

STINT23 Report Cuartielles Ruiz

Summary of activities during the 2023 STINT teaching sabbatical

Contact

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Introduction

I was awarded a STINT fellowship at the University of Texas, Austin, in the Fall term 2023. I was assigned to the School of Information, also known as the iSchool. While I was not aware of the existence of such a school before, it was not long until I understood its purpose, area of studies, and research interests. Traditionally, the different schools of information in the US educational system have been concerned with the handling of information and information storage. This includes libraries, repositories of different kinds, the indexing of information, preservation, and presentation to the general public. With the arrival of digital technology, the schools of information have pivoted to work with different forms of information handling using computers and educate in subjects such as informatics and Ux, while maintaining their more traditional subjects such as restoration of books, library management, etc.

The iSchool at UT Austin celebrated its 75th anniversary during 2023 securing a large grant coming from the personal foundation from one of their alumni. In terms of students, the masters is mainly attended by students from foreign backgrounds who are taking this masters as a step to either pursue a PhD or to explore the job market in the US. In recent years, due to the geopolitical situation, the school has pivoted from having more than 50% of their students coming from China, to being coming from India. Only a small percent of US citizens pursue the masters, while there are mostly US students at the bachelors level.

The post pandemic SB-17 infected department

At the time of my arrival to the iSchool, it was facing two different challenges of very different nature. On the one hand, the Texas Governor signed so-called SB-17¹ establishing that “public institutions of higher education cannot engage in diversity, equity, and inclusion activities.” This implied that the UT had to adjust to a new system that would not allow the application of any kind of positive discrimination in their hiring processes, nor demand any kind of education in terms of diversity, equity, and inclusion to UT applicants. This is having a huge impact in an academic community as diverse as the Texan one where many different communities meet in a single geographical space. As a matter of fact, some of the faculty members were in doubt whether their position (such as the vice-dean in DEI) would be kept due to the passing of SB-17 at the senate. On the other hand, the whole institution was still suffering the consequences of a pandemic -where students were not asked to stay in

¹ <https://compliance.utexas.edu/sb17>

lock-down but that surely changed the way people worked and their time at school. As I was told and could witness myself, many of the faculty members were not present at the premises except for the occasional meeting or whenever their classes happened. As a matter of fact, I was one of the faculty members spending more time at the iSchool during my time there, even if I was scheduled to work only one day per week.

The circumstances surrounding both challenges keep on developing as I write. Currently DEI initiatives and programmes have been dismantled from the system. In parallel, the iSchool is still figuring out ways to make sure faculty is more present at school through different initiatives.

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Preparation and planning

First visit

Practically the same day I left the yearly STINT gathering in Stockholm on February 1st 2023 I reached out to my mentor at the partner institution to start the process of obtaining my sponsorship for the J1-visa, and book a visit to their premises. Since I had just been appointed head of one education programme at Malmö University and my Spring was fully booked, I scheduled a visit during the week of the 20th of February to Austin. Together with my family (partner and kid) we came to visit the university and the city. During this visit I could barely schedule five meetings: with my mentor at the iSchool, with a representative of the international office "Texas Global," with the head of the Design department -closer to my area of work- where one of my colleagues in Malmö had an exchange 10 years prior, with the head of the Creative Technologies programme, and with the head of the iSchool. On top of that, I had a brief encounter with the administrative person who should handle my paperwork at the iSchool. While we were in Austin for a full week (Monday to Friday), I only had meetings scheduled during one day. It was almost impossible to get things scheduled with some time due to being the beginning of the semester and the happening of a terrible storm that left the city in the dark the week prior.

The main outcomes of this trip were that I was asked to teach a course on my own -instead of following a teacher having one, and gaining some understanding of the city in order to proceed searching for accommodation. Also at this point we got notice that our daughter, who was starting gymnasium during the Fall 2023 in Sweden, was not going to be allowed to follow us during the full duration of the sabbatical, which took from us the need to continue searching for a school for her to attend.

Visa process

Our visa process was dramatically delayed due to a lack of responsiveness from the iSchool's administrative personnel. I got to know later that the iSchool had to initiate the process but due to first a slowness in response and later a 5-weeks long sickness, this work was not started until mid April. This represented a problem for us, since I had no way to know whether I would get my visa on time to leave for Texas taking into account the month-long summer vacation at the US embassy in Stockholm and the time it would take to process the application. As a matter of fact, I was scheduled for a meeting to check on my story at the embassy on August 17th, the same day I was supposed to fly to the US. Thanks to the visa waiver programme we could get this sorted out and got our visas granted just short before the summer break. In retrospect, this was a very stressful situation where I had to be teaching and managing my education programme in Sweden, while designing a new course to be done in the US, having to look for accommodation, preparing our house to be left closed for several months, while not being even sure any of the above was going to really happen.

EID, SSN, contracts

Technically, professors are not hired until September 1st every academic year. Furthermore, they are only paid 9 months out of 12 due to their teaching duties. The rest of the year it is up to them to get access to grants from different funding bodies to pursue any kind of research. They might also engage in summer courses offered by different institutions such as one ongoing with a South Korean university. iSchool professors are quite successful in collecting grants and most of them manage several projects, which allow them to fund their own PhD students.

However relevant this is to the iSchool, the truth of the matter is that even if I started teaching the last week of August, my contract was not signed until September 1st. This is a hurdle that only exists because the semester has been recently moved to start earlier in the year. This also means that some administrative work such as the Social Security Number could only be pursued once I had a contract in place. On the other hand, the school had already adjusted to these circumstances at other levels, and it was possible to obtain the electronic ID (EID) needed for producing the access card and digital identity for me to access buildings, use public transportation, etc. I was told that there is an effort to change this issue with contracts in the future, only time will tell whether this is sorted out or not.

Planning teaching

The planning of a new course is typically a complex process that will be done together with peers or that will -at least- be vetted by a peer-review process. In this case I was asked to produce a very extensive syllabus based on a previously existing template. During the academic year 2022-23 I attended a course at MaU where we were exposed to the kind of syllabi used in the US where everything happening around the course should be put together in a single document. I was asked to do this in two phases. In the first one I would just submit the title, learning objectives, initial bibliography, and weekly schedule.

Already in February, I was introduced to the person responsible for handling all of the schedules for all of the courses at the iSchool. We decided on the days in the week when my class would take place, and the days in the week when I should have office times for the students to come by and ask questions. Many students work while pursuing their masters, therefore the school tries to schedule as many as possible of the learning days between Monday and Thursday. Each course has 3 hours per week that are scheduled as a single slot. The classes are supposed to end after 2h 30m to give the students time to move around on campus to attend any other courses. Many students choose their classes based on when they happen and not on their personal learning goals. My class was scheduled on Tuesday mornings in a 3h long slot, while my office hours were scheduled on Thursday mornings.

For the sake of brevity, I will list here the relevant aspects to take into account when working with any school at UT Austin:

- The first two weeks of a course are used for the students to decide whether they will stay in a class or not, as most students register to more classes they can handle, they will typically make a test run of the class to make sure it will work for them. This has implications on the teaching, since it is not really possible to start group work, assign homework, or expect students to prepare the classes in depth.

- The last week of the semester ends on Monday since the rest of the days that week are booked for students to study for their finals.
- It is possible to schedule finals after the study days; it is, however, not recommended to schedule exhibitions or public displays of work, since there might not be students to attend.
- In the Fall term, there is a full week that should be left out of planning, that is the Thanksgiving week, which happens one week before the last week of the term. This breaks the class rhythm very much, and invalidates the possibility of having a more-intense practical week just before the end of the term.
- Purchases of materials are centralised through a system that makes it easy to produce shopping lists. There are two levels of confirmation after making the list: administrative personnel and group leader, which adds unnecessary delays to the process. In my case, an administrative oversight delayed the materials I needed for my class for over 3 weeks, leaving me in a bad position and having to improvise two classes with materials I had to purchase myself.

Figure 1 shows my handwritten notes once I was finally informed about the final form of the schedule. Note that I had to correct the location of the Thanksgiving week since I didn't get confirmation of this event until I had arrived in Texas. In total a course like this will have 14 active meetings with the whole class, of which the last one is a presentation and the first two are somehow open since the configuration of the class might change. Students will therefore work for about 39 hours in class and, on top of that, they should invest up to 10 hours per week in the course. This is significantly less than I would have at any of my courses in Sweden. Considering that it is not possible to demand prerequisites from these students in terms of expected knowledge at the time of joining, the course design I had to make required to incorporate aspects ranging from many different areas from interaction design.

I was not made aware of most of the above during my first interaction with the iSchool in February 2023. Therefore, I planned my class in a certain way and -by the time I was submitting my syllabus, I had to change it to accommodate a very different class once at UT. It came at no surprise that I was not the only one having to revise the syllabus, other teachers had as well. It is, in fact, common to do so as the course advances. The immutability that the syllabus experiments as a legal document in Sweden, doesn't apply to the department I visited. I cannot however speak for other departments at UT.

