

LMC 8803

RESEARCH METHODS FOR DIGITAL MEDIA

Course Instructor: Carl DiSalvo

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Office Hours: tbd

Course Times: Mondays and Wednesdays 12:05 – 1:25pm

Course Location: tbd

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to research methods for studying digital media. This includes methods for studying digital artifacts and systems, studying practices of making digital artifacts and systems, and studying the use of digital artifacts and systems. It is oriented toward graduate students who will pursue research careers in academia or industry. The course focuses on qualitative and interpretive methods drawn from the social sciences and humanities, with an emphasis on methods and theories from science and technology studies. In particular, we will cover multiple modes of ethnography, methods for the analysis of technical objects, and “inventive methods” that explore the intersection of design and interpretive social science. Through the course students will experiment with multiple research methods and write a research proposal. The course is open to graduate students from any major. Students should be prepared for significant readings in social science and the humanities and a significant amount of writing.

Required Books

The Craft of Research, Booth, Colomb, & Williams

Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes, Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw

How Users Matter: The Co-construction of Users and Technology, Oudshoorn & Pinch (eds)

Seeing Like a Rover: How robots, teams, and images craft knowledge of Mars, Vertesi

Attendance & Participation

Class attendance and participation is mandatory. Participation in class discussion is imperative because it allows you to explore the readings, projects, and themes collaboratively, and in the process, discover meanings and issues that you probably would not discover on your own. Participation in class also challenges you to continuously question, refine, and articulate your own ideas and interpretations.

Grading

If you complete all of the requirements for the assignment reasonably well, you should expect to earn a B. In order to earn an A, you must complete and go “above and beyond” all of the requirements and your work must be exceptional across multiple grading factors.

Absence from more than three classes will result in the loss of 1-letter grade for the course.

Tardiness for more than four classes will result in the loss of 1-letter grade for the course.

Assignments and Their Value

Mini Ethnography:	100 points
10 Research Questions:	100 points
Mini Lit Review:	100 points
Essay Review	100 points
Research Presentation	100 points
Research Proposal:	200 points

Information for Students with Disabilities

Please notify the instructor if you have any disabilities with which you need special assistance or consideration. The campus disability assistance program can be contacted through ADAPTS:

<http://www.adapts.gatech.edu>

Honor Code Statement

Students are expected to adhere to the Georgia Tech Honor Code: honor.gatech.edu

PhD Learning Objectives

- Develop the knowledge, comprehension and ability to apply historical, cultural, and theoretical concepts to the study of digital media
- Demonstrate the ability to identify the major theoretical traditions contributing to scholarly discourse about digital media
- Discuss and distinguish among historical, cultural, and theoretical contexts for digital media
- Apply theoretical concepts to specific digital media works

COURSE OUTLINE

Aug 17 **Introduction to the Course**

Aug 19 **What is Research?**

The Craft of Research, Prologue thru Chapter 4 (pages 1 – 67)

Aug 24 **Introduction to Ethnography I**

Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*, Chapters 1 & 15

- Aug 26 Introduction to Ethnography II**
 Dourish, P. (2014). "Reading and Interpreting Ethnography". In *Ways of Knowing in HCI* (pp. 1-23). Springer New York.
 Marcus, G. E. (1995). "Ethnography in/of the World System: The emergence of multi-sited ethnography". *Annual review of anthropology*, 95-117.
- Aug 31 Fieldwork**
Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes, Chapters 1 – 3
- Sep 02 Ethnography of Science and Technology I**
 Vertesi *Seeing Like a Rover*, Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2
- Sep 07 LABOR DAY – NO CLASS**
- Sep 09 Ethnography of Science and Technology II**
 Vertesi *Seeing Like a Rover*, Chapters 3, 4, & 6
- Sep 14 Studying Users I**
 Oudshoorn, N. & Pinch, T. "How Users and Nonusers Matter." In *How Users Matter*
 Wyatt, S. M. E. "Non-users Also Matter: The construction of users and non-users of the Internet." In *How Users Matter*
 Lindsay, C. "From the Shadows: Users as designers, producers, marketers, distributors, and technical support." In *How Users Matter*
- Sep 16 Studying Users II**
 Pinch, T. "Giving Birth to New Users: How the minimoog was sold to rock and roll." In *How Users Matter*
 Van Oost, T. "Materialized Gender: How shavers configure the users' femininity and masculinity." In *How Users Matter*
- Sep 21 CLASS TBD**
- Sep 23 Finding Research Questions**
The Craft of Research, Chapters 5 & 6
- Sep 28 Engaged Ethnography I**
 Fortun, K. (2012). "Ethnography in Late Industrialism." *Cultural Anthropology*, 27(3), 446-464.

