

LMC 8001 – Proseminar II

Spring 2025

3 Units

(Details of the syllabus subject to change; the version on Canvas will be the most up-to-date!)

Course Information

Course Meeting

Wednesday 12:30-1:45pm; 2-3:15pm

Skiles 010

Instructor

Richmond Wong, PhD

Assistant Professor, Digital Media, School of Literature Media & Communication

[he/him/his](#)

Drop-In (“Office”) Hours

To be announced, link on canvas. Please email me in the meantime to set up an appointment (or if the listed times don’t work for you).

Course Description

This course is to provide an understanding of approaches to research in Digital Media, with an emphasis on design and human-computer interaction (HCI). We will discuss how research questions, methods, and disciplines take different approaches to framing problems, claiming validity, make arguments, and shape and create knowledge. The course will primarily consist of readings and seminar discussions, though we may also have guest speakers or other activities on certain days.

Materials

All required readings will be available as PDFs through Canvas or the Georgia Tech library. (Readings will be available on Persuall, but I highly encourage you to also download the full PDFs from the Files section of Canvas for your own records.)

Course Technology

- Readings and assignments will be on Canvas
- We will also have a Microsoft Teams group
- Perusall for shared notetaking

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

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

- Understand the historical, theoretical, and cultural contexts of Digital Media research, particularly design and HCI research
- To create and analyze digital artifacts with an awareness of history and culture, with respect and sensitivity to multiple and diverse audiences.
- Apply formal concepts and theories using appropriate methods

Course Approach and Philosophy

Many, though not all, readings in this class are from the quals list, spanning design, HCI, and STS. The goal of this class is not necessarily to read through the quals list, but to provide enough background and scaffolding so that you can have a framework to work your way through the quals reading lists.

We'll read about 80-100 pages per week (sometimes more or less based on the density of the reading). The course will primarily be in a seminar style – so students are expected to keep up with the readings and participate in class discussions and/or the Canvas discussion threads. Readings should be completed before class. We'll talk about strategies for reading books during the first week, but the key goal will be to focus on reading for the main argument(s) of each reading, rather than reading word-for-word to memorize every specific detail and example presented by the authors.

Across our reading and discussions this semester, there are a set of key questions we will continually discuss and think about:

- How should the world be described?
- How is the world knowable?
- What counts as knowledge?
- Whose perspectives and knowledge counts?
- Who makes these choices?

Assignments and Grading

Major assignments during the class add up to 100 points total.

- Reading reflections: 10% (10 times, 1 point each)
- In-Class Participation: 15%
- Perusall Annotations: 15%
- Discussion lead: 10% (2 times, 5 points each)
- Literature Review: 30%
- Final Essays: 20%

Reading Reflections (10 out of 13 weeks, 1 point each): 10 points

Each week you will be expected to post a reading reflection to a Discussion thread on Canvas before we meet. Please post these by noon on Wednesdays. Reading reflections are meant to help you explore possible ideas through writing. Grading is based on depth of engagement with readings.

In-Class Participation: 15 points

Participation can include lots of things – you don't need to have some amazing brilliant insight or even have fully understood all the readings.

Perusall Annotations: 15 points

We will use the online tool Perusall, which allows for collective group notes on readings. Because we are trying to read and learn about the readings together, this will help us build a collective understanding of the readings.

Discussion Lead (2 times, 5 points each): 10 points

Students will each sign up to lead the discussion for at least 2 sessions, starting in week 3 or 4. Leading the discussion means helping provide generative questions that help us draw connections and critically discuss the readings.

Literature Review: 30 points

Over the semester, you will create a literature review of a topic or domain related to your area of research. You will need to connect that domain to several course readings. The goal is to describe the core course questions in relation to your topic or domain of interest.

- Final lit review topic proposal/brainstorm = 5 points
- Outline/draft = 10 points

- Final version = 15 points

Final Essay: 20 points

For the final, you will write essay responses to 2 questions similar to the PhD qualifying exam questions, synthesizing several readings from the course related to design, STS, or HCI. This will be a take-home, open book, untimed essay, but help you begin practicing the skills for the qualifying exam.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (Jan 8): Introduction – Reading, Writing, Discussing

- Discussion on reading strategies
- Guiding questions for the course

Week 2 (Jan 15): Objectivity and Efficiency in Digital Media

- Card et al. 1983. Excerpts
- Video: Mouse Pointers & Fitts's Law – Computerphile (2015) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3gS9tjACwU>
- Norman. 2002. Excerpts.

Week 3 (Jan 22): What are “Things”?

- Winner. 1980.
- Latour. 1992.
- Barad. 2003.

