

# I ILLINOIS

## DTX 495

### Intro to UX Theory and Tools

#### Course Information

- **Semester:** Fall 2026
- **Duration:** Full Semester
- **Contact Hours:** Tuesday & Thursday, 3:30 – 4:50 PM (two 80-minute sessions per week)
- **Format:** In-person and on-line (lecture/discussion format)
- **Location:** Room 1046, School of Design (SCD), University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
- **Weekly Hours of Expected Student Work, apart from instruction time:** ~6 hours per week
- **Credit Hours:** 3 Undergraduate Credit Hours

#### Course Description

Introduction to UX Theory and Tools is a foundational course aimed at providing students with an initial grasp of the theoretical principles fundamental to User Experience (UX) Design, along with practical hands-on training in essential UX tools. We will explore key concepts of UX, including user psychology, interaction design, information architecture, and usability principles. Moreover, the course offers interactive sessions to familiarize students with popular UX design tools like Figma, with a focus on wireframing, prototyping, and collaboration functionalities. Through a blend of lectures, workshops, and project-based tasks, students will develop beginner-level proficiency in utilizing these tools to create and assess effective user interfaces. Upon completion, students will have acquired introductory knowledge and skills necessary to evaluate the usability of digital products and create functional prototypes. Students from all academic backgrounds are encouraged to enroll in this hands-on course, as no prior programming or design experience is required. This course is recommended as a precursor for DTX 495: Design Thinking and Immersive Experiences and other similar courses on campus.

#### Learning Outcomes

Over the course of the term, students will:

- Apply Human-Centered Design (HCD) principles and design thinking methodologies to design a feature for a student-centered app that addresses a specific problem faced by the university community.

- Explore user research to understand and address the needs of the app's target audience: students.
- Develop wireframes, prototypes, and user interfaces that adhere to UX design principles and best practices, while incorporating user feedback through iterative design and testing processes.
- Employ storytelling skills to present app concepts and prototypes to peers and potential stakeholders, demonstrating the impact of design choices on user experience.

## General Education

No

## Prerequisite

None.

## Course Materials

### Learning Management System (LMS):

- Canvas: <https://canvas.illinois.edu> – All readings, assignments, discussion boards, and announcements will be posted here.

### Course Readings:

No textbook required. All course readings and resources will be provided.

**Materials:** Laptop for design activities and digital collaboration

**Equipment:** Students are required to bring a laptop, iPad, or another digital device (excluding phones) to each class session, as these will be necessary for completing in-class assignments and activities.

### Software:

- Microsoft Office and/or Google Suite, Miro, Figma, and Canvas (accessed via free student accounts or campus lab resources)

# Course Requirements and Policies

## Grading Breakdown

Instructional Activity	Total Points
Weekly Assignments	50%
Design Presentation	20%
Attendance	30%
<b>Total:</b>	100%

## Class Attendance:

Attendance Unless otherwise stated, attendance at regular in-person or virtual class meetings is required. Sign-in sheets will be provided at each class meeting. If you think that you will not be able to attend one or more of our class meetings, please let us know in advance. Because this course is heavily dependent on the work that you will begin with your teammates during class meetings, you can only miss one class before you fall behind. If you get ill, have a family emergency, feel emotionally run-down, are observing religious holidays, have technology problems, lose the internet, whatever, let us know before class and take the time you need. (We do NOT need any documentation of illness from a doctor - we trust you.) Please prioritize your well-being over this class, if you need to. Unless we contact you with concerns about your attendance, you can assume that you are doing fine and earning all the possible attendance points. All this being said, please keep in mind two things: 1) Not attending class and missing deadlines will mean that the work you produce by the end of the semester will be weaker. Staying on schedule as much as possible will set you up to succeed. 2) We'll be doing a substantial amount of in-class and/or group work in this class. Getting behind on deadlines puts you and/or your whole group at risk; be sure to communicate with your group members regularly to discuss how to coordinate with and support each other throughout the semester.

**Classroom Conduct:** Section 1-201(b) of the UIUC Student Code states that "It is expected that students enrolled in the university will conduct themselves at all times in accordance with accepted principles of responsible citizenship and with due regard for the rights of others." Additionally, our goal is to run an inclusive, safe, and accommodating classroom and to provide a supportive learning environment for all students. We have a zero-tolerance policy for attacks of a personal nature or statements denigrating another on the basis of race, sex, religion, sexual orientation, age, linguistic background, ability or disability, physical appearance, or national/regional

origin. Those who engage in such behaviors will be asked to leave the classroom and counted absent for the day. We respect each student's right to respond to the name and pronoun of their choice and the right of all people to be treated with dignity and respect. If you see a way to make the class feel more inclusive, safe, and accommodating, we encourage you to share your ideas with us.

