



MERRIMACK COLLEGE
Visual & Performing Arts

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| Course Title | UX Design |
| Course # | DES3860 |
| Credit Hours | 4-credit |
| Location | Merrimack Athletic Complex, 1185 Design Lab |
| Prerequisites | DES2830 or DES2840, or permission of the instructor |

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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|-----------------------|--|
| Instructor | Professor Christopher Previte |
| Office Hours | Weekly, Online Office Hours will be posted in Announcements on Canvas. |
| E-Mail Address | previtec@merrimack.edu |

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Course Description UX Design is the design of experiences and interactions that users find functional and enjoyable. This course provides a comprehensive introduction to the user experience design process. Lectures and assignments focus on creating experiences for contemporary digital interfaces. Students explore and apply UX concepts and techniques presented through distinct projects that are augmented with lectures, reading, and writing assignments. Projects explore user research, problem definition, information architecture, and interactive prototyping. Students practice presenting their ideas and collect feedback for further iterative evaluation and evolution. Students develop a better understanding of what technological standards and tools are utilized for the design of digital products. Technological, design, business and ethical practices are discussed in reference to each projects' intent.

Class time will include short lectures, critique, software demonstrations, discussion of reading and writing assignments and in-class studio work. Students will be expected to work outside of class to finish projects.

Learning Outcomes Upon successful completion of this course, students must demonstrate that they possess the following learning outcomes as determined by their performance assessments:

1. Utilize research and ideation techniques to develop front-end interactive solutions
2. Conduct rapid prototyping and wireframe user testing for web, mobile, and app design
3. Discuss how human centered design and accessibility in web design benefits all users
4. Identify and practice best practices in the UX workflow and site development
5. Employ effective design, layout, typography, and color theory to web design



Grading and Assessment Methods

Your progress is assessed based on attendance, class participation and assignments. Each of these are graded using rubrics and guidelines published under Assignments in Canvas. Critiques follow the Functional Criticism technique. Students are expected to make use of critiques to revise and improve projects.

1. THE FOLLOWING IS THE BREAKDOWN OF YOUR GRADE:

Projects (2) - worth 50%

UX design projects serve as the principle means through which the student demonstrates the objectives of their learning. Please see the requirements in each project handout.

Discussion Essay – worth 10%

Around mid-term there will be one discussion essay students will participate in. See the Discussion Board Course Policy

Exercises/Tutorials - worth 30%

Students will be introduced to and are expected to complete a series of web coding exercises and tutorials. Students can work at their own pace, but all exercises and tutorials must be completed by the end of the semester.

Attendance/Participation – worth 10%

See the Attendance and Participation Course Policy

2. DUE DATES

| ASSIGNMENT | FINAL DUE DATE |
|---|----------------|
| PROJECT 1: Tablet Application Design – PART 1 | WEEK 3 |
| PROJECT 1: Tablet Application Design – PART 2 | WEEK 4 |
| PROJECT 1: Tablet Application Design – PART 3 | WEEK 6 |
| PROJECT 1: Tablet Application Design – FINAL PRESENTATION | WEEK 8 |
| DISCUSSION BOARD ESSAY: Skeuomorphism (pt. 1) | WEEK 8 |
| DISCUSSION BOARD ESSAY: Skeuomorphism (pt. 2) | WEEK 9 |
| PROJECT 2: Instructional Site Design – PART 1 | WEEK 10 |
| PROJECT 2: Instructional Site Design – PART 2 | WEEK 12 |
| PROJECT 2: Instructional Site Design – PART 3 | WEEK 13 |
| PROJECT 2: Instructional Site Design – PART 4 | WEEK 15 |
| LEARN HTML EXERCISES/TUTORIALS | WEEK 15 |
| LEARN CSS EXERCISE/TUTORIALS | WEEK 15 |
| PROJECT 2: Instructional Site Design – FINAL PRESENTATION | WEEK 16 |

> Specific deadline dates are found in the assignment details under Assignments on Canvas.

