

**CIS\*2170 User Interface Design**  
**0.75 Credits – Undergraduate – Winter 2023**  
**School of Computer Science – University of Guelph**

**Lectures (all sections):**

Tuesdays, 0830-0950, RICH 2520  
Thursdays, 0830-0950, RICH 2520 \*

**Instructor:**

David Flatla [dflatla@uoguelph.ca](mailto:dflatla@uoguelph.ca)  
Office hours: email for appointment

**Labs:**

Lab 01: Mon 0830-1020 ALEX 028 \*  
Lab 02: Fri 0830-1020 MINS 017  
Lab 03: Fri 1130-1320 MCKN 233  
Lab 04: Fri 1430-162 ROZH 106  
Lab 05: Mon 1900-2050 MCLN 101

**Teaching Assistants:**

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**Course Website:** <https://courselink.uoguelph.ca/d2l/home/795327>

The course website will be used for all distributions and all submissions for this course. I will use it to post announcements, readings, assignment descriptions, Zoom links, and grades. All assignment submissions will be submitted via the course website.

**Readings:** Online readings will be posted on the course website each week.

**Course Prerequisites:** CIS\*1200 or CIS\*1500

**Course Calendar Description:**

This course is a practical introduction to the area of user interface construction. Topics include user interface components and their application, best practices for user interface design, approaches to prototyping, and techniques for assessing interface suitability.

**Semester Plan:** My goal for CIS\*2170 this semester is to be predictable and reasonable. Each week, you will have online readings (posted the previous Friday) to read, a discussion lecture on Tuesday, an Example/Counterexample to submit (Wednesday), a short presentation (to deliver or attend) in Thursday's lecture, and a lab exercise to complete with a partner (posted one Friday, due the next Friday). Scheduled labs and Tuesday lectures are 'in-person', with Tuesday lectures also broadcast and recorded via Zoom. Thursday lectures will be online-only (no recordings). All assignment submissions and feedback will be electronic. Your lowest grade for Examples/Counterexamples and Labs will be dropped. There will be no midterm or final exam.

**COURSE PLAN**

Design is an expertise-driven practice and designers are practice-led experts. As such, this course focuses on: 1) building expertise, and 2) developing practice.

**Building Expertise (45% of final grade):**

*Readings:* Posted each Friday (starting 13 Jan – see schedule below). Read these first each week.

*Discussions:* On Tuesdays, we will discuss the readings. This is a time for comments, questions, criticisms, and discussion. I will NOT be lecturing what you have read (i.e., reading is 100% your responsibility). Take notes as you read (summarize), record any questions you have as you read (engage), and identify strengths and weaknesses of the topics covered in the readings (critique). Bring your thoughts to class and we'll discuss them.

*Example/Counterexample Submissions:* On Wednesday evenings (starting 18 Jan – see schedule below), you will submit an Example/Counterexample that illustrates one (or more) concept(s) from the week's readings. You will submit a PDF to the course website that contains a

screenshot/image (plus source) of your example with a short text description. More details will be provided in a separate specification.

*Presentations:* For Thursday (online) lectures (starting 20 Jan), ~40-50 students will be called upon to unmute their mic (one at a time) and briefly verbally describe how their Example/Counterexample (that I will screenshare) illustrates concepts from that week's readings. Do NOT prepare slides, but you can direct me to a website or other resource if helpful, but each student will only have 2-3 minutes maximum.

You will each be scheduled to do two such presentations, one before Winter Break and one after Winter Break. I will post the presentation schedule to CourseLink on Monday 16 January.

If you are unable to attend your scheduled Thursday presentation, I will reserve the final Thursday prior to Winter Break (16 Feb) and again at the end of the Semester (06 Apr) for make-up presentations. If you fail to attend your scheduled presentation and fail to attend the make-up presentation day, then you will receive 0 for that presentation. Please note that Winter Break and end-of-term are hard deadlines.

