I 320J/S: Understanding Disability and Accessibility
Fall 2024 Syllabus

Instructor Information:
Instructor: Dr. Earl W. Huff Jr. (he/him/his)
Office: UTA 5.424
Office Hours:
- **Zoom:** by appointment

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Course Information
Room: PAR 203
Date and Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00 AM to 12:30 PM

Course Description
The course focuses on disability in the digital era and in organizations/communities and how we can reimagine a more accessible and inclusive society. We will focus on people with different types (e.g., vision loss, hearing loss, neurodiversity, physical and cognitive decline) and forms (e.g., permanent, situational, temporary) of disabilities. This course will focus on case studies featuring scenarios and futures where students will critically examine areas of exclusion and discrimination and how to reimagine them for more accessible outcomes. Students will engage in class discussions, small group activities, homework assignments, and give oral presentations. Students will be equipped with the knowledge and skills to apply methods and models of accessibility in the workplace in various fields, including software design, data science, AI, and library science.

Course Objectives
By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Leverage the literature in disability studies to explain different models of disabilities.
2. Critically critique accessibility approaches of different media formats across disabilities.
3. Examine case studies in how communities and organizations can promote accessible approaches and policies.
4. Compare and contrast accessibility design frameworks.

5. Effectively communicate barriers, requirements, and solutions to accessibility challenges to stakeholders.

Course Pre-/Co-requisite

Depending on your concentration, either I 310J Introduction to Social Justice Informatics or I 310S Introduction to Social Informatics is a prerequisite for this course.

Course Readings, Documents, and Assignments

All course readings, assignments, documents, and announcements will be posted on Canvas.

Class Structure

As a seminar-style course, the expectation is that students will be engaged in their own learning through in-class and out-of-class discussions and exercises. Students are expected to complete the assigned readings and corresponding Canvas discussions prior to class.

Grading

Area	Proportion
Attendance and class participation	30%
Homework	20%
Case study presentation	20%
Proposed project report	30%
Total points	100%

Grade Distribution

Grade	Cutoff
A	95%
A-	90%
B+	87%
B	84%
B-	80%
C+	77%

C	74%
C-	70%
D+	67%
D	64%
D-	60%
F	< 60%

Attendance and Class Participation (30%)

This course is student-centered. The majority of the learning will take place in the classroom and on Canvas. It is critical that you attend class regularly and on time and be an active participant in class. You are expected to complete all pre-class readings and assignments to be well-prepared to engage in the discussions and activities in class. Discussion questions and journal discussions will always be due the **day before class (Monday or Wednesday) at 11:59 PM**.

Attendance will be taken every class. Absences will only be excused if the situation falls in line with university policies, such as illness, family emergencies, religious and/or holy days, or participation in university activities. If you will be absent from class, you are expected to provide advanced notice (for non-emergencies) and proper documentation. Class will always begin on time; you are considered late **if you show up more than 5 minutes into the class**. Frequent tardiness may be considered as an unexcused absence except in situations following university policy. Attendance will also be taken for asynchronous exercises on Canvas.

Homework (20%)

There will be three homework assignments issued throughout the course. The homework assignments are to test your comprehension of the concepts learned in each course module (*Disability Foundation, Disability in ICT, Disability in Communities/Organizations*). All homework assignments are individual; you may not work with other people. All homework assignments will be submitted through Canvas. Homework assignments will be due the **day before class (Monday or Wednesday) at 11:59 PM**.

Case Study Presentation (20%)

Students will prepare a 10-15-minute presentation on how accessibility plays a role in a specified context. You will select one type or form of disability and a context, which can be a specific technology, a task or tasks that may be currently challenging or inaccessible, or a topic focused on accessibility in an organization or society at large. You present a case study of the disability and context similar to how the instructor presents in class. You will discuss how the disability is impacted, current trends in accessibility or inaccessibility, and opportunities for future investigations. The presentations will take place in early December.

Proposed Project Report (30%)

The final deliverable for the course is a 2,500-5,000-word proposal detailing an identified accessibility problem in society. You will propose a topic to the instructor involving one or more disabilities and an area in information, technology, and/or community/organization you are interested in researching. It can be a topic similar as from the Case Study assignment or completely different. If the former, you must demonstrate in writing how the report will differ or extend on the topic for approval. The proposal will consist of an introduction to the problem, its relevance, existing approaches, your proposed plan, and expected outcomes.

Schedule

Please note that this a tentative schedule for what the class entails. The schedule is subject to change with fair notice to best meet the needs of the class. Please refer to Canvas for the most up-to-date readings, assignments, and due dates.