Fortun, K., & Fortun, M. (2005). "Scientific Imaginaries and Ethical Plateaus in contemporary US toxicology." *American Anthropologist*, 107(1), 43-54.

Fortun, K. (2004). "Environmental Information Systems as Appropriate Technology." *Design Issues*, 20(3), 54-65. (Optional)

Sep 30 Engaged Ethnography II

Ottinger, G. (2010). "Buckets of Resistance: Standards and the effectiveness of citizen science." *Science, technology & human values*, 35(2), 244-270.

Wylie, S., & Albright, L. (2014). "WellWatch: Reflections on designing digital media for multi-sited para-ethnography." *Journal of Political Ecology*, 21(1), 321-48.

Wylie, S. A., Jalbert, K., Dosemagen, S., & Ratto, M. (2014). "Institutions for Civic Technoscience: How critical making is transforming environmental research." *The Information Society*, 30(2), 116-126. (Optional)

Oct 05 Making Arguments

The Craft of Research, Section III

Oct 07 CLASS TBD

Oct 12 FALL BREAK – NO CLASS

Oct 14 Design Anthropology I

Otto, T., & Smith, R. C. (2013). "Design Anthropology: A distinct style of knowing." *Design Anthropology: Theory and Practice*, 1-29.

Salvador, T., Bell, G., & Anderson, K. (1999). "Design Ethnography." *Design Management Journal (Former Series)*, 10(4), 35-41.

Oct 19 Design Anthropology II

Gatt, C., & Ingold, T. (2013). "From Description to Correspondence: Anthropology in real time." *Design Anthropology: Theory and Practice*. London: Bloomsbury, 139-158. (Optional)

Halse, J. (2013). "Ethnographies of the Possible." *Design Anthropology: Theory and Practice*, 180.

Murphy, K. M., & Marcus, G. E. (2013). "Epilogue: Ethnography and Design, Ethnography in Design." *Ethnography by Design. Design Anthropology: Theory and Practice*, 251-268.

Oct 21 CLASS TBD

- Oct 26** **Communities and Publics I**
 Marres, N., & Lezaun, J. (2011). "Materials and Devices of the Public: An introduction." *Economy and society*, 40(4), 489-509.
 Marres, N. (2009). "Testing Powers of Engagement Green Living Experiments, The Ontological Turn and the Undoability of Involvement." *European Journal of social theory*, 12(1), 117-133.
- Oct 28** **Communities and Publics II**
 Dunbar-Hester, C. (2008). "Geeks, Meta-Geeks, and Gender Trouble Activism, Identity, and Low-power FM Radio." *Social Studies of Science*, 38(2), 201-232.
 Kelty, C. (2005). "Geeks, Social Imaginaries, and Recursive Publics." *Cultural Anthropology*, 20(2), 185-214.
- Nov 02** **Media & Exploratory Methods I**
 Pink, *The Future of Visual Anthropology*, Chapters 1 & 2
- Nov 04** **Media & Exploratory Methods II**
 Pink, S. (2011). "Sensory Digital Photography: Re-thinking 'moving' and the image." *Visual Studies*, 26(1), 4-13.
 Pink, S. (2011). "Amateur Photographic Practice, Collective Representation and the Constitution of Place." *Visual Studies*, 26(2), 92-101.
- Nov 09** **Project Workshops**
 In-class group work on projects
- Nov 11** **CLASS TBD**
- Nov 16** **Media & Exploratory Methods III**
 Wilkie, A., Michael, M., & Plummer-Fernandez, M. (2015). "Speculative Method and Twitter: Bots, energy and three conceptual characters." *The Sociological Review*, 63(1), 79-101.
 Hatzius, B., & Wakeford, N. (2014). "Everything Is Going On at the Same Time." *Video Methods: Social Science Research in Motion*, 10, 187.
 Kimbell, L. U. C. Y. (2008). "Re-Assembling the Visual." In *proceedings of Ethnographic Praxis in Industry Conference, Copenhagen*.
http://www.lucykimbell.com/stuff/EPIC_kimbell.pdf
- Nov 18** **Nov 09 Project Workshops**
 In-class group work on projects

Nov 23 **Course Reflection**

In-class discussion

Nov 25 **THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY / NO CLASS**

Nov 30 **Final Presentations**

In-class presentations

Dec 02 **Final Presentations**

In-class presentations