**Introduction & Goals**

For IDSE 202, students will have a single assignment that is broken into multiple parts; to apply the methods and approach learned in this class, and the program thus far, to the redesign of an existing business / service. In addition, students will be required to ask the service provider / owner for **$1000 in compensation or equitable trade** as a means of demonstrating that substantive value was exchanged.

The goals of this project are:

* To practice making abstract concepts tangible; so that they can be inspected and iterated upon
* To learn how to visually communicate complex problems – or problems that exist primarily in the realm of behavior and user experience
* To gain confidence in “systems thinking”
* To gain confidence using service design methods and to iterate on ideas that occur over time
* To direct attention and decision making in a persuasive manner
* To learn an effective, iterative, and user-centered process for designing a service
* To learn how to craft solutions to problems that involve a variety of user touch points
* To gain confidence in communicating the value of addressing problems systemically
* To demonstrate that concepts, and the thinking behind them, represent real world value
* To end quarter 2 with a portfolio piece

**Businesses**

You can pick any business / service assuming:

* It’s Legal
* You can gain access to the front & back of house in relatively short order
* You are able to directly interact with customers while they utilize the service (i.e. contextual inquiry)
* You are able to directly interact with the business / service owner(s) (i.e. contextual inquiry)
* You are not related to the service provider (if you are, please check with me)
* You can demonstrate a use of an iterative process (repeat access to the environment is possible)

The following service providers represent potential opportunities for this project. Teams may not select the same service provider. If you choose a business / service that is not on this list, please inform me before moving forward:

* Austin Blood and Tissue center
* Annies Café
* Sawyer & Co
* Quickie Picky
* Lawn Starter (or other yard service company)
* Austin Dub Academy
* Hopdoddy
* Royal Blue Grocery
* Nau’s Enfield Drug Store
* Bouldin Creek Café
* Texas Rowing Center
* Catering company

At this point in the program you’ve learned how to identify opportunities (problem finding through research), how to synthesize data into insights, and how to quickly visualize ideas and prototype things. You have not learned: Polish, high fidelity craftsmanship, detailed interaction design, high fidelity prototyping, user testing, or business model generation.

succeed in this project, leverage what you’ve learned so far

**To succeed in this project, you must acknowledge the feeling of personal short comings and find ways to account for any skill / craftsmanship gaps. This will require you to objectively reflect on and reframe your approach while executing against it.**

**Deliverables**

Teams are ultimately responsible for managing their own schedule, scope, and sequence. This will require you to estimate and time box activities. Note: At some point in this project, you will feel as if you are falling behind for reasons that are perceived as “out of your control”. **Be persistent, be rigorous, double the time you think it takes to do anything, and know that you are not at the whim of anyone except yourselves. If you are stuck, find another way.**

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|  | Description | Points | Due |
| 1 | Assignment 1: AEIOU Assessment | 100 | Fri Oct 28 |
| 2 | Design Strategy Brief – Part 1: Research and Customer Journey (Actual State) | 100 | Mon Nov 7 |
| 3 | Design Strategy Brief – Part 2: Value Promise and Problem State | 100 | Wed Nov 16 |
| 4 | Design Strategy Brief – Part 3: Opportunity, Principles, and Vignettes | 100 | Mon Nov 28 |
| 5 | Design Strategy Brief – Part 4: Prototyping, Evaluative Research and Product Roadmap | 100 | Wed Dec 14 |
| 6 | Final Presentation | 100 | Wed Dec 14 |

AEIOU Research

A service, while made up of a variety of touch-points (artifacts, data points, environments, people, etc..), doesn’t ‘exist’ until it is in-use. It remains largely conceptual; subjected to the experience of the individuals who are participating in it. The AEIOU framework allows design research to observe and document various components that render the service as it is co-produced; over time.

