

CLL 4803 Special Topics

Learning Experience Design

Fall 2026 | Fully Online

Course design studio: Students will design, prototype, test, revise, and defend a short online course or learning module for a specific learner population and context. The course itself models the learner-centered, iterative practices it teaches.

Instructor Information

Instructor	Email	Office Hours	Course Location
Seyedahmad Rahimi, Ph.D.	srahimi@gatech.edu	By appointment; online	Online, Canvas

General Course Information

Course Description

This course introduces the principles and practices of learning experience design (LXD), with emphasis on creating learner-centered, engaging, and effective learning experiences. Students examine how LXD differs from traditional instructional design and apply an iterative design process that includes identifying a design challenge, understanding learners and stakeholders, generating and selecting ideas, mapping the learning experience, developing a prototype, and evaluating and revising the resulting design. Through a semester-long design project, students apply the LXD process to create and evaluate a short online course or learning module. Along the way, they develop artifacts such as learner personas, a Learning Experience Canvas, learner journey maps, course maps, prototypes, and evaluation plans. The course also addresses design thinking, project management, visual and interaction design, accessibility, emerging learning technologies, and the professional communication of design decisions.

Prerequisites

PSYC 1101 General Psychology OR PSYC 2130 Educational Psychology.

Course Format

The course is delivered fully online through Canvas. Weekly modules normally open on Monday and close on Sunday at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time. Each module follows a predictable cycle: encounter a design problem, learn from core resources, apply ideas to the semester project, share work, critique peers, and reflect or revise. Any optional live sessions will be announced in advance and recorded when appropriate. Students should plan for regular engagement throughout the week rather than completing all work in a single sitting.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Describe the foundations and principles of LXD.
- Compare LXD with traditional instructional design approaches, including ADDIE.
- Analyze the needs, characteristics, and contexts of diverse learners.
- Apply empathy, learner analysis, and human-centered design methods.
- Use the Learning Experience Canvas and journey mapping to develop a coherent learning experience.
- Apply design thinking, project management, visual design, and prototyping methods.
- Design, develop, evaluate, and revise a short online course or learning module using learner-centered and iterative LXD methods.
- Evaluate and revise a learning experience using feedback and heuristic evaluation.
- Communicate and defend design decisions professionally.

Course Materials

Required Textbook

Schmidt, M. (Ed.). *A Course Reader for Learning Experience Design*. [Open course reader](#)

Open and Free Course Resources

The textbook provides the shared LXD process, vocabulary, and toolkit. Selected open resources provide research-based depth in learning theory, learner research, assessment, accessibility, and evaluation. Assigned selections and links will be posted in Canvas.

1. Floor, N. (2023). *This is learning experience design: What it is, how it works and why it matters* (1st ed.). New Riders/Pearson. Print ISBN 978-0-13-795073-7; eText ISBN 978-0-13-795082-9.
2. West, R. E., & Leary, H. (Eds.). (2024). *Foundations of Learning and Instructional Design Technology*. [Open textbook](#)

Full disclosure - none of these are required. However, if you are serious about becoming a learning experience designer, these are resources that will serve you well.

1. [UX Research Resources for Beginners](#)
2. [Learner and User Experience Research: An Introduction for the Field of Learning Design & Technology](#)
3. [Measuring the User Experience](#)
4. [An Architectural Approach to Instructional Design](#)
5. [Interdisciplinary Interaction Design: A Visual Guide to Basic Theories, Models and Ideas for Thinking and Designing for Interactive Web Design and Digital Device Experiences](#)
6. [UX Research: Practical Techniques for Designing Better Products](#)
7. [UX Methods: A Quick Guide to User Experience Research Methods](#)
8. [Designing for Interaction: Creating Innovative Applications and Devices \(Voices That Matter\)](#)
9. [The Design of Everyday Things](#)
10. [100 Things Every Designer Needs to Know About People \(Voices That Matter\)](#)

How Learning Will Work Online

Because this is a course about experience design, participation means contributing to the design process—not merely appearing online. Most weeks will include some combination of the following:

- Encounter: examine a learning experience, case, or design problem.
- Learn: complete the Floor reading, selected open resource, and a brief instructor lesson.
- Apply: produce or revise one element of the semester project.
- Share: make a design decision or artifact visible to a critique circle.

