COURSE SYLLABUS

Information Architecture
ENG 3790-D608 (#68754)
Dates: 1/29/2016 to 5/28/2016

FACULTY INFORMATION

Instructor:	Dr. Patrick Corbett, Assistant Professor of English
Office:	Namm #520
Telephone:	(718) 260-5429 (office phone)
Email:	plcorb@gmail.com (primary) pcorbett@citytech.cuny.edu (official) You can also send me your questions (but not assignments) via email. If an email response is necessary, you can expect it within 24 hours.
Office Hours:	Tuesdays 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. Thursdays 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Other times on a case-by-case basis (email me first). Please make an appointment. I welcome drop-ins, but students with appointments always receive priority.

COURSE INFORMATION

Credits:	4
Course Format:	Computer-aided classroom
Course Meeting Times:	Tuesdays/Thursdays 10:00 a.m. to 11:40 a.m. (N601-B)
Pre-requisites:	ENG 2700

Catalog Description: "This theory and practice-based course provides a theoretical overview of the concepts and practices of information architecture: Organization, labeling, navigation, search, and metadata. Students develop practical skills through the study of human-computer interaction."

ENG 3790 will give you the opportunity to explore a new way of thinking about information, the role it plays in our lives, and how to organize it to accomplish bigger things, both in digital space and in meat space. The goal of this course is no less than to transform how you perceive reality, and how you begin to consciously shape the aspects of it available to you as an information architect.

As part of your work in ENG 3790, you will be responsible for the thorough study and review of course readings, and the development of a repertoire of problem-solving tools, techniques, and routines that you will integrate into your own professional practice. **This will require extensive time and dedication on your part**, but the reward will be your confident and skillful use information architecture theory and practice to solve significant organizational problems across a range of media for a variety of purposes.

Competencies:	This course stresses competencies in the following areas: Content organization ● Schemas ● Systems thinking ● Design perspectives ● Written, visual, and verbal communication of complex ideas ● Audience-Content-Context analysis ● Encoding ● Inquiry-based research ● Usability ● Project management.
Capabilities:	This course requires the skills and access to the technology listed below:

- Work independently and responsibly on challenging material under continuous deadlines.
- Produce projects in written Standard Business English with good design.
- Use MS Word and OpenLab with confidence.
- Be willing to learn LaTex and MadCap authoring software.
- Maintain cloud or USB flash storage for backing up your work.
- Access to stable high-speed Internet.
- Ability to visit research locations within NYC.
- Use a computer keyboard and mouse expertly.
- Conduct online research using search engines and the digital library.

Textbooks:	**Information Architecture For The Web And Beyond** Author(s): Rosenfeld, Morville, & Arango, Publisher: O'Reilly, Edition: 4th, Year Published: 2015, Price: 28.00 (retail) USD, Notes: 4th edition only. Do not rent. ISBN: 978-1-491-91168-6 **How To Make Sense Of Any Mess** Author: Covert, Publisher: Abby Covert, Edition: 1st, Year Published: 2014, Price: 20.00 (retail) USD, Notes: Used okay. ISBN: 978-1-50-061599-4

COURSE STRUCTURE

ENG 3790 is a four-credit course that meets twice per week for 100 minutes each meeting. The presentation of this course is a combination of short lectures and demonstrations, class discussions, small group work, workshops, and presentations.

This is a **hands-on** course, which means your active participation and preparation are **crucial** to:

1. Your success as a student,
2. Your preparation as a professional,
3. The intellectual dynamic of this class.

To get what you need out of this course and to earn an honor grade, you should expect to spend an average of 10 to 12 hours per week on class preparation and projects.

Blackboard: This course does not use the Blackboard OLS.

OpenLab: Course materials will be available to you on OpenLab. You will need your OpenLab user name and password to access these materials. You can find our OpenLab course home here: http://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/courses/.

Learning Outcomes: The following outcomes are determined by the College.