Final Grading Scale

| Letter Grade | Range | Letter Grade | Range |
|--------------|------------|--------------|-----------|
| A | 93% - 100% | C | 73% - 77% |
| A- | 90% - 93% | C- | 70% - 73% |
| B+ | 87% - 90% | D+ | 67% - 70% |
| B | 83% - 87% | D | 63% - 67% |
| B- | 80% - 83% | D- | 60% - 63% |
| C+ | 77% - 80% | F | 0% - 60% |

Credit Justification Statement

| Activity | Weekly Time Commitment |
|---|--|
| In-Class Time incl. Final Presentations | 230 min. x 16 weeks = 61.3 hours total |
| Consumables | 3 hours x 15 weeks = 45 hours total |
| Project Research, Ideation, and Prep | 2 hours x 16 weeks = 32 hours total |
| Deliverable Creation | 2 hours x 16 weeks = 32 hours total |
| Discussions and Critiques | 1 hour x 10 weeks = 10 hours total |
| Total Hours | 180.3 |

COURSE MATERIALS



- Software** This course makes use of the [Adobe Creative Cloud](#) set of apps, specifically XD, Photoshop, and Illustrator. Additionally, we will explore online tools such as [Figma](#), [Tilda](#), and [LottieFiles](#).
- File Storage** Portable, external hard drive (200GB min.) AND/OR
Access to cloud storage (OneDrive, DropBox, iCloud, etc.)
- Other Supplies** Sketch Book; Graph or Dot Paper; Cork-Backed Metal Ruler; Pencils; Pens; Markers; Colored Pencils; Drafting Tape; Xacto Knife and Blades
- Consumables** All weekly consumables, which can include readings, videos, and podcasts, will be included in the Weekly Modules and/or Announcements in Canvas. Students are expected to consume and take notes on all of these as they are made available. We will be discussing these in class both casually and formally (using the Yes, and... method)

There is no textbook in this class.

Recommended Reading:

- [Introduction to Design Thinking for UX Beginners](#)
- [Design Is Storytelling](#)

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance and Class Participation Attendance is required in this class. The ability to be in class, explore ideas and concepts, practice skills, and provide thoughtful critique with your classmates and professor is crucial to a robust practice of art and design. Additionally, students are expected to be active on Canvas. Being active means participating fully in discussion boards, peer reviews, and submitting assignments/projects as required. Finally, students are expected to participate in any group work and respond to emails from their professor and classmates in a timely, professional manner. In these ways, students will earn credit for attendance and participation in this class.

If you are unable to attend class due to illness or other unavoidable circumstance, you may be allowed to attend via Zoom if you email the professor in advance for approval.

Students are allowed up to two excused absences for any reason at all (freebies).

Discussion Boards Students are required to fully participate in all discussion boards by the Friday of the week they are assigned (by 10PM). To “fully participate” in a discussion board means to reply to the given prompt in a thorough, well-researched, and thoughtful manner that addresses all given instructions. Additionally, all students must respond to *at least two* classmates’ posts within each discussion board in an equally thoughtful manner. *Any research referenced in your posts must be cited.*

Timely participation in discussion boards is essential to the relevancy of the given discussion. Late participation, within the assigned week, will result in a reduced grade. Participation after the Saturday of a given week or not at all will result in a ‘0’ for that discussion boards.



Course Writing Guidelines

All written assignments and content for class will be written using the following guidelines:

- A page of writing is approximately 250 to 500 words per page. So, if an assignment requires 3-pages, that's 750 to 1,500 words.
- You must write in 11-point font, with 1.5 line spacing throughout the whole document.
- You can use any of these fonts: Times New Roman, Avenir, Calibri, Helvetica. Only 1-font per document. You can use any included type styles (bold, book, italic, etc.) for emphasis.

While you may certainly do your initial writing by hand, on paper, all *submitted* writing must be done using one of the following digital writing tools: Microsoft Word, Google Docs, Apple Pages.

Late Work

Students are expected to turn assignments and projects in on time, based on posted deadlines. The expectation is that work will be completed on time. Any work that is not submitted when due may be marked down by one letter grade ("B" to "C", "C" to "D"...) for each week that it is late.

Students must submit the final assignment no later than the last day of the term/semester. No assignments are accepted after the last day of the term/semester.