Week	Date	Topic	Reading(s)
		Disability Foundations	
1	8/27, 8/29	Introduction + legislation on disability	Required Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Optional The disability rights movement: from charity to confrontation, Chapter 6.
2	9/3, 9/5	Disability models	Required Routledge Handbook of Disability Studies, Chapter 2. The stores that cripple us: the consequences of the medical model of disability in the legal sphere, pp. 342-357
3	9/10, 9/12	Vision	Required Kaiti, Shyangbo, & Pandey (2022). Visual Impairment and its Rehabilitation: A Review Guidice & Legge (2008). Blind navigation and the role of technology
4	9/17, 9/19	Hearing (no class on 9/19)	Required Kushalnagar (2019). Deafness and hearing loss. Borghouts et al. (2022). Understanding the potential of mental health apps to address mental health needs of the deaf and hard of hearing community. Optional Shields and Lennox. Strategies to address educational needs of students who are deaf or hard of hearing

5	9/24, 9/25	Cognition & neurodiversity	Required
			  Baumer & Frueh (2021). What is neurodiversity?
			  Baron-Cohen (2017). Neurodiversity – a revolutionary concept for autism and psychiatry
			Optional
			  Sims & Delisi. An Introductory Guide to Understanding Cognitive Disabilities

6	10/1, 10/3	Mobility & motor (no class on 10/3)	Required
			  Physical & Mobility Impairments: Information & News
			  Larco et al. (2021) Thinking about Inclusion: Designing a Digital App Catalog for People with Motor Disability
			Optional
			  Hatem et al. (2016) Rehabilitation of Motor Function after Stroke

7	10/8, 10/10	Mental health + older adults	Required
			  CDC – Subjective Cognitive Decline: A Public Health Issue
			  Dionigi (2015). Stereotypes of Aging: Their Effects on the Health of Older Adults
			Optional
			  Huff et al. (2019) Am I Too Old to Drive? Opinions of Older Adults on Self-Driving Vehicles

		**Disability in Information and Communication Technology**	

8	10/15, 10/17	Disability in design	Required
			  Wobbrock et al. (2011). Ability-based design
			  Shinohara et al. (2018). Tenets for Social Accessibility

9	10/22, 10/24	Disability in web and media	Required
			  Brophy & Craven (2007). Web Accessibility
			  Gluck et al. (2021). Racing in the Dark
			Optional
			  Asakawa et al. (2019). An Independent and Interactive Museum Experience for Blind People

10	10/29, 10/31	AI & disability	Required
			  Smith & Smith (2021). Artificial intelligence and disability: too much promise, yet too little substance?
			  Wangmo (2019). Ethical concerns with the use of intelligent assistive technology

		**Disability in Communities/Organizations**	
11	11/5, 11/7	Disability in education (no class on 11/5)	Required Huff et al. (2020) Accessible Tools and Curricula for K-12 Computing Education Optional

			Huff et al.(2021) Exploring the Perspectives of Teachers of the Visually Impaired Regarding Accessible K-12 Computing Education
12	11/12, 11/14	Disability in the workplace & organizations	Required Santuzzi & Watz (2016). Disability in the Workplace: A Unique and Variable Identity
13	11/19, 11/21	Disability in sociotechnical systems	Required Sweet et al. (2019). Community building and knowledge sharing by individuals with disabilities using social media
14	11/26, 11/28	**Fall/Thanksgiving break (no classes)**	
15	12/3, 12/5	Case Study Presentations	
16	12/9	Last day of class	

Policies

Land Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge that we are meeting on Indigenous land. Moreover, I would like to acknowledge and pay our respects to the Carrizo & Comecrudo, Coahuiltecan, Caddo, Tonkawa, Comanche, Lipan Apache, Alabama-Coushatta, Kickapoo, Tigua Pueblo, and all the American Indian and Indigenous Peoples and communities who have been or have become a part of these lands and territories in Texas, here on Turtle Island.

Statement on Flexibility

In acknowledgment of COVID 19 and its impact on the University of Texas at Austin community, this course will reaffirm one of the core values here at UT Austin: responsibility. Our responsibility to ourselves and each other is to put our humanity at the forefront of our academic pursuits. With that being said, this semester I commit to being adaptable in this time of great need, which is reflected in the course policies below around attendance, grading, and assignments/exams. If you experience any hardships such as illness, accident, family crisis please know that these policies may be amended and therefore you should communicate with me as soon as you feel comfortable doing so. If for any reason you do not feel comfortable discussing with me, please visit Student Emergency Services. For additional campus resources, please visit protect.utexas.edu.