The goal of this assignment is to do preliminary research with 2 – 3 service providers so that your team can make an informed decision on which one to move forward with. As a result, your team should be able to:

* assess the complexity of the service landscape; so that you might forecast the degree to which you can immerse yourselves without disrupting the offering.
* asses the access to a service owner / manager and their potential willingness for participation.
* communicate the breath and depth of the service landscape through photos and narrative.
* Identify potential breakdowns (functional, emotional) for further investigation.

**Deliverables**

The goal of this assignment is to create an abridged ‘notes from the field’ blog post – complete with reflection on the process itself – that familiarizes your client (Myself and the AC4D community) with the project and gives them a sense of the assumptions you are making and the reasoning behind them.

Teams will also be responsible for quickly ‘making sense’ of each opportunity by capturing and externalizing the touch-points of each service in a war room.

**Due**

This assignment is due on Wednesday, October 26. Before the start of class, the blog post must be posted and the war room should feel like ‘curated chaos’ for any credit to be given.

**Grading Criteria**

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| Description | Points |
| A blog post that contains the necessary elements to give your client a sense of the project, an introduction to potential candidates, a high level outline of the potential opportunity areas / breakdowns, and a reflection on the process. | 50 |
| A complete photo journey for each service externalized in your war-room | 20 |
| A demonstration of how your skills to date are being used to contain the ambiguity of the problem | 20 |
| The team exhibits a ‘can do’ attitude | 10 |
| Total | 100 |

Design Strategy Brief Part 1: Research and Customer Journey Map (Actual State)

Throughout the design process, designers create artifacts to progressively build clarity and momentum. This happens within a design team; translating “identified problems” into insights, and ultimately into design direction – but also inside of the design team’s organization; as designers attempt to persuade others of the value of solving a particular problem(s), and the ideal form of a given solution(s).

The challenge with the latter lies in the information required to ‘state the case’ in an artifact that stands alone. Too much information and the audience will not work to digest it – too little information and the argument may be dismissed or lack the persuasive power required to generate institutional momentum.

A design strategy brief aims to serve as this reference-able, yet persuasive, intermediary. A good design strategy brief is curated enough to be used in a (very text heavy) presentation and holistic enough to stand-alone as a persuasive argument; a document that is periodically updated as concepts are both learned and generated. Throughout the course of this quarter, teams will be responsible for capturing the progression of their work in this format. They will be tasked to use this artifact for communicating with their clients as well as internal discussions (blog) and ‘off the cuff’ presentations.

The design strategy brief will evolve over the course of the project.

**Part 1: Research and Customer Journey Map (Actual State)**

The first version of the design strategy brief is intended to familiarize your audience with the project, orientation in the design process, initial insights, key observations / obvious breakdowns (as made tangible by the customer journey map (actual state) and any additional supporting conceptual models that articulate the problem scale / scope.

**Due**

This assignment is due on Monday, November 7. Before the start of class, the blog post must be posted and the war room should feel like ‘curated chaos’ for any credit to be given.

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| Description | Points |
| The document contains enough detail to stand alone – but curated in a capacity that is still digestible | 20 |
| Conveys the use of a empathetic design process and establishes the credibility of the approach | 20 |
| Contains key observations of the process / individuals and highlights “points of interest” in a visually rich capacity | 20 |
| Make complex, and often abstract, service interactions tangible, through the use of easily digestible models | 20 |
| The document, posted to the blog, with an introduction for the larger AC4D community. | 10 |
| The document feels crafted; is clean, contains some visual hierarchy, and is generally free of grammar / spelling errors. | 10 |
| Total | 100 |

**Part 2: Value Promise and Problem State**

Part 2 of the design strategy brief focus on articulating the value promise, the problem state (at large) and the principles governing your team’s momentum moving forward. The goal of this iteration is to clearly and succinctly communicate the latent needs in the system, their overall affect on the system’s ability to deliver value to the end user, and what that value is / perceived to be.

