PUCD 2125
Core 2: Interaction Studio

Last Updated: Jan. 20, 2026

Program	School of Art, Media, and Technology: Communication Design
CRN	2527
Semester	Spring 2026
Meeting Day	Tuesdays, Thursdays
Meeting Time	9:00am - 11:40am
Room	1111
Instructor & Email	Andrés Cuervo cuervora@newschool.edu
Class Website	cwervo.github.io/c2is26/

Course Description

This course exposes students to thorough and elaborate interactive concepts and techniques for applications. It is an extensive investigation in the interface, the mechanism, the controls and the aims of interactive works. Students will learn how to design and develop complex interactive projects and understand how to undertake comprehensive research and direct their thinking process from brainstorming to the final outcome. They will be given the tools to conceive, plan and develop an interactive system and they will become aware of the importance of design's role in contemporary media.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

1. Use the vocabulary of interaction design to give and respond to critique productively.
2. Identify and understand the needs and context of the audience for an interactive experience.
3. Contextualize work within historic and current design precedents.
4. Begin to develop a perspective on the relationships among design, technology, and the internet.
5. Effectively deploy typography and compositional form to create interactive experiences that are compelling and dynamic.
6. Conceive design systems that respond to unpredictable and variable content, situations, and end-user devices

7. Understand how interaction design patterns facilitate orientation, user behaviours, usability, and consistency.
8. Understand the iterative making process of user research, prototyping, and refinement from low to high fidelity designs.
9. Translate design ideas and sketches into working prototypes and built experiences.
10. Document and archive screen-based work in a reflective manner.

Course Outline

Unit 1: Structure & Style (Weeks 1–4)

- **Unit Summary**

  In the first unit, we will examine the prominent qualities that distinguish a website from static media. We will focus on the fundamental relationship between the structure—the semantic organization of digital environments, and the style—the visual presentation and composition of contents, as an organizing principle in design and on the web. We will survey web features for fictive spaces (hyperlinks, infinite scroll &tc.), and the interactions with them for non-linear experiences in the browser. We will also explore typography as a tool to illustrate concepts in web projects and how they respond to the fluid and dynamic properties of the screen.

Unit 2: Ways of Arranging (Weeks 5–9)

- **Unit Summary**

  Building on Unit 1, we will continue the examination of our digital environments as a composition of many building blocks and components. Here, we will look into how different visuals of elements indicate distinctive interfaces, to different interactions; and how all of them work together for a user experience that is dynamic and changing. We will also build on our understanding of the fluid and responsive typography on the screen, and extend it to think responsively for modular approaches and dynamic forms.

Unit 3: Users and Platforms (Weeks 10–14)

- **Unit Summary**

  In the final unit, we will consider what occurs when the content of an online experience, its interface, and its users are dynamic and in a state of constant change. This final unit requires students to build upon the lessons from the previous two units and to design a platform that serves real-life users. Conducting user research from life experience, students get to work with real-world feedback and needs, understanding how design takes shape through multi-modal communications and processes. By implementing a data management system, the website manages to collect, and store, and publish the contributed information from its users.

Assessable Tasks

Projects, Activities, and Readings

Every unit will consist of lectures, assigned readings, and projects. Topics will cover historical, critical, and practical issues in interaction design. Students are expected to contribute to a culture of critique and dialogue by active participation and engagement in every class.

Lectures

On Fridays, all students will attend a Core 2 Interaction Lecture. Each lecture will frame the concepts discussed in studio from the perspective of coding which will enable students to complete the projects assigned in studio. Attendance is required and necessary for completion of this course.

CD Lecture Series

All sophomores are required to attend the CD Lecture series.

Assessment Criteria

25% Project 1
30% Project 2
30% Project 3
15% Participation and Engagement

Grading Rubric

The following grading rubric will be used to assess both mid-semester score and final grade.