Students Rights & Responsibilities

- You have a right to a learning environment that supports mental and physical wellness.
- You have a right to respect.
- You have a right to be assessed and graded fairly.

- You have a right to freedom of opinion and expression.
- You have a right to privacy and confidentiality.
- You have a right to meaningful and equal participation, to self-organize groups to improve your learning environment.
- You have a right to learn in an environment that is welcoming to all people. No student shall be isolated, excluded or diminished in any way.

With these rights come responsibilities:
- You are responsible for taking care of yourself, managing your time, and communicating with the teaching team and with others if things start to feel out of control or overwhelming.
- You are responsible for acting in a way that is worthy of respect and always respectful of others.
- Your experience with this course is directly related to the quality of the energy that you bring to it, and your energy shapes the quality of your peers' experiences.
- You are responsible for creating an inclusive environment and for speaking up when someone is excluded.
- You are responsible for holding yourself accountable to these standards, holding each other to these standards, and holding the teaching team accountable as well.

Artificial intelligence
The creation of artificial intelligence tools for widespread use is an exciting innovation. These tools have both appropriate and inappropriate uses in classwork. The use of artificial intelligence tools (such as ChatGPT) in this class shall be permitted on a limited basis. You will be informed as to the assignments for which AI may be utilized. You are also welcome to seek my prior approval to use AI writing tools on any assignment. In either instance, AI writing tools should be used with caution and proper citation (see https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt to cite ChatGPT) , as the use of AI should be properly attributed. Using AI writing tools without my permission or authorization, or failing to properly cite AI even where permitted, shall constitute a violation of UT Austin's Institutional Rules on academic integrity.

Personal Pronouns
Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender identity & expression, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name, unless they have added a "chosen name" with the registrar's office, which you can do so here: https://utdirect.utexas.edu/apps/ais/chosen_name/. I will gladly honor your request to address you by a name that is different from what appears on the official roster, and by the pronouns you use (she/he/they/ze, etc). Please advise me of any changes early in the semester so that I may make appropriate updates to my records. For instructions on how to add your pronouns to Canvas,

visit https://utexas.instructure.com/courses/633028/pages/profile-pronouns. More resources available on the Gender and Sexuality Center's website, www.utgsc.org.

Basic Needs Security

Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. UT maintains the UT Outpost (https://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/utoutpost.php) which is a free on-campus food pantry and career closet. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable him to provide any resources that he may possess.

Academic Integrity

In addition to academic performance, students are expected to demonstrate the qualities of honesty and integrity. All submissions by a student are expected to be the original work product of the submitting student. Material that violates this requirement in any way, or that constitutes any form of dishonesty, cheating, fabrication, the facilitation of academic dishonesty, and/or plagiarism, may result in the student receiving a failing grade in the course ('F') and in appropriate disciplinary action being initiated. The possible sanctions include, but are not limited to, grade penalties, permanent record on your transcript of academic dishonesty, loss of registration privileges, disqualification, and dismissal. Please see the official UT Policy on Cheating and Plagiarism (Policy Statement 08-02) for more details about the consequences of academic dishonesty. It is accessible online at:

https://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/standardsofconduct.php

Students submissions in this course may be processed by TurnItIn, a tool that compares submitted material to an archived database of published work to check for potential plagiarism. Other methods may also be used to determine if a paper is the student's original work. Regardless of the results of any TurnItIn submission, the faculty member will make the final determination as to whether or not a paper has been plagiarized.

Q Drop Policy

If you want to drop a class after the 12th class day, you'll need to execute a Q drop before the Q-drop deadline, which typically occurs near the middle of the semester. Under Texas law, you are only allowed six Q drops while you are in college at any public Texas institution. For more information, see: http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/csacc/academic/adddrop/qdrop

Sharing of Course Materials

No materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, lecture hand-outs, videos, assessments (quizzes, exams, papers, projects, homework assignments), in-class or Canvas course materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets, may be shared

online or with anyone outside of the class unless you have my explicit, written permission. Unauthorized sharing of materials promotes cheating. It is a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty. The University is well aware of the sites used for sharing materials, and any materials found online that are associated with a specific student, or any suspected unauthorized sharing of materials, will be reported to Student Conduct and Academic Integrity in the Office of the Dean of Students. These reports can result in sanctions, including failure in the course.

