

**CS 3724 Course Policies\***  
**Introduction to Human-Computer Interaction**  
**Fall 2005**  
**Capra section**

**Section:** CRN 91533 MW 4:00pm – 5:15m McBryde 216

**Instructor:** **Robert Capra**  
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Office Hours: MWF 11:10am – 12:30pm  
and by appointment  
(Note: No hours or appointments on Tues or Thurs)  
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**Teaching Assistant:** Pardha Pyla  
Office: McBryde 565  
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and by appointment  
Email: ppyla@vt.edu

**Textbooks (required):** *Usability Engineering: Scenario-Based Development of Human-Computer Interaction*  
Mary Beth Rosson and John M. Carroll,  
Morgan Kaufmann, ©2002. ISBN: 1-55860-712-9

*The Design of Everyday Things*  
Donald A. Norman, Basic Books, ©2002.  
ISBN: 0-465-06710-7

**Course Webpage:** <http://courses.cs.vt.edu/~cs3724/fall2005-capra/>

**Grade Weighting:**

Item	Weight	Date(s)
Project	50%	Will be posted on course web site
Quizzes	5%	Various
Homework	5%	Will be posted on course web site
Participation	5%	Various
Midterm exams	10%	In-class, Wed, September 21 and
	10%	In-class, Wed, October 26
Final exam	15%	3:25pm – 5:25pm, Tues, Dec 13

\* This syllabus and course policies document contains 7 numbered sections on 6 pages.

# 1. Prerequisites

The following are the prerequisites for CS 3724:

- **CS2604**  
CS Majors and Minors must have completed this prerequisite with a grade of C or higher (C- is not acceptable). CpE Majors must have completed this prerequisite with a grade of C- or higher.

Any student not meeting these requirements (both prerequisites and grades) and not obtaining written permission from the CS department must withdraw from the course within the first week of classes. Any student who is subsequently found not to meet these requirements **will be subject to an honors violation report** on the basis of falsification of qualifications. Neither instructors nor anyone else in the CS department are bound to investigate the records of students to ascertain their prerequisite status; this is the student's own responsibility. **There will be absolutely NO exceptions to these requirements.**

# 2. Graded Work

Your grade will be based on two midterm tests, a final exam, homework assignments, quizzes, class participation, and a project, weighted as shown on the table listed under "Grade Weighting" on the first page.

## Project

Much of the design experience you gain this semester will be "hands-on" through work on a semester-long design project. Details about this project will be described throughout the semester and posted on the course web site. During the first week of classes, groups of 3-5 students will be formed by the instructor. You will be assigned to one group for the entire semester and will work with this group to complete the design project.

## Quizzes

There will be a number of in-class quizzes throughout the semester. Quizzes will generally be short and based upon class discussions and/or assigned readings. Each student's **two** lowest quiz scores will be dropped. Missed quizzes may **not** be made up.

## Homework

There will be small number of homework assignments throughout the semester. Homework assignments will be submitted electronically using the Blackboard system. Homework assignments submissions must be typeset using a word processor (e.g. Word), LaTeX, Tex, or a text processor resulting in neatly formatted ASCII text. No handwritten work (including scanned documents) will be accepted.

## Participation

Part of your grade for the semester will be based on your participation in class. The class lectures are designed to be discussion oriented and students are encouraged to contribute to these discussions. In addition, we will have a number of in-class activities throughout the semester. The instructor will make an effort to encourage each student to participate in the discussions and activities, but ultimately, it is each student's responsibility to make sure they are participating in class. Students will be provided with an assessment of their class participation grade two times before final grades is assigned: 1) as part of the first set of mid-term grades released after the first mid-term exam, and 2) as part of the second set of mid-term grades released after the second mid-term exam. Class participation may **not** be made up in any way except by participating in remaining classes during the semester.

## Extra Credit

Students often ask about getting extra credit. In this course, no individual extra credit assignments will be given. However, several opportunities for extra credit will be offered to everyone in the class. Any extra

credit earned will be applied to your grade AFTER the grade letter breakpoints have been determined (i.e. you will not be penalized for not doing extra credit work).

