

# Mobile News App Design

A cross-disciplinary course between the School of Journalism and the Computer Sciences department at the University of Texas at Austin

**Spring 2014**

**Instructor:** Robert Quigley

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**Tech instructor:** Jeff Linwood: [jlinwood@gmail.com](mailto:jlinwood@gmail.com)

**TA:** Qian Wang: [qwjasmine@gmail.com](mailto:qwjasmine@gmail.com)

**Class:** T-TH 12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m. BMC 3.208

**Open lab:** Times TBA

## Course overview

What is the secret to Apple's success?

"It's in Apple's DNA that technology alone is not enough – it's technology married with liberal arts, married with the humanities that yields us the results that makes our heart sing." – Steve Jobs

Journalists have been traditionally afraid of technology. Those in the tech world have traditionally been afraid of liberal arts. Both have been weary of each other. That has to change.

In this course, you will work toward building an iPhone app in one semester, with the goal of having an app accepted in the Apple App Store.

Journalism students: You will dream big, research your ideas, test them, work with your peers, work with Austin's vibrant tech community, learn code, learn how to speak to coders, learn to communicate your ideas, learn design and find your place in the future of journalism and mobile development. After this course, you will be a developer.

Computer science students: You will be challenged on the programming. We will be looking for ambitious ideas that stretch your knowledge and abilities. You will also learn in a meaningful way how to communicate ideas, learn how to work in a team environment and learn about the journalism industry, its ethics and tenets.

Everyone in this class will learn what it takes to be a well-rounded developer, not just a communicator or a programmer.

The class is led by a longtime journalist who worked with developers at the Austin American-Statesman to create one of the first iPhone apps for a newspaper of its size. Robert Quigley has also worked closely with the newsroom to bring it into the

digital age as Internet editor and social media editor. Joining him is Jeff Linwood, an Austin mobile developer and entrepreneur.

The class will culminate with a demo day. Students will show off their creations to a panel of professionals, students and academics and to the general public.

### **Objectives**

By the end of this course, you will:

- \* Be able to call yourself a developer who can work in a dynamic team environment
- \* Know how to pitch a great idea and understand on a deep level what resources it will take to execute on that idea
- \* Understand and work within the agile development method
- \* Understand the vital importance of user interface and user experience
- \* Understand what type of content works on mobile news platforms
- \* Know how to intelligently critique mobile content and platforms
- \* Be able to speak to a programmer and understand the limitations and possibilities of programming and design (for the journalism students)
- \* Be able to speak to a content producer and understand the limitations and possibilities of content (for the computer science students)
- \* Understand how to communicate complex tech challenges through various platforms
- \* Understand the various business models for mobile apps
- \* Gain the skills needed to execute all phases of building an iPhone app.

### **Teamwork**

On the first day of class, students will be divided into teams. The teams will be a mixture of computer science and journalism students, and each team will be given freedom to pursue projects independently with guidance.

The teams will work within Github, which will help organize the work and give you a published code.

The teams will also publish regular blog posts that include photos, video and text stories about their products on utapps.com and run social media campaigns for their teams.

### **Structure of the class**

- \* The student teams will brainstorm, research and pitch their idea to the instructors for approval.
- \* Students will then immediately begin researching and wireframing their apps.
- \* Following the agile development method, there will be four “sprints” through the semester. At the end of each sprint, the development team will have to show their work in front of the class.
- \* There will be blog posts, news stories, video stories and developers’-diary style

posts that each team must produce throughout the semester.

\* Each team will have a social media presence that the team will be responsible for maintaining

\* There will be stand-up style demos at the end of each mini sprint. At the end of the course, there will be a Demo Day on April 26 that all students will be required to attend. The students will show off their work to academics and professionals from the journalism and tech worlds. The public will also be invited to attend.

\* We will use our class time to typically give short lectures (20 minutes or less) and spend the rest of the time working on your iPhone projects.

\* There will be open lab time (schedule TBA) under the guidance of the TA. Other lab hours will be available.

### **Required reading:**

\* Apple.com's developer guide ([developer.apple.com/iphone](http://developer.apple.com/iphone))

### **Suggested reading:**

#### **For advanced students (mainly computer science majors):**

\* Cownway and Hillegass: "IOS Programming, the Big Nerd Ranch Guide" (3rd ed.)

\* Isaacson, Walter: "Steve Jobs: A biography"

\* AP Style Guide

\* Shore: "The Art of Agile Development" Publisher: O'Reilly

### **Also required:**

1. All students must participate in a Demo Day, tentatively scheduled for April 26.
2. Students will be expected to attend at least one meeting related to mobile development during the course of the semester and write about it.

### **Assessment/how you're graded**

25 percent: App grade. This is a team grade. Your team will be assessed on the usability, creativity and execution of your app. As part of this grade, your team will also be required to turn in plans for sprints, and an initial pitch assignment.

24 percent: Peer reviews. Individual grade. Teamwork is central to this course and to developing an app outside of this course. You are expected to be a strong teammate, and you will be assessed by your peers. You will also be expected to assess others in your team.