- Understand cognitive and socio-cultural learning theories.
- Successfully search for and acquire appropriate information about a topic in a variety of media and formats (e.g., Web, print, audio, and video).
- Apply basic principles of Web usability and accessibility.
- Use DITA (Darwin Information Typing Architecture) for designing, writing, managing, and publishing information.

Learning Activities: The following activities are determined by the College.

- Connect learning by designing.
- Collaborate in design teams to create, structure, and present information online.
- Use of industry-standard technical communications tools.

CLASS POLICIES

Student Responsibilities: Students are expected to be familiar with CUNY and City Tech policies and procedures. Many of the important policies and procedures are in the Student Handbook on the City Tech website, located here:

http://www.citytech.cuny.edu/files/students/handbook.pdf

Additionally, you must accept full responsibility for the consequences of your words, your actions, as well as any classes and/or work that you miss. You must come physically, emotionally, and intellectually prepared to perform under the pressures associated with a structured learning environment.

Instructor Duties: As your professor, I commit to communicating openly and frequently with you about this course. I will maintain a professional and safe learning environment that adheres to the policies of the College. You can expect a reply to communication, be it via e-mail, through online discussions, voicemail, or in person, within 24 hours. If you have a problem with this class, my evaluation of your performance, or any other aspect of our professional relationship, please reach out to me to discuss your concerns.

Class participation: Obviously, you are expected to participate. Students who participate in the intellectual life of a course learn more, earn better grades, and are uniquely prepared to enter the professional workforce.

As the professor of this course, I am responsible for creating and maintaining the conditions that facilitate your learning, but you must actively engage the intellectual challenges presented to you.

If you are not actively participating in this class then you are wasting precious money and time, and you will not graduate with the range or depth of skills necessary to ensure your employment as a degreed professional.

Attendance: Your attendance is recorded and reported to the college according to CUNY policy. Because this course is designed as a hands-on experience (meaning that you actually *work* in class) missing even one class will impair your ability to complete future assignments.

If you are absent for more than four of our classes, you may earn a WU (unintentional withdraw) for the course, which is counted as an F in the calculation of your GPA. If you know that you will be missing classes, or are prone to illness, be sure to avoid unnecessary absences.

Late arrival: Arrive for class and be prepared to begin on time. Late arrivals are disruptive and disrespectful to your peers. Likewise, do not prepare to leave until you are dismissed at 11:40. Plan in advance for adverse travel conditions like MTA delays and weather.

After the first two late arrivals, each time you arrive more than ten minutes late, or leave early, you will lose 1% of your final grade.

New York City College of Technology Policy on Academic Integrity: Students and all others who work with information, ideas, texts, images, music, inventions, and other intellectual property owe their audience and sources accuracy and honesty in using, crediting, and citing sources. As a community of intellectual and professional workers, the College recognizes its responsibility for providing instruction in information literacy and academic integrity, offering models of good practice, and responding vigilantly and appropriately to infractions of academic integrity. Accordingly, academic dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and at New York City College of Technology and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion. The complete text of the College policy on Academic Integrity may be found in the catalog.

Submitting Work: All work must be uploaded to the specified location (Dropbox or OpenLab) by 11:59 p.m. on the day specified on the assignment sheet. Typically, you will submit assignments as a document file (.doc, .rtf, .docx, or .pdf).

Please name your file with the assignment name, and your last name. For example, *Research Paper 1_Smith*. Be sure to exercise effective document control in your Dropbox folder, so that I can easily find and evaluate the correct draft of your work.

For the sake of sanity (primarily mine), I do not accept <u>or even acknowledge</u> coursework that is submitted by email unless I directly solicit it.

City Tech Email: Official course communications from the College will be delivered to your student email. When you contact me by email, please do so from your City Tech email account. Student e-mail can be accessed at: http://cis.citytech.cuny.edu/Student/it_student_email.aspx.