You may earn up to 2 points of extra credit that will be added on to your final course grade by completing one or more of the activities that will be posted in the “Extra Credit” section of the web site during the semester. For each activity that you complete in a satisfactory manner, you will receive 0.5 points added to your final course grade, up to a maximum of 2 points (i.e. you may complete 4 activities). Some activities may be repeated – for example, if one of the activities is to write a summary of a research article, you could repeat this activity with a different research article. You may select any combination of activities up to the maximum of 4 activities (2 points). Additional opportunities for extra credit may be presented during the semester – if so, these will be posted on the course web site.

### **Exams**

There will be two mid-term exams in-class on the following dates:

- Wednesday, September 21, 2005
- Wednesday, October 26, 2005

The final exam is scheduled for 3:25pm – 5:25pm, Tuesday, Dec 13, 2005.

## **3. Grading Policies**

This is in large part a course about design and evaluation, and the project accounts for 50% of your grade. Do not confuse this with a class focused on programming projects – in this class you will spend much more time learning about users, design, and evaluation than you will spend writing program code. Each project deliverable will include or refer to explicit guidelines that you will be expected to follow – these will be posted on the course web site.

### **Grades**

The following grade scale will be used AS A GUIDELINE (subject to any curve):

Percentage	Minimum Grade
90%	A-
80%	B-
70%	C-
60%	D-
Below 60%	F

This scale will be used as a GUIDELINE ONLY. The final grade scale may differ. After each mid-term exam, mid-term grades will be posted. A grade curve may or may not be employed in this course. The application of a curve is dependent upon class performance on tests, projects and homework. The decision to utilize a curve rests entirely with the course instructor(s). Any extra credit earned will be applied to your grade AFTER the grade letter breakpoints have been determined (i.e. you will not be penalized for not doing extra credit work).

### **Backups**

It is your responsibility to maintain up-to-date backup copies of all work for this class (that is in addition to the copy you submit). The hard drives of the lab machines are re-cloned (i.e. erased and the operating system re-installed) periodically, so don't count on leaving a backup there! It is recommended that you keep a copy of all the relevant files for each project on at least two different types of storage media (e.g. floppy disks, CD-ROM, Flash memory card, VT Filebox) in case your original assignment is mislaid or the files are corrupted. Loss of work due to failure of a storage device (e.g. hard drive) is not grounds for an extension on an assignment.

### **Due Dates and Late Work**

Each project deliverable will have a due date and time and will include instructions for submission. Late submissions will not be given any credit if submitted after graded assignments or solutions have been released.

Plan your time carefully for the project deliverables. You will be working on these deliverables as part of a group. This will require careful planning and coordination among members of your group so don't put things off until the last minute. Note: delays resulting from scheduling conflicts among group members, machine availability, lab schedules, hardware failures or your failure to maintain a backup of your work do not merit an extension.

Homework assignments are due at the date and time specified in the homework assignment. No late homework assignments will be accepted unless an extension has been granted by the instructor in an email to the student.

Quizzes will not be accepted late.

### **Requests for Extensions**

Any request for an extension must be made, preferably by email, at least 24 hours prior to the due date. Written documentation is required for illness.

### **Statute of Limitations**

Any questions or complaints regarding the grading of an assignment or test must be raised within one week after the score or graded assignment is made available (not when you pick it up).

### **Absences**

If a serious illness prevents you from taking any of the tests, send your instructor an e-mail message, or a friend with a note, describing your condition before the scheduled test. Also, to establish a valid excuse for an illness you must get a note from a physician or the University infirmary. Before missing a test for any reason, you must make every effort to discuss the problem with your instructor before the day of the test. Excuses other than an illness must be reported to your Dean's office so that they can send your instructor a written explanation of the absence. If you need to be away for an official University event, this must be cleared with your instructor in advance. Without a valid excuse, no makeup tests or exam will be given.