In addition, make sure that you submit an Example/Counterexample in the week you are scheduled to present. You will not be called upon to present if you do not submit an Example/Counterexample for that week, so you will receive a 0 for both your Example/Counterexample AND your presentation (assuming you miss both your scheduled presentation day and the make-up day).

I understand that presentations can be challenging. However, being able to clearly explain your ideas and contributions is an important skill for essentially everything you will ever do. I've also noticed that seeing your peers' work and hearing their thoughts behind their work also has a great reinforcement learning effect for each week's concepts. To help provide motivation, you will receive credit for each presentation (6%).

### **Developing Practice (55% of final grade):**

Lab specifications will be released Fridays (same day as readings, starting 13 January). Each lab will be due the following Friday. The Monday and Friday scheduled lab sessions are optional in-person help sessions for you to get help from the people who will be grading your submissions (i.e., the TAs). Please attend the lab that you are registered in, as space and TA time is limited.

All labs will be completed in pairs (you will have an opportunity to choose your partner). You will work with the same partner all semester. I leave it to you to determine how you will work with your partner for the labs. I want to give you the chance to choose your partner, but you will need a partner for Lab 01, so don't delay. Please use this (authenticated) Microsoft Form to specify your group:

<https://forms.office.com/r/7071yZ4aHD>

You must find a partner and complete the form by 11:59pm Sunday, 15 January 2023. Only one person from each group needs to complete the form. Any students who remain unpaired (by not completing the Form) after the deadline above will be put into pairs ASAP after the form closes.

Many labs require that you complete your design exercises on paper so you will need *plain paper, pencils, colouring pencils, pens, scissors, a ruler, etc.* You will also need to be able to *take photos* of your lab results for uploading. You will also occasionally need to *print out* a resource to work on, but I will keep this to a minimum. All labs are designed to take about two hours. Only one group member needs to upload your lab submission to CourseLink.

### Grading Scheme:

- Individual Examples/Counterexamples [11 in total x 3% each] = 33%
- Individual Presentations [2 in total x 6% each] = 12%
- Group Labs [11 in total x 5% each] = 55%

Your final grade will be the weighted average of your grades for the three submission types above. You must achieve a passing grade ( $\geq 50\%$ ) in each of the three components listed above (Examples/Counterexamples, Presentations, Labs) in order to pass this course.

### Notes on Grading:

Assessing design involves some degree of interpretation. As such, it can be difficult to precisely define what 'correct' and 'incorrect' mean for 2170 submissions. We will be assessing technical aspects such as completeness (e.g., all components present), correctness (e.g., in requested format), and communication (e.g., spelling and grammar), plus more subjective aspects such as topic fit (e.g., example or lab submission is relevant to weekly topic), depth of insight for any justifications provided, and overall quality.

Requests for regrading will be declined by default. There are almost 4000 units of assessment to be graded during this course, so having an open regrading policy is infeasible. If you persist with a regrading request, we will carefully regrade every aspect of the submission in question, with the potential for your grade to decrease, remain the same, or increase.

### Course Schedule:

Week (Monday)	Topic	Example	Lab	Example Due Date	Readings Posted
00 (09 Jan)	Course Intro	--	--	--	13 Jan (Week 01)
01 (16 Jan)	Design Practice I	Ex01	Lab01	11:59pm 18 Jan	20 Jan (Week 02)
02 (23 Jan)	Design Practice II	Ex02	Lab02	11:59pm 25 Jan	27 Jan (Week 03)
03 (30 Jan)	Sketching	Ex03	Lab03	11:59pm 01 Feb	03 Feb (Week 04)
04 (06 Feb)	Prototyping	Ex04	Lab04	11:59pm 08 Feb	10 Feb (Week 05)
05 (13 Feb)	UI Components	Ex05	Lab05	11:59pm 15 Feb	17 Feb (Week 06)
WB (20 Feb)	Winter Break	--	--	--	--
06 (27 Feb)	Colour	Ex06	Lab06	11:59pm 01 Mar	03 Mar (Week 07)
07 (06 Mar)	Gestalt/Form	Ex07	Lab07	11:59pm 08 Mar	10 Mar (Week 08)
08 (13 Mar)	Usability/Function	Ex08	Lab08	11:59pm 15 Mar	17 Mar (Week 09)
09 (20 Mar)	User Studies	Ex09	Lab09	11:59pm 22 Mar	24 Mar (Week 10)
10 (27 Mar)	Accessibility	Ex10	Lab10	11:59pm 29 Mar	31 Mar (Week 11)
11 (03 Apr)	Personas	Ex11	Lab11	11:59pm 05 Apr	--