Project 1 / 25 pts

- **Conceptual Thinking (# / 5)**
  Original and creative thinking, depth of investigation, and historic/contemporary context
- **Process (# / 5)**
  Iteration, risk-taking, and refinement of ideas and skills towards the final project
- **Response (# / 5)**
  Appropriateness of solution to original intention, problem, and audience
- **Visual Quality (# / 5)**
  Devotion to craft and attention to details of typography, form, composition
- **Technical Realization (# / 5)**
  Ability to meaningfully build and realize design intentions through the final artifact

Project 2 / 30 pts

- **Conceptual Thinking (# / 6)**
  Original and creative thinking, depth of investigation, and historic/contemporary context

- **Process (# / 6)**
  Iteration, risk-taking, and refinement of ideas and skills towards the final project
- **Response (# / 6)**
  Appropriateness of solution to original intention, problem, and audience
- **Visual Quality (# / 6)**
  Devotion to craft and attention to details of typography, form, composition
- **Technical Realization (# / 6)**
  Ability to meaningfully build and realize design intentions through the final artifact

Project 3 / 30 pts

- **Conceptual Thinking (# / 6)**
  Original and creative thinking, depth of investigation, and historic/contemporary context
- **Process (# / 6)**
  Iteration, risk-taking, and refinement of ideas and skills towards the final project
- **Response (# / 6)**
  Appropriateness of solution to original intention, problem, and audience
- **Visual Quality (# / 6)**
  Devotion to craft and attention to details of typography, form, composition
- **Technical Realization (# / 6)**
  Ability to meaningfully build and realize design intentions through the final artifact

Participation and Engagement / 15 pts

- **Unit 1 # / 5**
- **Unit 2 # / 5**
- **Unit 3 # / 5**

  Active involvement in class discussions and activities
  Contributing to a culture of dialogue and critique in the classroom

Total Score **# / 100**

A (95 – 100); **A-** (90 – 94); **B+** (86 – 89); **B** (84 – 85); **B-** (80 – 83);
C+ (76 – 79); **C** (74 – 75); **C-** (70 – 73); **D** (60 – 69); **F** (59 and below)

Attendance, Grading and Work Submission Standards, Program Policies, Making Resources, and University Policies

All CD classes adhere to the same program and university policies: https://bit.ly/2LHztsW

Attendance Policy: For classes meeting twice a week, students are allowed **4 absences**. Any absence beyond the allowed absences will result in an automatic failure (F) for the course. There are no excused absences, and doctor's notes are not necessary.

A student is deemed tardy if a student fails to arrive within 15 minutes past the beginning of class. **2 tardies** will result in an automatic absence. A student who arrives an hour past the beginning of class will be deemed absent.

Materials and Supplies

- **Laptop**
- [Google Drive/Dropbox Paper/Canvas/Notion]
- Git/GitHub We will be using GitHub to manage our code. Sign up if you don't have an account already.
- Figma Figma is a modern interface design tool that is collaborative online. We will be using Figma exclusively for creating your design mockups. Sign up with your newschool.edu email for a free education account.
- Visual Studio Code editor
- Google Chrome A fast, secure, and free web browser.
- Vimeo
- A library of interaction-related topics is available on the CD Vimeo account. Password for all videos: **interaction**

Fair use disclaimer about using ChatGPT

Learning a new skill can often be challenging. Give yourself time to experience this challenge and work, step-by-step, through issues as you gain new knowledge. Don't let LLMs (like ChatGPT) take this away from you. Instead, use them mindfully to assist you in your growth.

Do

- Proofread code you already wrote
- Add an explanation for why the code is or isn't working so that you can understand it better
- Debug and catch typos
- As part of the design process as demonstrated by your faculty

Don't

- Generate new code from scratch that you copy/paste
- Write a complete program for you

Projects

Project 1: Non-linear Space

Design and build a website that presents multiple texts in a non-linear reading experience. Identify meaningful cross-linking relationships within the content and develop visual strategies to represent these connections. Use tools such as sitemaps, navigation, and hyperlinks to map the web experience that allows multiple ways of exploration. Develop a cohesive visual system that unifies the texts into a digital reader with consistent, well-structured architecture.

