

98-130

TECHNIQUES FOR WEB INTERFACES

SYLLABUS & COURSE CALENDAR

Course Time: Tuesdays (6:30PM – 7:50PM) in Porter A18A

Instructor: Tony Poor (tpoor@cmu.edu)

Website: <http://www.tonypoor.com/98130>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed for beginners to the world of web design. The focus for the first half of the course is on front-end engineering and CSS. This serves as a foundation for the guiding principles of accessibility, usability, and excellent design, which we'll cover more thoroughly in the second half of the course. A bit of basic HTML knowledge is highly recommended.

Every class will be accompanied by a handout, but keep in mind that we'll primarily be learning by example, and the handouts aren't exactly loaded with examples. If you miss class, then, you've really only got the handout to fall back on, which probably won't be enough to learn from.

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT

Office hours will be held on request; if necessary, we'll set up a weekly time. Otherwise, feel free to contact me via:

- **Email:** tpoor@cmu.edu
 - **AIM:** tonypoor
- ...preferably in that order.
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ASSIGNMENTS & GRADES

Your final grade (pass/fail) is determined by your final project (65%), midterm exam (20%), and quizzes (15%). A passing grade is 60 or more.

FINAL PROJECT (65%) Your final project will be to design some web site of your choosing. This is intentionally open-ended and will proceed in a few discrete steps which will be discussed later on. You can work in teams of two,

but an even larger project will be expected if you do so. Note that you can pass the entire class simply by having an awesome final project.

MIDTERM EXAM (20%) The midterm will take place on October 13 and will cover all material from the first half of the course.

QUIZZES (15%) There will be an occasional (very small) in-class quiz; these will be announced beforehand and will cover the material from the preceding lecture. After the quiz, I'll provide the answers on the class website and will go over them in class, but no make-ups allowed.

COURSE CALENDAR

The full course calendar is available on the website, where handouts and quizzes will also be posted.

Aug. 25 *Introduction & Process*

An introduction to the class and a review of the basic process behind great web development.

Sep. 1 *Foundations of CSS*

The basics of CSS in a single class; covers selectors, pseudo-classes, the cascade, margin collapsing, etc. Skippable if you know your stuff.

Sep. 8 *Day after Labor Day*

No class, but a couple of articles to read instead.

Sep. 15 *Visual Formatting Model*

An explanation of the theory behind the most complicated part of CSS.

Sep. 22 *Miscellaneous Topics I*

Miscellaneous case studies and techniques, including multi-column layouts, different layout types (and when to use which), and positioning tricks.

Sep. 29 *Miscellaneous Topics II*

More case studies, including navigational techniques, tricks involving the background property, and CSS drop-down menus.

Oct. 6 *Typography for the Web*

The limitations and capabilities of web typography.

Oct. 13 *Midterm Exam*

Oct. 20 *Performance & The Toolkit*

The life-saving tools of a web developer (Firebug, etc.), and an in-depth look at some crucial tips to improve loadtime (spriting, YSlow guidelines, etc.)

Oct. 27 *Accessibility*

Making the world a better place, one blind internet user at a time.

Nov. 3 *The Future: HTML5 and CSS3*

A somewhat thorough look into the future of web standards, including features that we can already make use of.

Nov. 10 *Usability & HCI*

A look at web design through the glass of HCI.

Nov. 17 *Special Topic I*

Content to be decided based on student interests.

Nov. 24 *Special Topic II*

Content to be decided based on student interests.

Dec. 1 *Special Topic III*

Content to be decided based on student interests.