

User Interface Design - Course Outline

SWEN 303: 2010 Trimester 2

(Yet to be approved by the course auditor)

This document sets out the workload and assessment requirements for SWEN 303. It also provides contact information for staff involved in the course. If the contents of this document are altered during the course, you will be advised of the change by an announcement in lectures and/or on the course web site. A printed copy of this document is held in the School Office.

Objectives

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Understand principles of usability engineering;
2. Design a user interface as part of a team following accepted principles and guidelines;
3. Conduct testing of a user interface and interpret the results of the testing to improve a design;
4. Integrate user interface design techniques into the general software engineering life cycle;
5. Identify the opportunities and challenges in designing user interfaces for new types of interactive devices. A discussion on how these objectives map to the assessment, as well as to the graduate attributes, can be found in the assignments and projects section below.

Textbook

There is no prescribed textbook for SWEN303. We will use a combination of materials available through the Library's online databases, and some photocopied chapters pursuant to academic use under the University's copyright agreements.

Lectures, Tutorials, Laboratories, and Practical work

A schedule of lecture topics, readings, and assignment due dates is available online

Lectures for SWEN 303 are: *Monday, Tuesday & Friday, 14:10 - 15:00 in Hugh McKenzie LT 002*

While there are three lecture slots per week, we will not use all the slots and we will average roughly two lectures per week.

A timetable for labs is on the forum. Teams are required to attend one of these labs each week during weeks 2 - 9.

Assignments and Project

Assessment is split between a research essay (covering objectives 1 and 5), a team project (covering objectives 1 - 4), and an external exam.

Specifically, internal assessment for this course includes: an essay discussing the history and current challenges of an individually chosen sub-field in human computer interaction; an individually written report assessing the user interface design your team prototyped, the alternative designs that were considered, and the process that your team followed during the project; and lastly a team presentation that demonstrates the team's user interface and discusses preliminary testing.

A deeper description of the team project is in the Practical Work section later in this document.

The team project will assess your ability to apply user interface engineering principles to a real world problem, and critique the proposed solution (BE graduate attributes 3(a), 3(b)). Working in team will provide further experience in working collaboratively, and demonstrating leadership (BE graduate attributes 2(a)). Your individual report assessing the team's process and product (BE graduate attributes 3(d), 3(f)) along with the team's presentation, will further develop your communications skills (BE graduate attribute 2(b)).

Workload

In order to maintain satisfactory progress in SWEN 303, you should plan to spend an average of at least *10* hours per week on this paper. A plausible and approximate breakdown for these hours would be:

- Lectures and labs: 4
- Readings: 2
- Assignments: 4

School of Engineering and Computer Science

The School office is located on level three of the Cotton Building ([Cotton 358](#)).

The notice board for SWEN 303 is located on the second floor of the Cotton Building.

Staff

The course organiser and lecturer for SWEN 303 is [Stuart Marshall](#). Stuart's contact details are:

- [Stuart Marshall](#)
- [Cotton 261](#)
- +64 4 463 6730
- Stuart.Marshall@ecs.vuw.ac.nz

Announcements and Communication

The main means of communication outside of lectures will be the SWEN 303 web area at http://ecs.victoria.ac.nz/Courses/SWEN303_2010T2/. There you will find, among other things, this document, the [lecture schedule](#) and [assignment handouts](#), and the [SWEN 303 Forum](#). The forum is a web-based bulletin board system. Questions and comments can be posted to the forum, and staff will read these posts and frequently respond to them.

Assessment

Your grade for SWEN 303 will be determined based on the following assessment weightings:

Item	Weight
Research Essay	20%
Individual Project Report	25%
Group Presentation	15%
Final Examination	40%

Tests and Exams

The [timetable for final examinations](#) will be available from the University web site and will be posted on a notice board outside the faculty office. The final examination will be three hours long. No computers, electronic calculators or similar device will be allowed in the final examination. Paper non-English to English dictionaries will be permitted. The examination period for trimester 2 is 18 October - 14 November.

