

LUMSA University – Rome
Master's Degree Program in Marketing & Digital Communication

Web Design
A.Y. 2025/2026 – Second semester
COURSE SYLLABUS – Vers 2.0 (11th March 2026)

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My personal page (for contact information, student reception hours, and to download this syllabus):
<https://lumsa.it/it/docenti/piero-polidoro>

Course page on the Service portal (Mi@Lumsa):

<https://lumsa.coursecatalogue.cineca.it/corsi/2024/392/insegnamenti/2025/18243/2017/10002?coordinate=2024&schemaid=3422>

E-learning page: <https://elearning.lumsa.it/course/view.php?id=1444>

To access the e-learning page you must use your Lumsastud credentials (the username is your e-mail address without “@lumsastud.it”; the password is the same you use to log in to your Lumsastud email or to other Lumsa’s digital services).

You can join the page by clicking on the link above or following this path: Courses A-Z Index > Web Design 25-26.

Please be sure to choose the Web Design 25-26 class; otherwise, you will be directed to an obsolete class from another academic year.

Only the first time, after the login you need a course password, which will be communicated by me during the first lesson. After the first lesson, you can ask me for the password via email, but you must write from your Lumsastud address.

Aim of the course

The course teaches students to understand, analyze, and evaluate website communication for an excellent user experience.

At the completion of the class the students will be able to:

- Recognize and discuss pros and cons of the most important technologies used for the web: responsive/adaptive websites; web applications/web apps/native apps
- Know the phases of the development of a website and which actions have to be taken at each step
- Know the fundamentals of Information Architecture and Usability.

The course is focused on the analysis of already existing websites, but this approach will also be useful to understand how to manage the development of a website.

Course contents

This course deals with the communication aspects of a website and qualitative analysis; it does not cover quantitative tools (such as web analytics), and it is not a course about information technologies, but about their uses and functions for effective web communication.

In the first part of the course, we will study how a web system is articulated and which technologies can be used to build it (layout types; different kinds of apps), and what their pros and cons are.

In the second part we will analyse the development phases of a website and the bases of Information Architecture and Usability.

Both attending and non-attending students must access the class page on Lumsa's e-learning platform at <https://elearning.lumsa.it>

Main topics

This is a loose list of the topics that will be treated during the course; I can decide at any moment to add other topics or eliminate some of those included in this list:

- Introduction to the Web Design course
- Digital media and websites
- Informatic languages used for the web; static and dynamic websites; CMS
- Apps: functions and differences between native apps and websites
- Responsive and adaptive layouts
- Introduction to UX
- Information Architecture
- Usability and usability tests
- Accessibility

Textbooks

1. Leah Buley, *The User Experience Team of One*, Rosenfeld Media, New York 2013.
2. Steve Krug, *Don't Make Me Think* (3rd Edition), New Riders, San Francisco 2013.
3. Lecture presentations, papers, and links to papers which will be published on the course web page are part of the exam program.

Exam

There are two ways to take the exam.

1) Group work

Students will be organized into groups at the beginning of the course; they must actively and continuously participate in group work. To be considered part of a group, students must have attended at least 60% of the classes.

Groups will receive assignments during the course, and each work will be evaluated. Assignment tasks and assessment criteria will be described in detail in documents that will be published during the course. After the course, each workgroup will present during the ordinary exam dates its work on the assigned topic (max 15 minutes for each group). Each student will present a part of the whole work (chosen randomly by me) and will receive points according to his/her performance during the presentation.

Students must also do a written test, which will take place only once, at the end of the course.

Attending students will thus receive both individual and group evaluations, as summarized in the following table:

Test	Points	Evaluation type	Notes
Assignment 1 Mapping the web system, Information Architecture – part	0-8	Group	Each group member will receive the same grade for this assignment.

1			
Assignment 2 Information Architecture – part 2, Usability	0-9	Group	See above
Written test	0-10	Individual	Closed answer questions; the written test will take place only once, at the end of the course
Final Presentation	0-5	Individual	Each student will present a part of the whole work done by the group for the two assignments

Students who could not attend the written test or refused its grade must do an oral exam (on the ordinary exam dates), which will be about the course program and will assign the same maximum number of points as the written test. This eventual integration with an oral exam can be done only after the group presents its collective work.

By the way, I strongly suggest doing the written test.

It is not possible to repeat the assignments or the written test.

A score of 32 is equivalent to 30 cum laude (while 31 and 30 are equivalent to 30/30).

2) *Individual work*

Students who do not want to or cannot participate in a group must write a paper that will be evaluated before the oral exam. The paper will be an analysis of a website, including a comparison with its competitors or anyway with comparable websites. The website and the list of competitors must be approved by the teacher before the student begins his/her work. It is not possible to choose e-commerce platforms (such as Amazon, Zalando, etc.).

The paper will be composed of a series of analyses. Use the template, which will be published on the class e-learning page during the course (the template includes instructions and further information), and read the attending student assignment guidelines as further support and explanation.

The paper will be followed by an oral exam (on the ordinary exam dates) about the course program (points from 1 to 3 of the “Textbooks” section).

Both the paper and the oral exam will be evaluated a maximum of 30 points. The final grade is expressed on a scale of 30 points and is the average of the paper and oral exam grades.

Assignment deadlines

Assignment 1: The deadline will be indicated in the assignment documentation

Assignment 2:

- For the first exam date (June 3): Friday, May 8, 13:00
- For the second exam date (June 17): Monday, June 1, 13:00
- For the third exam date (July 14): Monday, June 27, 13:00
- For the following exam dates: at least 3 weeks before the exam date

Written test

The written test will consist in closed answer questions (multiple choice questions, matching exercises, etc.) about the course program (points from 1 to 3 of the “Textbooks” section).

To do the written test, you must have access to the e-learning page of the course.

The date of the written test will be communicated during the course and will be published on the e-learning platform.

Assessment criteria for the group oral presentation

Members of a group present their whole work together, but they are evaluated individually, for their own performance (thus, members belonging to the same group may obtain different grades).

On the day of the presentation, the group must communicate to me the “sections” or “chapters” in which the presentation will be organized (for instance, Web system mapping, Website navigation tree, etc.), written on a sticky note or a paper sheet; the number of sections/chapters must be the same of the group members.

The group can use a Power Point (or similar) support for the presentation (this is strongly suggested).

Each group member will present a single section, chosen randomly by me.

The single member oral presentation will be evaluated according to these criteria:

Points	Evaluation
5	The presentation is brilliant and proactive; it is correct and complete, for both formal and substantial aspects. The theoretical topics of the exam syllabus are well known.
3-4	The presentation is good, correct, and complete, for both formal and substantial aspects. The theoretical topics of the exam syllabus are sufficiently known.
0-2	The presentation is just sufficient, or it shows deficiencies and/or there are gaps and uncertainties in the knowledge of the theoretical topics.

Plagiarism

The written paper (for non-attending students) and the workgroup reports (for attending students) must be original. Plagiarism, even if partial, is a crime. Every contribution from other works must be declared and correctly cited (references are not included in the maximum number of characters indicated for each assignment).