Students needing extra time to submit work are expected to contact the instructor via email to explain their circumstances and request an extension. The instructor will then decide whether or not to grant an extension or maintain the failing grade ('F').

Missed Assignments

Failure to submit an assignment will result in the assignment receiving a failing grade ('F').

Plagiarism or Other Forms of Academic Dishonesty

"Plagiarism is the act of stealing or passing as one's own the ideas or words of another" or "re-submitting work in whole or in part that has previously been submitted in another course, without the permission of the current instructor."

As this is a visual design class, I extend that definition to include any imagery such as photography, illustration, iconography, or graphics that are not your own original creation. Using photography as reference when creating an original illustration or graphic, is not the same as plagiarism. We will discuss the difference in detail, in class.

Any instance of plagiarism or academic dishonesty as defined, will result in an "F" for that assignment and will be reported to the Office of Academic Affairs.



AI Use Policy Introduction & Purpose

I recognize the importance and benefits of using Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, which is why my position is to embrace and integrate them into certain course activities with full transparency about their use. Any use of AI in this course is to enrich your learning experience with interactive activities and as a way for you to gain practical experience with important technologies. However, using any AI tools without permission is not permitted.

Examples of AI Tools

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| ChatGPT | Replika | MidJourney |
| ChatSonic | ELSA | Adobe Firefly |
| Jasper | Bing Chat | Claude |
| Socratic | Wolfram Alpha | Poe |
| Ai-powered Bing | Bloom | DALL.E |
| Google Bard | YouChat | QuillBOT |
| TruthGPT | Megatron-Turing | |

Specific use rules for AI in this course:

- Do not use any AI tools during any exams or quizzes.
- Do not use AI tools during any assignments without specific permission and instructions.
- Credit and cite any time you use AI.
- You may use AI to check your written work for grammar and punctuation.
- You may use AI to paraphrase your own, original writing.
- AI should not be used to write or change the style and composition of your writing.
- Never enter any personally identifiable information into AI tools

Academic Accommodations from the Accessibility Services Office

Regardless of whether the course or the student is on-campus or remote, Merrimack College provides reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities through the Accessibility Services Office. Students who have, or think they may have, a disability are invited to contact the Accessibility Services Office via the online request form found on the [Accessibility Services website](#), email accessibilityservices@merrimack.edu or by visiting us on the third floor of McQuade Library (subject to change if the college is remote).

Students are encouraged to contact the office as soon as possible via the website or via email at accessibilityservices@merrimack.edu to ensure adequate time to meet and create a plan. Students already registered with Accessibility Services are encouraged semesterly to request for their letters to be emailed and students are responsible to then email the letter to their instructors personally. The Accessibility Services Testing Center remains available to students whether in-person or remote. While it is understood that some students will not use all accommodations in all courses, accommodations cannot be made retroactively.

If you have an academic need or learning disability that should be taken into account in either classroom activities or exams, you must provide the proper documentation detailing the accommodations necessary in the first two weeks of the semester.

