

Product Design Strategy for News Organizations

Spring 2017

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Course Description

In this process-focused course, students will work collaboratively in teams to understand and address a core challenge faced by today's news industry: how to evolve a modern news organization when the nature of news production and consumption is rapidly shifting. In this class, the focus will be the New School Free Press as a microcosm of larger industry problems. Students in this class will use the deeply hands-on approach called human-centered design and apply rigorous methods and tools from that process to conduct research, develop insights, brainstorm ideas, and test prototypes.

In each class, teams will explore a different phase towards the creation of an overall product design solution for the semester, culminating in a final presentation of both the solution and the entire discovery journey.

Outcomes & Grading

Learning Outcomes By the successful completion of this course, students will:

- Learn to break down and solve problems collaboratively within a team
- Understand the challenges of real newsrooms
- Gain practical experience conducting research, creating prototypes, and user testing solutions
- Gain hands-on storytelling experience

Required Activities

Students are expected to work approximately 7 HOURS outside of class per week for this course.

Class Project

Each student will be assigned to a team to complete a single class project over the course of the semester. You are responsible for contributing to all phases of the project, including defining the goal and users, planning and conducting research, brainstorming ideas, prototyping and refining solutions, and testing.

Each team will be responsible for creating and presenting a polished piece summarizing the entire process journey as well as the final solution. These presentations will take place in the second to last class (Week 13). You are responsible for documenting each phase of the process (including photographs of team exercises completed in class) along the way to include in your final presentation.

*EXTRA CREDIT: An extra credit assignment (TBD) will be offered later in the semester. The additional credit awarded will be based on the quality and effectiveness of the student's work but may be up to 1/2 half a letter grade increase for the course.

Journal Writing

Each student will be required to document reading assignments, research, and progress in the form of a journal. Journal entries are due on the day before the next class. There is no minimum or maximum amount to write, but each entry should clearly and effectively reflect that 1) you completed the assignment (on time) and 2) considered the assignment intelligently within the context of your team project and contemporary journalism.

Readings & Other Assignments

Assignments will vary from week to week. Sometimes they will include articles to read or tasks to perform. As the course progresses, the outside assignments will center more on research, prototyping, user testing, and storytelling as it relates to your team projects.

Final Grade Calculation Individual Performance.....	30%	Team Collaboration.....	40%
Final Project Presentation.....	30%	TOTAL.....	100%

Students' final grades will be based on the 3 parts above as well as overall attendance (see the "Attendance" section).

Attendance

Weekly Classes Students are expected to attend every class. Significant lateness (30 min) may be

considered as an absence for the day. Absences may justify some grade reduction and a total of two absences mandate a reduction of one letter grade for the course. Three absences mandate a failing grade for the course, unless there are extenuating circumstances, such as the following:

- an extended illness requiring hospitalization or visit to a physician (with documentation)
- a family emergency, e.g. serious illness (with written explanation)
- observance of a religious holiday

The attendance and lateness policies are enforced as of the first day of classes for all registered students. If registered during the first week of the add/drop period, the student is responsible for any missed assignments and coursework. Students failing a course due to attendance should consult with an academic advisor to discuss options.

Readings

[How asking 5 questions allowed me to eat dinner with my kids \(REQUIRED\)](http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2016/03/10/how-asking-5-questions-allowed-me-to-eat-dinner-with-my-kids/?smprod=nytcore-iphone&smid=nytcore-iphone-share&_r=1)

http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2016/03/10/how-asking-5-questions-allowed-me-to-eat-dinner-with-my-kids/?smprod=nytcore-iphone&smid=nytcore-iphone-share&_r=1

[How the NY Times is incorporating design into audience research \(REQUIRED\)](http://www.cjr.org/tow_center/new_york_times_design_audience_research.php)

http://www.cjr.org/tow_center/new_york_times_design_audience_research.php

[Design Thinking 101 \(REQUIRED\)](https://www.nngroup.com/articles/design-thinking/) <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/design-thinking/>

[IDEO Field Guide to Human Centered Design \(REQUIRED\)](http://d1r3w4d5z5a88i.cloudfront.net/assets/guide/Field%20Guide%20to%20Human-Centered%20Design_IDEOorg_English-ee47a1ed4b91f3252115b83152828d7e.pdf)

http://d1r3w4d5z5a88i.cloudfront.net/assets/guide/Field%20Guide%20to%20Human-Centered%20Design_IDEOorg_English-ee47a1ed4b91f3252115b83152828d7e.pdf

[The secret ingredient that makes some teams better than others \(REQUIRED\)](http://ideas.ted.com/the-secret-ingredient-that-makes-some-teams-better-than-others/?utm_campaign=social&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=linkedin.com&utm_content=ideas-blog&utm_term=humanities)

http://ideas.ted.com/the-secret-ingredient-that-makes-some-teams-better-than-others/?utm_campaign=social&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=linkedin.com&utm_content=ideas-blog&utm_term=humanities

[Digital Tools for Design Research \(REQUIRED\)](https://labs.ideo.com/2014/09/19/digital-tools-for-design-research/)

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Sprint: How to Solve Big Problems and Test New Ideas (SUPPLEMENTAL) by Jake Knapp

Change By Design (SUPPLEMENTAL) by Tim Brown

Schedule & Assignments

Week 1 (Jan 24) - INTRODUCTION

- ☐ Hello
- ☐ Course summary (in 3 Minutes)
- ☐ Check-in: Who are you?
- ☐ Exercise: Redesign your morning workflow
- ☐ Exercise: Reflect on the process
- ☐ Housekeeping
- ☐ Review assignments
- ☐ Outro

Assignments: (ALWAYS check “green slide” in the weekly deck to confirm final assignments)

- ☐ Read assigned articles
- ☐ User test “morning workflow” solutions
- ☐ Write in your journal

