

SOAN 161 (Spring 2017)
Designing for Diversity: Anthropology and New Technologies
Leighton 304, Tuesdays & Thursdays 1:15-3:00pm

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Given increasingly fast product cycles of the tech industry, success or failure of a particular technology in the marketplace often depends on user buy-in rather than just the quality of code. At the same time, users for any given technology are increasingly diverse. How do we make products that leverage that diversity? More and more, anthropologists and other social scientists are collaborating with engineers to build more usable technologies for these diverse groups of users. While there are many methods for designing better user experience, this course will focus on how anthropology's ethnographic method can help us design for diversity. Ethnographic research is a qualitative method of person-centered inquiry that uses in-depth observation and interviewing in natural settings to gain insight into what people actually do and believe in their everyday lives.

The first part of class will focus on the theory and practice of ethnography. These weeks will include learning about why the increasingly pervasive nature of technology demands that cultural and social research informs how we engineer and innovate. This part of class will conclude with a proposal for your team's term project. In the second part of class, we will focus on specific forms of diversity, the design problems they raise, and how ethnography can be applied to develop inclusive solutions. The themes for these weeks will be accessibility and universal design, race and the ethics of inclusion, gender and implicit bias, and cultural difference in a global world. During this part of class, students will work on their term project during and outside class in collaborative teams. These projects will use ethnographic research to examine how people actually use technologies and inform prototypes that respond to user needs. This research will be conducted either on the Carleton campus or with our community partner, the Northfield Public Schools. Our learning will be supplemented with visits from Carleton alumni working in user experience or the creation of inclusive technologies and workplaces. We are happy to have you join us in following the intersection of culture, society, technology, and design.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The SOAN Department has identified Student Learning Outcomes for SOAN majors. In this course you will learn three of these outcomes:

- *Formulate appropriate anthropological research questions about socio-cultural phenomena.*
- *Apply anthropological theory to analyze socio-cultural phenomena.*
- *Use your understanding of historical & contemporary socio-cultural phenomena to engage the world.*

CLASS READINGS

The two required books are: Genevieve Bell and Paul Dourish's *Divining a Digital Future* (MIT Press, 2014) and Sam Ladner's *Practical Ethnography* (Routledge, 2014). Find them in the bookstore or online through the library. All other required readings are marked by an asterisk (*) on the class schedule and will be posted to Moodle. Throughout the term, we reserve the right to make changes to the readings. We will email you in advance. The most current version of the syllabus will be available on Moodle. You are expected to complete the assigned readings by class time and come prepared to participate in class discussion. If you are ever confused about what is due or are having trouble with the readings, please do not hesitate to contact us.

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS

Your grade during the term will be assessed through your participation, assignments, and quizzes. More detailed instructions for many of these activities will be posted on Moodle or handed out in class. Unless an assignment is due in class, deadlines are no later than 11:55pm on the due date. These due dates are firm. Please contact me immediately if you have any concerns about these assessments or due dates for any learning or related challenges. In the interest of building an inclusive learning community, we are more than happy to work with you to find adequate accommodations.

Attendance – 10%

Due - Every class meeting

Attendance is mandatory.

Participation – 10%

Due - Every class meeting

Attendance is mandatory. Your participation will be assessed based on your commitment to class discussions. This includes contributing in each class meeting by responding to a question, reading something from your reading response, or in another way. We will provide plenty of opportunities.

Reading responses – 15%

Due – 11:55pm before each class, unless otherwise indicated

For each class, write and post to the forum a response for each of that day's readings. Each response can take the form of either (A) three, 10-second Snaps collected in a Story and uploaded to Moodle or (B) a 150-200 word paragraph responding to a question you pose about the reading. In either case, you should focus on key concepts, arguments, or implications from the readings. *You are entitled to skip one day of reading responses without penalty. Please just inform us at least a day in advance of when you will skip. There will be no readings responses due during week 10.

Zotero collection and weekly informal shares – 10%

Due - Thursdays in class

Zotero is a very useful and simple reference manager that can help you collect sources for your academic writing (including comps) and generate bibliographies. Unlike many other reference managers like Endnote the software is free and open source, meaning that you will be able to continue to get regular updates and support at no cost beyond your time at Carleton. After receiving basic training in Zotero during an in-class workshop early in the term, you will begin to be responsible on a weekly basis for finding, saving and briefly annotating (around 100-150 words) at least ten popular sources related to the topics of the class. These sources must include at least two scholarly, anthropological articles and at least one of each of the following: blog posts, videos, news articles, social media, and podcast episodes. You will share a new source with your classmates in class each Thursday. These will be informal presentations, hence calling them "shares."

