

MIS3506 – Spring 2026

# Designing Chatbots

Conversational Interfaces



For UX Students



Practical & Hands-On

# What Is a Chatbot?

And why should UX designers care?



## A software program

that simulates human conversation through text or voice interfaces.



## Rule-based or AI-powered

From simple decision trees to large language models (LLMs).

## Growing fast



Chatbots are now embedded in apps, websites, and services everywhere.

## UX-critical



Poor conversational design frustrates users — great UX makes it seamless.

## Designer's opportunity



UX designers shape the voice, tone, flow, and empathy of every chatbot.

# Types of Chatbots

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## Natural Language Processing

An NLP (Natural Language Processing) chatbot is an enchanting software creation that harnesses the power of AI to comprehend and engage with human language, facilitating conversations that flow more naturally and resemble the warmth of human interaction.

## Rule-based or AI-powered

A rule-based chatbot operates on a set of predefined rules and responses, like a flowchart, guiding conversations based on user input and pre-programmed logic, making it simple to implement but limited in its ability to handle complex or unexpected queries.

## Examples



Customer Service, Siri, Uber, Dominos, Starbucks

## Skilled Multi-Tasker



A high volume of inquiries.

The need for quick resolution.

The drive to maintain exceptional service standards.

## Designer's opportunity



This data-driven approach equips companies with the intelligence needed to tailor products, services, and marketing strategies to meet the evolving needs of their audience.

# Design for the Conversation

Understanding user needs and intent



## Know the user's goal

# 01

Every message has an intent. Design to meet it — not to show off what the bot can do.

### Do This

Write user stories before writing bot responses.



## Write like a human

# 02

Use natural, friendly language. Avoid jargon. Match your tone to your audience.

### Do This

Read responses aloud — does it sound like a real conversation?



## Plan for failure

# 03

Users will say unexpected things. Design graceful fallback messages and clear recovery paths.

### Do This

Always include a fallback: 'I didn't catch that — can you rephrase?'

# Testing & Usability

Understanding user needs and intent

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## User testing best practices

- Role-playing conversations
- Gathering feedback and iterating

## Class Discussion: Ethical Considerations

- Data privacy, bias in AI, user frustration

# Tools to Build With

Prototyping and platforms for beginners



## You don't need to code

Most beginner-friendly chatbot tools are no-code or low-code — start building in minutes.

No-code first

### **Voiceflow** No-code

Visual drag-and-drop builder for voice and chat flows. Great for UX prototyping.

Best for: Conversation flow design

### **Figma** Design tool

Use Figma to mockup chatbot UI screens and map conversation flows visually.

Best for: Visual UI prototyping

### **Botpress** Low-code

Open-source platform with a visual editor and built-in NLU. Free to get started.

Best for: Functional bot prototypes

### **ChatGPT / OpenAI** AI-powered

Experiment with AI-driven conversations. Use the playground to test prompts quickly.

Best for: AI conversation testing

# Your Next Steps

From class to creation — start today

1



## Map a real user need

Pick one task a user struggles with. Sketch the conversation flow on paper first.

2



## Build a prototype in Jotform

Create a free account and build a 3–5 turn conversation prototype this week.

3



## Test with a real person

Share your prototype with a classmate. Watch them use it and note where they get stuck.

## Resources



Google's Conversation Design Site  
[designguidelines.withgoogle.com](https://designguidelines.withgoogle.com)



Voiceflow YouTube Tutorials  
[youtube.com/voiceflow](https://youtube.com/voiceflow)



Nielsen Norman Group — Chatbot UX  
[nngroup.com](https://nngroup.com)



Botpress Documentation  
[botpress.com/docs](https://botpress.com/docs)

*"Good design is invisible — even in a conversation."*

— UX Principle

## Reflection #2

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Investigate your options for free chatbots and agents. Spend some time with at least one option and tell us about your findings on the discussion board –

- Name & URL
- Was it user friendly?
- Would you recommend?
- What use case did you envision?