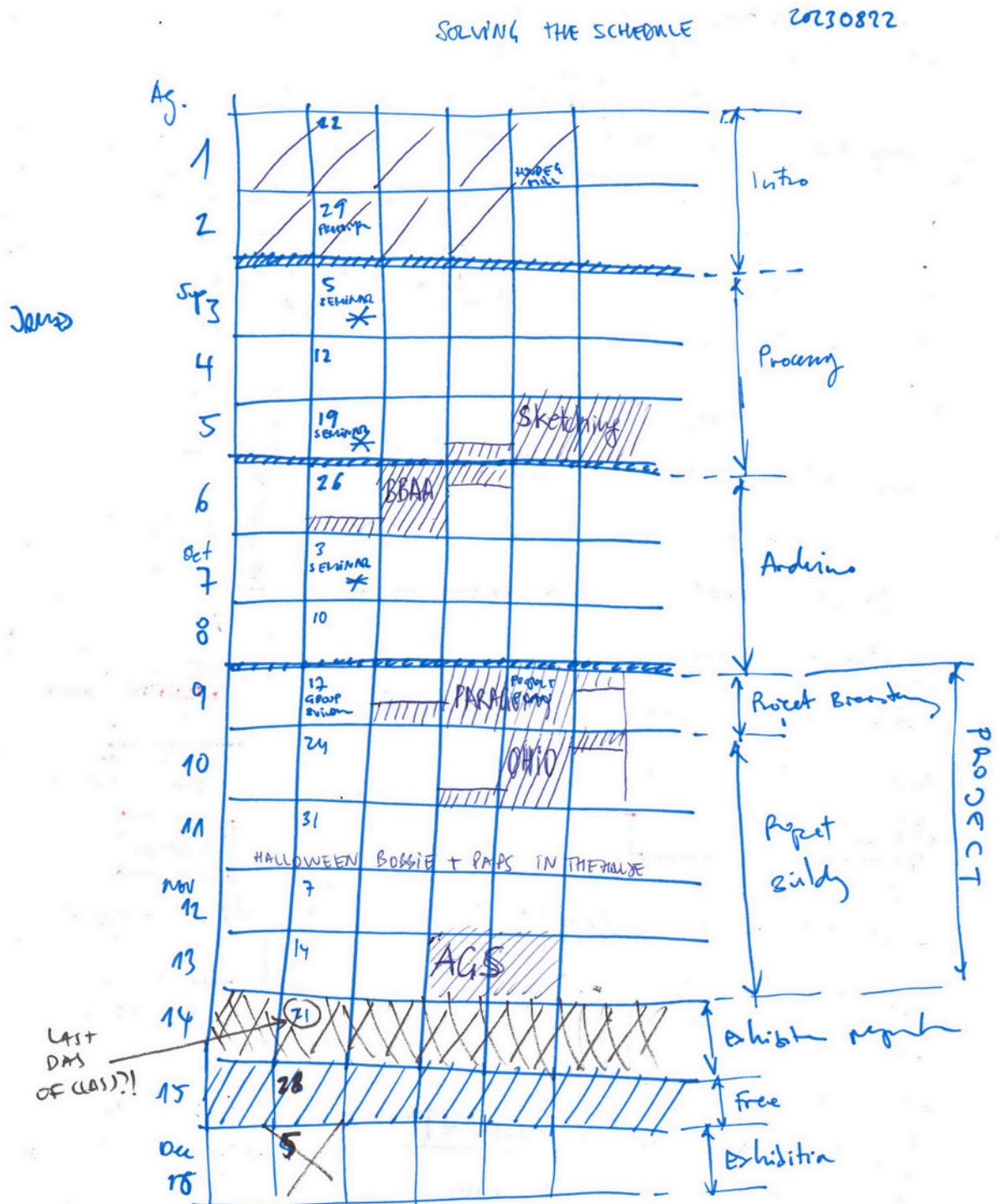


Figure 1: view of my notes when having to re-plan my class schedule once I had been informed about the final shape of the calendar.

The classroom and the office

The iSchool is located a couple of blocks outside the UT campus. It is just taking two of the floors in the building (floors 1 and 5) with the possibility of accessing some meeting rooms in other floors in the building when needed. The first floor has a couple of classrooms, two laboratories on paper and book restoration, a small modelling workshop inside one of the

laboratories, the post room, the IT room, a student-managed area called the iCommons, and a student meeting and eating space. The offices for all of the faculty and staff are located on floor 5. There are also some research rooms, booked by professors for their personal research projects over longer periods of time, two copy rooms, a larger conference room (for about 25 people), and an open kitchen space with a microwave, a fridge, and a coffee machine.



Figure 2: Teaching desk with foam particles during the dusting process, 20230822.

I was given a normal classroom for my teaching and offered an office that I was supposed to occasionally share with other people. The classroom was following the classic masterclass layout, something that was not what I needed to proceed with my hands-on pedagogy (and that I had previously stated). Besides, the space would not have passed the basic regulations of security at work in Sweden as the ventilation system was projecting almost invisible foam particles in the room (see figure 2). In a matter of hours after cleaning the space, a thin layer of black foam-dust would cover the surface of those desks exposed to the ventilation exhaust. More specifically, the teaching space was one of those. I mentioned this to some colleagues, who not only didn't look too surprised about it, but didn't also recommend any kind of action. Personally I didn't feel comfortable with this and I negotiated the use of part of the book restoration workshop for my classes. I used the argument of being in need of a workshop-like environment for teaching, to an extent that was also true, as I was already looking for a space at the school of Design to conduct my classes in a hands-on friendly space. The workshop responsible kindly offered me a place where to run my class and build a small electronics laboratory for that purpose (figure 3).



Figure 3: Presentation day at the book restoration workshop, 20231128.

The office I got access to was small, but enough for one person. It had no natural light, and ventilation and heating controls were shared with other small offices (figure 4). It was however sufficient considering that I was present at university more than most of the other faculty who performed a lot of distance work. This kind of office was meant just for faculty working on a part time basis. Full time faculty would have larger offices with room to host several shelves with materials and a second desk where to host visits from students. Not all spaces had the same size, but everyday faculty had better equipped rooms than I and the other temporary people did. I was told that I was expected to share the office because they didn't expect me to make such an extensive use of the space as I was just teaching one course. It is common for teachers to have a mix of supplies and food in there, since very few people leave their workspace over lunch on a normal basis. In my case, I built a small electronics laboratory with an ultra-portable soldering kit, had the physical version of the books I would use to support my teaching, and had an extra chair to have students visit in one-to-one meetings.

We were encouraged to park our bikes inside of our offices because the school could not guarantee any kind of secure parking space for those and I was commuting by bike as we lived just 5 km away from campus. There is parking space in the building and it is possible to pay for it at a rate of 5 USD per day or with a monthly plan if you happen to go there frequently enough to justify it. Most teachers would come to work by car and park in the mentioned space. Students and faculty at UT have free access to public transportation (buses and trains) using the UT access card. This was a convenient option for me as there was a bus line within walking distance from our home that covered the path to the iSchool in

less than 20 minutes. Buses have the option to carry bikes in front, which simplifies combined commutes on bike-bus. On top of that, thanks to an agreement between UT and the crowd-taxi company Lyft, we had a strong discount to move in the evenings within a certain part of the metropolitan area.



Figure 4: Office space at iSchool, 20230907.

Equipment, network, and e-access

I was provided with equipment for as long as I asked for it. I purchased teaching materials worth 1.000 USD (enough for a class in the size I was teaching) and the department had no issue with that. I had my own computer and never was offered one from UT. This proved to be an issue, since I didn't have access to very simple printing services. I was told that I could use my EID to access a certain computer on the student floor and print, but that never worked in the 5 months I spent there. The iSchool is physically separated from the rest of the university and has its own IT group handling all kinds of issues. They can lend material to faculty and students, will make sure connectivity is working, handle helpdesk cases for people specifically working in the house, etc.

In retrospect, and even if this would have made my communication with Sweden more complex, it would have been a good idea to request borrowing a computer for the time at UT. Some of the other people coming from Sweden got this sorted out this way.

The network works flawlessly all over UT, it is possible to connect using Eduroam, but it is recommended to use the local UTexas network or it will not be possible to access any of the official platforms (Canvas, MyIO, etc) while on campus.

Online preparation workshop, department retreat

The iSchool is constantly recruiting new teaching faculty. As a matter of fact, it is possible to suggest courses and they have a budget to bring in a certain number of professionals to teach there. If courses are successful they will repeat them every term or every other term. They have what they call the professional track where they try to attract professionals who might not be interested in a tenure track (where the personal growth is based in research production) but who would still be interested in pursuing an academic career through the dissemination of their professional experience and skills. This, together with a certain degree of departmental rotation, requires to run an onboarding workshop every semester. I attended this online, 1 hour long, workshop a couple of weeks prior to my arrival to the US. We were a small group of 6 people, the main administrative staff for the department, and the vice-dean for Academic Affairs (my mentor for the STINT program) guided a session where we were told some basic things we should take into account.

The main aspects that do have a huge impact in the ability of anyone visiting the iSchool for any period of time is to ensure being registered at the right email lists. UT has a long list of email lists and becoming a member of the community doesn't ensure access to them. Therefore it is important to understand which ones are relevant and make sure to be added to them. While I attended this workshop, was informed about this, registered with time to the lists, there were others where I had no control and where the administrative staff failed to subscribe me. Therefore I lived in the black about several aspects of the iSchool for over a month, until I understood that I was not properly informed about the activities happening. I should -somehow- been reminded by my mentor on-site, but that was not the case. It was through the interaction with other faculty members that I understood I was missing things.

The most important aspect that I missed, and this was a huge oversight from both my mentor and the administrative staff, was the general entry week arranged by the central administration at UT (from August 14th), and the department retreat happening on August 18th. My arrival to UT was scheduled for August 17th, I had informed everyone accordingly since February. There was plenty of time to let me know about either of the events, but I was never told. Once I landed on the 17th, I immediately wrote to the main administrative staff of the department informing about it. The response I got on the 18th is that I should come on the following Monday since they were at a department retreat.

Neither the introductory week, nor the retreat were mentioned at the many email exchanges, or at the online introductory workshop. The host university missed every opportunity of letting me know about any of those events which -in my opinion- would have been fundamental for me to learn about my colleagues and for them to get to know me. It is -at least- a relief to know that this was not the case for some of my fellow STINTonians, and that they got access to these events thanks to better communication from their respective departments. The irony was, however, that I was working at the school of information.

Online mandatory courses, online administration

UT has a huge group of faculty and students enrolling every semester. They have an online educational platform that is linked to everyone's personal profiles and that will flag situations when someone might not have participated in a mandatory course that would block them from using certain parts of the system. For example, it is not possible to start teaching without having participated in a Title IX course where you get to know about the regulations around harassment, how to report it, and how to handle it. If you don't participate in one of the available courses on the topic by a certain date, you will first be reminded, then your EID will be cancelled. There is a list of courses that everyone has to attend to, then there are other courses which are optional and that one could take. This is very similar to the CAKL² system at Malmö University with the big difference on availability (there are many more courses), and the ease of enrolment (everything is done online).

Most of the administration requirements when working at UT are handled online. There is a big amount of visiting scholars and PhD students that need to go through this process each semester. Therefore they have streamlined all of their processes through different online platforms:

- eID manager: this is the place where to manage the personal electronic ID to get access to all online services https://idmanager.its.utexas.edu/eid_self_help/
- UT Learn: this platform is where one should do mandatory and elective courses. It can be found at <https://utlearn.utexas.edu/> It is constantly adding new resources that one could take to keep updated with new pedagogical techniques, legal aspects of teaching, the US labour market, etc.
- myUT: general entry dashboard for all UT employees, it gives access to personal schedules, software tools (office and the like), Canvas for class management, personal information, all financials (salaries, tuitions, etc.), and a list of tools to handle class waiting lists, manuals on how to deal with different situations, etc. Find it at <https://my.utexas.edu/>
- myIO: this site is relevant for visiting scholars to handle their immigration documents, insurance ones, etc. The URL is a little tricky: <https://isss.io.utexas.edu/>
- UT market: this is the official procurement site, it is used for buying materials through registered vendors such as DigiKey, Amazon, etc. The process is such that once one has prepared the shopping list, an accountant at UT will oversee it and issue a request towards a department responsible who should be approving the purchase. Further explanations could be found at <https://purchasing.utexas.edu/ut-market>

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<https://mau.se/en/about-us/faculties-and-departments/faculty-of-education-and-society/the-centre-for-teaching-and-learning/>

Tasks and responsibilities

This section covers an explanation of my duties while at UT. I mainly focused on teaching my class, and creating a small-scale electronics laboratory.