**Absence Policy:** Notify the instructor in advance. Excused absences require documentation per university policy.

**Participation:** You are welcome to participate in this class in whatever way is most useful to you. In "typical" college classrooms, participation looks like active verbal contributions in large group conversation during class meetings, but we understand that this model doesn't fit everyone's personality type, abilities, and cultural norms. If it works better for you to listen attentively and take notes during class, do that. Remember, this class relies heavily on your work in your group. Please, do your best to actively participate in group discussions and activities. Unless we contact you with concerns about your participation, you can assume that you are doing fine and earning all the possible participation points.

## Final Letter Grades

### Percentage Letter Grade

93–100	A+, A
90–92	A-
87–89	B+
83–86	B
80–82	B-
77–79	C+
73–76	C
70–72	C-
67–69	D+
63–66	D
60–62	D-

## Percentage Letter Grade

<60            F

### Campus Academic Policies & Statements

See University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign policies for Academic Integrity, Students with Disabilities, FERPA, Mental Health, Community of Care, Disruptive Behavior, Emergency Response, Religious Observances, Sexual Misconduct, and Veterans/Military Students. Links provided in original syllabus template.

### Land Acknowledgement Statement

As a land-grant institution, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has a responsibility to acknowledge the historical context in which it exists. In order to remind ourselves and our community, we will begin this event with the following statement. We are currently on the lands of the Peoria, Kaskaskia, Piankashaw, Wea, Miami, Mascoutin, Odawa, Sauk, Mesquaki, Kickapoo, Potawatomi, Ojibwe, and Chickasaw Nations. It is necessary for us to acknowledge these Native Nations and for us to work with them as we move forward as an institution. Over the next 150 years, we will be a vibrant community inclusive of all our differences, with Native peoples at the core of our efforts.

## Course Schedule/Outline

**Format: Tuesdays – In-Person | Thursdays – Remote**

Week-by-week Course Schedule

<b>Week #</b>	<b>Topic</b>
<b>Week 1</b>	Empathy
<b>Week 2</b>	Interviewing
<b>Week 3</b>	Journey Mapping

<b>Week 4</b>	Usability Heuristics
<b>Week 5</b>	Prototyping
<b>Week 6</b>	Designing in Figma
<b>Week 7</b>	Research Planning
<b>Week 8</b>	Identifying Opportunities
<b>Week 9</b>	Ideation and Prototyping
<b>Week 10</b>	Interface Design
<b>Week 11</b>	Collecting Feedback
<b>Week 12</b>	Storytelling
<b>Week 13</b>	Final Project Work Time
<b>Week 14 – NO CLASS (FALL BREAK)</b>	
<b>Week 15</b>	Final Project Work Time
<b>Week 16</b>	Final Project Presentation

## Academic Integrity

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign [Student Code](https://studentcode.illinois.edu/) (https://studentcode.illinois.edu/) should also be considered as a part of this syllabus. Students should pay particular attention to Article 1, Part 4: Academic Integrity.

Academic dishonesty may result in a failing grade. Every student is expected to review and abide by the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1/part4/1-401/) (https://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1/part4/1-401/). Ignorance is not an excuse for any academic dishonesty. It is your responsibility to read this policy to avoid any misunderstanding. Do not hesitate to ask the instructor(s) if you are ever in doubt about what constitutes plagiarism, cheating, or any other breach of academic integrity.

## Students with Disabilities

The University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana, is committed to ensuring that all students, including students with disabilities, do not experience barriers to learning and participating fully in class. Students who have a letter of accommodation from DRES are advised to share that with instructors as soon as possible to ensure accommodation needs can be discussed and met.

To obtain disability-related academic accommodations, disabled students must contact Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) as soon as possible. To contact DRES, please visit 1207 S. Oak Street, Champaign, call (217) 333-1970, email [disability@illinois.edu](mailto:disability@illinois.edu), or visit the [DRES website](https://dres.illinois.edu/) (https://dres.illinois.edu/).

## Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

See [FERPA – Office of the Registrar](https://registrar.illinois.edu/academic-records/ferpa/) (https://registrar.illinois.edu/academic-records/ferpa/) for more information on the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

## Mental Health

Significant stress, mood changes, excessive worry, substance/alcohol misuse or interferences in eating or sleep can have an impact on academic performance, social development, and emotional wellbeing. The University of Illinois offers a variety of confidential services including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, psychiatric services, and specialized screenings which are covered through the Health Service Fee. If you or someone you know experiences any of the above mental health concerns, it is strongly encouraged to contact or visit any of the University's resources provided below. Getting help is a smart and courageous thing to do for yourself and for those who care about you.

