Module Title

HighWire Special Topics

Academic Year	*Level*	*Mnemonic*
2012-13	Masters	HIGH 401

Staff

Module Co-convenors	*Email*	*Discipline*
Dr Martyn Evans	m.evans@lancaster.ac.uk	Design
Dr Keith Cheverst	kc@comp.lancs.ac.uk	Computing
Dr Patrick Stacey	p.stacey@lancaster.ac.uk	Management

Module Overview

This module explores key topics related to the digital economy from Computing, Design and Management perspectives, and their relationship to society in terms of instrumental, substantive and critical issues. Within this broad spectrum of innovation, participants will have the opportunity to explore specific topics of contemporary significance. Through examination of a chosen study topic, selected by each participant in conjunction with, and agreed by, adviser(s), students explore aspects of how the interrelated nature of digital innovation, design, technology and business shapes practices, artefacts, services, expectations and lifestyles.

The purpose of the module is to provide students with an opportunity to focus on a specific area of research of particular interest to themselves and which may well feed into the eventual development of a PhD topic. Students have the opportunity to explore historical precedents, case-studies, theoretical critiques or alternative scenarios, and to consider future possibilities that could overcome the social and environmental shortcomings of our present modes. The module combines resources from the range of disciplines represented in HighWire, i.e. computing, design and management.

This module has a special role in HighWire, as a key part of the research strand, complementing the studies of comparative research methods in HIGH402, and also providing a HighWire equivalent of Google's 20% time, allowing each student to pursue a particular research project of interest to them for approximately one day a week during Lent Term and resulting in a research output on this topic. The module will be supported and stimulated by a workshop series and is intended to stimulate the students' thinking around key digital economy themes.

Module Learning Outcomes

Subject Specific:
On successful completion of this module students will be able to:
- Describe key literature in the topic-related areas examined
- Demonstrate an understanding of relationships and perspectives among two or more disciplines represented in HighWire (i.e. computing, design and management)
- Show the ability to successfully demonstrate the ability to successfully undertake independent study into the relationships among areas that may include, but are not limited to, design, management, technology, society, and environment.
- Demonstrate an ability to discuss and critique contemporary developments in their chosen topic area and to present cogently on this topic.

General:
On successful completion of this module students will be able to:
- Demonstrate critical, analytical and intellectual competencies appropriate to Masters level study
- Demonstrate skills in self organisation, reflection and communication
- Demonstrate oral and visual presentation skills to a level appropriate for Masters level study, including structuring of presentation, clear articulation of arguments or key points, rationale, and conclusions, accompanied by appropriate, informative and thoughtfully-designed visual materials.

Teaching Details

The module is semi-structured with initial sessions designed to bootstrap the module, followed by a period of self study interleaved with sessions designed to provide intermediary feedback and challenge the students on their ideas, and culminating in the completion of a research paper and a class presentation at the end of the term. The module programme is provided below.