Practical Work

The practical work will consist of a team project. The project will involve teams of four or five students analysing, designing, implementing and testing a user interface for a software system.

Teams will propose their own problem domain that they want to prototype a user interface for. The team must submit a short proposal by the end of the first week, and the course coordinator will check for the appropriateness of the problem and the scope of what is being attempted.

Students will be assessed through the project via an individually compiled report that critiques the process followed and the user interface prototype (along with any other alternative solutions that were considered), as well as via a group presentation that focuses on the design and a usability evaluation.

Both the report and the essay will be up to 6 pages long (in a prescribed format), and the report will require the group to firstly perform a usability evaluation of the group's user interface.

The project has three prototype milestones that must be met. Milestones that are not met will incur a one grade point penalty (on both the report and the presentation) on all individuals in that group. Milestones are due at 5pm at the end of the week specified in [lecture schedule](#).

Individual students will be assessed on the basis of the report they submit. Students may use facts about their team's process/experience and their team's prototype to support the arguments and observations in their report *if and only if* the student was actively involved in the team at the time. This means that if the student were actively taking responsibility and were performing allocated work when an event occurred or an artifact was created, then the student may use that in their essay. It does not have to be something that the student directly worked on themselves, and the student may have been working on some other aspect of the system, as long as the student was actively involved in something project-related for the team at the time.

Note that this means that --- for example --- if the team decides to create two prototypes to test different design possibilities, and the student works on the prototype that does not end up getting used, the student can still talk about the other prototype in their report as the student was still actively involved in the team at the time.

If the student includes material or experiences from the team that were created or occurred while they were not actively participating in the team, then *that report content will be discarded and not counted when determining the final report grade*.

Involvement will be determined by journals that the group will submit at each milestone. Submission of the journal is a necessary (but not sufficient) requirement of passing the milestone.

Assessment that is submitted late will incur a one grade point penalty for each day that the assessment is late.

Plagiarism

Working Together and Plagiarism

We encourage you to discuss the principles of the course and assignments with other students, to help and seek help with programming details, problems involving the lab machines. However, any work you hand in must be your own work.

The School policy on Plagiarism (claiming other people's work as your own) is available from the course home page. Please read it. We will penalise anyone we find plagiarising, whether from students currently doing the course, or from other sources. Students who knowingly allow other students to copy their work may also be penalised. If you have had help from someone else (other than a tutor), it is always safe to state the help that you got. For example, if you had help from someone else in writing a component of your code, it is not plagiarism as long as you state (eg, as a comment in the code) who helped you in writing the method.

Mandatory Requirements

To satisfy mandatory requirements, a student must gain at least a **D** grade in the exam, and at least a **D** grade in the individual project report.

Passing SWEN 303

To pass SWEN 303, a student must satisfy mandatory requirements and gain at least a **C** grade overall.

Withdrawal

The last date for withdrawal from SWEN 303 with entitlement to a refund of tuition fees is Fri 23 July 2010. The last date for withdrawal without being regarded as having failed the course is Fri 24 Sept 2010 -- though later withdrawals may be approved by the Dean in special circumstances.

Rules & Policies

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study>.

Find out about academic progress and restricted enrolment at <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress>.

The University's statutes and policies are available at <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy>, except qualification statutes, which are available via the Calendar webpage at <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar> (See Section C).

Further information about the University's academic processes can be found on the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic) at <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcacademic>

All students are expected to be familiar with the following regulations and policies, which are available from the school web site:

[Grievances](#)

[Student and Staff Conduct](#)

[Meeting the Needs of Students with Disabilities](#)

[Student Support](#)

[Academic Integrity and Plagiarism](#)

[Dates and Deadlines including Withdrawal dates](#)

[School Laboratory Hours and Rules](#)

[Printing Allocations](#)

[Expectations of Students in ECS courses](#)

The School of Engineering and Computer Science strives to anticipate all problems associated with its courses, laboratories and equipment. We hope you will find that your courses meet your expectations of a quality learning experience.

If you think we have overlooked something or would like to make a suggestion feel free to talk to your course organiser or lecturer.
