Syllabus

LMC 6399 Discovery & Invention

Spring 2024

Units: 3

Course Meetings

Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:30am – 10:45am in Skiles 357

Instructor

Noura Howell, PhD
Assistant Professor
Digital Media in LMC
Georgia Tech
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she / her / hers

Office hours: By appointment.
The best way to reach the instructor is via a 1:1 chat message on MS Teams.

Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA)

Kosha Bheda
MS Student
Digital Media in LMC
Georgia Tech
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Office hours: By appointment.

Course Description

In this class, we will explore and practice research methods used to ‘discover’ or learn about, from, and with the world (including other people, environments, etc) and ‘invent’ or create, shape, design, develop ideas, concepts, artifacts, etc.

Goals

The course objective is to lay a foundation for understanding creative research methods as related to digital media. The course learning outcomes are:

- To understand the methodological foundations of creative research
- To use the methods presented in this course to pose research questions, collect evidence, and make claims about digital artifacts.
- To create and analyze digital artifacts with an awareness of history, respect and sensitivity to multiple and diverse audiences.
- To learn to present persuasively about digital media projects.
## Schedule

The schedule will be updated as the semester progresses. Readings will be added. Due dates and topics for each class may be adjusted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Activities</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>Review before class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8-Jan</td>
<td>Course overview&lt;br&gt;Methods exploration</td>
<td>Review before class</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10-Jan</td>
<td>Methods clustering, finalizing, method presentation group formation and signup</td>
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<tr>
<td>15-Jan</td>
<td>MLK day - no class</td>
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<tr>
<td>22-Jan</td>
<td>Method Spotlight: Interview</td>
<td>Creswell Chapter 3: &quot;Qualitative Theory Use&quot; (pdf pages 98-111), link above</td>
<td>Chapter 5 &quot;How to Conduct a Good Interview&quot; of Annette Lareau. 2021. Listening to people: a practical guide to interviewing, participant observation, data analysis, and writing it all up.</td>
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<tr>
<td>24-Jan</td>
<td>Project Launch &amp; Team Formation</td>
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<tr>
<td>31-Jan</td>
<td>Team: instructor checkins</td>
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<tr>
<td>7-Feb</td>
<td>Project launch presentations&lt;br&gt; Project launch documentation</td>
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Method Spotlights:

Human Centered Design

Team:instructor checkins

Method Spotlight: Qual user studies

Team:instructor checkins

Method Spotlight: Quant user studies

Team:instructor checkins

Project midpoint presentations

Project midpoint documentation

Project midpoint presentations

Spring break - no class

Spring break - no class

field day: team work time

Team:instructor checkins

Method Spotlight: TBD

Team:instructor checkins

Method Spotlight: TBD

field day: team work time

Final presentations

Project final documentation

Grading Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation: Adding to Methods Exploration</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation: Method Spotlight Group Signup</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation: In-class comment/question #1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation: In-class comment/question #2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation: In-class comment/question #3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation: Attendance</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method Spotlight Presentation</td>
<td>20</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Grading of each assignment is based on points. The number of points for an assignment indicates its weight in determining the final grade. Assignments are due at the beginning of class unless otherwise specified.

Late assignments receive at most 50% credit. Assignment that are turned in on time, but where the student is not present in class to represent their work, also receive at most 50% credit. This is because the pedagogical value of many assignments includes using these assignment for in-class activities such as giving and receiving feedback on the assignment.

If you have to miss class for a valid reason such as illness, family emergency, etc., please proactively coordinate with the instructor in advance to find an alternative make up assignment, which could take a different form than the original assignment.

Grade Ranges

A: 90 – 100%
B: 80 – 89%
C: 70 – 79%
D: 60 – 69%
F: 0 – 59%

Attendance Policy

Attendance is required for all sessions, and contributes to the participation part of the grade in the Grading Breakdown. The class relies on in-class activities to develop the skills of this class. Skipping class is mostly hurting your own learning and that of your teammates.

If you are sick, stay home and rest to protect yourself and others. Give the GTA and Instructor a heads up before class, and coordinate with them to find an alternate make up assignment.

Being late to class will detract from your attendance and participation grade.

Accommodations

Please refer to the Office of Disability Services for information on how to request accommodations. The instructor and TA are committed to working with you to accommodate your needs. Communicating with us about your needs will assist us in best accommodating your needs.