Consider and reflect:

What is your typical web surfing experience like? Do you jump a lot between links?
What are some functions a website is capable of but a book is not?
How do you visualize a webpage beyond the screen?
What is a good metaphor of the screen to the web?
How do you navigate yourself in a physical space, like a gallery or show for the first time?
What devices would you provide to support a first-time visitor to your website?

Content: Jorges Luis Borges, *The Garden of Forking Paths*
The Circular Ruins
The Book of Sand

Stretch goal

- Responsiveness (multiple devices)

Suggested readings & resources:

- Jonathan L. Zittrain, “The Battle of the Boxes” & “The Battle of the Networks” from The Future of the Internet (pp.11–35)
- Katharina Nill, Contest for Kids
- Maciej Cegłowski, Web Design - The First 100 Years
- Beatriz Colomina and Mark Wigley, Introduction to Are We Human?
- Olia Lialina, A Vernacular Web; PDF version
- American Artist, Black Gooey Universe
- Dan Rhatigan, Beyond Type
- (Podcast interview) Kyle Chayka, How to Discover your own taste
- Cliff Huang, User Friendly
- Don Norman, Chapter 1 of The Design of Everyday Things
- Eleven Ways of Smelling a Tree
- Establishing Secure Connection
- Pleasure of the Text
- The Sound of Love

Project 2: Ways of Arranging

Identify an HTML element as your interface element, and create a website that comprises 25 instances of this interface element, either visually or literally. Understand the semantic meaning and inherited styles, interactions, and functions of the HTML element; research its origin and common usages, and curate a content that complements, deviates, or subverts its common use. Compile all the instances you've created as components on a single page, you will then add your page to a class repository that we'll establish collectively as a component library.

Stretch goal

- Class create a collective component library of student made components
- Student use the component library for future projects

Suggested readings & resources

- Kimon Keramida, The Interface Experience
- Rob Giampietro, I AM A HANDLE
- Rauno Freiberg, Invisible Details of Interaction Design
- Olia Lialina, Once Again, the Doorknob
- Apple Inclusion guidelines
- Google Accessibility Guidelines
- https://kayserifserif.place/every-element-is-an-html/
- http://www.sebastianlyserena.dk/

Project 3: Digital Platform

The internet is one of the most prevalent and powerful communication technologies today, if not the most powerful. In the final project, you will create a digital platform for people to exchange information, goods, and services in a time of need. By connecting to a data management system, your website will collect, store, and publish the collected information from its users, and benefit the group as a whole.

Start from identifying a group of named, real-life audiences, and review 3-4 user archetypes within the group (e.g. leaders, people with needs, helpers). Create a diagram of how they would interact with each other, and what information they would collect and share. Map at least one user journey that shows the necessary steps and touchpoints in their interaction with the platform to accomplish their goals. Consider how your web app can address the needs of this specific user group, and how you can clarify or highlight certain areas of the interface to support this goal.

Consider:

Who are the contributing users?
Who are the non-contributing users? How would you prompt them to potentially contribute?
What are the benefits the project does to the group as a whole?
What steps are there from collecting the data to publishing it?

Will the website evolve with the content collection evolve over time?
If technical difficulty is anticipated at any of the steps, what are some alternative work arounds? Be creative!