Electronic Devices: College-wide policy prohibits you from using personal communications devices for non-instructional purposes in class, which is from 10:00 a.m. until 11:40 a.m. Your use of these devices disrupts class business. If you must use your phone, please excuse yourself from the classroom. Do not engage in texting conversations or video watching while in class. Please remove your listening accessories before you enter the classroom.

Recording: No audio-visual recording of any kind or for any purpose is allowed in the classroom without an ADA accommodation, or written permission from me for each occurrence.

Use of Social Media: Please do not use class time to explore or update these sites.

Class Cancellation: Official closures will be announced on local public radio stations and the City Tech website. If you are unable to safely come to campus, please stay home and notify your professors via your City Tech email. Coursework is due whether we have class or not.

GRADING METHODS

As your professor, I will use a variety of methods to evaluate your work, including: holistic rubrics, analytical rubrics, non-rubric responses, credit for completion, oral feedback, and occasionally…a distant exasperated stare. Graded evaluations in this course are on a points system. You will receive points for each assignment that is graded based on how well it meets the criteria articulated on the assignment sheet. The value of the points you earn in this course will be divided by total number of points available to determine your final letter grade for the course.

Generally speaking, points equivalent to the grade of C will be awarded to work that is "average." You can earn a C by showing up to our class meetings, doing the course work, and fulfilling all of the course objectives. The grade of B is awarded for work demonstrating qualities that appreciably exceed what might be expected of "average." An A is an honor grade, signifying consistent quality and effort that is often "outstanding."

Late Work: This course is an intensive major course and moves very quickly through material. Late work dramatically disrupts your ability to learn. Students who get behind typically withdraw or fail the course. The ones who don't endure a lot of needless suffering to get caught back up. Finally, significantly late assignments often receive less timely and responsive feedback.

All assignments are due by 11:59 p.m. on the date specified on the assignment sheet. Late assignments (except the final project) are generally accepted for regular credit for up to two weeks past the deadline. Very late assignments (more than two weeks) are accepted for half-credit. Assignments more than a month late will not be accepted except under extraordinary conditions (e.g., you were in a coma).

Grading Scale:

Grade	% Attained
A	93-100
A-	90-92.9
B+	87-89.9
B	83-86.9
B-	80-82.9
C+	77-79.9
C	70-76.9
D	60-69.9
F	59.9-0

ASSIGNMENTS

The workload of this course is appropriate for a 3000-level major course. You can expect to devote between 10 and 12 hours per week outside of class to your work for this course. While this is enough commitment to be successful in this course for most students, it is only the average amount of investment necessary to prepare you for full-time professional employment in technical communications.

This is what you will be doing for this course:

- Carefully reading approximately 40 to 60 pages from textbooks and other sources per week.
- Contributing daily and substantively to our class activities and discussions.
- Complete weekly IA assignments and projects related to course topics.
- Contribute an executive summary of an IA-related book to our "Information Architecture in Review" project.
- Conceive of, propose, design, and produce a collaborative IA project.
- Demonstrating a thorough understanding of basic IA concepts and practices through examination.

For each assignment, you will receive a detailed specification sheet, typically one or more weeks in advance. For projects, you will receive an overview and then a detailed specification sheets for each step in the project. The specifications will explain the parameters of each assignment and how it will be evaluated.

Assignment Table:

Course Work	Approximate Percentage of Grade
Chapter Summaries	20%
IA Book Review Project	20%
Personal Organization Project	20%
Final Collaborative Project	25%
Final Exam	15%
Total	100%

Extra Credit: Opportunities for extra credit in this class occasionally appear. Unless you are actively engaged in the work of the course, you will not be in a position to earn them.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE

Office Hours: I am available to you in Namm #520. You can email me to make an appointment (first-come, first-served).

I cannot stress enough the importance of using my office hours as part of a successful learning strategy. They are the place where we can work one-on-one when you need it the most.