16 percent: End-of-sprint demos. Team grade. At the end of each sprint, you will stand in front of the class with your team and present your progress and product.

14 percent: Blogging. This is a team grade. Your team is expected to post on [utapps.com](http://utapps.com) at least 14 times during the semester about your product, the process, or anything related to the mobile development industry.

9 percent: Videos. This is a team grade. Throughout the course of the semester, you are required to post at least four videos and host them on utapps.com. The videos should be related to your process and product and will be used during Demo Day.

7 percent: Social media. This is a team grade. Your product needs a social presence, and as a team you are expected to use social media to reach out to potential customers.

5 percent: Meeting. This is an individual grade. You will be required to attend one meeting related to mobile technology and write about it.

### **Grade scale:**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D	60-69

### **Tentative schedule (also see deadlines on Canvas)**

#### **Week 1**

##### **Jan. 14**

Introduction to the course

Both professors: Introductions, discussion about class structure

Quigley: How to generate ideas for products

Linwood: XCode download and basics

Divide class into teams

Through self-reporting, we will separate the five strongest CS students and the five strongest journalism students. Rest of students can pick which group they want to join.

##### **Jan. 16**

Outside pitches for ideas - KUT, Statesman, Daily Texan, McCombs students. Each gets 10 minutes to explain their app idea/take questions from students

If time, brainstorming

No lecture

## **Week 2**

### **Jan. 21**

Brainstorming ideas - entire class will hear the possible ideas that each team has and have an opportunity to question the ideas

Quigley: Explanation of first assignment.

Linwood: Github

Assigned: Pitch presentation, which will include the following: Elevator pitch, goals, potential user analysis, risks, plan for Sprint One. Due Jan. 28.

### **Jan. 23**

Quigley: Agile development process and wireframing

Group work on pitch presentations

Due: Blog post No. 1

## **Week 3**

### **Jan. 28 \*\* Begin Sprint 1\*\***

Pitch presentations

Ideas will be approved

Due: Plan for sprint 1

### **Jan. 30**

Quigley: Effective tech communication and a look at the blog posts

Linwood: Intro to Storyboard

Due: Blog post No. 2

## **Week 4**

### **Feb. 4**

Quigley: Group dynamics

### **Feb. 6**

Guest lecture: Olivia Hayes - UI/UX expert

Due: Video No. 1

Due: Blog post No. 3

## **Week 5**

**Feb. 11**

**Feb. 13**

End-of-sprint demo

Due: Blog post No. 4

Due: Peer review No. 1

**Week 6 \*\* Begin Sprint 2 \*\***

**Feb. 18**

**Feb. 20**

Guest lecture: Joshua McClure - founder RealMassive

Due: Blog post No. 5

**Week 7**

**Feb. 25**

**Feb. 27**

Due: Video No. 2

Due: Blog post No. 6

**Week 8**

**March 4**

**March 6**

End-of-sprint demo

Due: Blog post No. 7

Due: Peer review No. 2

**SPRING BREAK**

**Week 9 \*\* Begin Sprint 3 \*\***

**March 18**

**March 20**

Due: Blog post No. 8

**Week 10**

**March 25**

**March 27**

Due: Video No. 3

Due: Blog post No. 9

**Week 11**

**April 1**

**April 3**

End-of-sprint demo

Due: Blog post No. 10

Due: Peer review No. 3

**Week 12 \*\* Begin Sprint 4 \*\***

**April 8**

**April 10**

Due: Blog post No. 11

## **Week 13**

**April 15**

**April 17**

Due: Video No. 4

Due: Blog post No. 12

Due: Meeting attendance

## **Week 14**

**April 22**

**April 24**

End-of-sprint demo

Due: Blog post No. 13

Due: Storify showing social media efforts

**April 26**

DEMO DAY

## **Week 15**

**April 29**

**May 1**

Due: Blog post No. 14

Due: Peer review No. 4



**Other important information**

\* Your grades and the submission of your evaluations will be handled through Blackboard. Quizzes will be administered through Blackboard as well.

\* University Honor Code: All students are expected to abide by the University of Texas Honor Code, which reads: "The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community."

\* Students with Disabilities Please notify your instructor of any modification/adaptation you may require to accommodate a disability-related need. You will be requested to provide documentation to the Dean of Student's Office in order that the most appropriate accommodations can be determined. Specialized services are available on campus through Services for Students with Disabilities. <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

\*Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty: The University defines academic dishonesty as cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to avoid participating honestly in the learning process. Scholastic dishonesty also includes, but is not limited to, providing false or misleading information to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment, and submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor. By accepting this syllabus, you have agreed to these guidelines and must adhere to them. Scholastic dishonesty damages both the student's learning experience and readiness for the future demands of a work-career. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University.

[http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint\\_student.php](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php). For the University's official definition of scholastic dishonesty, see Section 11-802, Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities.

<http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi08-09/app/gi08.appc03.html#sec-11-802-scholastic-dishonesty19>

\* Campus emergency information  
<http://www.utexas.edu/safety/terms/>