Late Work and Makeups

Late submissions for homework, reflection journal entries, and semester project deliverables will be accepted with a penalty. In-class assignments will not be allowed to be submitted late. For homework assignments and journal entries, I will accept late submissions for up to 24 hours beyond the due date for a 5% penalty and up to 48 hours for a 10% penalty. For semester project deliverables, I will accept late submissions up to 24 hours for a 10% penalty. Submissions beyond the late submission window will NOT be accepted unless:

1. The instructor granted an extension in advance of the due date.
2. Document was provided of an unforeseeable circumstance(s) (as assessed by the instructor's discretion).

Resources and Support for Students

Services for Students with Disabilities

The university is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive learning environment consistent with university policy and federal and state law. Please let me know if you experience any barriers to learning so I can work with you to ensure you have equal opportunity to participate fully in this course. If you are a student with a disability, or think you may have a disability, and need accommodations please contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). Please refer to SSD's website for contact and more information: http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/. If you are already registered with SSD, please deliver your Accommodation Letter to me as early as possible in the semester so we can discuss your approved accommodations and needs in this course.

Counseling and Mental Health Center

Students who are struggling for any reason and who believe that it might impact their performance in the course are urged to reach out to Bryce Moffett if they feel comfortable. This will allow her to provide any resources or accommodations that she can. If immediate mental health assistance is needed, call the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC) at 512-471-3515 or you may also contact Bryce Moffett, LCSW (iSchool CARE counselor) at 512-232-4449. Bryce's office is located in FAC18S and she holds drop in Office Hours on Wednesday from 2-3pm. For urgent mental health concerns, please contact the CMHC 24/7 Crisis Line at 512-471-2255.

The Sanger Learning Center

Did you know that more than one-third of UT undergraduate students use the Sanger Learning Center each year to improve their academic performance? All students are welcome to take advantage of Sanger Center's classes and workshops, private learning specialist appointments, peer academic coaching, and tutoring for more than 70 courses in 15 different subject areas. For more information, please visit http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/slc or call 512-471-3614 (JES A332).

BeVocal

BeVocal is a university-wide initiative to promote the idea that individual Longhorns have the power to prevent high-risk behavior and harm. At UT Austin all Longhorns have the power to intervene and reduce harm. To learn more about BeVocal and how you can help to build a culture of care on campus, go to: https://wellnessnetwork.utexas.edu/BeVocal.

Wellness Center resources for self-care

Virtual Mindfulness and Stress Reduction Activities

Undergraduate Writing Center: http://uwc.utexas.edu/

Libraries: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/

ITS: http://www.utexas.edu/its/

Student Emergency Services: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/

UT University Health Services: https://healthyhorns.utexas.edu/

COVID-19 Update: "Keep Learning" Resources

This course may be offered in a format to which you are unaccustomed. If you are looking for ideas and strategies to help you feel more comfortable participating in our class, please explore the resources available here: https://onestop.utexas.edu/keep-learning/.

If you have concerns about the safety or behavior of fellow students, TAs or instructors, call BCAL (the Behavior Concerns Advice Line): 512-232-5050. Your call can be anonymous. If something doesn't feel right–it probably isn't. Trust your instincts and share your concerns.

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

The following recommendations regarding emergency evacuation are from the Campus Safety Office, 512-471-5767, https://safety.utexas.edu/

- Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus must evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside.
- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.
- Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class.
- During an evacuation — follow the instructions of faculty or class instructors.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.
- For more information, please visit emergency preparedness.

Title IX Reporting

Title IX is a federal law that protects against sex and gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, unprofessional or inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature, dating/domestic violence and stalking at federally funded educational institutions. UT Austin is committed to fostering a learning and working environment free from discrimination in all its forms. When unprofessional or inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature occurs in our community, the university can:

1. Intervene to prevent harmful behavior from continuing or escalating.
2. Provide support and remedies to students and employees who have experienced harm or have become involved in a Title IX investigation.
3. Investigate and discipline violations of the university's relevant policies.

Beginning January 1, 2020, Texas Senate Bill 212 requires all employees of Texas universities, including faculty, report any information to the Title IX Office regarding sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking that is disclosed to them. Texas law requires that all employees who witness or receive any information of this type (including, but not limited to, writing assignments, class discussions, or one-on-one conversations) must be reported. I am a Responsible Employee and must report any Title IX related incidents that are disclosed in writing, discussion, or one-on-one. Before talking with me, or with any faculty or staff member about a Title IX related incident, be sure to ask whether they are a responsible employee. If you would like to speak with someone who can provide support or remedies without making an official report to the university, please email advocate@austin.utexas.edu. For more information about reporting options and resources, visit http://www.titleix.utexas.edu/, contact the Title IX Office via email at titleix@austin.utexas.edu, or call 512-471-0419.