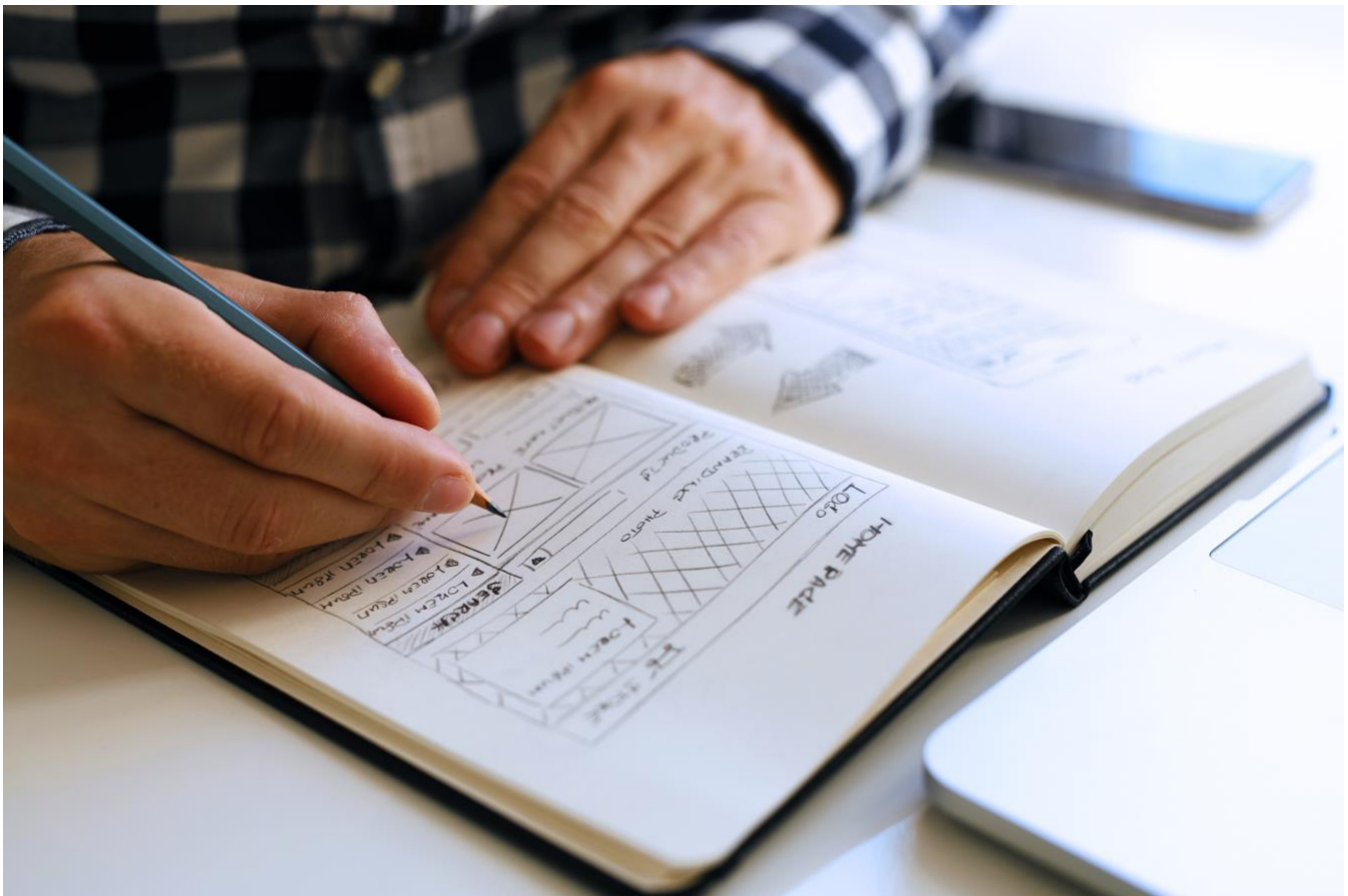
Health Message

Your mental health is a top priority. Licensed mental health professionals at the Counseling Center are available to help you address personal challenges and learn strategies and skills to help you navigate the college experience. Please call them at 978- 837-5444 to schedule an appointment via Zoom. For more information, visit the Counseling Center.



Diversity Statement The commitment of Merrimack College to honor and advance diversity embodies a vigilant, constructive and creative pledge to ensure that all racial, ethnic, cultural and social groups dedicated to discourse and mutual respect are full partners in our common educational quest. The unique experiences and particular perspectives of such partners in the search for knowledge and wisdom contribute to a rich interdisciplinary and multicultural curriculum.