Teaching my class

I was asked to propose a course alongside my skills and previous knowledge. At Malmö university I have been working for many years in the field of prototyping with electronic components, and the question was that could be incorporated to the masters at UT focusing on one of the core topics of their study plan. I created a new class where students were to learn about the way electronics can be used to create new types of interfaces that could be used to interact with data. This interaction could happen in any kind of everyday setting. To accomplish a relevant result for this class, students would have to learn about electronics, programming, data visualisation, and some basic aspects of design research. It was not an easy task to put together this course and produce the syllabus. The class consisted of a 2h 30m session happening every week with mandatory attendance (this is standard at many courses in this masters). During the first half of the course I exposed the students to standard design research literature as well as to different topics in the form of lectures and seminars in parallel to 6 guided laboratory sessions. The course ended with a project building period and a project exhibition (see figure 5).

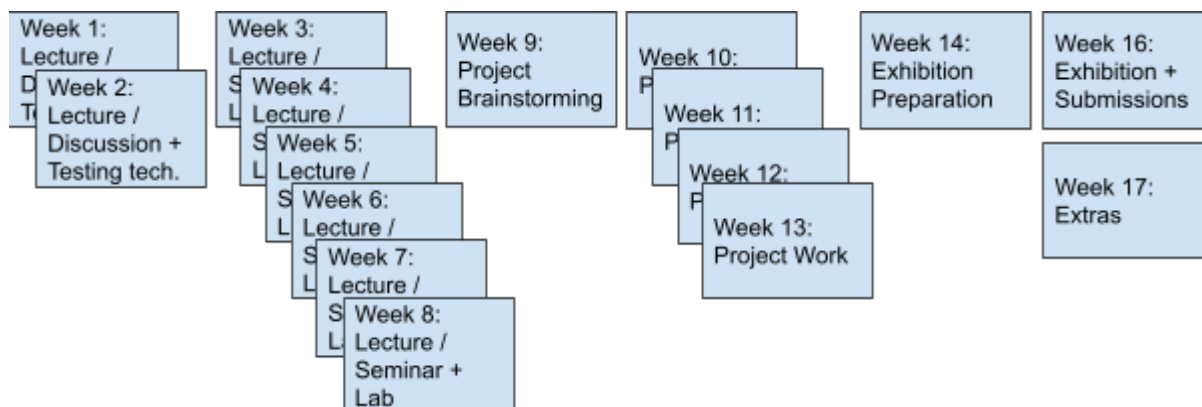


Figure 5: Original course plan, it would be adjusted later due to delays on the arrival of laboratory parts. Note that week 15 was Thanksgiving.

The course was proposed by submitting a sketch of a calendar and a list of Learning Objectives. 7 students opted in for this course. I learned that such an amount is normal for very specialised courses such as mine. Courses with less than 5 applicants will typically be cancelled, this would not have been my case since I didn't represent an expense to the university in any way. A large masters class could accommodate 20 students.

The course plan suffered some changes due to an unfortunate delay in the delivery of laboratory parts. I dealt with it using some of my personal materials and thanks to the fact that there were just 7 students in my class. I learned that -while the whole purchase process is very well streamlined through UT's online platforms, it still requires a two-level signature process and that people need to be reminded about checking their email to confirm whatever

extent needs to be confirmed. Despite the changes, I managed to squeeze in all of the content I had planned to by shortening down the project phase.

The one aspect I learned about is that students in this masters not only have entirely different backgrounds, but that their interaction with different professors and individual study plans at the masters makes them into a very diverse crowd. Their education differs both in width and depth at all times, which makes it impossible to work with any pre-assumed knowledge. To compensate for this, I considered the possibility of having extra seminars outside the originally appointed teaching hours. However this idea could not be pursued because one of the students manifested the impossibility of participating in such seminars. I made other attempts of providing extracurricular activities for the students to try, but to no avail.

While there is an extreme degree of flexibility to handle the syllabus and modify it on the fly based on circumstances, it is almost impossible to change the agenda. If it was hard for a 7-student class, I cannot even conceive how it would be for a 40 student one.

Creation of a small scale electronics laboratory

In order to successfully conduct a course like the one mentioned, students needed to use their own computers for programming purposes, but the school had to offer some laboratory materials. I made a calculation exercise and anticipated the kind of materials the students would need ahead of time. Since the iSchool has never had a prototyping facility like the ones I typically work with, I had to figure out how to equip the education programme with all of the materials needed to run this class. I did explore existing spaces at UT where my students could get access to larger prototyping tools such as laser cutters or 3D printers, and the support needed to run them. Namely there are two places where it is quite straightforward to get access to those: the space called Invention Works, and the school of Design (which shares a makerspace with the school of Robotics).



Figure 6: Some of the materials purchased for conducting the course.

The final puzzle for me to properly conduct my courses included: space at the book restoration workshop, electronic components purchased by the iSchool (figure 6), and prototyping spaces at two different locations on campus.

Activities during the Teaching Sabbatical

This section covers all of the activities I pursued besides my teaching.

Participating at the Education committee

Once I was added to the official communication channels, which didn't happen when it should in the first place, I got notified about different education committees. This is the equivalent to Malmö University's faculty meetings for each department where all educators attend and follow an agenda set by the Vice-dean for education. In total I attended three of these meetings. These meetings would cover any matters from any of the three education degrees (undergraduate, masters, PhD). I took my own notes of the meetings. Things that I learned:

- Teachers are conflicted as for how will the SB-17 regulation affect the student intake, and about how it will modify their own orgchart. This was resolved over time by removing a vice-decanate dedicated to diversity and transforming it into one focused on global engagement.
- The school runs a special integration programme to promote that under-represented student groups will move from their bachelors into a masters. This is done in the form of a summer course where students from iSchools from all over the US participate.
- PhD students fail to participate in many courses because they have a strong dependency on the funding provided by their professors. It is not in the professors' benefit to pay for a student to take hours off to participate in a learning activity and not just work as a research assistant. They are thinking about a way to ensure that they will at least take the mandatory courses.
- Master students have the option not to make a master's thesis and instead do a capstone project at a company. This is an action that students can do in parallel with other courses since they are supposed to spend only about 120 hours in the course of a semester.
- The bachelors programme has, as they call them, mid-sized classes with about 40 students per class. This represents an issue for them as they are not big enough to get access to resources (mainly teaching assistants) enough to focus in the class administration leaving all of the pedagogical actions on their staff, and they are not small enough to be able to run them by themselves. There are voices defending both views: make classes bigger, or make them smaller.
- There is a conflict with the way these meetings are happening. Administration is struggling because it is hard to run them in hybrid format, but there is also the issue of professional teachers who need to make a long commute on a Friday afternoon (when these meetings happen) just to participate in a 1h long meeting.
- Meetings are very formal, previous minutes are discussed, documented, and modified. It is almost an assembly format with the difference that there is a top-down approach to management and direction of the meetings.
- Educators work with external and internal grants in improving the conditions of the education. For example, they realised that there is not a good-enough guide to teach their students how to use the command line interface for handling data. Therefore, two of the teachers applied for a grant to create a guide to support their courses. The guide is open and available on github.

Evaluating a course proposal

At some point, my mentor at the iSchool asked whether I could help evaluate a course proposal on 3D design. I acceded to produce a quick evaluation of the course proposal based on the learning objectives, teaching activities, and theoretical background suggested. The reason for this analysis was my experience with design courses. The contents of that report are confidential.

Attending iSchool's research seminar

The iSchool has a recurrent research seminar happening several times in the semester. I attended two different ones. My main learning from them is that the iSchool is very strong in quantitative research methods in a way we don't work at K3. It could be relevant to introduce some of those methods to benefit students who might be interested in pursuing a career in HCI instead of Interaction Design (our specialty). Research seminars happen over lunch and therefore participants are given some food and soft drinks.

Hosting a research seminar session

I was approached by the iSchool's research seminar responsible who asked whether I would be interested in introducing my work and K3 after suggesting that I would like to do so. I was glad to be added to the official agenda and hosted a talk. I covered aspects such as how MaU works, my role there, my research, examples of past projects, and ideas for future ones. My intention with this talk was to figure out potential ways to work with people at the iSchool and while I got compliments for the talk and people manifested their interest, nothing really took off.

Teaching at Prof. Min Kyung Lee class

Prof. Min Kyung Lee, a colleague at the iSchool, asked whether I could run a session for them about the kind of work that I do in prototyping. This gave me the opportunity of meeting bachelor students for the first time in class. Prof. Lee was unfortunately not there, since they had a trip to Stockholm that week, but I interacted with their TA, a PhD student at the iSchool responsible for scheduling some of the sessions. Bachelor students are mostly coming from the US, as a matter of fact, from Texas. This is a huge difference with the masters where most students are foreigners. I didn't see big differences between the students there and the ones I would typically get at a course in Sweden. The session went fine and I had a productive Q&A session at the end.

Participating at the Design School department meetings

From my first trip to Austin in February 2023 I got in touch with the head of the Design department, thanks to the introductions made by one of my colleagues at MaU who had a STINT grant some years before me with them. The reception of my presence there was very different from the one at my own host department. We considered the possibility of having some of their students participate in my course (but we failed to do so due to administrative issues), and discussed having a talk at one of their departmental meetings (I ended up

partaking in two of their meetings and talking at one of those). These meetings were a lot more relaxed than the ones at the iSchool and while they followed an agenda, they were mostly informative and didn't have minutes. There were more participants than at the iSchool and people engaged in a more positive manner with the discussion. The first half of the meeting was dedicated to reporting on different issues, while the second half was used for teachers to talk about different experiences in order to keep everyone informed. Some highlights of those meetings:

- At one of the sessions, the dean of the College of Fine Arts made a very reassuring speech about SB-17 and how UT was approaching this matter. This was, in my humble opinion, a strong demonstration of the school's commitment to diversity while respecting the new laws passed by the US. It was a good talk and while improvised, it was carefully touching upon the matter and explaining how their own opinion had changed throughout the process of producing the internal policies to deal with SB-17.
- The experiences presented included a summer course in typography done every year and where students can apply to work with old-school types. It is a classic design course where students get the chance to experiment with materials that are not that easily accessible.
- Yet another experience was the one of a teacher who had been working with gardening communities in Austin thanks to a summer grant offered by the department. They explained how the design process worked, data was collected, and different experiments in visualisation.
- I.e. there are departmental grants to support teachers in doing research over the summer, this is the period when they are not paid as educators and need to figure out how to sustain themselves anyway. This is a great way to help young faculty exploring subjects while improving their background materials for teaching.

