

User Experience Design

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Instructor(s):

Judit Pónya
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Short Description of the Course:

During this course

- students work in **teams** to solve a problem
- by **designing & prototyping** an application interface,
- based on **user feedback** from interviews and usability tests,
- with the help of **lecturers & mentors**,
- and present their work in front of a professional **jury**.

This course addresses user satisfaction in the software industry by focusing developers' awareness and skills towards making user friendly software that serves users' needs well and is a source of satisfaction rather than frustration.

The course improves user-centered thinking. Student teams design the user experience of an interactive system of their own choosing, and learn a few key methods of understanding end users' needs, creating prototypes of a user interface and validating them by usability testing.

Participants of the User Experience Design course are encouraged to sign up for the Leadership and Entrepreneurship Studies course (Gábor Bojár) as well, because the objective of the two courses are closely related. While the User Experience Design course focuses on how to design an *easy to use* product, the Leadership and Entrepreneurship Studies course teaches how to build a company to *sell* that product.

Aim of the Course:

This course enables and encourages students to create user-friendly solutions regardless of their manual creative skills or design experience. We achieve this by increasing sensitivity to users' real problems and developing analytical and design skills to solve them.

In addition, by simulating processes of real-life software design, students will gain insights into the practice of user-centered design under difficult organizational, budget and deadline constraints. They will also improve their teamwork and presentation skills.

Finally, the course aims at raising student awareness of cognitive sciences, usability engineering and related disciplines.

Prerequisites:

There are no prerequisites for this course. It is a principal aim of the course to demonstrate that usable software can be created without extensive theoretical background, just as great dishes can be cooked without being an expert in food chemistry.

The tools and methods used are simple and low-tech; basic user-level computer skills are sufficient for this course.

Detailed Program and Class Schedule:

The course can be best characterized as a design workshop. Students walk the path from an idea to a detailed prototype of an interactive system. Along the way, they collect theoretical knowledge via learning-by-doing and trial-and-error, as opposed to formal lectures about fine details of the discipline.

Students learn how to avoid the most common pitfall of software development projects that prevent delivered systems from being fully-utilized – or used at all: the lack of proper understanding of the users of the system, their current and future needs, and the lack of verification of concepts and early designs.

Students form teams to design user interfaces in a series of workshops which take them along the most important steps of the design process. See the table below for more details about the themes and schedule of the workshops. Each workshop starts with a brief introduction to the goals and methods of the workshop, but most of the time is dedicated to intensive teamwork with the assistance of the instructor.

Part 1: Goal setting and research. Analysis of users and their needs, preferences, and thinking.

Part 2: Shaping the information architecture and creation of early sketches. Collecting feedback from mentors and peers.

Part 3: Bits of theory. Design iterations and evaluation methods. Testing with external users.

Part 4: Adding final details and presenting the results.

In addition to the lectures and workshops, students are expected to spend at least 2 extra hours per week in teams, completing and refining what they produced in the preceding workshop, to ensure that all teams progress at an equal pace.

Content and schedule:

- Week 1 UID Course Introduction
- Week 2 UI Design Basics. Project teams & project ideas
- Week 3 UX research basics. Interview prep
- Week 4 Interview analysis. Product vision (with Mentors)
- Week 5 Information Architecture basics: content, flow
- Week 6 Sketching. Design Studio (with Mentors)
- Week 7 Prototyping tools
- Week 8 -
- Week 9 Design Critique (with Mentors)
- Week 10 UX research: Usability testing prep
- Week 11 Prototyping workshop
- Week 12 Usability testing workshop
- Week 13 Finishing touches (with Mentors)
- Week 14 Project presentations.

Method of instruction:

Lectures with hands-on practice and analysis, project-based creative sessions in groups, prototype and design creation on paper and with simple software tools.

Groups are assisted in the creative process by **mentors** from local software companies.

Homework:

Homework assignments are related to the design themes of the groups. They require individual or group activity.

Grading system:

Individual assignments, short quizzes 50%

Project Team assignments: workshop activities or related deliverables (sketches, flowcharts, research reports), final presentation) 50%

No midterm or final exam.

Bonus points can be collected with working on extra assignments or attending local UX events.

Instructors' bio:

Judit Pónya is a User Experience Strategist & Designer. With over 10 years of experience, she works with product managers and software engineers, defining and designing digital products and services. She is first and foremost a practitioner; besides consulting, she has been teaching courses at the Budapest Polytechnic, at the University of Szeged, and currently she also teaches at the UI Academy of the Hungarian University of Fine Arts. She is a co-founder and organizer of the UX Budapest professional community.

Balázs Simonyi (born 1981) is Lead User Experience Designer at BlackRock. Graduated from the Budapest University of Technology and Economics in 2005 as a product designer. He joined Graphisoft in 2003 and worked as a product designer of ArchiCAD for 8 years and 2 more years as the product owner of myArchiCAD.com. He worked at LogMeIn on various products for 5 years as a user experience designer in agile teams. In 2017 he started working at BlackRock - the world's largest asset manager - in their new Budapest office as a user experience designer in the global digital marketing team. As a side project, he is a co-founder of a startup called ConfigCat.