Module Programme

Week	Summary	Staff
Session 01 15 January 2013 **George Fox LT4**	**Module Introduction:** This first session will introduce students to the module, its content, overall approach, and signpost mechanisms to identify potential areas of study. Advisors will discuss personal experience in academic research and contextualise the concept of 'special topics' in their field. Specific input will be provided into undertaking a literature review. Students will have the opportunity to briefly discuss initial research interests.	KC, ME
Session 02 22 January 2013 **George Fox LT4**	**Initial Student Presentation:** Students will be required to present their areas of research interest and potential topic areas. Presentations should be concise (3-5 mins) and aim to provide an overview of the broad area of interest rather than detail all aspects of the research. All students will be expected to present and participate in advisor led discussions. Discussions should inform students' individual reflective log.	KC, ME, PS
Session 03 29 January 2013	**Sign-up Surgery:** Advisors will provide sign-up tutorial slots. These tutorials are on a one-to-one basis between individual advisors and students. Students will not be expected to meet with all staff during the 'Sign-up Surgery' in any given week, but should seek to utilise staff expertise as appropriate. Discussions should inform students' individual reflective log.	ME, PS
Session 04 05 February 2013 **Bowland North SR1**	**Group discussion**: Students meet with special topic advisors as a group. In this session students will be expected to discuss general issues related to the development of their special topics, communicate progress made and challenges faced, and establish a strategy for future actions. These sessions will enable students to present interim findings to their peers and advisors, and receive feedback and suggestions for further development. Group discussions should inform students' individual reflective log. HighWire PhD students will be invited to discuss their experience of developing the focus of their research.	KC, PS
Session 05 12 February 2013	**Sign-up Surgery:** Advisors will provide sign-up tutorial slots. These tutorials are on a one-to-one basis between individual advisors and students. Students will not be expected to meet with all staff during the 'Sign-up Surgery' in any given week, but should seek to utilise staff expertise as appropriate. Discussions should inform students' individual reflective log.	KC, ME
Session 06 19 February 2013	**Sign-up Surgery:** Advisors will provide sign-up tutorial slots. These tutorials are on a one-to-one basis between individual advisors and students. Students will not be expected to meet with all staff during the 'Sign-up Surgery' in any given week, but should seek to utilise staff expertise as appropriate. Discussions should inform students' individual reflective log.	PS
Session 07 26 February 2013 **Bowland North SR1**	**Interim Student Presentation:** Students will be required to present their areas of research interest and potential topic areas. Presentations should be concise and aim to provide an overview of the broad area of interest rather than detail all aspects of the research. All students will be expected to present and participate in advisor led discussions. Discussions should inform students' individual reflective log.	KC, ME
Session 08 05 March 2013	**Sign-up Surgery:** Advisors will provide sign-up tutorial slots. These tutorials are on a one-to-one basis between individual advisors and students. Students will not be expected to meet with all staff during the 'Sign-up Surgery' in any given week, but should seek to utilise staff expertise as appropriate. Discussions should inform students' individual reflective log.	KC
Session 09 12 March 2013	**Sign-up Surgery:** Advisors will provide sign-up tutorial slots. These tutorials are on a one-to-one basis between individual advisors and students. Students will not be expected to meet with all staff during the 'Sign-up Surgery' in any given week, but should seek to utilise staff expertise as appropriate. Discussions should inform students' individual reflective log.	KC, ME, PS
Session 10 19 March 2013 **George Fox LT4**	**Final presentations**: All participants are required to present their research topic, supported with visual material, to the cohort. Advisers facilitate a short class discussion which will seek to identify the boundary crossing aspects of the proposed research, i.e. how the research crosses between computing, design, and management. NOTE: Schedule for presentations TBC.	KC, ME, PS
Final Submission 28 March 2013	**Final submission:** 1) Research paper, and 2) Reflective Log, Thursday 28 March 2013 by 12.00pm.	

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Assessment

Assignment	Summary	Percentage
1. Research Paper	A research 'position' paper which defines and details the student's chosen area of study (ca. 4000 words excluding references). The research paper should span at least two disciplines both in terms of the content and the literature considered. The research paper should conclude with identified research question(s). These questions will be considered in HIGH402.	**50%**
2. Reflective Log	An individual reflective log containing week-by-week entries (of ca. 500 words per week) that contains a commentary on the workshop series and development of the students' special topics. This should act a mechanism to capture students thinking as it progresses and help to develop and underpin their proposed research topic.	**25%**
3. Oral Presentation	An illustrated 10 minute oral presentation of the special topic that presents the topic, the results of the investigation, conclusions, and recommendations for further study/research. The presentation should identify potential research questions and contextualise the proposed research in the relative fields.	**25%**

Indicative Bibliography:

Hart, C (2008) Doing a Literature Review: Releasing the Social Science Research Imagination. Sage, London, UK.

Machi, L & McEvoy, B (2009) The Literature Review. Corwin Press, USA.

Ridley, D (2008) The Literature Review: A Step-by-Step Guide for Students. Sage, London, UK.

Phillips, E & Pugh, D (2005) How to Get a PhD: A Handbook for Students and their Supervisors. Open University Press, UK.

Dunleavy, P (2003) Authoring a PhD: How to Plan, Draft. Write and Finish a Doctoral Thesis or Dissertation. Palgrave, Macmillan, UK.

Trafford, V & Lesham, S (2008) Stepping Stones to Achieving Your Doctorate by Focussing Upon Your Viva from the Start. Open University Press, UK.

Rugg, G & Petre, M (2007) The Unwritten Rules of PhD Research. Open University Press, UK.

Brewer, R (2007) Your PhD Thesis: How to Plan, Draft, Revise and Edit Your Thesis. Studymates, UK.