Week 4 (Jan 29): How do things relate?

- Tsing. 2015. Excerpts
- Haraway. 1991.

Week 5 (Feb 5): What and why do we know what we know?

- Weber. 1968. Excerpts
- Haraway. 1988.
- Harding. 1992.

Week 6 (Feb 12): Ethnographic and interpretivist methods

- Clarke, Charmaz (2019)
- Dourish. 2006.
- Star. 1999.
- Suchman. 2012.

Week 7 (Feb 19): Design as a way of knowing

- Schön. 1983 (Excerpts)
- Vertesi et al (2016)
- Gaver. 2014.

Week 8 (Feb 26): Speculative/Critical Design

- Dunne, Raby. 2001. Excerpts
- Dunne, Raby 2013. Excerpts
- Keyes et al, 2019.
- Ratto, 2011.

Week 9 (Mar 5): Participatory methods

- Steen. 2013
- Asaro. 2000.
- Le Dantec & Fox, 2015
- Göransdotter. 2022.

Week 10 (Mar 12): Broader Perspectives

- Nakamura. 2014.
- Parvin. 2018.
- Irani et al, 2010.
- Bennett, Rosner, 2019

Mar 19 - Spring Break No Class

Week 11 (Mar 26): HCI Overview and History

- Rogers. 2012. Excerpts
- Mark Weiser. 1991.
- Harrison, Tatar, Sengers, 2007.

Week 12 (Apr 2): Critiques in HCI

- Agre 1997a
- Agre 1997b , Excerpts
- Sengers et al 2005
- Bardzell & Bardzell, 2013
- Bardzell 2010

Week 13 (Apr 9): Online Communities, , Online worlds

- Turkle. 1997. Excerpts
- Hine, 2000
- Boyd, 2010
- Boellstorff, 2016

Week 14 (Apr 16): Data and AI

- Weizenbaum. 1966.
- Loukissas. 2019. Excerpts
- Suchman. 2023.
- Leahu. 2016.

ChatGPT/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 similar 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 for you to show me how well you're meeting the course objectives (of being able to analyze, critically think, or apply new skills). And the assignments provide an opportunity to evaluate how well you are meeting those course objectives, so that I can give you feedback to improve, and so I can adjust my teaching as we go along. Using automated tools to do most of the assignment for you break that feedback loop – instead of these assignments being a communication mechanism between us, they just become more busy work that doesn't mean anything (which none of us should want!)

ChatGPT and 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 can be useful for certain types of tasks, or as resources to help in writing. Therefore, **every assignment must include a ChatGPT & AI Use statement at the end** (approximately 100 words) describing if and how you used ChatGPT as part of the assignment. If you did use it, you should include a couple sentences specifying what you did, reflecting on what you think worked well and what worked less well, as well as any strategies you tried in your prompts.

In general, you will not be penalized for using ChatGPT and AI tools if you disclose how you used it (however, low quality assignments will still receive lower grades). However, writing a false statement about your use of ChatGPT & 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.

Note that some assignments may have specific ChatGPT use/non-use policies that will override this general course policy.

Course Expectations and Guidelines

Due Dates and Late Policy

For late submissions, one half point will be deducted for every late day (0.5 point for up to 24 hours late, 1 point for up to 48 hours, etc), up until half credit.

Academic Integrity

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards and to follow the [Georgia Tech Academic Honor Code](#).

Accommodations

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services at (404)894-2563 or <http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/>, as soon as possible, to make an appointment to

discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

Attendance

Participation in this class is important so that we can explore and understand the readings together. Your attendance is important; however I acknowledge we live in uncertain times. Any absences due to health reasons and personal or family emergencies will be excused. Stay home if you feel sick, to protect yourself and others. Please communicate with me in advance if you will be missing a class.

3 unexcused absences are allowed (you do not need to provide any specific reason – but it may include a job/internship interview, needing to do a presentation for another project, or other activities that conflict with class). However additional unexcused absences will lower the student's overall grade by 1% each time. If you feel that you are falling behind due to an illness, emergency, or other reason, please come see me and we can make a plan for alternate arrangements.

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

At Georgia Tech we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. See <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/22/> for an articulation of some basic expectation that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek.

Statement on Inclusivity and Diversity

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.

Additional 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 college 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>). If you are the victim of sexual misconduct or harassment, resources are listed at: <https://diversity.gatech.edu/equity-compliance/reporting-options/i-want-report-incident>. VOICE Advocates also serve as confidential resources for victim-survivors (speaking to them does not trigger an official reporting process): <https://wellnesscenter.gatech.edu/voice>