DECO2102 Lecture 1

(If you are reading this, but didn't turn up to the lecture, you're out of luck, because there was a lot covered that may not appear here)

Introduction to the course

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Assessments

1. Tutorial A – 10%
2. Tutorial B – 15%
3. Tutorial C – 25%
4. Final Assessment – 50%

Assessment Breakdown:

The goals of the assessments for this unit of study are:

- To give you an idea of the process of following a brief and developing a response to that brief
- To encourage you to develop that response in modular pieces
- To help you maintain flexibility during the development process to avoid being trapped in one particular approach
- To expose you to various web technologies (and not be distracted by them)

Tutorial a – create a simple web page. 10%

This tutorial will ground you in the mechanics of creating a simple web page from scratch. It is a low-level exercise, intended to give you the confidence to come to grips with HTML. You will be provided with content that you are to use to create the page.
Tutorial b – create a simple web site. 15%

This tutorial will test your knowledge of what you learned about topologies, and requires you to join web pages into a web site. You are to create a single web site that incorporates three sections, which are to be examples of linear, tree, and graph topologies.

Tutorial c – create a web site that interacts with the server. 20%

For this tutorial you are to create a web page that interacts with a web server.

TBC.

Final Assessment – create an online portfolio for your student life at this university. 50%

This assessment is to incorporate the technologies you have learned about in this UOS. Stated as simply as possible, the deliverable for this assessment is a web site, hosted on your web space. The media budget for this assessment will be given at the appropriate time.

More detail on these assessments will follow.

URLs for your assessments

Imagine for a moment that you are running a UOS and have 60 or more students. Imagine that you receive 240 emails from students informing you of the location of 4 pieces of assessment. This is the worse-case scenario, and one that will be avoided this semester. When delivering your tutorials and final assessment, you are to use specific URLs. Let's imagine for a moment that your name is Steven Tudorly, or possibly Sophie Tudmington, and your login is "stud1234". Your student ID is 987654321. Here's where I expect to find your assignments:


Final Assessment: http://www.arch.usyd.edu.au/~stud1234/deco2102/987654321.zip

Notice a pattern here? No? Then may the Lord have mercy on your soul. In this case, "The Lord" is whoever is marking your assessments.

You should all have a space onto which you can upload data. If you're still unsure how to upload material, you can talk to me in the next tutorial, but don't hassle me with questions about activating your account and whatnot- they should be directed to ICT.
**Timeline and outline for this UOS.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>27 July – 28 July</td>
<td>Introduction and Principles of Visual Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3 Aug – 4 Aug</td>
<td>Hypertext</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10 Aug – 11 Aug</td>
<td>Markup Languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>17 Aug – 18 Aug</td>
<td>Modern Web Page Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>24 Aug – 25 Aug</td>
<td>Human-Computer Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>31 Aug – 1 Sept</td>
<td>Client/Server Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7 Sept – 8 Sept</td>
<td>Dynamic Web Pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>14 Sept – 15 Sept</td>
<td>Web 2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>21 Sept – 22 Sept</td>
<td>Exploring Multi-User Domains</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mid-semester Break**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>5 Oct – 6 Oct</td>
<td>Multimedia for the Web</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>12 Oct – 13 Oct</td>
<td>Principles of Animation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>19 Oct – 20 Oct</td>
<td>Web Usability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>26 Oct – 27 Oct</td>
<td>Project Presentations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Concepts that reappear time and time again

Prototyping

Expect to "throw away" any given project at least twice. The magic number for most projects seems to be three:

1. A very rough prototype
2. A more complete solution
3. The final delivered project.

This would be the bare minimum; there's nothing wrong with developing many versions of a project- it helps avoid "cruft".


I say "throw away", because you are throwing out the prototype, but keeping the ideas and lessons you learned from the experience.

Flexible Strategies

Don't be a 'rat in a maze'. That is, don't slavishly follow one set course towards finding a solution to a problem- 'flow around' the problem like water- have more than one response to a problem, and never give up or lose hope. Step back from the situation and try a new angle. We are far more interested in the process you follow in reaching the solution (providing it's an interesting and thoughtful one) than in final result. However, it is the case that most well thought out processes produce high quality output.
Some miscellaneous things you need to be aware of:

Choose your words carefully:

"Design" is a noun.
"Designing" is a verb.

Avoid use of the words "thing", and "like". You are at a prestigious university, not on the set of "Friends".

Use your apostrophes correctly!

"Justin's notes" – the notes of Justin [possession]

"Justin's going home" – "Justin is going home" [abbreviation]

"It is" -> "It's" [abbreviation]

"Off its rocker" – [possessive] (This is the exception to the rule that gets most people)

"Hamas' agenda" – [possessive] When there's already an "s", just add the apostrophe after it. Note "Bridget Jones's Diary" is wrong! And yet it's on the movie poster. Just because it's in print, doesn't mean it's right..

Oh, and please get the whole "your"/"you're" thing right… you're in big trouble if you can't get your grammar together.
Principles of Visual Communication

It's possible to embed sounds in web pages, but primarily the web is a visual medium. If you are trying to design effective web pages, rather than simply learning about a bunch of web technologies, and applying them haphazardly, it's a much better idea to come to grips with principles of visual communication, and decide on which technologies best support those principles.

Here are four to start with:

Communication

topics to research:
- Semiology/Semiotics

We are symbol processing animals by nature. If we weren't, traffic light-related deaths would be far more common. Consideration of the shape, colour, texture, etc. of visual design, and the effect on the User is paramount in effective visual design. This applies to individual design elements, and well as the overall architecture of the page/site.

Organisation

topics to research:
- Information Design.

A single page can convey a great deal of information. However, more often than not, there is more information to be presented than a single page can comfortably hold.

http://www.milliondollarhomepage.com/  (Eugh.)

This brings us to the notion of hierarchy and organisation (or "organization" if you're into the idea of colonisation (or "colonization".))

Humans can cope with 7 plus or minus 2 concepts/objects at a time. (Let's hope you guys are in the "plus 2" category). If our capacity was unlimited, it would be possible to have sites with no hierarchy.

http://www.well.com/~smalin/miller.html

So, how do you organise the information to be presented? It depends on the information being presented- the amount and nature of the information, to begin with.
Usability

topics to research:
- Dynamic Design  (NOT this site! : http://www.dynamicdesign.biz/)
- Functionality vs. Form

One criticism of the 9MSN search page (for example) versus Google's is that 9MSN's is cluttered and distracting, whereas Google's has the bare minimum required to provide the functionality, and that functionality is easy to use.

Personality

topics to research:
- Look and Feel
- Themes
- Typography
- Colour Theory

The personality of a page can be hard to define, but easy to recognise. The same information can be given any number of personalities.

www.apple.com

References:


http://www.filemeaway.com/archives/2006/03/the_ugly_conver.php


Please investigate these topics further.