- Counseling Center (217) 333-3704
- McKinley Health Center (217) 333-2700
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800) 273-8255
- Rosecrance Crisis Line (815) 720-4953 (available 24/7, 365 days a year)

If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

*This statement is approved by the University of Illinois Counseling Center*

## **Community of Care**

As members of the Illinois community, we each have a responsibility to express care and concern for one another. If you come across a classmate whose behavior concerns you, whether in regard to their well-being or yours, we encourage you to refer this behavior to the Connie Frank CARE Center (formerly the Student Assistance Center) in the Office of the Dean of Students. You may do so by calling (217) 333-0050 or by submitting an [online referral](https://odos.illinois.edu/community-of-care/referral) (<https://odos.illinois.edu/community-of-care/referral>). Based on your report, staff in the Connie Frank CARE Center will reach out to offer support and assistance.

Further, as a Community of Care, we want to support you in your overall wellness. We know that students sometimes face challenges that can impact academic performance (examples include mental health concerns, food insecurity, homelessness, personal emergencies). Should you find that you are managing such a challenge and that it is interfering with your coursework, you are encouraged to contact the [Connie Frank CARE Center](https://odos.illinois.edu/community-of-care/CAREcenter) (<https://odos.illinois.edu/community-of-care/CAREcenter>) (formerly the Student Assistance Center) in the Office of the Dean of Students for support and referrals to campus and/or community resources.

## **Disruptive Behavior**

Behavior that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students' ability to learn and an instructor's ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the [Office for Student Conflict Resolution](https://go.illinois.edu/ReportMisconduct) (<https://go.illinois.edu/ReportMisconduct>), [conflictresolution@illinois.edu](mailto:conflictresolution@illinois.edu), or (217) 333-3680 for disciplinary action.

## **Emergency Response Recommendations**

Emergency response recommendations and campus building floor plans can be found at [Public Safety's Run, Hide, Fight website](https://police.illinois.edu/em/run-hide-fight/) (<https://police.illinois.edu/em/run-hide-fight/>). I encourage you to review this website within the first 10 days of class.

## **Religious Observances**

It is the policy of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign to reasonably accommodate its students' religious beliefs, observances, and practices that conflict with a student's class attendance or participation in a scheduled examination or work requirement, consistent with state and federal law. Students must make requests for accommodation in advance of the conflict to allow time for both consideration of the request and alternate procedures to be prepared. Requests should be directed to the instructor. An optional resource to assist students in making such requests can be found on The Office of the Dean of Students' [Religious Observances website](https://odos.illinois.edu/resources/students/religious-observances) (<https://odos.illinois.edu/resources/students/religious-observances>).

## Sexual Misconduct Reporting Obligation

The University of Illinois is committed to combating sexual misconduct. Faculty and staff members are required to report any instances of sexual misconduct to the University's Title IX Office. In turn, an individual with the Title IX Office will provide information about rights and options, including supportive measures, resources, the campus disciplinary process, and law enforcement options.

A list of the designated University employees who, as counselors, confidential advisors, and medical professionals, do not have this reporting responsibility and can maintain confidentiality, can be found on [We Care Student Resources](https://wecare.illinois.edu/resources/students/#confidential) (<https://wecare.illinois.edu/resources/students/#confidential>).

Other information about resources and reporting is available on [At Illinois We Care](https://wecare.illinois.edu) (<https://wecare.illinois.edu>).

## Veterans and Military Students

As a military-friendly institution, and per federal regulations and Illinois statutes, the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign has established policies and procedures to accommodate military-connected students. In addition to the support available at the [Chez Veterans Center](https://chezveteranscenter.ahs.illinois.edu/) (<https://chezveteranscenter.ahs.illinois.edu/>), members of the National Guard or Reserves and active-duty military personnel with military obligations (e.g., deployments, training, drills) are encouraged to communicate these, in advance whenever possible, to the instructor. For policy details, see the Student Code on [Excused Absences and Departure from the University for U.S. Military or other U.S. National Defense Services](https://studentcode.illinois.edu/article3/part3/3-313) (<https://studentcode.illinois.edu/article3/part3/3-313>).

## Disclosure on Artificial Intelligence (AI)

In this course, you are welcome to use AI-based tools to aid in your work. These tools, such as language models and other large-scale AI technologies, can assist with tasks like drafting content or organizing ideas. However, AI is not a replacement for your own work; it serves as a companion to help streamline certain tasks. All AI-generated content must be carefully reviewed for accuracy, relevance, and appropriateness before submission. Please note that our policy is specific to this course based on the nature of our assignments. In other courses, particularly those with written components—the use of AI tools and/or failure to disclose AI use may be treated as academic dishonesty.