Co-teaching at the DFA Alternative Game controllers class

Through the intervention of the head of the Design department, I got to know the head of the Creative Technologies department at the school of Fine Arts who invited me to participate as a co-teacher to some of the sessions of a course dedicated to alternative interfaces for console games run by a third teacher. I attended two different sessions of the course, where I got the chance to help build some of the prototypes and to offer some critique to the students' works. I was also invited to a public viewing of their work in a gallery format at a festival and to the final examination at the end of the semester. This was a refreshing part of my trip as I could participate in a course very close to the kind of classes I would typically teach in Sweden. It was great to see the quality of the work and the access students get to materials in such courses. I got to see the DFA from the inside, their black box, their motion tracking systems, and to have several conversations with people teaching there.

Mapping the way the way Invention Works functions

Invention Works is a university-wide makerspace with three faculty hired full time and about 20 assistants coming from different parts of the university supporting it at all times. The space is open Monday to Friday from midday to 6 or 8PM (depending on the part of the semester). Students who have taken different kinds of courses on how the tools in the makerspace work are allowed to independently work with the different tools, whether laser

cutters, 3D printers, vinyl cutters, electronic kits, etc. Since this is a university-wide service it is also accessible for courses who request access to it, and it runs its own courses -typically under the umbrella of the school of Design, even if it is part of the school of Engineering. Personally I took ALL of their online education courses just to understand how it works. I also attended 4 (out of 6 available) introductory sessions to their machines for me to be able to use them if needed. As I am currently creating a new facility dedicated to prototyping at MaU, this was a very useful experience that I complemented with interviews to the head of the group and the other educators working there. Furthermore, I am currently supervising a caption project for the iSchool where one of the graduate students will be producing a workflow map and a proposal of an education plan for MaU's prototyping lab based on the Invention Works one.

Participating at the Invention Works Hackathon

Invention Works in collaboration with a group of engineering students arranges a yearly hackathon called "the Makeathon." I joined as an advisor and final project evaluator. The topic for this hackathon was to create technologies to support people with disabilities. Students worked with the topic for a week, and built their prototypes during the weekend. I spent two half days interacting with students in different ways. This is not very different from similar events arranged by MaU students such as the Game Jam and the like. There is a clear difference in terms of budget and in how students guarantee participation (applicants have to do so with a symbolic 20 USD fee that will only be returned if they participated in the event), but otherwise it is more or less the same.

Attending Open Access Summit

UT's library, which is strongly related to the iSchool, in collaboration with NASA and other US entities, arranged an Open Access Summit to discuss ways the university could contribute to the production of open knowledge. This was a half-day programme hosted at UT's main library and scholars from many different schools attended. It was a great opportunity to meet people working in some of the topics that interest me and to be seen by others. It was also good to gain some first hand access to how things work in the US in regards to this matter. There is a slightly different understanding on the value of openness in academia in the US compared to how we understand it in the EU. Covering this aspect is not the aim of this document.

Attending iSchool's 75th Anniversary event

The iSchool celebrated its 75th anniversary with a gala dinner at Austin's public library building. I joined the other faculty and staff to a nicely arranged event with talks by different historical characters in the history of the school and closing with a panel about the visions for the future of the discipline. All and all a nicely arranged event that gave me an overview of the history of the iSchool that I couldn't get anywhere else packed with facts and images of the work produced by students.

Attending different guest lectures

UT is a large university and it is constantly hosting relevant lectures. I attended several external lectures at different faculties, as an example I mention the most relevant ones:

- The school of Engineering hosted Robert Metcalfe, one of the creators of the Ethernet as we know it.
- The Institute for Historical Studies in the Department of History hosted "Loosening the Grid: Ideas for Mapping Human Experience," a keynote talk by Anne Kelly Knowles and Levi Westerveld.
- The Humanities Institute had Dr. Lilly Irani as Distinguished Visiting Lecturer to will lead the conversation on "Surveillance and Solidarities."

Participated in Creativity with AI seminars

UT is not exempt of the disruption that AI is provoking in the academic world. Knowing that technologies such as generative AI have arrived to transform the way we think and do, the university has launched a series of initiatives opened to the whole academic community in an attempt to create a fruitful discussion and a common way of thinking about the advantages and risks of the technology. I participated in two different online seminars and joined the AI Forum, an open programme with seminars where to continue the debate with peers. The forum can be found at: <https://www.cs.utexas.edu/forum-for-ai#10-13-23>

Meetings with DFA BA programme

I participated in 4 different one-to-one meetings with professors in different disciplines at the school of Arts. The meetings dealt with the possibility of arranging exchanges between the institutions, launching a class having students to collaborate over the Internet, and the possibility of participating in courses. Communication is ongoing.

Meetings with Design programme

I met 8 times with different professors and management at the school of Design. We held conversations regarding my observations on how UT works, how students get enrolled, the structure of the programme, and the possibilities of having one of their teachers coming over to MaU for a short visit.

Meetings with Engineering programme

My main interactions with the school of Engineering were through the Invention Works space. I had 4 different meetings with the responsible of the space, some of them including the other members of the staff.

Important lessons

The list of learned lessons is large. The 5-months-long experience of the US culture embedded into the so-called UT nation has brought me to think differently about my own role and agency in the institution I work at. Probably the most important lesson is that I do have the power to bring change to MaU. While just being a small part of the whole academic machine, over the course of my 24 years career I have been able to create laboratories, produce new knowledge, conduct many classes, and follow the growth of thousands of students. MaU has provided a safety net for me not to worry about basic things. While in the US, I realised about the very different infrastructure my peers have to deal with and how that has an effect in both the way they work, their relationship to students, and to the institution. I also witnessed huge differences in culture and access to resources between faculties within the same institution. While we are not exempt from those in Sweden, I felt that our practice and understanding of our roles gives us the chance to be closer to one another. I don't see it as problematic to start a collaboration with someone from a different faculty at MaU as it is at the UT.

The one aspect that I found relevant is that in Sweden we have the individual goal of making research while we are hired as teachers, but in the US researchers compete for a teaching job. Many see their academic career as the sequence study-research-teach, while the way I understand this in Sweden is study-teach/research. While this difference might seem subtle, it is not. I do think that the whole academic community suffers from an excessive competitiveness between professors who try to produce more and more papers (research) to demonstrate their ability to handle new knowledge in an attempt to secure a safe job as teachers. This makes academia into a machine of production instead of a space of reflection.

I could easily link this to my personal experience of how life happens in the US. Mobility is constructed around the individual vehicle. Public space is erected around parking. Your ability to succeed as a business is directly linked to the space you have for customers to come over. The university is no exception. Currently less than 15% of UT students live within walking / cycling distance from campus, thus many of them have to commute for their academic interactions. Professors have a similar problem since living close to campus is too expensive. Therefore neither students nor professors spend too much time on campus. They go to the university to be productive, which sets the tone also for their social relationships, and the academic ones. I learned that it is hard to connect with others at a human level, and that they don't expect for that to happen. Things happen there and then, and there is no room for a second chance. It is better to be well prepared for the classes and the meetings, since there might not be a second chance or the possibility to randomly meet others at the workspace. As a designer and design professor, these meetings, whether programmed or random, are of vital importance for the development of my work and I was not prepared for this when I first arrived at UT. It took me some time to understand this and to give more value to people's time, as well as to my own.

Comparison between the host and the home institutions (in Sweden)

In this section I will comment on aspects relating the host institution to my own. For the sake of clarity, I will compare the iSchool (UT) to K3 (MaU), leaving aside other faculties I visited during my sabbatical.

Pedagogy and its importance

At MaU we have constructed almost monolithic education programmes where students follow a single track education in order to obtain a degree. The pedagogy is carefully crafted and the different teaching moments are scheduled over the course of the duration of the whole education, whether 3 or 2 years. We look at learning objectives in a holistic way making sure that students cover the full range of goals throughout their education and looking into progression. The masters at the iSchool works in a very different way. Students are advised to create individual study plans following their own interests. It is impossible for students to take all of the courses offered in the raster, both because there are too many, and because some courses only happen once. There is a guarrant of the education progression in the form of a vice-dean of education and an education committee where all faculty join, but it is unclear to me how progression is planned or how the general overview of the programme is designed.

Curriculum and courses offered

The iSchool has a long list of courses which change every term. As mentioned earlier, the students' individual study plans are based on making an a-la-carte selection of elective courses and not two students will take the same. At the time of writing, the iSchool's website listed 160 courses, taking into account that thesis projects are also considered a course. The courses cover many different topics having to do with informatics, data management, human computer interaction, etc. I could see some similarities when it comes to the courses to the ones we run at some of the programmes at MaU. The duration and expected depth from the courses is different since the students have entirely different levels of prerequisites, and the courses are typically shorter than ours in terms of the amount of time students will devote to the course. Some of the courses listed were offered just once and are listed under a special list of courses. Figure 7 shows a partial screenshot where my course is listed.

How teaching is conducted

Teaching is conducted in silos. Teachers run their own classes with sporadic collaborations. They get a time slot assigned by the administrative staff and they use Canvas for all communication with students. Teaching happens in a 2,5h time slot every week with another 2,5h office time slot for students to come up with questions. Courses run a full semester which effectively lasts 15 weeks. Students can be asked to work up to a certain amount of hours per week, taking into account that they should be taking 3 parallel courses.

Elliott Hauser	Datafication	2023	Fall	Syllabus
Abhijit Mishra	Deep Learning and Multimodal Systems	2023	Fall	Syllabus
David Joaquin Cuartielles Ruiz	Designing Physical Information Systems	2023	Fall	Syllabus
Jakki Bailey	Designing User Interfaces for Children	2023	Spring	

Figure 7: Partial screenshot of the site showing the course I taught³.

