I learned a lot in this course...

It Was Not About HTML

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As a person filled with curiosity, one of the things that I always wanted to know is how websites are made, and how I can have a well designed website. The College of Communication and Media Sciences offers a web course for COM students who are, like me, majoring in Multi-Media Journalism. Multi-Media Journalism is a specialization where we learn to integrate skills in feature and news writing, photojournalism, web design, editing, and publishing. I chose this major because I have a dream that I want to publish news in a simple, interesting way, so all kinds of people will enjoy reading it.

This course is called **COM 309-Web Design and Publishing**. In fact, I was hesitant about taking this course because I was afraid of the computer language, the HTML, since I am not good at coding. At school I learned that web sites are built up using a special language called HTML. I felt that coding needs people who are good at Math and I am the kind of person who forgets numbers easily. However, although I am not good at Math, I love learning programs and I am good at it. I have learned some programs by myself, like Photoshop, Comic Life, Adium, Image Ready and others. When I saw "COM 309" in my schedule, I ran to the Zayed University Catalog to find more information about this course. Then, my curiosity pushed me to try the course, for the 2006 spring semester.

Before this course, I used to design a lot using Photoshop and Illustrator; I also used Illustrator to draw cartoons. So I can say that I am creative and motivated to use technology, but I am not interested in building technology. I enjoy using creative programs like Flash where I can use my style and thought in it.

I was ready to attack HTML, to learn it and to understand it; however, instead I learned a new program called Dreamweaver. The instructor taught me this program in which I can build and publish my websites. The instructor made the program easy for me to use; he also taught me another program called Adobe Image Ready to help design animations that we often see in websites. I learned three compressed graphic formats for the web (GIF, JPEG and PNG); and I had to use Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator and Flash to design every page for website. So, I was very, very active in classes because there was no HTML. I was asking questions, I was working on my design all the time in the class. By the end of the semester, I had learned many things from this course. I have learned how to identify web design elements and vocabulary, I have the ability to use Internet software for producing effective design work, and I can recognize and evaluate web design and graphic needs. I learned about image maps, forms, tables and layers as the elements of web design, as well as vocabulary such as *animation*, *multiple event rollovers* and *frames*.

The final project was to design and to create a website on a specific topic. Because my favorite game in Play Station is Resident Evil, I designed a website about it. I enjoyed designing the site, and I designed twenty-nine pages for it.

Figure 1: My design for a Resident Evil homepage.

I enjoyed researching the topic that I chose, and I enjoyed using Photoshop to put all pictures in it and importing it into Dreamweaver. My teacher corrected our projects according to a "Web Project Evaluation" sheet; overall my site was "above average" to "very good", and I got a final grade of "A", which made me proud of my work.

I can say that I was blessed by having Mr. Mathew Dyck as my instructor for the Web

Design course. He was the one who helped me from the beginning of the course until the end; he was also behind my successful web design for "Resident Evil", which became an example of a good website in Web Design classes for this semester. Mr. Mathew Dyck is very, very organized in teaching; for example, he came to class prepared and he always knew what we had to learn in every class and he also taught us step by step so we could get the lesson. When he taught us something new, he connected it with the lesson that we had the class before. His teaching also was very clear; for example, he explained the lesson first, then he showed it on the computer, then after that he let us do it by ourselves, which helped me understand what was going on in the course. He created an educational environment in classes; for example, he gave us a chance to ask questions, gave us a chance to learn more about the lesson if we wanted, he reminded us to take notes on important points and he gave us time in class to finish our projects. He also made the lessons very simple and understandable, by teaching the lesson step by step, which made my studying life very easy. He always welcomed his and other students whenever they asked him to help; for example, if we had question about any lesson or even if we wanted to learn more we just went directly to his office without appointments and he never sent us away.

To use different kind of programs to design a website you need to be patient and to be a very good planner, because before starting a design you have to be organized and you have to have a good plan. I really enjoyed learning web design in this course for many reasons:

- Because of my curiosity
- Because of my creativity
- Because of Mr. Mathew Dyck
- And because of the topic that I chose as a final project

I wish all classes were like this one. At the end, I really would like to give an especial thank you to Mr. Mathew who made the course enjoyable and easy. "Thank you sir" is a very small sentence comparing to what he taught me. I have no other words to say but "thanks".