- Critique: provide specific, evidence-based feedback to peers.
- Reflect and revise: document what changed, why it changed, and what remains uncertain.

Students will normally complete individual semester projects while working in stable critique circles of three or four classmates. Peer feedback is required, but each student remains responsible for the quality, integrity, and completion of their own design.

Semester Design Challenge

Challenge: Design, develop, evaluate, and revise a short online course or learning module for a clearly defined learner population and context.

Students will design, develop, evaluate, and revise a short online course or learning module for a clearly defined learner population and educational or professional context. The project will progress through a series of connected milestones, including learner analysis, a Learning Experience Canvas, journey and course mapping, prototyping, visual design, development in an approved authoring platform, heuristic evaluation, and revision. The scope must be feasible within one semester and approved early in the course.

Course Requirements and Grading

Class participation (20%): This will primarily take place within class discussions, feedback to one another, and the overall practice to support a positive, creative learning environment.

Reflections (25%): These will be short, formal written assignments and discussions that will help students to process the various readings and to strengthen meta cognitive skills related to different learning experiences.

Learning deliverables (25%): Students will explore and create learning experiences using various technologies (more details will be shared on Canvas).

Final project (30%): Students will create and test their own learning intervention as a culminating project by using pedagogical strategies and technological skills they have considered and refined over the semester (more details will be shared on Canvas).

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage	Performance Description
A	90–100%	Excellent
B	80–89%	Good
C	70–79%	Satisfactory
D	60–69%	Passing
F	0–59%	Failing

Feedback and Revision

Revision is central to LXD. Students will receive feedback from the instructor, peers, and—where feasible—representative users. Portfolio artifacts may be revised for the final submission when permitted by the assignment instructions. A revision should not simply correct surface features; it should explain which evidence or critique informed the change and how the change improves the experience.

Course Schedule

The schedule may be adjusted to respond to learner needs, project progress, or changes in the Institute calendar. The instructor will communicate material changes through Canvas. Floor readings refer to the assigned sections of the required textbook; exact pages and supplemental open readings will be listed in each Canvas module.

Week	Module	Topics and Activities
1	Orientation	Course and Canvas orientation; final project overview
2	Introduction to LXD	LXD foundations; learning experiences
3	Introduction to LXD	Learning-designer roles and competencies
4	What LX Designers Do	LXD, instructional design, and ADDIE
5	What LX Designers Do	Design challenges; Learning Experience Canvas
6	Empathy and Personas	Empathy; learner research; empathy maps
7	Empathy and Personas	Learner analysis; personas; design requirements
8	Design Thinking and Rapid Prototyping	Design thinking; ideation; concept selection
9	Design Thinking and Rapid Prototyping	Low-fidelity prototyping; peer feedback
10	Project Management and Journey Mapping	Scope, milestones, responsibilities, and risks
11	Project Management and Journey Mapping	Learner journeys and experience mapping
12	Aesthetics and Development	Visual design and accessibility
13	Aesthetics and Development	Authoring tools; functional development
14	Evaluation and Revision	Heuristic evaluation; usability; revision
15	Final Project	Final revision; implementation; design defense

Course Policies, Expectations, and Guidelines

Online Attendance and Participation

In a fully online course, attendance is demonstrated through timely, substantive participation in required learning activities. Students should enter Canvas during the first two days of the term and engage consistently each week. Logging in without contributing does not constitute participation. If circumstances interfere with participation, communicate with the instructor as early as possible. Approved Institute activities, religious observances, accommodations, and documented emergencies will be handled in accordance with Georgia Tech policy.

Communication and Response Expectations

Course announcements, instructions, feedback, and routine questions will be managed through Canvas. Use the Course Questions discussion for questions that may benefit the class and email for personal matters. Messages should identify the course and clearly explain the issue. The instructor will normally respond within two business days; messages sent on weekends or Institute holidays may receive a response on the next business day.

Discussion and Critique Guidelines

Civility and intellectual generosity are essential to design critique. Differences in beliefs, experiences, and approaches are expected. Students should:

3. Critique the design or idea, not the person.
4. Ground feedback in learner needs, course concepts, evidence, or observable features of the artifact.
5. Identify strengths as well as consequential questions or improvement priorities.
6. Ask clarifying questions before assuming the designer's intent.
7. Share participation space equitably and protect private or sensitive learner information.