Use of technology/IT in education

Technology is key in the courses here. All students have laptops, the university has a properly functioning WiFi network. Courses are hosted on Canvas. During the last weeks of the semester, students are given an online evaluation survey. At the end of the semester, the administrative staff will send teachers a link where to post the grades, very similar to Ladok, only that it has no second-peer validation possibility.

When planned with time, it is possible to access all sorts of extra resources at UT. The main issue is distance, as the campus is big. Therefore, while it is possible to plan using e.g. a fabrication laboratory for a class, then a whole 2,5h sessions should be booked for that, as it is not possible to ask the students to go there for a small fraction of time.

The library offers digital access to most materials and students can connect on distance to practically everything. So can teachers.

One important aspect is that external computers need to be registered to work within the official university network, the use of the available Eduroam is not giving access to Canvas or other local tools. Also, external computers will not be able to print even when registered in the network. Some faculties have implemented systems for part-time teachers (with not school computers) to print using stationary computers available in the printing rooms.

Teachers' information is easily accessible online. Students can find the teacher profile through the iSchool's main site. Figure 8 shows a screen capture of the site I had during my time there. It should be noted that -as one could expect- this profile site was down at the time of writing.

³ Check the website at: <https://www.ischool.utexas.edu/ischool-course-offerings?courseID=182>

Figure 8: Profile page on the iSchool’s site accessible through the Wayback machine⁴.

Forms of examination

There is a big flexibility when it comes to forms of examination at UT. When I was creating my course I was told that I could choose to have a Project-Based Learning course (as I did), that I could track attendance (as I did), and that I would decide whether or not to make a final exam (which I didn’t). In the courses I helped with at the school of Design, the one of Arts, and the iSchool, I observed different examination methods ranging from oral presentations, to written exams. Given the circumstances and because I had much more time than I usually do to evaluate the students’ work, I tried a different assessment mechanism. I defined a formula-based model that would allow students to obtain more than 100% of the grade. This would let them choose their preferred way to be evaluated. It is to be seen whether I will apply this at my courses in Sweden, due to the amount of work it represents in larger groups. Anyway, I recommend checking the attached syllabus for the full explanation. The formula I applied is depicted in figure 9.

$$final\ grade = \sum_{i=1}^6 labs(i) + \sum_{i=1}^3 seminars(i) + (prj.\ work + exhibition) + prj.\ report + design\ journal + extras$$

Figure 9: Equation used to grade the students during my course at UT.

The relationship and/or status of pedagogical merits compared to research merits

The iSchool has different ways of being part of the academic life as an educator. There is the possibility of following a classic tenured track based on publications, while there is also the

⁴

<https://web.archive.org/web/20231003064224/https://www.ischool.utexas.edu/people/people-details?PersonID=569>

chance of joining as a professional whether part- or full time. The professional track is however limited in time to 3 years in any of the existing contractual forms⁵. The position of affiliate professor is a formula that allows for professors from a different institution within the UT to establish a temporary relationship with other schools. Most of the professors at UT have a PhD independently of them following the tenured or the professional tracks. The other schools I visited I met with professors who were teaching despite not having a PhD, somehow more common at art and design schools at other places. At the iSchool's website, they distinguish between full-time, part time, affiliate, and emeritus faculty types. That said, from the current 30 full-time faculty, only one is not having a PhD; at the affiliate level from its 14 professors, 3 don't have a PhD; at the part-time level, where I was listed during my time there, there are 46 professors at the time of writing, it is hard to say how many have a PhD. With this, the logical conclusion is that having a PhD is a must to teach at the iSchool full-time, always based on the publicly available information.

This is very different from the situation we have at K3 in MaU. Since our school is only 25 years old and we barely became a research university a couple of years ago, added to the fact that we are a school strongly built on top of practice, many of the educators do not have a PhD. Currently we are experiencing huge problems hiring temporary faculty (whether full or part-time), which makes it hard for us to demand from our applicants to come with a PhD. In that sense, we value the ability of the applicants to teach more than their research skills.

To what extent educational programmes conform to labour market needs

The one thing that took me a long time to understand was the kind of work students at the iSchool would apply for. The diversity of backgrounds and study plans was such that it is hard to define "the typical iSchool" student. This is not very different from what we see currently happening with design graduates at any of the disciplines taught at MaU. Students have the possibility of applying to a very broad range of positions from very skill-based ones such as Ux designer, to more process oriented ones as project manager in a certain organisation. The special characteristic of the iSchool, founded on the idea of library science has transformed over time and I could see many students interested in topics such as the influence of automation in work processes and other related topics. From that perspective the ability of the iSchool to conform to the labour market is big. The topics taught in classes are up-to-date, the tools used as well, and they have a huge flexibility to adjust given their elective-based education programme. This is a flexibility we lack at MaU, and while we have designed our syllabi in a way that allows us to change the content without changing the substance, the iSchool can change everything (even the teachers) from one semester to the next. On top of that, students are welcome to select courses at other education programmes to make their individual study plans more suited to their own needs.

Students are however scared of the market. I had several conversations with my students (all foreigners but one, and in need of a quick job not to be forced to return to their countries) about the current trend of laying off employees at the kinds of companies they dreamt to work for. At the end of the day, the masters at the iSchool counts with a large body of foreign students who are willing to enter the US labour force. If jobs become an issue for their

⁵ <https://wikis.utexas.edu/display/coe/Titles+and+Ranks+-+Professional+Track+Faculty>

graduates, the programme might suffer the consequences by getting less applicants in the future. Therefore, the faculty is engaged in connecting their students to prospect jobs by sharing job offerings, creating opportunities during the programme to engage with companies through internships and capstone projects, and bringing the students into their own research projects as employees.

Competence development and career opportunities for teachers

UT has a long list of online resources, courses, and special interest groups for teachers to keep updating their knowledge. I have mentioned several throughout the document, as listed below:

- Mandatory online courses to understand the rights and obligations of educators.
- Open lectures and seminars.
- Special interest groups (such as the AI forum).
- Summer programmes for further personal development.

Recommendations

To STINT scholars visiting UT

UT is a very big institution, and a very well working machine where administration is at times very detached from the educational part. Visiting scholars will have to deal with very different parts of the organisation which will not necessarily be talking to one another. While they might be expecting to have a single interface with the hosting organisation, there will be many more and not all responses to one's questions will be answered by the same person. At the same time, depending on how the mentoring person at the other side is, they might be very busy and one's work might just represent a very small portion of the whole semester for them -as it was in my case. Therefore I would strongly recommend finding an anchor in the organisation with whom to share challenges and look for answers.



Figure 9: View of a bikepacking trip in Texas.

Furthermore, UT offers plenty of opportunities to interact with scholars from many disciplines. While one might not find the perfect match at one's institution, I recommend looking through the whole list of teachers at other institutions to figure out possible connections with whom to interact, and sharing teaching and research opportunities with.

At a personal level, UT offers some chances to connect with other visiting scholars. However, I would recommend looking in different social media platforms for communities with whom to spend time with. Whether cycling, hiking, reading clubs, stand-up comedy, jazz gatherings, or cooking classes, Austin has a lot to offer. The main challenge will be moving around for which I would recommend to get access to a vehicle or to be ready to get a bike (Austin is the most bike-friendly city in Texas). Personally I engaged with the many social cycling groups in the city (over 70) and joined different periodic activities in order to build a secure social network around myself and my family. Figure 9 shows an image of a bikepacking trip I followed with the CycleEast community in the month of December, in total I cycled over 3.000 kilometres during the 5 months stay in Texas (at a pace of 5 rides per week), joined 9 different clubs, and unfortunately broke 2 bicycles.

To foreign scholars coming over to MaU

Malmö University is a very friendly working environment. Our school, despite being big (24.000 students), has a fairly small campus and everything is strongly connected. Therefore it will not be hard to get formalities done over a cup of coffee with the help of your peers. MaU is organised in faculties, but it is easy to do crossovers and work with people from different institutions.

We will typically work in open office spaces (with some exceptions), and have relatively short working days (8.00 to 16.00). It is important for most of us to have a good work-family balance and it is uncommon to see very many people on location after office hours. It is anyway possible to access the premises 24/7. It should not be uncommon to be invited over to your peers' place for dinner, or to go out for a drink after work. During workdays, we all take a break for lunch at around 12 and eat at either one of the restaurants close by or at the teachers' room. Coffee / tea / hot cocoa is free for all faculty.

Students understand their education as a 40h per week kind of work and so we build our education programmes around that idea. Our student base at Interaction Design comes from all over the world as all of our programmes are international and the official language is English. There are other programmes which are not international, but students are ready to be taught in English anyway.

Malmö is not a big city and everything is either within walking or cycling distance. In my 25 years in Sweden, I spent the last 23 without a car. It is possible to move around using public transportation in the colder winter days. Malmö is very well placed in the European map and it is possible to visit Denmark, Germany, Poland, Norway, or Sweden by simply taking a train or a bus.

Action plan

This last section of the document is dedicated to the actions I plan to execute in the following months / years based on the experience I acquired during my time at UT.

For me as an individual

First and foremost I am applying to get an L1 visa to the US taking advantage of my engagement in my own company. This is of some importance if I plan to pursue any kind of actions in the future, as the visa is in many ways the most complex part of the process of getting to the US only surpassed by getting accommodation.

I will work in securing the contacts I made during the time in Texas both at personal and professional level. Personally, I did meet with many people and organisations within the cycling community of Texas and this helped me understand cycling as not just a leisure activity, but also a technological platform enabling human communication. From that perspective, as a designer, I identified several relevant research topics I would like to pursue in the close future. This will require for me to formulate a research project, get a research permit from the ethics committee from my university, and eventually identify a research peer at UT with whom to launch a survey process within the Texas cycling community.

For the department

When it comes to my department, I am interested in bringing over three different people (one from the Design school, one from the Arts one, and one from Engineering) to spend some time in Sweden, have them to teach at either our masters in Interaction Design or at some of our bachelors programmes. This is a process that I have already started with two of the three thanks to an existing funding scheme at the school of Languages (Swedish department). It is worth mentioning that I got to know about this opportunity through my landlady, a professor in Gender Studies who introduced me to the right people.

On the other hand, I will continue to pursue an exchange program between the bachelors at the iSchool and MaU. I have already started the conversation and just need to make sure that both parts engage in a deeper discussion about the opportunity. It is challenging, as our experience shows that US students are willing to come to Sweden, but Swedish students have a hard time going to the US because of the extra expenses it represents to them.

