Course Description

This seminar provides an introduction to persuasive technology – a new interdisciplinary field of research and practice. It deals with the question of how interactive media can be designed to change people’s attitudes and behavior. It draws on theories and methods from multiple disciplines including communication, behavioral economics, psychology, and human–computer interaction to inform the design and evaluation of persuasive experiences delivered through different interactive media and applications. The seminar covers a broad range of interactive media, including social media, persuasive games and gamification, smart objects and environments, social robotics, and virtual and augmented reality. Applications of persuasive technologies will be discussed in a variety of domains,
including health and well-being, environmental sustainability, and (e)commerce.

In this year’s Persuasive Technology seminar, a particular focus will be placed on the persuasive power of virtual and augmented reality (VR/AR) and the new opportunities that emerge for creating persuasive user experiences in the Metaverse.

In Semester A, students will learn the theory of persuasive design and analyze examples of persuasive technology applications in order to identify their underlying persuasion strategies and potential ethical issues. Building on this theoretical knowledge, students will conduct a seminar research project in Semester B in which they empirically test a research question related how these persuasive design principles can be applied in the Metaverse in an innovative, effective, and responsible way.

**Assignments and Requirements:**

- Class attendance and constructive participation in class discussion
- Reading the bibliographical material as preparation for class meetings
- Submission of (bi-)weekly assignments (Semester A)
- Submission of a Literature Review as a Mid-term Assignment (Semester A)
- Mandatory participation in VR/AR experiments (collecting 6 ‘research credits’ = 90 minutes in total)
- Final presentation of the seminar research project (Semester B)
- Submission of a final seminar paper (research report) (individually or in pairs)

**Course Subjects:**

**Semester A:**

**Week 1:** Introduction to persuasive technology (key terms and concepts)

*Reading assignment:* Interview with BJ Fogg (Fogg & Euchner, 2019)

**Week 2:** Design principles of persuasive technology (“persuasive tools”)

*Reading assignment:* Fogg, 2003 (chapter 3)

**Week 3:** Design principles of persuasive technology (“persuasive media”)

*Reading assignment:* Fogg, 2003 (chapter 4)

**Week 4:** Design principles of persuasive technology (“persuasive social actors”)

*Reading assignment:* Fogg, 2003 (chapter 5)

**Week 5:** Mobile persuasion

*Reading assignment:* Fogg, 2003 (chapter 8, pp. 185-194); Lathia et al., 2013

**Week 6:** Web persuasion

Week 7: Persuasion in online social networks

*Reading assignment:* Fogg, 2003 (chapter 8, pp. 195-207); Lee, 2011

Week 8: Persuasive games and gamification


Week 9: Virtual reality for social change

*Reading assignment:* Farmer & Maister, 2017


Week 10: How to conduct a literature review

Week 11: Persuasion in the Metaverse

*Literature review assignment & Class discussion on the topic*

This class meeting will be conducted in the metaverse...

Week 12: Ethics of persuasive technology

*Reading assignment:* Berdichevsky & Neuenschwander, 1999; de Oliveira & Carrascal, 2014

Week 13: Seminar research projects: Topics & Team building

 Semester B:

Most of the meetings in Semester B will be individual meetings with the project teams to guide them through the process of conducting an empirical research project – starting with finding a research question, designing an experiment or survey/interview study, collecting and analyzing data. Occasional full class meetings will be scheduled for general instructions and peer feedback on the research progress. The seminar research projects will be presented in the final class meeting.

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**Course Goals**

Students will be able to identify the persuasive strategies of existing behavior change technologies, apply principles of persuasive design to new emerging interactive media, and learn how to empirically study the effectiveness of persuasive technologies.

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**Grading**

The final grade is composed of the mid-term assignment (literature review) (30%), and the final seminar paper (research report) (70%). Assignments in Semester A will be graded as
pass or fail. Failed assignments can be re-submitted. For missing each research credit (for participation in VR/AR experiments) and each missing assignments or failed assignment that is not resubmitted, one point will be deducted from the final grade. Bonus points for the final grade can be earned through special assignments (on demand/request).

**Deadlines:**

Submission of the final seminar paper: October 1st, 2023

Completion of the research credits collection: July 1st, 2023

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**Reading List**

**Mandatory readings:**


**Recommended articles/books for further reading:**