Week 2 (Jan 31) - DISCOVERY: Set Goals & Identify Users

- ☐ Check-In
- ☐ Present: Human-centered Design Process (a.k.a. Design Thinking)

*Exercise: What’s your Problem? ** Collaboration with NSFP Student Editors*

*Exercise: What’s the Goal? ** Collaboration with NSFP Student Editors*

*Exercise: What are the Risks? ** Collaboration with NSFP Student Editors*

*Exercise: Who are the Users? ** Collaboration with NSFP Student Editors*

- ☐ Review assignments
- ☐ Outro

Assignments: (ALWAYS check “green slide” in the weekly deck to confirm final assignments)

- ☐ Read assigned articles
- ☐ Write in your journal

Week 3 (Feb 7) - DISCOVERY: Plan Research

- ☐ Check-In

*Exercise: Create a Map ** Collaboration with NSFP Student Editors*

*Exercise: Prioritize Questions ** Collaboration with NSFP Student Editors*

- ☐ Present: Research Toolbox
- ☐ Exercise: Make a Research Plan
- ☐ Review assignments
- ☐ Outro

Assignments: (ALWAYS check “green slide” in the weekly deck to confirm final assignments)

- ☐ Read assigned articles
- ☐ Conduct research
- ☐ Write in your journal

Week 4 (Feb 14) - DISCOVERY: Research Check-In

- ☐ Check-In
- ☐ Exercise: Synthesis
- ☐ Exercise: Pick an Initial Target Point
- ☐ Exercise: More Research
- ☐ Review assignments
- ☐ Outro

Assignments: (ALWAYS check “green slide” in the weekly deck to confirm final assignments)

- ☐ Read assigned articles
- ☐ Conduct research
- ☐ Write in your journal

Week 5 (Feb 21) - DISCOVERY: Research Check-In 2

- ☐ Check-In

*Exercise: Synthesis Take 2 ** Collaboration with NSFP Student Editors*

*Exercise: Narrow the Target Point ** Collaboration with NSFP Student Editors*

- ☐ Exercise: Date Your Target Point
- ☐ Review assignments
- ☐ Outro

Assignments: (ALWAYS check “green slide” in the weekly deck to confirm final assignments)

- ☐ Date Your Target Point

- Write in your journal

Week 6 (Feb 28) - IDEATION: Inspiration & Sketching

- Check-In
- Exercise: Lightning Demos
- Exercise: Notes, Ideas, & Crazy 8s
- Exercise: Solution Sketches
- Review assignments
- Outro

Assignments: (ALWAYS check “green slide” in the weekly deck to confirm final assignments)

- Create 3-panel solution sketches
- Complete mid-course check-in survey
- Write in your journal

Week 7 (Mar 7) - IDEATION: Convergence

- Check-In
- Exercise: Applying DT to ourselves!

*Exercise: Narrow the Field ** Collaboration with NSFP Student Editors*

*Exercise: All-in-One ** Collaboration with NSFP Student Editors*

- Review assignments
- Outro

Assignments: (ALWAYS check “green slide” in the weekly deck to confirm final assignments)

- Revise solution storyboards
- Create 3-panel solution sketches for your team’s final presentation
- Write in your journal

Week 8 (Mar 14) - IDEATION: Storyboarding

- Check-In
- Exercise: Storyboard

- Exercise: Prototyping
- Review assignments
- Outro

Assignments: (ALWAYS check “green slide” in the weekly deck to confirm final assignments)

- Draw wireframes
- Create prototype (and learn software!)
- Write in your journal

NO CLASS (Mar 21) - SPRING BREAK

Week 9 (Mar 28) - PROTOTYPING: Prototyping

- Check-In
- Exercise: Narrow the Field (team presentations)
- Exercise: Divide and Conquer
- Exercise: Make a Prototyping Plan
- Review assignments
- Outro

Assignments: (ALWAYS check “green slide” in the weekly deck to confirm final assignments)

- Plan for user testing (recruit participants, write script)
- Work on prototype
- Work on final team presentations
- Write in your journal

Week 10 (Apr 4) - PROTOTYPING: User Testing 1

- Check-In

*Exercise: User Testing Dry Run ** Collaboration with NSFP Student Editors*

- Exercise: Make a User Testing Plan
- Exercise: Prep Final Presentation
- Review assignments
- Outro

Assignments: (ALWAYS check “green slide” in the weekly deck to confirm final assignments)

- Revise prototype
- Conduct user testing
- Work on final team presentations
- Write in your journal

Week 11 (Apr 11) - PROTOTYPING: User Testing 2

- Check-In
- Exercise: User Testing Synthesis
- Work Time: Final Presentation
- Review assignments
- Outro

Assignments: (ALWAYS check “green slide” in the weekly deck to confirm final assignments)

- Revise prototype
- Work on final presentations
- Write in your journal

Week 12 (Apr 18) - WRAP-UP: Pulling It All Together

- Check-In
- Exercise: Final Presentation Dry Run
- Review assignments
- Outro

Assignments: (ALWAYS check “green slide” in the weekly deck to confirm final assignments)

- Complete and rehearse final presentations
- Write in your journal

Week 13 (Apr 25) - WRAP-UP: Final Presentations

- Check-In

*Present: Final presentations! ** Collaboration with NSFP Student Editors*

- Review assignments
- Outro

Assignments: (ALWAYS check “green slide” in the weekly deck to confirm final assignments)

○ Write in your journal

Week 14 (May 2) - WRAP-UP: All Good Things Must Come To An End...

○ Check-In

○ Exercise: Personal Journey

○ Exercise: Team Assessments

○ Exercise: Love Shower

○ Outro

Assignments:

○ ENJOY YOUR SUMMER HOLIDAY!!