For my home institution

Currently I am not only leading the Interaction Design Masters at MaU, but also I am one of the co-heads of the new Prototyping facility called Full Stack Lab. This is the reason why I have already started a caption project with one student from the iSchool in order to map the way Invention Works currently functions as a way to start a conversation on how to scale our existing laboratory spaces at Design and Engineering to the whole academic -and even regional at enterprise level- ecosystem.

In the Swedish research and education system

While the Swedish education act and higher education ordinance present very clearly how educators and institutions should aim at the creation of educational scenarios to enable individuals to tailor their own educations, I do believe that we are far from that. I would love to be engaged in a discussion on how to implement such systems. I will have to research whether there are any efforts in this direction.

Continued relationship with the host institution

As I have mentioned at different places in this report, I plan to continue the relationship with the host institution through academic exchanges at educators and students level. In the mid-term I would like to start a research project, but I have not yet identified who to conduct it with.

Appendix: Course Syllabus document

INF 385T Special Topics in Information Science : Designing Physical Information Systems

UNIQUE ID: 28730

Fall 2023

CLASS MEETS: 9.30 AM – 12.30 PM, Tuesdays, UTA 1.212

Instructor: David J. Cuartielles Ruiz, PhD.

Office: UTA 5.470

Pronouns: he / him

Email: david.cuartiellesruiz@austin.utexas.edu

Phone: +1 (737) 342 6333

Office hours: 9.30 AM – 11.30 AM, Thursdays
and by appointment

Course Description

UNIVERSITY CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION

Introduction to tools and methods, software and hardware, to produce physical information displays.

The creation of prototypes, the expression of design ideas, or the visualization of information and other technological skills are relevant for contemporary professionals in various fields (designers, artists, architects, engineers amongst others). In this course students are encouraged to engage with new technologies and recent development within the field of interaction design. The individual aim may be to further advance previous understanding of the field of data physicalization, explore new dimensions of it or to use such technologies in a new empirical setting.

The course offers an introduction to different techniques and tools through workshops and seminars and students may explore in-depth one or more technology/ies that interest them to work with. Students will work in formulating a group project and learning goals and with the help of a supervisor work towards the production of an exhibition piece/artifact and a 'reflection in action document'.

PRE-REQUISITES FOR THE COURSE

Graduate standing.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Translate specific interaction modalities into design requirements and / or principles.
2. Experiment with different prototyping technologies to support the creation of a personal toolbox of techniques to support design processes.

3. Argue for the most suited digital materials and their orchestration over time for the production of a prototype based on contextual information from the case under study.
4. Develop an artifact using contemporary tools and techniques from the field of interaction design including novel software, new hardware configurations, or both.
5. Arrange and document an array of experiments (using the artifact) with a selected group of testers, using interactive digital tools.
6. Construct a public display version of the artifact to be exhibited at a public venue in a traditional gallery setting.

FLAG COURSES

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How Will You Learn?

STATEMENT OF LEARNING SUCCESS

Your success in this class is important to me. We all learn differently, and everyone struggles sometimes. You are not, ever, the only one having difficulty! If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we will develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. I also encourage you to reach out to the student resources available through UT and I am happy to connect you with a person or Center if you would like.

TEACHING MODALITY INFORMATION

This course will be conducted in person and at the specified location. If circumstances allow, we will host a session at a prototyping facility within the UT. Sessions will not be recorded as they are highly interactive and all students are expected to participate, making it technically impossible to record. If students have an emergency and happen to miss one of the sessions, they are expected to finish the weekly assignments (whether a reading, or a lab session) on their own and deliver them on time. Attendance to class will be taken from the third week of the course (included) and will be part of the grading, see the *Course Requirements and Grading* section of this document for more information on this matter.

Each weekly session will include a theoretical component in either the form of a lecture or seminar, and a practical one in the form of a laboratory session for the first half of the course. The second half will be devoted to the production of a project in groups. See figure 1 for a time plan for the course including the different modalities of teaching. Students are expected to prepare for the lectures and seminars by reading a curated selection of the course literature and to have their computers with them for the laboratory session. Students will have to submit a short summary of their assigned reading (300 – 500 words) by the end of the week prior to the session. Those materials will be reviewed by the instructor in written form directly on Canvas. The weeks when there are no assigned readings, the students will get a small practical assignment that will have to be submitted to Canvas by the end of the week and peer-reviewed by a colleague before the following class meeting.

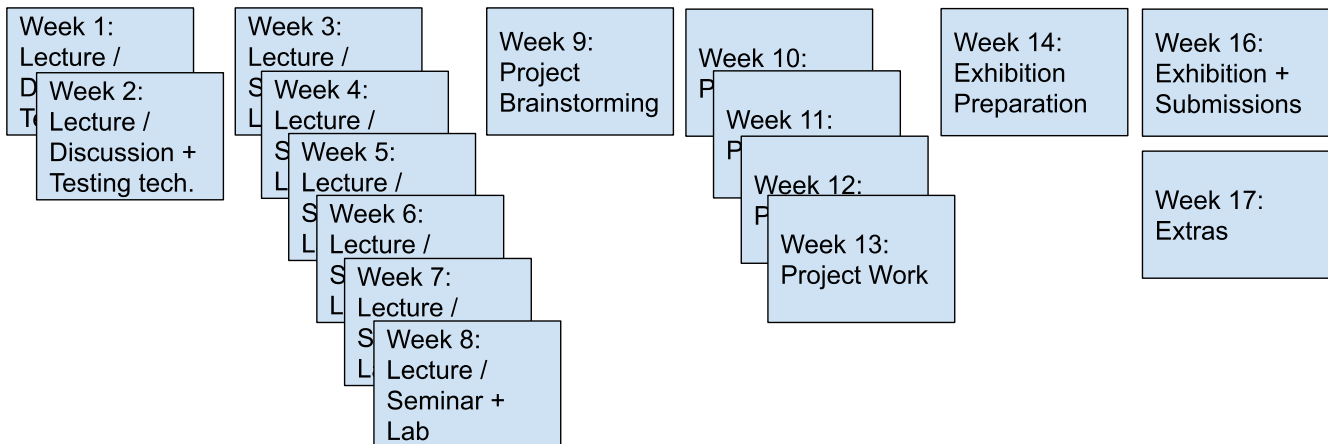


Figure 1: Time plan for the course showing the different modalities of teaching.

The ultimate goal of the course is to produce a project displaying data in a physical way. The source of data, as well as the practical aspects of the construction will be discussed and performed in class throughout different weekly meetings. During the project phase of the course, the students – working in groups – will not get readings and instead, they are expected to use some time outside of class implementing some of the aspects of their prototypes. Students will host a small exhibition where the projects will be displayed by the final session of the course. On top of that, each group is expected to produce a short academic report known as pictorial where they will be displaying the process of producing the prototype, explaining the different design choices made, the sources of inspiration, and references in APA format. A template for the production of this report will be provided to the students.

Students are encouraged to keep a design journal, whether on digital or physical form, as a way to document their learning. A good design journal keeps – in chronological order – account for the different sessions, key quotes from readings, notes on design decisions made during the project building, commented minutes from meetings with colleagues, etc. Good journals are focused on reflections and not just in depicting what happened. The production of the journal will be taken into account as a way to compensate attendance, or to obtain the maximum grade in the course. See the *Extra Credit* section for more information about this.

If a student – for unexpected reasons – happens to continuously fail at attending the sessions (that is more than twice after the 3rd week – included), the Design Journal will become mandatory for passing the course. See the *Absence* section of this document for further information.

If a student is systematically delivering their work late (that is more than twice), the Design Journal component will become mandatory for passing the course. See the *Late Work and Making up Missed Work* section for more information.

If a student is missing work, they will have to finish all of it upon a set deadline and the Design Journal component will become mandatory for passing the course. See the *Late Work and Making up Missed Work* section for more information.

COMMUNICATION

The course Canvas site can be found at utexas.instructure.com/courses/1367031. Please email me through Canvas. You are responsible for ensuring that the primary email address you have recorded with the university is the one you will check for course communications because that is the email address that Canvas uses.

ASKING FOR HELP

You can choose two different mechanisms to ask for help. First you could send an email through Canvas. I will be reading my email daily. Use email to communicate unexpected absences to class, share a concern, or request help with something rather urgent.

Second, you are welcome to visit my office during my weekly support hours. These non-mandatory sessions are outside the normal classes, and are meant to help with the specific assignments, extend the course literature, or clarify concepts. Support hours will happen in person. Eventually, due to the instructor's participation in two conferences this Fall, the support hours corresponding to those dates will be hosted online. Check Canvas for any modifications of the original schedule. Since time is limited, there will be 15 minute slots made available for you to book on a weekly basis. If there are no other students booking times, you are welcome to extend your booking. Eventually, if there are more bookings than available slots, I will offer extra times during the week.

DISABILITY & ACCESS (D&A)

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 Disability & Access (D&A). Please refer to the D&A website for more information: <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>. If you are already registered with D&A, 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.

Course Requirements and Grading

REQUIRED MATERIALS

This course will require the use of some crafting materials such as basic office supplies (post-it notes, notebooks, pens) needed for brainstorming sessions. Later, during the project phase of the course, students will need basic building materials, whether cardboard, clay, wood, or plastic.

Follows a list of recommended readings (alphabetically sorted) that have been used in the creation of this course. Students will be requested to read excerpts of chapters and papers from this list. The readings will be provided by the teacher under UT's Fair Use policy for Copyrighted Materials. I provide the full list for reference in case students want to learn more:

Brandt, E., Binder, T., & B-N Sanders, E. (2012). Tools and techniques: Ways to engage telling, making and enacting. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/262035619>

Buxton, B. (2007). *Sketching User Experiences*.

Corsín Jiménez, A. (2014). Introduction: The prototype: more than many and less than one. In *Journal of Cultural Economy* (Vol. 7, Issue 4, pp. 381–398). Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17530350.2013.858059>

Cuartielles, D. (2018). *Platform Design: creating meaningful toolsets where people meet*. Malmö University Press.

Data Physicalization - Data Physicalization Wiki. (n.d.). Retrieved July 12, 2023, from <http://dataphys.org/>

Edwards, P. N. (1996). *The Closed World - Computers and the Politics of Discourse in Cold War America*. The MIT Press.

Falbel, A. (1993). *Constructionism Tools to build (and think) with*.

Fry, B., & Reas, C. (2007). *Processing: A Programming Handbook for Visual Designers and Artists*.

