

# Designing conversational media

**Nassim JafariNaimi**

nassim@gatech.edu

Office Location: TSRB #320

Office Hours: by appointment

Class Meetings: Tuesdays 1pm – 4:30pm

Design and Social Interaction Studio:

TSRB 209

## OBJECTIVE

To lay a foundation for understanding and informed criticism of visual and informational artifacts as well as the methods of devising effective communication strategies. To learn methods and strategies for structuring a design research project while at the same time managing and completing it through a reflective process.

## OVERVIEW

Can media applications support conversations in a meaningful and organic way? If so what is the appropriate form for these media responsive both to the content of conversation and the character and concerns of individuals participating? Can we design “conversational media,” media applications that *turn with* the organic flow of a conversation?

The course *Designing Conversational Media* engages the above questions through theoretical readings, criticism and reflection on contemporary digital media artifacts, a series of short experimental design exercises, and a semester-long project in collaboration with an external client to design and prototype a suite of digital artifacts. More specifically from the theoretical side, we will review models of communication understood as information exchange; rhetorical presentation and persuasion; and situated interaction and conversation. We will draw on this review to open up and inquire into concepts such as evidence, conversation, and shared decision making.

On the side of practice, this class will be centered on a semester-long project in collaboration with the Knowledge and Evaluation Research (KER) Unit at the Mayo Clinic exploring how digital artifacts might support shared decision making during patient doctor conversations.

This is an advanced studio course that expects students to be already familiar with design as a strategy as well techniques of digital design. We will however explore and review design methods and strategies such as ideation, iterative prototyping, and criticism as well as some of the basic foundations of visual and interaction design.

**Open to students from all disciplines.**

### ***Learning Outcomes***

- Understand basic theoretical foundations of interaction design.
- Understand information design artifacts as reasoned and persuasive arguments that are audience specific and situated.
- Use the theories and topics presented in this course to identify the problems and analyze the issues of information artifacts in the respective rhetorical and problematic contexts.
- Create digital artifacts with an awareness of history, audience, and context.

### **CLASS POLICIES**

#### ***Evaluation***

This course consists of discussions of selected readings, studio/critique sessions, and a set of projects.

Grades will be determined based on the following:

Project 1: 10%

Project 2: 60%

Readings: 30%

Extra 10%: active sketchbook; blog posts; and other individual explorations and contributions to class

\* Also, see note on attendance

#### ***Attendance***

Due to a significant amount of in-class material and work, prompt attendance and active participation in class discussions and group critiques is required. Two absences are allowed. After that, your grade will drop by one letter grade with every two absences. You will fail the course if you are absent for 6 sessions or more.

#### ***Readings***

As you can see under grading section, I put a great emphasis on your preparation and participation in class. All of you are required to read the assigned papers/ book sections and be ready to discuss them in class. In addition, I will be making you in charge of some of the readings in class in which case you will be required to open and lead the class discussion.

#### ***Communication***

I will use email as means of communication for this course. It is your responsibility to check email often to obtain information related to the course. T-square is also used heavily for communication in class. Make sure to update the settings on your t-square page so you will receive automatic emails about announcements, readings, and assignments. **You are responsible for all announcements made in class, via email or t-square.**

#### ***Office Hours***

Fridays 2pm – 3pm. You can always request a meeting by email.

#### ***Information for Students with Disabilities***

Please notify the instructor if you have any disabilities with which you need special assistance or consideration. The campus disability assistance program can be contacted through ADAPTS: <http://www.adapts.gatech.edu>

***Honor Code Statement:***

Students are expected to adhere to the Georgia Tech Honor Code: [honor.gatech.edu](http://honor.gatech.edu)

**READINGS**

***Required***

Lupton, Ellen. Thinking with Type: A Critical Guide for Designers, Writers, Editors, & Students (Design Briefs). New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004.

***A selection of readings will be distributed for the theoretical portion of the studio.***

This course is also inspired and informed by the following readings:

Booth, Wayne C. The company we keep: An ethics of fiction. (1988)

Dewey, John. Logic: The theory of inquiry (1938)

Dewey, John. Art as Experience. (1934)

Frank, Arthur W. Letting stories breathe: A socio-narratology. (2010)

McKeon, Richard. Rhetoric: Essays in invention and discovery. (1987)

**SOFTWARE & SUPPLIES**

***Software***

We will be doing most of the work using paper and pencil, the Adobe Creative Suite as well as the prototyping tool Axure. Programming skills are a plus but not required. While most of the software are available at Georgia Tech library, students are responsible for accessing the software and not the course. It is also important to note that this is not a class on the software.

