

## LMC 6650 Project Studio: Material, Care, Computer?

Spring 2021

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Tue 12:30-3:15

online

office hours Wed 2-3 (TBC)

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### Overview

This course will relate to the fields of physical computing and tangible interaction design as they intersect with material culture and practices. It asks: How do we speak to stuff and how does stuff speak to us and what role can digital media and interaction design play in these conversations? The main concern of the class, thus, is how someone or something “relates.” We will look for answers along a few key theme. One focus of this exploration will center on the principle of “care,” which we will adapt from selected readings in feminist technoscience and new materialism. We, then, will investigate possible connections reaching into fields such as hybrid craft as well as design approaches such as critical fabulations and material experience design.

Our methods will combine theory with critical discussions, hands on exercises, design, and implementation of example cases. Students should be ready to discuss, produce, and critique theory as well as practices, design, and projects. This course aims to include individual practical final projects that should reflect the issues we discuss and the materials we encounter.

The course will not enforce any particular technology but knowledge in prototyping tools and techniques from handcraft to Arduino are certainly valuable. The more it involves your hands as well as your minds, the better.

The class is online only. Students most likely will have to purchase materials and prototyping components for this course. All texts will be online.

### Schedule

(note that changes are bound to happen)

| Day  | Topic                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Projected reading                                                                          |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1/19 | <b>Intro to course</b><br><br>Debating the syllabus and procedures (blog? Teams?)<br>C I: Material culture – Turning in North GA<br>C II: PrimalClay<br><br>Activity<br>Objects and material culture       | (Burrison; Turkle)<br><br><b>ASSIGNMENT:</b> read Dunne and do the “narrative speculation” |
| 1/26 | Pre-discuss: syllabus settling<br><br><b>DUE:</b> collection of 500 word stories<br><br><b>Materials Relating &gt; voices of materials</b><br><br>C I: “second order cybernetics”<br>C II: material agency | Syllabus stabilized<br><br>Barad; Glanville<br><br><b>ASSIGNMENT:</b> sensory speculation  |

|      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                           |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|      | <p>Activity/ Method: discuss in your group what your object “does”</p> <p>Discuss: analytical tools?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 2/2  | <p><b>Materials Relating &gt; body practices</b></p> <p><b>DUE:</b> Sensory Speculation</p> <p>C I: Of critters and string figures<br/>C II: What is somaesthetic design/ embodied design ideation?</p> <p>Activity/ Method: embodied design ideation</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <p>Haraway<br/>Höök<br/>Wilde/ Vallgarda/<br/>Tomico<br/><b>ASSIGNMENT:</b> find example</p>                                                                              |
| 2/9  | <p><b>Materials Relating &gt; material collaborations</b></p> <p><b>DUE:</b> critical making example</p> <p>C I: Is making a critical practice?<br/>C II: Is craft a critical practice? The value of “risk” and “need”</p> <p>Method I: Critical Fabulations<br/>Method II: material experience</p> <p>Discussion/ Activity: what are possibilities to do a non-human-focused “relational analytical kit” &gt; sketch ~3 exercises (this is ideation for an analytical tool kit)</p> | <p>Ingold<br/>Ratto/ Hertz<br/>Pye; (Risatti)</p> <p>Rosner<br/>Karana</p> <p><b>ASSIGNMENT:</b><br/>Develop tools</p>                                                    |
| 2/16 | <p><b>DUE:</b> Brief presentation of your exercise<br/>Discussion: assembly of a first “relational analytical kit”</p> <p><b>Humans Relating &gt; needs and performance (the individual)</b></p> <p>C I: Performance and expression<br/>C II: How do we individuate? ... toward objects?</p> <p>Activity: a remote shared performance exercise</p>                                                                                                                                   | <p>Schechner<br/>Simondon<br/>Richards</p> <p><b>ASSIGNMENT:</b> start looking for your material/ use the methods we explored so far (from fabulation to our own kit)</p> |
| 2/23 | <p><b>Humans Relating &gt; “more than one critter”</b></p> <p>C I: Health<br/>C II: Social Justice<br/>C III: Environmental relating (Liu?)</p> <p>Activity/ Discussion: how can we include human needs and care in the kit we developed?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p>Lupton?<br/>Clary-Lemon?<br/>Haraway again?<br/>Liu?</p>                                                                                                               |
| 3/2  | <p><b>DUE:</b> Material presentation</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                           |