While it’s safe to assume that your audience is versed in the project, you should prioritize key insights gained as a result of doing ethnographic research and be able to articulate their impact on your approach (i.e. design principles). In addition, the overall problem state should be made tangible through key user stories and visualizations of the actual AND perceived customer journeys.

Finally, assume that you will have stakeholders that join midway through your process. Consider including “the appropriate” artifacts / evidence in the appendix of your document that illustrates the process and approach to date.

**Due**

This assignment is due on Wednesday, November 16. Before the start of class, the blog post must be posted and the war room should feel like ‘curated chaos’ for any credit to be given.

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| Description | Points |
| The document contains enough detail to stand alone – but curated in a capacity that is still digestible as a narrative | 15 |
| Conveys the use of a empathetic design process and the current location in that process | 5 |
| Contains key insights / problem observations and substantiates them in a visually rich capacity | 10 |
| A succinct and clearly articulated value promise (Note: if there is a difference between what the business / customer perceptions of value, you must reconcile these into something new). | 15 |
| A succinct and clearly articulated problem statement that reflects the service opportunity as a whole | 15 |
| The problem state is made tangible, through the use of easily digestible models – including but not limited to the CJ Map: Actual and CJ Map: Perceived. | 15 |
| A set of emerging design principles that will be used to guide concept and prototype development. | 15 |
| An appendix, containing “the appropriate” artifacts / evidence of the process and approach to date. | 10 |
| The document feels crafted; is clean, contains some visual hierarchy, and is generally free of grammar / spelling errors. | 10 |
| Total | 100 |

**Part 3: Opportunity, Principles and Vignettes**

In the previous version of the design strategy brief, teams described the problem state at large; articulating how breakdowns in the system prevent users from achieving the value promise. In doing this, teams began to develop a sense of prioritization. At this point in time, teams should be able to “intuit” points in the system/customer journey that feel like the largest breakdowns. Subsequently, teams should also be able to “intuit” the concepts (redesigned and/or new touch-point) that could exist to solve specific problems, and the details that are important to their manifestation (i.e. how it should present itself to the user / what it does explicitly).

Part 3 of the design strategy brief focuses on making these intuited boundaries explicit. The goal of this iteration is to articulate the concepts selected for prototyping and the constraints that make them appropriate. To do this, you’ll need to describe:

* Design principles (ability to… statements) that articulate what needs to be in place for your product / system / service to be successful – from the user and service perspectives.
* A variety of concepts illustrating what could exist and how it should manifest (vignettes – 20 to 30 minimum)
* A set of criteria that used to down select ideas for prototyping (2-3 touch-points minimum)
* The functional and emotional value that you seek to deliver with the selected concepts

While it’s safe to assume that your audience is versed in the project, you should reiterate key insights when presenting design principles as this makes the connection to your user research explicit. In addition, the overall problem state should be made tangible through key user stories. Consider touching on the primary breakdowns that you ultimately seek to mitigate through your selected concepts.

**Due**

This assignment is due on Monday, November 28. Before the start of class, the blog post must be posted and the war room should feel like ‘curated chaos’ for any credit to be given.

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| Description | Points |
| The document contains enough detail to stand alone – but curated in a capacity that is still digestible as a narrative | 10 |
| Conveys the use of a empathetic design process and the current location in that process | 5 |
| Contains key insights and design principles; substantiates them in a visually rich capacity – generating enough empathy within your audience to create buy-in | 10 |
| A succinct and clearly articulated value promise (Note: if there is a difference between what the business / customer perceptions of value, you must reconcile these into something new) and a corresponding problem statement. | 10 |
| A curated set of vignettes that capture the breadth of your exploration (Note: all vignettes should be in the appendix) | 10 |
| A set of criteria that was used to down select ideas for prototyping | 10 |
| A review of each concept selected prototyping. Including the function and emotional value that you seek to deliver, variations in form to the delivery, and initial you plan on evaluating of that value. | 20 |
| An appendix, containing “the appropriate” artifacts / evidence of the process and approach to date. | 10 |
| A blog post that includes the document and an introduction / reflection | 5 |
| The document feels crafted; is clean, contains some visual hierarchy, and is generally free of grammar / spelling errors. | 10 |
| Total | 100 |

