

IS 375 - Discovering User Needs for UX - Fall 2025 Syllabus

Meeting time and room:

Section 007 - Wednesday 8:30 - 11:20 AM CKB G-08

Instructor:

Adam Spryszynski
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Office hours:

Tuesdays 4:30 - 5:30

Wednesdays 11:45 - 12:45

Additional Office Hours available by appointment

Course Description:

What new digital products or services need to be developed? How do you anticipate someone's needs before they do? How do you understand how people interact with products? These are key questions that both interaction designers and start-up entrepreneurs need to answer. It's all about understanding the user. We need to work with users to investigate or "research" their needs and how they interact with the product or service. In this course, we take a deep dive into qualitative user experience (UX) research. UX research is the process of understanding why and how people use products and services. This course will teach you a set of research tools to discover user needs, investigate the user experience, and enhance the user experience by deriving design recommendations. We will cover techniques like ethnography, focus groups, interviewing, and analyzing qualitative data. This practical, hands-on course will give you an insight into the psychology of user behavior and lay the foundation for students who are pursuing careers designing, evaluating, or marketing products for people.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the conclusion of this course students will be able to:

1. Understand user research and its applications
2. Differentiate methods of user research and their application
3. Analyze qualitative data
4. Present research findings
5. Design user research projects

Grading Policy

Final grade breakdown:

Participation: 15%

Assignments: 15%

Diary Studies Report 15%

Interview Studies Report 15%

Contextual Inquiry Report 15%

Final Project: 20%

Reflection Paper: 5%

Final grade rubric:

| | |
|----|---------------|
| A | 90% and above |
| B+ | 85-89% |
| B | 80-84% |
| C+ | 75-79% |
| C | 70-74% |
| D | 60-69% |
| F | 59% and below |

Late submission policy:

- Late submission penalty on papers is 10% per day up to a maximum of -50%
- Other work will not be accepted late except in extenuating circumstances

Participation Policy:

At the end of each class you will be asked to answer a question on an index card and hand it in. The total count of these will be a foundation of your participation grade. I cannot accept index cards late. Additional assignments counted towards the participation grade will be required during class.

Textbook

The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers - Johnny Saldaña - 2nd OR 3rd edition (buy the cheapest copy you can find)

Required Materials

- 3x5 Index cards
- Post-it notes
- Fine point sharpie (or similar)
- Safety scissors (with the blunt tips)

Academic Integrity:

"Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the academic code of integrity policy that is found at: [NJIT Academic Integrity Code](#).

Please note that it is my professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Dean of Students Office. Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade of F, and/or suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Dean of Students Office at dos@njit.edu"