Overview

This summer studio course is about making work in the web browser. We will explore website as a virtual space lives inside of the browser and draw connections back to our physical experience. Combining readings, writing prompts, workshops and discussions, we will approach websites as an individual practice and then discuss how they serve as places for more people to meet, communicate, and connect.

Critiques and discussions will focus on the choices in content, layouts and other forms of the design, and on the technical side, this 5-week course will cover foundational front-end languages HTML, CSS and JavaScript. Learning path is provided through in-class workshops and exercises, with out-of-class assignments and office hour meetings. No prior programming experience is required.
Course Objectives

• We learn how to learn: Part of the class premise is that everyone can learn, and we explore and study how we learn individually and collectively.

• Technical: Master the basics of front-end web development. Gain fluency in HTML, CSS, and JavaScript.

• Technical: Apprehend a general approach to programming. By the end of the course, you should be able to determine the best way to structure and begin a project; know how to write efficient, eloquent code; and develop strategies for troubleshooting.

• Literacy: Be critical and inventive when designing for the web.

• Creative: Realize projects that make compelling use of content, visual design, and technical opportunities.

• Creative: Develop personal design strategies and interests that can be applied to a studio practice more broadly.

Tools

• Computer: a Mac or PC is required for in-class exercises
• Web browser: Google Chrome, Firefox
• Text editor: Visual Studio Code / Atom / Sublime text…
• Other softwares and services: GitHub.com, netlify.com, are.na, Dropbox and Google sheets etc

Projects

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<tbody>
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ART S167: Intro to Interactive Design
P1: Walk
Create a website that journals a walk of yours. The walk site can host multiple locations, sceneries, and paths, or conversations with people that you met along the walk. To think:
  Can you notice the most subtle activities in a space, not only by visuals but also through other senses? e.g., room tone, bird chirping, breeze, noises…
  If you film the walk, how does the video as a format, introduces the experience to the audience?
  And how does text and other formats to do so?
  How can you translate the personal experience to a website? And can you make the experience interactive?

Your can create your walk from a first-person perspective, including activities and feelings, or a collection of metadata of the environment like time and spatial descriptions, or a mixed result of the two.

We will create an HTML-only version first, then add CSS. Given the short span of this project, text-based methods are recommended, but not limited to, you are welcome to incorporate other formats of audio, video, images or any combination.

P2: Channel
We will look at the website as a publishing tool and create a Content Management System (CMS) based website. During this project, we will investigate our content in depth, look for internal consistency and organize them into a systematic display.

Curate an Are.na channel and use Are.na API to deploy it to a website. We will spend the first week focusing on the content of the channel, then explore the design in CSS, and use ChatGPT to facilitate the learning experience for writing the JavaScript. Aside from debugging and
technical work, our discussion will center around how your design reflects your content curation.

To think:

Under the restriction of being a public channel, what are the relevant attributes that we can make use of in our projects?
For example, who can view the channel?
And who can contribute to the channel?
Where is the content collected from?
How long can the content, and the channel live?
Will the channel evolve over time? Will so the website?
...

P3: Easter Egg

Add an Easter egg state to your channel website (P2) and make it a space intervention on campus (Green Hall). In this project we will draw connections back to the local and our proximity, and rethink the physicality of our everyday surroundings.

On the website, the Easter egg can be triggered by parameters of time, media query, location, or specific inputs that you set for your website. Some physicalities that we can use to make connections are:
Temperature
Time (date/hour/sunrise or sunset…)
Location
...

And on the space intervention, think about where and how the Easter egg could be installed in physical space. You can look for a specific place that suits you the best in terms of its physical structure (e.g. small corners, staircases & etc), lighting, daily traffics or other objective conditions. The presentation could be projected, accessed via a QR code or other physical marker, shown on a monitor, and so on.
Attendance

Attendance to all class meetings is mandatory. Three or more unexcused absences will result in a failing grade for the course. Three or more late arrivals (more than 15 minutes late) equals an absence. If you absolutely must miss class, please email me in advance.

In addition to your attendance record, any work or class performance (discussions or presentations) missed during your absence will also count toward your final grade.

Academic Integrity

Students will become familiar with using pre-existing language, images, and software as raw material while creating entirely new works. While making websites, we will learn which technologies could be appropriated and how to properly credit their inclusion.


“writing code is similar to academic writing in that when you use or adapt code developed by someone else as part of your project, you must cite your source. However, instead of quoting or paraphrasing a source, you include an inline comment in the code. These comments not only ensure you are giving proper credit, but help with code understanding and debugging. ... you should not simply re-use code as the solution to an assignment. Like academic writing, your code can incorporate the ideas of others but should reflect your original approach to the problem.”

Try retyping someone else’s code instead of copy and pasting it. Be careful about pasting huge blocks of code. Remember to do things one step at a time so you truly understand each piece of code’s unique function.
This document is tentative and subject to change according to actual course operations, more related information and materials are available through email. Last updated on Feb 28, 2023.