Stretch goal

- Students conduct user testing, and build a working site that incorporates user inputs

Suggested readings

- Ursula K. Le Guin, The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction.
- Charles Broskoski on self-discovery that happens upon revisiting things you've accumulated over time
- Jia Tolenito, What Mutual Aid Can Do During a Pandemic
- OECD Survey of Adult Skills, Do Adults Have the Skills They Need to Thrive in a Changing World?
- Monica Chin, File Not Found
- Catherine D'Ignazio and Lauren Klein, Collect, Analyze, Imagine, Teach
- Mindy Seu, On Gathering
- Darius Kazemi, Run Your Own Social
- On Bureaucratic Technologies and the Future as Dream-Time (video)

Schedule

Week 1 (Thu)	**Project 1 Kick-off**
Lecture	Welcome and Icebreakers, What is the internet, Who is the Internet for?
Activity	Project 1: Introduction, Project 1: Content Generation Exercise, Form study groups
Homework	**Introduction:** Put together a slide show (10-20 slides) that describes your relationship to the internet, past or present **Project 1:** Write a definition for the word you selected, and select a supporting text. Research both the author and publication and consider how the text might be interpreted for a specific audience.

Week 2 (Tue)	**Project 1**
Lecture	Semantic Structure, Linear and non-linear reading experiences
Activity	Slideshow presentations, Small Group Meetings
Homework	**Ideate:** Structure your chosen text **Lecture Prep:** Organize into 3 person study groups mixed by proficiency.

Week 2 (Thu)	**Project 1**
Lecture	Typographic patterns on the web, Typographic hierarchy and navigation, Figma: Setup, organization, type styles
Activity	Inspiration and readings discussion, Project 1: Feedback on how users will interpret your text
Homework	**Design: Refine two of your designs for testing.**

Week 3 (Tue)	**Project 1**
Lecture	
Activity	Pin-up, Small Group Meetings
Homework	**Design: Refine two of your designs for testing.**

Week 3 (Thu)	**Project 1**
Lecture	Responsive design (typography focus) Accessibility (typography focus)

Activity	Inspiration and readings discussion, Project 1: User testing of design directions
Homework	**Test, Refine, and Build:** Refine your design and incorporate multiple screen sizes; begin programming

Week 4 (Tue)	**Project 1**
Lecture	
Activity	Individual Meetings
Homework	**Build:** Continue programming your site.

Week 4 (Thu)	**Project 1**
Lecture	Experimental web typography, building your presentation deck, Documenting your project
Activity	Project 1: User testing of builds-in-progress
Homework	**Build and Document:** Finalize the build of your site. Document your site.

Week 5 (Tue)	**Project 1 Final**
Lecture	
Activity	Project 1: Final Critique
Homework	

Week 5 (Thu)	**Project 2 Kick-off**
Lecture	What is an interface?, Parts of an interface (button/menu/inputs)
Activity	Project 2 Part 1: In-Class Activity
Homework	

Week 6 (Tue)	**Project 2**
Lecture	What is an algorithm?
Activity	Project 2 Part 2: Introduction
Homework	**Design and Build:** Project 2, Part 2

Week 6 (Thu)	**Project 2**
Lecture	What is an algorithm?
Activity	Project 2 Part 2: Introduction
Homework	**Design and Build:** Project 2, Part 2

Week 7 (Tue)	**Project 2**
Lecture	Behavioral states in design, Affordances and Microinteractions, Usability and accessibility
Activity	Testing, Small group meetings
Homework	**Design, Test, and Build:** Project 2, Part 2

Week 7 (Thu)	**Project 2**
Lecture	Project 2 Part 2 Critique
Activity	
Homework	

Week 8 (Tue)	**Project 2**
Lecture	Overview of generative AI tools and prompt generation
Activity	Project 2 Part 3: Introduction
Homework	**Ideate, Prompt Generation, and Algorithmic Design:** Explore and select the generative AI tool of your choice by experimenting with prompt generation based on your concept. Take note of how you are altering the prompt and define constants and variables.

Week 8 (Thu)	**Project 2**
Lecture	
Activity	Mid-Term Check-in: Individual Meetings
Homework	

Week 9 (Tue)	**Project 2**
Lecture	Figma: Reusable and dynamic elements: symbols, components, layout properties; variables and conditions

Activity	Small groups: Review of prompt parameters
Homework	**Interface Design:** Working in Figma, translate your parameters into interface controls. Create a working prototype in Figma for testing on Thursday.