## **4. Getting Help**

You may get help from the following sources:

- CS 3724 classmates (see the Important Note below)
- CS 3724 Forum online at [forum.cs.vt.edu](http://forum.cs.vt.edu)
- CS 3724 TAs
- CS 3724 Instructors
- Textbooks and other reference books

**Important Note:** You will be working on the project deliverables with the members of your group, but should not work on the project with anyone outside your group except the sources listed above or as noted in the assignment. For the individual assignments in this course, the work should be entirely your own. It is acceptable to discuss with classmates an assignment in a general way, i.e., to discuss the nature of the assignment. In other words, you may discuss with your classmates the requirements of the assignment, but not how to achieve or solve the assignment. Also refer to the section below about the Honor Code.

## 5. Course Communication (Website, Listserv, Blackboard)

### Course Website

The official course website for this section of CS 3204 is at:

<http://courses.cs.vt.edu/~cs3724/fall2005-capra/>

It is the responsibility of every student to **check the website daily** for announcements.

The Announcements section of the website will be the source for all **official announcements** related to the class. Your instructor may announce tests, assignments, or changes to assignments in class, but there is no guarantee or promise that such announcements will be made in class. The Announcements section of the website is the **only** official, reliable source for announcements, changes, etc. from the instructor. If something the instructor says in class conflicts with information posted by the instructor on the website, then the information posted on by the instructor **on the website takes precedence**. Verbal instructions are easily mis-interpreted, and they do not leave a documentation trail. The excuse “my instructor/GTA said something else” will not be accepted.

### Listserv

In addition to the course website, there will be a Virginia Tech listserv for this course. The listserv should be available by the end of the first week of classes. Note that there is another section of CS3724 that may have different information or instructions. When using the listserv, note that you will be expected to follow the Virginia Tech “Acceptable Use” guidelines and that your use of the class listserv may be revoked or limited if the “Acceptable Use” guidelines are not followed.

### VT Blackboard System

Course grades for this section of CS 3724 will be posted to the Blackboard system available at:

<http://learn.vt.edu>

Students may log in to the Blackboard system using their VT PID and password. Once logged in, there should be a link for CS 3724 on the Blackboard web page. For this section of CS 3724, the Blackboard system will be used primarily for posting grades and submitting homework assignments – it is unlikely that other course material or information will be posted there.

## 6. Honor Code

The Virginia Tech Honor Code is in effect for all work in this course. This course includes both individual assignments and group assignments. Quizzes, homeworks, and exams are individual assignments and should be completely your own work and should include an honor statement. Project deliverables are group assignments and should consist of work done only by members of the project group.

An exhaustive list of Honor Code violations would be impossible to present here, but among other things, each of the following is a flagrant violation of the Virginia Tech Honor Code, and violations will be dealt with severely (Honor Court charges will be filed):

- Copying text, programs, or documents in whole or in part from someone else.
- Copying files from another student's disk even though they might be unprotected.
- Falsely reporting results.

If you have any question as to how the Honor Code applies to this class, remember that:

- Always give credit for work that is not entirely your own (e.g., quotations, diagrams, tables, or ideas that were obtained from another source).
- Evidence indicating the violation of the policy stated above will be turned in to the Honor Court.
- It is much easier to explain a poor grade to parents or a potential employer than to explain an Honor Court conviction.

## **7. Special Accommodations**

If any student needs special accommodations, please contact the instructor during the first week of classes.

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**Statement of Receipt and Understanding**

By signing below I certify that:

- I have received a complete copy (7 sections on 6 pages total) of the course policies for CS 3724 in the document titled, “CS 3724 Course Policies, Introduction to Human-Computer Interaction, Fall 2005, Capra Section”.
- I have read and understand the above referenced Course Policies and have had a chance to have any questions I have about the policies answered by the instructor.
- I understand that the above referenced Course Policies are in effect for my section of CS3724.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID Number \_\_\_\_\_