Technical Assistance: If your technology problem is not directly related to the content of the course, I will not be able to help you. Help is available at the Student Computer Help Desk on the first floor of the Namm Building. Consultants are available by phone at (718) 260-4900. You can receive help online (if you are connected) here: http://cis.citytech.cuny.edu/Student/it_student.aspx.

These services are available during the following times:
* Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday: 8:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
* Thursday, Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

If you encounter a problem, seek help immediately. Do not wait until the last minute.

Learning Center: Please consult with me when you have questions about how to do a particular assignment, or how to develop your ideas. Many students find the workshops and tutoring assistance of The College Learning Center to also be helpful. The College Learning Center can be found in the Atrium of the Namm Building at AG-18.

Disability Statement: City Tech complies with all provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act and makes reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Please contact Disability Resources Services at (718) 260-5143 for more information. The resource office is located in the Artrium Building, Room A-237.

If you have a documented disability that requires academic accommodations, please see me in private so that we can discuss the accommodations that you need in this class. ***It is best to do this at the beginning of the course***.

COURSE CALENDAR – REVISION 3/8/16

This course calendar will help you to create your schedule and properly budget your time. Prior to each class you will receive a more detailed synopsis of what you need to prepare for our next meeting. As the semester develops, this calendar may change to meet the objectives and needs of the class.

Date	Class Topic(s)	Readings	Notes
2/2 W1	• Introductions	Covert, pp. 10-29	
2/4 W1	• Introduction to Information Architecture	RMA, pp. 2-22	
2/9 W2	Friday Schedule		
2/11 W2	• What "information" is: A crash course	Rowley, pp. 243-254 Logan, pp. 68-91 ScienceAlert (online)	IA review summaries assigned
2/16 W3	• What people mean by "information architecture"	RMA, pp. 23-38 Pass (online)	
2/18 W3	• People's relationship with information	RMA, pp. 39-51 Kukka et al., pp. 15-27	
2/23 W4	• Informal information architecture	Covert, pp. 32-79	
2/25 W4	• Concepts of IA: Structure and "place"	RMA, pp. 53-75	
3/1 W5	• Anatomy of information architecture	RMA, pp. 79-95	Visualization projects assigned
3/3 W5	• Concepts of IA: Organization	RMA, pp. 97-131	
3/8 W6	• Concepts of IA: Labeling	RMA, pp. 133-173	
3/10 W6	• Design studio day		Final Projects assigned
3/15 W7	• Concepts of IA: Navigation	175-209	
3/17 W7	• Design studio day		Part I: IA review summaries due
3/22 W8	• Concepts of IA: Search	RMA, pp. 211-267	
3/24 W8	• Presentations		Visualization projects due (presentation)
3/29 W9	• Concepts of IA: Thesauri and controlled vocabularies	RMA, pp. 269-308	
3/31 W9	• Concepts of IA: Metadata		Midterm grades Part II: IA review summaries due
4/5 W10	• Conducting IA research	RMA, pp. 313-353	

4/7 W10	• "Choose a direction"	Covert, pp. 82-105	Final project proposals due
4/12 W11	• "Measure the distance"	Covert, pp. 108-121	
4/14 W11	• "Play with structure"	Covert, pp. 125-145	
4/19 W12	• "Prepare to adjust"	Covert, pp. 148-160	
4/21 W12	• Presentations		Final project progress report due (presentation)
4/25 4/28	Spring Recess		
5/3 W13	• Developing an IA strategy	RMA, pp. 355-388	
5/5 W13	• IA charette		
5/10 W14	• Documenting IA	RMA, pp. 389-439	Final project progress report due
5/12 W14	• Design studio day		
5/17 W15	• Design studio day		
5/19 W15	• Presentations		Final project due (presentation)
5/24 W16	• Comprehensive Final Exam		Final exam given Finished IA review summaries due
5/26 W16	• Final Conference		Final exam due
5/31	• Final Grades Due		