Week 9 (Thu)	**Project 2**
Lecture	
Activity	Small Group Meetings: Testing your Figma prototypes
Homework	**Test & Refine:** Continue to iterate by testing and designing your Figma prototype.

Week 10 (Tue)	**Project 2 Final**
Lecture	
Activity	Project 2 Final Critique (10 min / student)
Homework	

Week 10 (Thu)	**Project 3 Kick-off**
Lecture	User Research, Personas/archetypes, User Journeys and Flows
Activity	Project 3: Introduction
Homework	**Ideation & User Research:** Choose one of the communities and review the 3-4 user archetypes within that community (e.g. leaders, people with needs, helpers). Create a diagram of how they would interact with each other, and what information they would collect and share. Map one user journey that shows the steps of what they are trying to do and when/how they would interact with the platform to accomplish their goals.

Week 11 (Tue)	**Project 3**
Lecture	
Activity	Project 3: Small Group Meetings, feedback on diagrams
Homework	**Mapping and sketching:** Using your previous work, sketch out a sitemap on one plane. Think about where specific pages (such as the homepage) would be customized for each user type. Think about what information or notifications they would need or share, and how/where they would contribute or submit information and/or needs. Identify a key moment and create one snapshot sketch of what your platform would look like.

Week 11 (Thu)	**Project 3**
Lecture	Figma: Prototyping, styles, plugins
Activity	Project 3: All-group lightning round to share starting points; Small group meetings, feedback on sitemaps and sketches
Homework	**Design:** Wireframe your site in Figma. Everything should be basic (black and white) but clickable. Test it yourself, making sure that the user always knows where they are and what is happening. Add additional frames/states/pages as needed.

Week 12 (Tue)	**Project 3**
Lecture	
Activity	Project 3: Small group meetings to test wireframes and give feedback
Homework	**Design:** Go back to your sketch, refine your decisions, and apply your styles. Add content as needed to show one user flow in your prototype. Begin prototyping the shared visual information components.

Week 12 (Thu)	**Project 3**
Lecture	User Testing Methods, Figma variables, Dev Mode (and its limitations)
Activity	Project 3: UI/UX Accessibility; User testing of your design refinement
Homework	**Test, Refine, and Build:** Refine and extend your design based on feedback. Make sure that all your repeating elements are components, and available as a system. Add in the other flows.

Week 13 (Tue)	**Project 3**
Lecture	
Activity	Project 3: In class working time
Homework	**Test, Refine, and Build:** Refine and extend your design based on feedback. Make sure that all your repeating elements are components, and available as a system. Add in the other flows.

Week 13 (Thu)	**Project 3**
Lecture	
Activity	Project 3: Small group meetings

Homework	**Test, Refine, and Build:** Refine and extend your design based on feedback. Make sure that all your repeating elements are components, and available as a system. Add in the other flows.

Week 14 (Tue)	**Project 3**
Lecture	
Activity	Project 3: Lightning round to share progress; User testing of prototypes, with documentation
Homework	**Build and Document:** Finalize your prototype.

Week 14 (Thu)	**Project 3 Final**
Lecture	
Activity	Project 3: Final Critique
Homework	**Build:** Continue refining your design and building your other flows. - Start thinking about your Sophomore Work Collection Review presentations

Week 15 (Tue)	**Sophomore Work Collection Review**
Lecture	
Activity	Type Interaction & Core 2 Sophomore Work Collection Review
Homework	**Build:** Continue working on your Sophomore Work Collection Review presentation

Week 15 (Thu)	**Sophomore Work Collection Review**
Lecture	
Activity	Type Interaction & Core 2 Sophomore Work Collection Review
Homework	

Week 16 (Tue)	**Semester-end Debrief**
Lecture	
Activity	Individual debrief sessions
Homework	