**Part 4: Feature Brief**

The Feature Brief is the final document in the design strategy series. It seeks to illustrate the “ideal state” of the system / service, the components that comprise this ideal state (I.e. new touchpoints AND iterations on existing touchpoints), the value that is delivered the user and the system, and the ideal sequencing of delivery (i.e. the roadmap).

The feature brief is a proverbial “a stake in the ground”, describing how each component should look and behave, as well as its placement relative to other components in the customer journey. The document is strategic in the sense that it provides a north star to the organization to evaluate all future initiatives against the value and placement of the components you deem necessary to create the ideal future.

As a result of consuming this document, your audience should be able to:

* identify the use of a rigorous, user centered design process; used to identify latent needs in the system / service – and how those worked both in isolation and in tandem to detract from the user’s ability to achieve the desired end state.
* articulate the reasoning behind each component, the value it provides to the user, and how it works together with other components in the system to ultimately deliver upon the value promise.
* plan for and develop against each of the components you deem necessary, in the sequence you defined as most appropriate, to deliver upon the value promise.

To do this, the feature brief will need to describe:

* “Enough” of the problem state to provide context, act as supporting evidence, and create empathy.
* Design principles (ability to… statements) that articulate what needs to be in place for your product / system / service to be successful – from the user and service perspectives.
* A high fidelity representation of each component.
* An accounting of the functional and emotional value that each component delivers – and the specific mechanisms that support this (i.e. a design element, tone, interaction, etc..)
* A road map for moving toward the ideal state – including additional components / problems that must be considered (“in the appropriate order”) to achieve the vision.

To complete this project, you need to prototype a select (2 – 3) concepts at the “appropriate” fidelity to test the impact of your design assumptions on the system / service. This means you’ll also need to design a research mechanism to test capture the feedback.

For the final presentation, there will be multiple audience members who have not been tracking this progress. Take this into consideration in building your narrative. Consider brining elements of older feature briefs forward as needed to establish context and evidence for your direction. In addition, use the final presentation as a space to highlight the results of your prototypes; reflecting on the success and failure of each concept.

**Due**

This assignment is due on Wednesday, November 14. Before the start of class, EITHER the final feature brief or presentation must be posted to the blog with a reflection for any credit to be given. Consider reflecting on everything that you have done to date – where you started – how you used the design process to generate your own momentum. Also, take a public victory lap for getting the $1000 – demonstrating that you have the ability to wield the process to provide value.

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| Description | Points |
| The document contains enough detail to stand alone – but curated in a capacity that is still digestible as a narrative | 10 |
| Conveys the use of a empathetic design process and the current location in that process | 10 |
| Contains key insights and design principles; substantiates them in a visually rich capacity – generating enough empathy within your audience to create buy-in for the suggested end state. | 10 |
| A succinct and clearly articulated value promise (Note: if there is a difference between what the business / customer perceptions of value, you must reconcile these into something new) and a corresponding problem statement. | 10 |
| A set of design recommendations – illustrated at high fidelity; capturing the functional and emotional value delivered by the concept. | 10 |
| A recommended roadmap for delivery (note: this is where you can add concepts that were too difficult to prototype, provided that you have illustrated it in the design recommendation section) | 10 |
| An appendix, containing “the appropriate” artifacts / evidence of the process and approach to date. | 10 |
| A blog post that includes the document OR presentation and a reflection | 10 |
| A presentation (20 -25 min) crafted to describe what you have done to an audience who is not familiar with the work. | 10 |
| The document and presentation feel crafted; is clean, contains strong visual hierarchy, and is generally free of grammar / spelling errors. | 10 |
| Total | 100 |