated throughout the course and aggregated in a summative assessment.
  • Students who miss more than three crit sessions will fail the process component of the class. Exceptions will only be granted with a doctor or MIT Student Support Services note or for religious holidays (advance notification required). Please note that even if an exception is granted, the grade may be affected.
  • Students who do not submit all deliverables of the main assignment on time will fail the product component of the class. Extensions will only be granted with a doctor or MIT student support services note. Please note that even if an extension is granted, the grade may be affected.
Electronics Policy

Laptops/tablets are allowed in the class on the condition that students refrain from using them for activities unrelated to the class such as checking email or social media. We request the full attention of the students during class.

Statement on Plagiarism

Academic integrity is the foundation of all scholarship, because being able to trace how our ideas have developed in relation to other people’s theories, research, and evidence, as well as our own, is what ensures the soundness of our research. Thus university communities have a collective investment in ensuring that the practices of academic integrity are thoroughly learned and carefully practiced.

As members of this class and the larger scholarly community you are expected to abide by the norms of academic integrity. Everything you submit must be your own work, written specifically for this class. While a good deal of collaboration is encouraged in and out of class, all sources—of ideas as well as words and images, whether from a friend, a text, or the internet—must be acknowledged according to the conventions of academic citation. Willful disregard for these conventions—i.e., plagiarism—can result in withdrawal from the course with a grade of F, and/or suspension or expulsion from the Institute. For more information about policies and practices, please refer to the MIT Policy on Academic Integrity: integrity.mit.edu

Writing and Communication Center

The WCC at MIT (Writing and Communication Center) offers free one-on-one professional advice from communication experts (MIT lecturers who all have advanced degrees and who are all are published writers). The WCC works with undergraduate students, graduate students and post-docs.

The WCC helps you strategize about all types of academic and professional writing as well as about all aspects of oral presentations (including practicing your presentations & designing slides). No matter what department or discipline you are in, we help you think your way more deeply into your topic, help you strategize to convey your message more effectively to particular audiences, help you polish your style, and help you see new implications in your data, research and ideas. The WCC also helps with everything from understanding genre conventions to analyzing what particular journals require. We also help with all English as Second Language issues, from writing and grammar to pronunciation and conversation practice,

The WCC is located in Kendall Square (E39-115, 55 Hayward Street, around the corner from Rebecca’s Cafe). To register with our online scheduler and to make appointments, go to https://mit.mywconline.com/ . To access the WCC’s many pages of advice about writing and oral presentations, go to http://cmsw.mit.edu/writing-and-communication-center/ . The Center’s core hours are Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.; evening hours vary by semester—check the online scheduler for up-to-date hours.
Course Calendar

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<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Feb 3</th>
<th>Introduction Week</th>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Feb 10</td>
<td>Design as Research Method</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Feb 17</td>
<td>Fundamentals of Play</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Feb 24</td>
<td>Concept Presentations</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Mar 2</td>
<td>The Design Process &amp; Prototyping</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
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<td>Techniques For Presentation and Dissemination</td>
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<td>Reflective Practices &amp; Interaction Criticism</td>
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<td>Project Work and Individual Consultation</td>
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<td>Final Presentations</td>
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<td>Week 15</td>
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<td>Final Presentations</td>
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Submission deadline for all main assignment deliverables.

Tentative Reading List

Students will be assigned some readings individually based on the specifics of their projects. Since information retrieval is an important part of the research process, they will also be asked to find and evaluate their own source materials.