### Other Notes:

- First day of class is Monday, 09 January 2023 (first lecture is Tuesday, 10 January 2023).
- Labs will begin Monday, 16 January 2023.
- Winter break (no classes or labs) is 20-24 February 2023.
- Last day of classes & labs is Monday, 10 April 2023 (make-up day for Friday 07 April)
- There is no midterm exam & no final exam for this course.

### Late Policy:

As this course has a very strict schedule, no late submissions will be accepted.

### When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement:

In lieu of a formal process for accommodating missed submissions due to illness or compassionate reasons, a global 'drop one' policy will be in effect for your *Example/*

*Counterexample Submissions* and *Lab Submissions* – the single lowest grade for each will not be counted in your final grade calculation. I strongly recommend saving these for emergencies rather than using them early in the semester and regretting it later.

### **Communication (i.e., How to get help...)**

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their *uoguelph.ca* e-mail account regularly. E-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

**Assessment Help:** The best way to get help with assessments is to ask during a lab. The next best way to is to post a question to the appropriate CourseLink Discussion Forum. The next best way to get help is to email the TAs (email address above). The 2170 TA email address (listed with the TA info at the top of this document) **must** be used for all email correspondence with the TAs. Only the instructor and TAs have access to this email account. All email to individual TA email addresses will be ignored.

**Content Help:** If you are struggling with the content, the best way to get help is to ask me during lecture. The next best way to get help is to post a question to the appropriate CourseLink Discussion Forum. As a final resort, you can email me your questions or to book office hours.

I get a lot of email, so state the course title and your name in any correspondence you send me. Please also state your need if you are requesting office hours. If you send me a question that is answerable elsewhere (e.g., Google, course readings, peers, Discussion Forum, Course Outline, any other resource besides me), I will redirect you instead of answering your question. Please be respectful in all email correspondence. I will reciprocate.

### **Drop Date:**

Courses that are one semester long must be dropped by the end of the last day of classes. The regulations and procedures for dropping courses are available in the Undergraduate Calendar: <https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

### **Copies of out-of-class assignments:**

Keep reliable back-up copies of any work that you do in the course; you may be asked to resubmit your work at any time.

### **Accessibility:**

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required, however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway. Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to make a booking at least 14 days in advance, and no later than November 1 (fall), March 1 (winter) or July 1 (summer). Similarly, new or changed accommodations for online quizzes, tests and exams must be approved at least a week ahead of time. More information is available at: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/sas>

### **Academic Misconduct:**

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to

prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor. The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>

### **Recording of Materials:**

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

### **Resources:**

The Academic Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/index.cfm?index>

### **Illness:**

Medical notes will not normally be required for singular instances of academic consideration, although students may be required to provide supporting documentation for multiple missed assessments or when involving a large part of a course (e.g., final exam or major assignment).

### **Disclaimer:**

Please note that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may necessitate a revision of the format of course offerings, changes in classroom protocols, and academic schedules. Any such changes will be announced via CourseLink and/or class email. This includes on-campus scheduling during the semester, midterms, and final examination schedules. All University-wide decisions will be posted on the COVID-19 website (<https://news.uoguelph.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus-information/>) and circulated by email.

For information on current safety protocols, please follow these links:

<https://news.uoguelph.ca/return-to-campuses/how-u-of-g-is-preparing-for-your-safe-return/>

<https://news.uoguelph.ca/return-to-campuses/spaces/#ClassroomSpaces>

Please note, these guidelines may be updated as required in response to evolving University, Public Health, or government directives.