FAQ / How-To Guide for INFO6410 / CS5682: HCI and Design
Instructor: Nicki Dell

I am taking INFO6410/CS5682. What do I do?
This course will be primarily administered via Canvas -- https://canvas.cornell.edu/courses/20084. You should ensure you have access to Canvas via your Cornell account. You should monitor the course calendar and Canvas site closely so that you receive important communications and announcements.

We will also use the #hci-and-design-2020 channel within Cornell Tech’s slack team. Here, we will post important announcements and communication. Slack also provides you with a way to directly message Nicki and the course TAs – Emily Tseng and Natalie Friedman. Make sure you join the channel!

On Canvas, there is a module for each topic we will cover, typically two per week: one for Monday and one for Wednesday. Each module consists of (1) a required reading, (2) a pre-recorded video lecture, (3) a short (5-minute) Canvas quiz, (4) an online discussion, and (5) a live recitation session. You MUST do the reading, watch the video lecture, and take the quiz BEFORE attending the recitation for that day.

Each student is required to attend two recitation sessions per week: one on Monday and one on Wednesday. The recitation sessions will be conducted via Zoom. The Zoom links are available in Canvas. Please ensure you are signed into Zoom with your Cornell NetID. You can choose to attend either the morning recitation or the evening recitation, depending on your time zone. We ask that you are consistent in your choice (i.e., pick the morning or evening session and stick to it). During the recitation, we will have live Q&A and you will complete an individual or small group activity that gives you hands-on practice with the day’s topic. This activity will be turned in and graded.

I'm not enrolled in the course, but I'd like to attend the first lecture. Can you send me the Zoom link?
If you are considering taking the course and want to attend the first few lectures, you need to join the #hci-and-design-2020 channel within Cornell Tech’s slack team. Zoom links and other course materials are pinned to the channel.

Which recitation session should I attend?
Morning recitation sessions are Mon/Wed 11-11:50am ET on Zoom.
Evening recitation sessions are Mon/Wed 9-9:50pm ET on Zoom.

You need to attend EITHER the morning recitation OR the evening recitation. You are welcome to pick the session that is most convenient for your time zone. Once chosen, please stick to that session. It is OK if you occasionally need to attend the other session, but please do try to be consistent as much as possible.

What do I need to do before attending a recitation session?
It is your responsibility to come to class well-prepared to complete the day’s hands-on activity. This means that, BEFORE the day’s session, you MUST:
(1) do the required reading – usually a short, relevant article or blog post
(2) watch the pre-recorded video lecture (15-25 minutes)
(3) complete the relevant quiz in Canvas (5 minutes)
(4) post any questions you have about the day’s topic to the relevant canvas discussion board
What will we do during the recitation sessions?
Before the recitation session begins, you should ensure that you have (1) done the reading, (2) watched the video lecture, (3) completed the five-minute quiz, and (4) posted any questions you have about the day’s topic to the canvas discussion board.

Recitation sessions will usually consist of (1) a few minutes of live Q&A on the day’s topic, and (2) individual or small group activities in which you apply and practice the method covered in the lecture. These activities will be turned in and graded. You are welcome to complete the activity using any tools you choose (e.g., screensharing via Zoom, Google docs, Microsoft 365 tools, etc.) provided that you can collaborate appropriately with your teammates if needed. You will usually submit your activity as a pdf.

How do the quizzes work?
Most days, you will complete a short, 5-minute quiz on the day’s topic BEFORE you attend the recitation session. Quizzes will be administered via Canvas. The quiz is designed to ensure you understand the course material and come prepared to make the most of the recitation session and hands-on activity.

Quiz questions cover BOTH the required reading AND the pre-recorded video lecture. Each quiz consists of 4 multiple choice questions (randomly selected). Once you begin the quiz, you will have five minutes to complete it. You cannot return to previous questions.

Quizzes will be available in canvas from 9am the day before class until 9pm the day of class. i.e., for Monday’s session, quizzes are available from 9am Sunday to 9pm Monday. For Wednesday’s session, quizzes are available from 9am Tuesday to 9pm Wednesday.

Quizzes will be graded. If you miss a quiz, you cannot re-take it. Instead, we will deduct your four lowest quiz scores from your final grade. This allows you to miss up to four quizzes, without penalty, for reasons including: illness, religious holidays, job interviews, doctor’s appointments, etc.

How do the homeworks work?
Students will complete five homework assignments over the semester. These are a core deliverable for the class, with each assignment worth 10% of your final grade. The homeworks give you more opportunities to practice the concepts and methods you learn in class. Check canvas for homework due dates, descriptions, and submission instructions.

What if I still have questions?
If you still have questions, the chances are other people have them too. Please post them in Slack or on Canvas so Nicki and the TAs can answer them for everyone. Of course, if it’s a private/individual question, you can send Nicki or the TAs a direct message on Slack.

I want to enroll in the class but I can’t / I am on the waitlist. How do I enroll?
Enrollment is managed by student services. Please communicate with them. They need to manually move students off waiting lists into classes, so please be patient. In the meantime, please DO read the material, watch lecture videos, do the quizzes, and attend recitations so you do not miss important material while you wait to be enrolled.
**Tolerance, Compassion, Forgiveness, and Assuming the Best**
I think we can all agree that 2020 has been “interesting”. So, in this course and all our lives, I want to emphasize the importance of virtues like tolerance, compassion, forgiveness, and assuming the best.

Here are some examples. This is the first class I’ve ever taught in this mode. I have worked really hard to try to make it good. The videos may seem "home grown" but they still took me hours. And I don’t mind, but when you don’t get a Spielberg level of cinematic treat, please assume that I tried. When there’s a mistake, let me know, and forgive me for making it. If something seems odd (e.g., apparently there’s a problem with Canvas where it will show you a grade based on things that were auto-graded but not warn you that manually graded things have not yet been factored in), let us know, and assume that it’s a system problem not us grading you down. We all collectively carry the weight of this "new normal", it's an uncertain time. Anxiety can lead to us having a shorter fuse than usual.

We will all get through this together, we will be a community of students, TAs, and instructors. We will take care of each other. We will hopefully find some points of laughter, and we will embrace the fact that we are still learning together. When there are bumps in the road, our tolerance, compassion, forgiveness, and assuming the best will help us all handle this with grace and good humor.