Houde, S., & Hill, C. (1997). *What do Prototypes Prototype?*

Huron, S., Nagel, T., Oehlberg, L., Willett, W. (2022). *Making with Data* (1st ed.). CRC Press.

Intro | DanielPalacios Studio. (n.d.). Retrieved July 12, 2023, from <https://www.danielpalacios.studio/>

Jansen, Y., Dragicevic, P., & Fekete, J.-D. (2013). Evaluating the efficiency of physical visualizations. *CHI 2013: Changing Perspectives*, 2593–2602.
<https://doi.org/https://doi-org.proxy.mau.se/10.1145/2470654.2481359>

Let's get physical: how to represent data... | DataJournalism.com. (n.d.). Retrieved July 12, 2023, from <https://datajournalism.com/read/longreads/lets-get-physical-how-to-represent-data-through-touch>

Lim, Y.-K., Stolterman, E., & Tenenber, J. (2008). *The Anatomy of Prototypes: Prototypes as Filters, Prototypes as Manifestations of Design Ideas*.

Making with Data – Physical Design and Craft in a Data-Driven World. (n.d.). Retrieved July 12, 2023, from <https://makingwithdata.org/>

Rudd, J., Stern, K., & Isensee, S. (1996). Low vs. high-fidelity prototyping debate. *Interactions*, 3(1), 76–85.
<https://doi.org/10.1145/223500.223514>

Signer, B., Ebrahimi, P., Curtin, T. J., & Abdullah, A. K. A. (2018). *Towards a Framework for Dynamic Data Physicalisation*. <http://dataphys.org/wiki/Data>

Sosa, R., Gerrard, V., Esparza, A., Torres, R., & Napper, R. (2018). Data objects: Design principles for data physicalisation. *Proceedings of International Design Conference, DESIGN*, 4, 1685–1696.
<https://doi.org/10.21278/idc.2018.0125>

Stusak, S., Schwarz, J., & Butz, A. (2015). Evaluating the memorability of physical visualizations. Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems - Proceedings, 2015-April, 3247–3250.

<https://doi.org/10.1145/2702123.2702248>

Stusak, S. (2015). Exploring the potential of physical visualizations. TEI 2015 - Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Tangible, Embedded, and Embodied Interaction, 437–440.

<https://doi.org/10.1145/2677199.2691604>

Swaminathan, S., Shi, C., Jansen, Y., Dragicevic, P., Oehlberg, L., & Fekete, J. D. (2014). Supporting the design and fabrication of physical visualizations. Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems -

Proceedings, 3845–3854. <https://doi.org/10.1145/2556288.2557310>

Wiberg, & Mikael. (2017). The Materiality of Interaction: Notes on the Materials of Interaction Design (2017th ed.). MIT Press.

REQUIRED DEVICES

To succeed in this course students will need a personal computer running either Mac OSX, Windows, or Linux (Ubuntu, Fedora, Arch, etc). Please note that Chromebook computers, iPads, and other tablets will not work for this course since they don't offer the possibility of personally configure the development tools needed to work in this course. We will install free and open source software tools for performing lab sessions. See the required softwares in the list of *Required Materials* above.

Working with the physicalisation aspects of the course will require the use of microcontroller boards, sensors and actuators. In particular it is recommended to work with the following materials:

- 1x microcontroller board Arduino Nano 33 BLE Sense,
- 1x Grove shield for Arduino Nano from Seeed Studio to connect the microcontroller to sensors,
- 1x Grove rotary encoder sensor
- 1x Grove button sensor
- 1x Grove thumb joystick
- 1x Grove passive buzzer
- 1x Grove OLED display
- 1x Grove LED ring
- 1x Grove vibration motor
- 1x Grove relay high current
- 1x Grove servo

Some of these materials will be provided by the course organizers. The exact list will be provided at the end of the 2nd week of the course.

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

Class attendance

Students are expected to attend to 100% of the class meetings for their full duration from the 3rd week of the course (included), attendance will be accounted for through Canvas. If students have an emergency and happen

to miss one of the sessions, they are expected to finish the weekly assignments on their own. Attendance will be part of the grading as explained in the section *Grading for this Course*.

Class participation

Students are expected to be active participants in the different activities. Seminar participation as well as being part of the discussions and brainstorming sessions will be taken into account. I will moderate discussions making sure that all voices are heard. Students will self-monitor the participation during group work. In order to obtain the maximum grade in the course, students will have to obtain one extra point for active participation as explained in *Grading for this Course*.

Behavior expectations

We will follow the official code of conduct to be found at Section 11-402 of the Institutional Rules in the General Information Catalog.

Group work

During the project phase, students will be required to produce a group contract that will be used to both monitor participation and behavior within the group. Students will set their own learning goals in parallel to the project plan. They will define their roles and be evaluated for that. Students will be encouraged to step out of their comfort zone and take the challenge of learning something new.

Professional Standards

In this course we will follow contemporary standards in regards to ethics in the handling of personal information. When it comes to the manipulation of electronic components and electricity we will follow standard safety guidelines.

ASSIGNMENTS

The following table represents how you will demonstrate your learning and how we will assess the degree to which you have done so.

Assignments	Points Possible	Percent of Total Grade
1. Lab sessions: Intro to Programming (3 labs)	3	15
2. Lab sessions: Intro to Physical Computing (3 labs)	3	15
3. Seminars: Readings in technology and society (3 seminars)	3	15
4. Project development in groups and exhibition	7	35
5. Project report in groups	2	10
6. Individual design journal	2	10

LATE WORK AND MAKING UP MISSED WORK

In order to succeed at this course, all assignments have to be finished and uploaded to Canvas. In that sense, the policy for missed work is “finish the work.” Thus, once a missing assignment has been delivered, it will be understood as a late delivery. The late delivery of two or more assignments carries with it to have to present the

Design Journal component as a mandatory assignment. The Design Journal will, in this case, not account for obtaining the maximum grade.

ABSENCES

If a student – for unexpected reasons – happens to continuously fail at attending the sessions, the student will be requested to present their Design Journal. The Design Journal will, in this case, not account for obtaining the maximum grade.

EQUITABLE ACCOMMODATION

Students delivering two or less assignments late, will not need to complete any extra tasks. Those that have three or more assignments delivered late will have to present their Design Journal in order to pass the class as explained in previous sections.

EXTRA CREDIT

This course offers three different possibilities to obtain extra credit. This is a mechanism that could be used by either students who want to excel at the subject, or by those that due to absences or late work deliveries could not reach the maximum grade through the standard mechanism of the Design Journal. Eventually it could also be used by students who want to reach the highest grade in the course, but do not want to engage with the task of producing a Design Journal.

The first possibility is related to further studying the readings suggested for this course. Students should select three or more papers from the reference list (to be approved by me – the educator) and produce a short 3,500 words essay comparing the aspects mentioned in those papers building an argument for (or against) the physicalisation of data. The extra credit from this activity is up to 10% of the total grade.

The second possibility is more practical, and students should engage with one of the techniques displayed in the course and design a tool that could be used by others to further work in the field. It could be a library of code, a properly documented tutorial in the use of machine learning with embedded technology, or any other relevant topic once it should have been approved by the educator. The extra credit of this activity is up to 10% of the total grade.

The third possibility for extra credit is reserved to those students who would like to achieve the maximum grade in the course and is related to participation. Students’ participation in seminars, and workshops will be evaluated by the educator, while during project work it will be peer evaluated. In order to score the maximum grade, participation should be considered high by both peers and teachers. The extra credit of this activity is up to 5% of the total grade.

GRADING POLICY

In this course, the following grading policy will be used depending on the learning activities (the percents expressed are for each activity. i.e. 50% of a seminar, which counts up to 5% of the total grade would be 2,5% of the total grade):

Activity	0%	50%	100%
Seminar	The summary submitted for	The summary submitted is	The summary accepted is

5% each 3 seminars	the seminar is suboptimal. The student didn't participate in the discussion.	acceptable, but the student didn't participate.	more than acceptable, and the student participated in the discussion.
Lab Session 5% each 6 labs	The submission to the session is not functional or doesn't respond to the assignment.	The submission works, but lacks documentation on how to use it or improve it.	The submission works, and it has clear indications on how it works, either as in-code comments or as extra text.
Project Work 25% 4 sessions + ext. work	The project didn't follow a good process or the project doesn't do what it promised.	The project works, but the process was not properly thought through or executed.	The project works, and it followed a flawless process. Steps are clear and design was informed by data.
Project Report 10%	The report doesn't cover the project work, and doesn't respect the provided template.	The report doesn't cover the project work, or doesn't respect the provided template.	The report covers the project work, and respects the provided template.
Exhibition 10% preparation + pitch	The chosen form doesn't transmit the idea behind the project, or the students make a poor job at pitching the concept.	The final exhibition form does communicate the work done, but the students don't make a proper presentation of the concept.	Both form and presentation are successfully executed.
Design Journal 10%	The journal is a mere succession of steps, no reflections are to be found, neither are learned lessons.	The journal includes information about events, and reflections about the process, however there is no clear structure or it is hard to draw conclusions.	The journal is good in form and content, it is properly structured, and relevant information is highlighted to make it easy to browse and extract.
Extra: Theory 10%	The text is just a summary of the references without making any kind of connections between them.	The text displays some emergent relationships between the references, but either the form or the style do not communicate properly.	Both the form and the argumentative aspects in the text transmit an interesting idea that should be worth exploring further.
Extra: Tool 10%	The tool is either a repetition of an already existing one, or it is not	The tool is functional, but it is not properly documented, making it	The tool is both working, and comes with documentation that makes

	functional.	hard to use.	it easy to use.
Extra: Participation 5%	The student didn't show up to group meetings, didn't participate in the building process, or failed to deliver hindering the work of the whole group.	The student was there for most meetings, but failed to deliver work on time with no valid excuse.	The student participated actively in most meetings, delivered on time, and even found time to help their colleagues with other tasks.

The equation to calculate the final grade for this course goes as follows:

$$final\ grade = \sum_{i=1}^6 labs(i) + \sum_{i=1}^3 seminars(i) + (prj.\ work + exhibtion) + prj.\ report + design\ journal + extras$$

Given that equation, it is possible to obtain more than 100% of the grade. I leave that as an opportunity for those who want to excel to decide in which form they want to pursue the maximum grade in the course. This is also an opportunity to focus on special learning styles, opening for different ways to pass this course.