- See Merrimack College's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiative [HERE](#)
- See the Department of Communication & Media's Anti-Racism Statement and Initiatives [HERE](#)





WEEKLY MODULES

| Week | Date | Weekly Topics and Events |
|------|----------|---|
| 1 | 01/22/24 | <p>WHAT IS UX (USER EXPERIENCE) DESIGN Class Goals: Overview of Canvas, syllabus, goals, expectations, tools & processes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the UX Workflow • The State of UX/UI Software, Illustrator, and Photoshop • Introduce Web Code Exercises/Tutorials • The role of human centered design and the importance of empathy • The value of Design Thinking <p>Consumable(s): Human Centered Design; Human Centered Design vs User Centered Design; HTML CSS (pdf); UX Workflow (pdf); Adobe XD Tutorials</p> <p>---</p> <p>DUE: NA HW: Ensure Adobe Access, Consider all Consumables</p> |
| 2 | 01/29/24 | <p>PROJECT 1 Class Goals: Introduce Rapid Prototyping, and PROJECT 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine Design Teams • Determine restaurant menu to design • Begin creating your research packet (research, research, research) <p>Consumable(s): What is Paper Prototyping?</p> <p>---</p> <p>DUE: NA HW: PROJECT 1: Tablet Application Design – PART 1 (Research and Planning & Site Diagram and Wireframes)</p> |
| 3 | 02/05/24 | <p>PROJECT 1 Class Goals: Introduce Site Diagrams, Wireframing, and Usability Testing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of Research and Planning • Create site diagram and wireframes for all chosen screens • Develop user testing questions and structure <p>Consumable(s): Wireframe Mockups (pdf); What is Usability Testing? (pdf); The Guide to Usability Testing</p> <p>---</p> <p>DUE: PROJECT 1: Tablet Application Design – PART 1 (Research and Planning & Site Diagram and Wireframes) HW: PROJECT 1: Tablet Application Design – PART 2 (Usability Testing)</p> |



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| 4 | 02/12/24 | <p>PROJECT 1 Class Goals: All About Visual Design and Interactive Media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of Usability Testing Results • Self-critique and update wireframes based on UT results • Begin visual design for all screens • Stand Up: HTML/CSS Exercises/Tutorials • Anatomy of an Interactive Site <p>Consumable(s): Visual design examples; Creative Commons; Unsplash; Pexels; Pixabay; The Noun Project; Many Icon Sets</p> <p>Layout of Screen Elements (from <i>Designing Interfaces</i> by Tidwell, Brewer, Valencia)</p> <p>---</p> <p>DUE: PROJECT 1: Tablet Application Design – PART 2 (Usability Testing) HW: PROJECT 1: Tablet Application Design – PART 3 (Visual Design & Prototype Creation)</p> |
| 5 | 02/19/24 02/22/24 | <p>PRESIDENTS' DAY (no classes) CLASS MEETING ON WEDNESDAY</p> <p>PROJECT 1 Class Goals: Free Swim Time to Work on Visual Design</p> |
| 6 | 02/26/24 | <p>PROJECT 1 Class Goals: Full Critique of Visual Design. All About Digital Prototypes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation and critique of Visual Designs • Time to improve visual designs • Begin digital prototypes and prepare additional usability testing • The State of UX/UI Software <p>Consumable(s): Mental Models; The Role of Psychology in Design</p> <p>---</p> <p>DUE: PROJECT 1 : Tablet Application Design – PART 3 (Visual Design & Prototype Creation) HW: PROJECT 1: Tablet Application Design – FINAL PRESENTATION</p> |
| 7 | 03/04/24 | <p>SPRING RECESS (no classes)</p> |