***Supplies***

A sketchbook & pencil

8.5"x11" paper

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### **Part I. Conversation and Shared Decision Making: Three Paradigms**

#### **Week 1, Jan 10**

##### **Course Overview**

Creativity and Play  
Design Thinking  
Data

#### **Week 2, Jan 17**

##### **Theory: Conversation as Exchange**

*Reading:* "The Mathematics of Communication," Weaver

*Reading:* "Communication Theory," Fiske

*Reading:* "Visualizing uncertainty about the future," D. Spiegelhalter, M. Pearson, I Short

*Recommended Viewing:* "The Imitation Game," written by Ian McEwan and directed by Richard Eyre

##### **Design Methods and Principles**

*Viewing:* IDEO redesigning the shopping cart

*Viewing:* Tim Brown, Tales of Creativity and Play

*Find:* 100 uses for a paper clip

*Reading:* Thinking with Type (LETTER + TEXT)

#### **Week 3, Jan 24**

##### **Theory: Conversation as Negotiation**

*Reading:* Selections from The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, Erving Goffman

*Reading:* TBD

##### **Studio work | Project 1**

*Project 1: Redesign*

*Browse:* Universal Methods of Design: 100 Ways to Research Complex Problems, Develop Innovative Ideas, and Design Effective Solutions. by Bruce Hanington & Bella Martin

##### **Design Methods and Principles**

*Reading:* Thinking with Type (GRID)

*Explore:* <http://www.designkit.org/methods>

##### **Studio work | Project 1**

*Project 1: Critique and Discussion*

#### **Week 4, Jan 31**

##### **Theory: Conversation as Storied Inquiry (Thinking with)**

*Reading:* Selections from "Democracy and Education" by John Dewey

*Reading:* TBD

## Studio work | Final Submission of Project 1

Project 1: Redesign  
Final Critique and Reflection

### Design Methods and Principles

IDEO Method Cards  
+ TBD

## Part II. Conversational Media

### Week 5, Feb 7

#### Storied Inquiry

“Values as hypotheses: design, inquiry, and the service of values,” *JafariNaimi, Nathan, Hargraves*

#### Studio work | Project 2, Introduction

*Introducing Project 2: Conversational Media*

View: *Maggie Breslin: The Power of a Conversation* (Transform 2009): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5YU5\\_CW2Ik](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5YU5_CW2Ik)

*Meeting with Maggie Breslin*

### Week 6, Feb 14

#### Shared Decision Making

Read: *Keeping the Patient in the Equation — Humanism and Health Care Reform* (Pamela Hartzband and Jerome Groopman)

Read: *Selections From John Dewey on Evidence*. TBD

Explore:

Links to some of our current digital conversation support tools:

<http://statindecisionaid.mayoclinic.org>

<http://diabetesdecisionaid.mayoclinic.org>

<http://osteoporosisdecisionaid.mayoclinic.org>

<http://takethewind.dyndns-work.com/Mayo6/>

Research:

<http://shareddecisions.mayoclinic.org>

#### Studio work | Project 2

*Project 2: Conversational Media*

*Class Viewing: Patient-Doctor Conversations*

*Tentative: Student Presentations*

### Week 7, Feb 27

#### Shared Decision Making

Continue Research + Studio Work

<http://shareddecisions.mayoclinic.org>

*Early Concepts Presentations; Q&A*

### Week 8, Mar 6

Read: *The Case Against “the Evidence”*: A Different Perspective on Evidence-based Medicine

**Studio work | Project 2**  
Early Concept Presentation and Crit

**Week 9, Mar 13**

**Studio work | Project 2**  
Concept Presentation and Discussion with Mayo

**Week 10, Mar 20**

**SPRING BREAK**

**Week 11, Mar 27**

**Studio work | Project 2**  
Prototyping and Crit

**Week 12, April 3**

**Studio work | Project 2**  
Prototyping and Crit

### ***Part III. Values and Principles***

**Week 13, Apr 10**

**Studio work | Project 2**  
Concept Presentation and Discussion with Mayo

**Week 14, Apr 17**

#### **Theory: Criticism, Conversation, and Design Ethics**

Readings: Selections from "The Company We Keep, an Ethics of Fiction," by Wayne Booth

Reading: "Re-establishing the Center in Human-Centered Design: From Opportunity to Significance in Human Life and Living," by Ian Hargraves and Nassim JafariNaimi

Reading: "Human Dignity and Human Rights: Thoughts on the Principles of Human-Centered Design" by Richard Buchanan

**Studio work | Project 2**  
Concept Presentation and Dry Run

**Week 15, Apr 24**

**Studio work | Project 2**  
Final Stage Refinement of Ideas and Prototyping  
Final Presentations