Extensions and Late Work

Design work is interdependent: late submissions can prevent classmates from completing critique and can disrupt later project milestones. Unless an extension has been approved, work submitted late will lose 5% of the available points for each calendar day late. Peer-critique activities may not be recoverable after the critique window closes. Contact the instructor before the deadline whenever possible. Accommodations, approved Institute activities, religious observances, and documented emergencies supersede this general policy.

In professional life, you are expected to do your work and finish it on time. To prepare you for life and work, in this course due dates are firm, unless you have an authorized excuse. For each late day, you lose 5% of your grade for that deliverable.

Note also that, at Georgia Tech, [some exceptions are made for "approved Institute activities"](#) (e.g., field trips and athletic events) and religious observances. Consult your instructor when in doubt.

Collaboration, Authorship, and Generative AI

Generative AI is both a design tool and an object of study in this course. Assignment instructions will indicate whether AI use is required, permitted, limited, or prohibited. Permitted uses may include exploring alternatives, producing low-fidelity prototype material, checking accessibility, or examining how AI changes a learning experience. AI may not replace required learner research, the student's consequential design judgments, evaluation evidence, reflection, or design defense.

When generative AI is used, students must include an AI design log or disclosure appropriate to the assignment. The disclosure should identify the tool, purpose, substantive prompts or interactions, outputs

adopted or rejected, verification performed, and the student's own contribution. Students are accountable for accuracy, citations, bias, privacy, accessibility, environmental and ethical implications, and all submitted content. Do not enter confidential, personally identifiable, copyrighted, or restricted data into an AI system without authorization. Undisclosed or prohibited AI assistance may be treated as an academic-integrity violation. [Examples of how to reference the use of AI are available](#)

Please note that all large language models that operate behind these tools have plenty of shortcomings; they make up facts and resources, they have biases, and they may produce offensive, unethical, or misleading products. These tools also have an impact on our environment with their oversized need for computing (and cooling) power. *Once you incorporate Gen AI tools into your work, all these shortcomings become your responsibility.*

Academic Integrity

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. [Review Georgia Tech's Honor Code](#) and the [student Code of Conduct](#).

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, [contact the Office of Disability Services](#) (404-894-2563) as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

Learner Research, Privacy, and Ethical Practice

Course projects are educational design exercises, not formal research studies. Students may conduct low-risk interviews, observations, surveys, or prototype tests only as specified in assignment instructions. Participation must be voluntary, data collection should be proportionate to the course purpose, and identifying information should be avoided whenever possible. Students may not recruit children, vulnerable populations, or individuals over whom they have authority without explicit instructor approval. Findings may not be represented as generalizable research or used outside the course without appropriate permissions and review.

Accessibility and Alternative Formats

Students are expected to make reasonable efforts to ensure that submitted digital artifacts are perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust. This includes meaningful headings, readable contrast, descriptive link text, alternative text for consequential images, captions or transcripts for recorded media, and accessible document structures. When a prototyping tool cannot fully support accessibility, the student should identify the limitation and explain an accessible alternative or implementation plan.

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. [The Student-Faculty Expectations](#) articulate some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

Campus Resources for Students

Academic Success and Advising (a unit in the Office of Undergraduate Education & Student Success) provides free support for your courses. Students can attend scheduled supplemental review (PLUS)

sessions, stop by Drop-In Tutoring, or schedule a one-on-one appointment through Knack. To explore what options work best for you, please visit us online at success.gatech.edu/tutoring, email us at tutoring@gatech.edu, or visit Clough Undergraduate Learning Commons, Suite 283.

Student Well-Being: At Georgia Tech, we are concerned about your overall physical, social, and mental well-being. A [comprehensive list](#) of wellness related resources has been compiled and maintained by the Office of the Vice President for Student Engagement and Well-being ([student-resource-guide \(gatech.edu\)](#)).

More resources on supporting student well-being on the syllabus and beyond are available through the [Learning Well Initiative](#).

Syllabus Changes

This syllabus represents the instructor's current plan. Changes may be necessary because of learner needs, project progress, technology availability, or Institute requirements. Changes will be announced in Canvas with reasonable notice. No change will retroactively disadvantage students.