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| <p>8</p> | <p>03/11/24</p> | <p>PROJECT 1 and SKEUOMORPHISM Class Goals: Final Presentations of PROJECT 1. Discuss the benefits and history of Skeuomorphism as a design tool?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation and critique of PROJECT 1 • The history and application of Skeuomorphism • Skeuomorphism Discussion and Icon Creation • Stand Up: HTML/CSS Exercises/Tutorials <p>Consumable(s): Skeuomorphic Design: A Beginner's Guide; Skeuomorphism vs. Flat Design vs. Material Design</p> <p>---</p> <p>DUE: PROJECT 1: Tablet Application Design – FINAL PRESENTATION; SKEUOMORPHISM (pt. 1) – Discussion HW: SKEUOMORPHISM (pt. 2) – Icon Creation</p> |
| <p>9</p> | <p>03/18/24</p> | <p>SKEUOMORPHISM and PROJECT 2 Class Goals: Review the results of our exploration of skeuomorphism and introduce PROJECT 2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DIY culture and the web • What would you like to teach someone? • Think about what you enjoy doing. What are your hobbies and interests? • Begin research and writing • Create usability testing deck <p>Consumable(s): How to Design Icons: Tutorials and Pro Tips</p> <p>---</p> <p>DUE: SKEUOMORPHISM (pt. 2) – Icon Creation HW: PROJECT 2: Instructional Web Site – PART 1 (Research, Writing, and Planning)</p> |
| <p>10</p> | <p>03/25/24</p> | <p>PROJECT 2 Class Goals: Presentation of Written Steps and Usability Testing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct usability testing • Take user tester's questions and concerns into account and rewrite steps. • Begin creating and/or collecting needed imagery (photos, illustrations, diagrams, graphics) • Introducing Figma <p>Consumable(s): Figma for Beginners: Introducing Figma</p> <p>---</p> <p>DUE: PROJECT 2: Instructional Web Site – PART 1 (Research, Writing, and Planning) HW: PROJECT 2: Instructional Web Site – PART 2 (Site Diagram, Wireframes, Usability Testing)</p> |
| <p>11</p> | <p>04/01/24</p> | <p>EASTER RECESS (no classes)</p> |



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| <p style="text-align: center;">12</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">04/08/24</p> | <p>PROJECT 2 Class Goals: Review and critique completed imagery (photos, illustrations, diagrams, graphics)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edit and iterate imagery as needed per critique • Create wireframes for all chosen screens • Develop user testing questions and structure • Consider site names and begin simple logomark design • Stand Up: HTML/CSS Exercises/Tutorials <p>Consumable(s): All About Lottie Files; What is a Lottie Animation?</p> <p>---</p> <p>DUE: PROJECT 2: Instructional Web Site – PART 2 (Site Diagram, Wireframes, Usability Testing) HW: PROJECT 2: Instructional Web Site – PART 3 (Visual Design & Prototype Creation)</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">13</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">04/15/24</p> | <p>PROJECT 2 Class Goals: Presentation of Usability Testing Results, Site Name, Logomark Draft</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of Usability Testing Results • Self-critique and update wireframes based on UT results • Finalize Logomark and Site Name • Begin visual design for all screens <p>Consumable(s): All About Tilda</p> <p>---</p> <p>DUE: PROJECT 2: Instructional Web Site – PART 3 (Visual Design & Prototype Creation) HW: PROJECT 2: Instructional Web Site – PART 4 (Make Your Prototype Function)</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">14</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">04/22/24</p> | <p>PROJECT 2 Class Goals: Presentation of Visual Design, Logomark, Site Name</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize visual design • Begin digital prototype • Prepare final usability testing <p>Consumable(s): The Lisa, Susan Kare, and the GUI</p> <p>---</p> <p>DUE: PROJECT 2: Instructional Web Site – PART 4 (Make Your Prototype Function) HW: PROJECT 2: Instructional Web Site – PART 4 (Make Your Prototype Function)</p> |



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| <p>15</p> | <p>04/29/24</p> | <p>PROJECT 2 Class Goals: Completion of your instructional website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of final usability testing • Final site adjustments based on UT results and feedback <p>Consumable(s): The Institute for Human Centered Design</p> <p>---</p> <p>DUE: PROJECT 2: Instructional Web Site – PART 4 (Make Your Prototype Function); HTML/CSS Exercises/Tutorials HW: PROJECT 2: Instructional Web Site – FINAL PRESENTATION; Class Reflection</p> |
| <p>16</p> | <p>05/06/24 --- (Finals Week)</p> | <p>PROJECT 2 and CLASS REFLECTIONS Class Goals: Final Presentation of PROJECT 2 and Class Reflections</p> <p>---</p> <p>DUE: PROJECT 2: Instructional Web Site – FINAL PRESENTATION HW: A Long Nap</p> |

MERRIMACK COLLEGE COMMUNICATION & MEDIA



The schedule and material in this syllabus may be updated or changed upon the instructional needs of students in the course and any changes in college schedules.

Created by: Christopher Previte
Last updated: November 15, 2023
Maintained by: Christopher Previte