|      |                                                                                                                      |                     |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
|      | Discussion: Humans Relating > “folklife”?                                                                            | Dorson?<br>Nitsche? |
| 3/9  | <b>DUE:</b> Own text/ project presentation                                                                           |                     |
| 3/16 | Break                                                                                                                |                     |
| 3/23 | <b>DUE:</b> Final Project Idea<br>Discussion                                                                         |                     |
| 3/30 | Work on project                                                                                                      |                     |
| 4/6  | <b>DUE:</b> technical prototype of digital intervention<br>(fundamental working but not yet in the actual condition) |                     |
| 4/13 | Work on project                                                                                                      |                     |
| 4/20 | Work on project                                                                                                      |                     |
| 4/27 | NOTE: this is in reading week<br><b>DUE:</b> final project presentation<br>Discussion: Class reflection              |                     |

### Grading and Main Deliverables

| Assignment            | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | % of final grade |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Narrative speculation | read Dunne; write a 500 word essay from the perspective of the chosen object (use only words) Do not tackle a speculative social issue but focus on the object at hand; center of this object and its current condition – the speculation is the transfer into this object, not the development of any social dystopia                                                           | 5%               |
| Sensory speculation   | Adapt at least one of the analytical methods developed in class and conduct it; document the process; this is an exercise on sensory systems and how they relate to the object/ material you look at; what are the “right” ways to document here? his should not resolve into an academic reflective text; it might be more a collage (visual, acoustic, haptic) length: 2 pages | 5%               |
| Examples              | Find at least one example of “critical making” and/ or “critical craft” projects; be ready to present briefly in class during discussions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 5%               |
| Develop tools         | Pick one of the “relational exercises” we have identified and perform it; iterate and adjust the exercise as you perform it; document it; detail it; deliver it as a developed exercise back to class; others should be able to perform your optimized exercise with the help of your documentation only; length: ~ 3-4 pages (images, instructions)                             | 10%              |

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |     |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Own paper presentation | Presentation of self-selected research paper; pick a text that relates to your “problem” and bring it in relation to the discussions we have in class; this might be a text you are already familiar with; cover background; field, method, logic of the paper; critical review with clear argumentation; clarity; quality presentation (slides, delivery); ability to answer questions                                                | 15% |
| Material presentation  | Critically reflect on the material you have chosen; put it in a range of contexts (historical, social, technological, environmental ... it will depend on the particular material you have picked); use the terminology and means introduced in the course; look out for: clarity of presentation and argument, use of terminology, and an effective rich and deep reflection of the material<br>Analyze it using our “relational kit” | 15% |
| Final project          | Project idea presentation, final presentation; clarity and ambition of the concept; implementation; process (effective work over time); connection to the material relation; argument for the design and how does it relate to the texts discussed in class (and others); each project needs a short YouTube style video (~ 2 min) that explains its nature, evolution, and results                                                    | 30% |
| Participation          | active in discussions, active in example sessions; active in design meetings, teamwork, homework; activity and engagement in all meetings;                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 15% |

No use of cell phones (including texting) in class.

100-90% = A  
89-80% = B  
79-70% = C  
69- = D

Grading of individual pieces will be in percentage

Late submissions lead to automatic reductions of the grade unless a valid excuse is provided. Any 1 day delay, meaning anything after 5pm of the due day, will have 10% reduced from the grade; any 2 day delay will have 20% reduced, 3 day delays will not be accepted.

The Honor Code of Georgia Tech applies (see <http://www.honor.gatech.edu/>).

### Inclusivity Statement

The Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts supports the Georgia Institute of Technology’s commitment to creating a campus free of discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status. We further affirm the importance of cultivating an intellectual climate that allows us to better understand the similarities and differences of those who constitute the Georgia Tech community, as well as the necessity of working against inequalities that may also manifest here as they do in the broader society.

## Attendance

A student is allowed three excused absences. With the fourth absence, the student's overall grade will be lowered by 8% point, with the fifth an additional 8%, six absences are an automatic failure of the class.

If a student needs to miss a class, contact the instructor at least 24 hours in advance. If Institute Approved Absences collide with class times please contact the instructor in advance to make sure the workload can be distributed.

## Expectations

Students are expected to have a working video camera and microphone to be able to engage in the synchronous lectures and in group meetings with instructors and teammates. Unless technical issues prevent a student from participating via video, the course will ask all students to share their video during discussion, supervision, and collaboration segments.

The course materials, assignments, and deliverables will be on canvas but we will assess which scheduling format works best for our needs.

This is an online only course with synchronous meeting times.

## References

(selection)

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