It is important to recall the difference between the extra components and the rest. To summarize:

- Lab sessions, seminars, project work, and project report are mandatory components of this course. Everyone has to make them and obtain a minimum grade in each one of them (that is more than 0%).
- Design journal is either an extra to obtain the maximum grade or a mandatory component to those failing in terms of absence or late deliveries over a threshold.
- The extra components are ways to compensate for lower grades or complements to obtain higher grades.

GRADE BREAKS

Follows the grade breakdown for this course:

Grade	Cutoff
A	94%
A-	90%
B+	87%
B	84%
B-	80%
C+	77%
C	74%
C-	70%
D+	67%
D	64%
D-	60%
F	<60%

Course Outline

All instructions, assignments, readings, rubrics and essential information will be on the Canvas website at utexas.instructure.com/courses/1367031. Check Canvas regularly. **Changes** to the schedule may be made at my discretion if circumstances require. I will announce any such changes in class and will also communicate them via a Canvas announcement. It is your responsibility to note these changes when announced, and I will do my best to ensure that you are notified of changes with as much advance notice as possible.

Week	Date	Day	Class Topic	Out of Class Activities	Assignments Due
1	08/22	Tue	Lecture: Introduction	Reading prototyping text	--
1	08/22	Tue	Reading Data Physicalization intro		--
1	08/22	Tue	Installing and testing Processing	Test the tool	--
2	08/29	Tue	Lecture: Prototyping		--
2	08/29	Tue	Reading Physicalization text	Collect historical examples on Physicalization of data	09/01/2023
2	08/29	Tue	Play around with syntax in Processing	Try basic examples from the Processing book	--
3	09/05	Tue	Seminar: What do we know about Data Physicalization?	Read text from Datapolis + summary	09/05/2023
3	09/05	Tue	Lab: Intro to Processing I	Programming assignment	09/08/2023
4	09/12	Tue	Lecture: Experiments with Spreadsheets		--
4	09/12	Tue	Lab: Intro to Processing II	Programming assignment	09/15/2023
5	09/19	Tue	Seminar: Interactive Systems & Experiments in Physicalisation	Readings + summary	09/18/2023
5	09/19	Tue	Lab: Intro to Processing III	Programming assignment	09/22/2023
6	09/26	Tue	Lecture: Physical Computing		--
6	09/26	Tue	Lab: Intro to Arduino I	Electronics assignment	09/29/2023
7	10/03	Tue	Seminar: TBC	Reading + summary	10/02/2023
7	10/03	Tue	Lab: Intro to Arduino II	Electronics assignment	10/06/2023
8	10/10	Tue	Lecture: Computation Paradigms: from the Mainframe to the Cloud, passing by Ubicomp		--
8	10/10	Tue	Lab: Intro to Arduino III	Electronics assignment	10/13/2023
9	10/17	Tue	Project Brainstorming	Project plan, group contract, brainstorming documents, affinity	10/20/2023

Week	Date	Day	Class Topic	Out of Class Activities	Assignments Due
				diagram	
10	10/24	Tue	Project Work	Status report	10/27/2023
11	10/31	Tue	Project Work	Status report	11/03/2023
12	11/07	Tue	Project Work	Status report	11/10/2023
13	11/14	Tue	Project Work	Status report	11/17/2023
14	11/21	Tue	Preparing Exhibition	Slides / poster / video	12/03/2023
16	12/05	Tue	Exhibition		--
16	12/08	Fri	Final Group Report	Group submission	12/07/2023
17	12/15	Fri	Extras	Submission of extras	12/14/2023

Course Policies and Disclosures

HONOR CODE

The University of Texas at Austin strives to create a dynamic and engaging community of teaching and learning where students feel intellectually challenged; build knowledge and skills; and develop critical thinking, creativity, and intellectual curiosity. As a part of this community, it is important to engage in assignments, exams, and other work for your classes with openness, integrity, and a willingness to make mistakes and learn from them. The UT Austin honor code champions these principles:

I pledge, as a member of the University of Texas community, to do my work honestly, respectfully, and through the intentional pursuit of learning and scholarship.

The honor code affirmation includes three additional principles that elaborate on the core theme:

- I pledge to be honest about what I create and to acknowledge what I use that belongs to others.
- I pledge to value the process of learning in addition to the outcome, while celebrating and learning from mistakes.
- This code encompasses all of the academic and scholarly endeavors of the university community.

The honor code is more than a set of rules, it reflects the values that are foundational to your academic community. By affirming and embracing the honor code, you are both upholding the integrity of your work and contributing to a campus culture of trust and respect.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY EXPECTATIONS

Students who violate University rules on academic misconduct are subject to the student conduct process. A student found responsible for academic misconduct may be assigned both a status sanction and a grade impact

for the course. The grade impact could range from a zero on the assignment in question up to a failing grade in the course. A status sanction can range from a written warning, probation, deferred suspension and/or dismissal from the University. To learn more about academic integrity standards, tips for avoiding a potential academic misconduct violation, and the overall conduct process, please visit the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity website at: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct>.

[It is strongly recommended that you outline any individual expectations for assignment completion- including parameters around group work, authorized resources, citation requirements, etc. in the assignment directions. Clear and detailed expectations not only reduce the likelihood of a possible violation, but they also aid the Student Conduct team in holding students accountable that fail to adhere to the assignment directions.]

CONFIDENTIALITY OF CLASS RECORDINGS

Class recordings are reserved only for students in this class for educational purposes and are protected under FERPA. The recordings should not be shared outside the class in any form. Violation of this restriction by a student could lead to Student Misconduct proceedings.

GETTING HELP WITH TECHNOLOGY

Students needing help with technology such as connecting to UT's internet in this course should contact the [ITS Service Desk](#). For technologies taught in this course, students should contact the educator directly using the Canvas site.

CONTENT WARNING

Our classroom provides an open space for the critical and orderly exchange of ideas through discussion. Some readings and other content in this course will include topics and comments that some students may find offensive and/or traumatizing. I'll aim to forewarn students about potentially disturbing content and I ask all students to help to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and sensitivity.

SHARING OF COURSE MATERIALS IS PROHIBITED

No materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, lecture hand-outs, videos, assessments (quizzes, exams, papers, projects, homework assignments), in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets, may be shared online or with anyone outside of the class without explicit, my written permission. Unauthorized sharing of materials may facilitate cheating. The University is aware of the sites used for sharing materials, and any materials found online that are associated with you, 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 initiation of the student conduct process and include charge(s) for academic misconduct, potentially resulting in sanctions, including a grade impact.

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. By default you are not allowed to use AI tools when producing summaries of texts, essays, and reports. In either instance, AI writing tools should be used with caution and proper citation, 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. If you are considering the use of AI writing tools but are unsure if you are allowed or the extent to which they may be utilized appropriately, please ask."

RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS

By [UT Austin policy](#), you must notify me of your pending absence for a religious holy day as far in advance as possible of the date of observance. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

NAMES AND PRONOUNS

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. If you have not yet done so, I will gladly honor your request to address you with the name and pronouns that you prefer for me to use for you. It is helpful to advise me of any changes or needs regarding your name and pronouns early in the semester so that I may make appropriate updates to my records and be informed about how to support you in this class.

- For instructions on how to add your pronouns to Canvas, visit [this site](#).
- If you would like to update your chosen name with the registrar's office, you can do so [here](#), and reference [this guide](#).
- For additional guidelines prepared by the Gender and Sexuality Center for changing your name on various campus systems, see the Resources page under UT Resources [here](#).

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to acknowledge that we are meeting on the Indigenous lands of Turtle Island, the ancestral name for what now is called North America. Moreover, I would like to acknowledge the Alabama-Coushatta, Caddo, Carrizo/Comecrudo, Coahuiltecan, Comanche, Kickapoo, Lipan Apache, Tonkawa and Ysleta Del Sur 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.

COUNSELING AND MENTAL HEALTH CENTER (CMHC)

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.

Important Safety Information

CARRYING OF HANDGUNS ON CAMPUS

Students in this class should be aware of the following university policies related to Texas' Open Carry Law:

- Students in this class who hold a license to carry are asked to [review the university policy regarding campus carry](#).
- Individuals who hold a license to carry are eligible to carry a concealed handgun on campus, including in most outdoor areas, buildings and spaces that are accessible to the public, and in classrooms.
- It is the responsibility of concealed-carry license holders to carry their handguns on or about their person at all times while on campus. Open carry is NOT permitted, meaning that a license holder may not carry a partially or wholly visible handgun on campus premises or on any university driveway, street, sidewalk or walkway, parking lot, parking garage, or other parking area.
- Per my right, I prohibit carrying of handguns in my personal office. Note that this information will also be conveyed to all students verbally during the first week of class. This written notice is intended to reinforce the verbal notification, and is not a “legally effective” means of notification in its own right.

TITLE IX DISCLOSURE

Beginning January 1, 2020, Texas Education Code, Section 51.252 (formerly known as Senate Bill 212) requires all employees of Texas universities, including faculty, to report to the [Title IX Office](#) any information regarding incidents of sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, or stalking that is disclosed to them. Texas law requires that all employees who witness or receive information about incidents of this type (including, but not limited to, written forms, applications, one-on-one conversations, class assignments, class discussions, or third-party reports) must report it to the Title IX Coordinator. Before talking with me, or with any faculty or staff member about a Title IX-related incident, please remember that I will be required to report this information.

Although graduate teaching and research assistants are not subject to Texas Education Code, Section 51.252, they are [mandatory reporters](#) under federal Title IX regulations and are required to report [a wide range of behaviors we refer to as sexual misconduct](#), including the types of misconduct covered under Texas Education Code, Section 51.252. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex – including pregnancy and parental status – in educational programs and activities. The Title IX Office has developed supportive ways and compiled campus resources to support all impacted by a Title IX matter.

If you would like to speak with a case manager, who can provide support, resources, or academic accommodations, in the Title IX Office, please email: supportandresources@austin.utexas.edu. Case managers can also provide support, resources, and accommodations for pregnant, nursing, and parenting students.

For more information about reporting options and resources, please visit: <https://titleix.utexas.edu>, contact the Title IX Office via email at: titleix@austin.utexas.edu, or call 512-471-0419.

CAMPUS SAFETY

The following are recommendations regarding emergency evacuation from the [Office of Emergency Management](#), 512-232-2114:

- Students should sign up for Campus Emergency Text Alerts at the page linked above.
- 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.
- 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 the [Office of Emergency Management](#).

University Resources

For a list of university resources that may be helpful to you as you engage with and navigate your courses and the university, see the [University Resources Students Canvas page](#).