Technology use

Bring a computer to class every day. No use of cell phones (including texting) in class.
Inclusivity Statement

The Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts is committed 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 in our community, as well as the necessity of working against inequalities that may also manifest here as they do in the broader society.

Workload

Students are expected to work not only in class but also outside of class sessions on assignments and projects.

Mental Health Resources

If you are experiencing anxiety or depression or a medical, personal, or family crisis, or if you just feel overwhelmed, please do not hesitate to reach out for help. Everybody needs help sometimes, and being in school can be a personally challenging time. You are not alone, and many of us are available to be sympathetic listeners and to share our own strategies for coping with stressful situations. In addition, professional counselors and medical practitioners have expertise that can be very helpful. The Dean of Students has a list of services (see https://studentlife.gatech.edu/content/get-help-now).

Library Resources

The GT Library has numerous resources, gadget rental, study space, activities, and more.

Georgia Tech Honor Code

The Georgia Tech Honor Code will be strictly enforced.

Comm Lab

This is a helpful resource available to you: Communication Center.

ChatGPT and other Generative AI Tools Policy

I want to acknowledge that we are still in a period where there are not clear norms about how to use ChatGPT and other generative AI tools. This policy may get updated over the semester as we all learn about different uses of these tools, or encounter them in new situations.

Assignments are a form of communication. The assignments in this class are meant to be opportunities to demonstrate and evaluate your learning. They enable receiving useful feedback from peers and the instructor, to help you learn and improve on your skills and work. Using automated tools to do most of the assignment for you can break that feedback loop, transforming the assignments from useful to busy work – Ultimately this is just harming your learning, wasting your educational opportunity in this program.

ChatGPT and generative AI tools are based on matching patterns on past materials, and they're not actively thinking/reasoning like a human does. (A metaphor: if you asked me to design a bridge without any engineering training, and I drew up some blueprints based on a bunch of designs of bridges through Google, it might look pretty cool and it might even stand up! But we probably wouldn’t build that exact bridge because I didn't follow any of the reasoning and requirements that's been developed in structural and civil engineering).
Assignments in this class may not always feel straightforward (that’s the nature of research!). There can be temptation to turn to an automated AI tool as soon as you hit a challenge. It’s OK to sit for a while and be unsure, or work on something else for a while and come back, or talk to a person. I’d rather you talk to your peers first for ideas and brainstorming before turning to ChatGPT. (In the same way that you’ll get richer research data by talking to real people than talking to a ChatGPT persona; you’ll get richer research ideas by talking to real people instead of talking to ChatGPT).

That being said, I know that tools like ChatGPT and generative AI can be useful for certain types of tasks, or as resources to help in writing. Therefore, for any assignment for which you use ChatGPT or any other generative AI, you must both (1) cite the tools you use, as you would cite a research paper or other resource that you used in your work, and (2) add a section titled “Generative AI Usage” documenting how you used the tool(s). Include transcripts of LLM text or dialogues, and any iterations of generative image, sound, or other media from/with AI, etc, to thoroughly document your process of using generative AI in producing the output of your project.

In general, you will not be penalized for using ChatGPT and other generative AI tools if you disclose how you used it. Of course, low quality assignments will still receive lower grades. However, writing a false statement about your use of ChatGPT or other generative AI tools, or turning in a document that was completely written by ChatGPT or an AI tool are likely violations of the academic honor code (plagiarism, false claims of performance, deliberate falsification), and will result in a 0 grade and a possible referral to the Office of Student Integrity.

Use of ChatGPT and AI tools is a large gray zone – the following are not 100% rules, but some suggestions and guidelines to help you use these tools in a way that will be helpful to you achieving the course goals and objectives.

Likely useful ways of using ChatGPT:

- Helping to re-word or re-structure a sentence or paragraph to help you more clearly convey an idea
- Translating languages (you may need to double check manually for errors)
- Finding a specific resource/paper you already know about but can’t remember the name of
- Providing a template for a paragraph
- Asking it to critique your writing
- Cut down words you’ve written to meet a word count or page limit.
- Brainstorming (while keeping in mind the normative bent of generative AI tools, which are based on training data whose statistical majorities may not match what you want for your work)

Likely non-useful ways of using ChatGPT:

- Writing the assignment for you and turning it in – this is likely a violation of the academic honor code and will be dealt with as such
- Citing factual statements from ChatGPT – ChatGPT can “hallucinate,” or create very convincing sounding facts and citations, and passing them off as real
- Finding new sources and papers – the hallucination problem again
- Using ChatGPT as a general search engine – the hallucination problem again