Take-home quizzes – 20%

First Quiz (10%): From Thursday, April 20 at 5pm to Friday, April 21 at 5pm

Second Quiz (10%): From Thursday, May 18 at 5pm to Friday, May 19 at 5pm

Instead of in-class pop quizzes, these "take-home quizzes" will give you 24-hours to answer a series of short answers questions directly related to key concepts, arguments, and implications in either the assigned readings or alumni presentations.

Term project – 30%

As part of this assignment, you will need to follow this schedule of deadlines:

- 1. Project Proposal and Task Outline (5%): Due in Class on Tuesday, April 25th**
Bring a hard copy of these documents to class. We will meet with each team individually during to go over your plan. Upload the documents to Moodle at some point on Tuesday.
- 2. Project Presentations (5%): Due in Class on Tuesday, May 30th**
Presentations require a 1-2 page handout, two presentation slides, and full participation of your team. In order for me to print your handouts and organize the slides, upload them to Moodle by 11:55pm on Monday, May 29th. Presentations should follow the guidelines of Ch. 10 of *Practical Ethnography*.
- 3. Individual Project Report (20%): Due on Moodle, Monday, June 5th by 5pm**
Submit your individual project report (6-8 pages) on Moodle. This report will include a table of contents, introduction to the project, background on the design problem, an argument for the suitability of ethnography to this project, the results, and recommendations for next steps. You will need to use a minimum of five academic sources that are based on qualitative inquiry to support your report using the appropriate citation methods. You must include a bibliography. You can include additional images or figures if you wish. In order for your report to be accepted, you must also complete the self and team evaluation form on Moodle no later than the report deadline. Be honest and constructive in your evaluation. Reports should follow the guidelines of Ch. 10 of *Practical Ethnography*.

FORMATTING AND CITATION GUIDELINES

Your Zotero synthesis document, midterm essay, and final paper assignments must be typed, double-spaced, have 1-inch margins on all sides, and use size 12 Times New Roman font. **Please upload these assignments to Moodle as PDFs.** These assignments and your reading response posts should all follow the recommendation of the American Anthropological Association to use the *Chicago Manual of Style* format for all in-text citations, footnotes, and bibliographies. There are plenty of great sites with information on how to best follow this format. We recommend Purdue-OWL, owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/01. You can also consider consulting at the library or buying a copy of Kate Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students or Researchers*. You can also consult the Writing Center for help in citing sources.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to adhere to Carleton's code of academic honesty. Even in the event of participating in team projects, your final work should still reflect your own ideas and other people's ideas should always be credited. If you have any questions regarding this policy please visit <http://apps.carleton.edu/campus/doc/integrity/> or come speak to me. Failure to follow Carleton's expectation will result in a failing grade and formal action with the administration.

OFFICE HOURS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Janell strongly encourages everyone to see her individually at least once during the term in her office hours, Wednesdays from 2:30-4:30pm in Leighton 224. In the second half of class, your group will need to meet with her outside of class time at a time that works for everyone. Regarding email please note that from Monday to Friday, both of us will try to answer emails within a 24-hour period. However, if you email us on the weekend, expect a response no earlier than Sunday evening.

LATE AND MAKE-UP POLICY

Unless you have a legitimate excuse for turning in an assignment late or missing an exam we will either not accept the assignment or deduct points from your grade. Although we are certainly sympathetic to emergencies, you must let us know well before the assignment or exam is due if you need alternative accommodations. If you think you might need alternative accommodations but are not sure, contact us as early as possible in the term and we will help you find the appropriate services to facilitate this.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

If you need any help dealing with the requirement of the course please let us know as soon as possible so we can direct you to the multitude of resources available to you at Carleton. It is important to remember that looking for support and improving skills is something that absolutely all of us should be doing. Four pertinent resources are listed below:

- **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

The Disability Services office (Burton Hall 03) collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. If you have, or think you may have, a disability, please contact Chris Dallager, Director of Disability Services, at 507-222-5250 or cdallager@carleton.edu to arrange a confidential discussion about reasonable accommodations.

- **Gould Library**

Kristin Partlo, the social sciences reference librarian can help you will find anthropological and sociological sources online and in the library, as well as how to use Zotero effectively and collaboratively. Her email is kpartlo@carleton.edu. You can make an appointment with her either by email or by scheduling an appointment online at <http://gouldguides.carleton.edu/kpartlo>

- **IdeaLab**

We will occasionally meet during class in the IdeaLab in the lower level (room 26) of the Weitz Center for Creativity. For access to the IdeaLab outside of class time and more information on what it includes, make an appointment to meet with Celeste. The IdeaLab's software list is available at <http://apps.carleton.edu/idealab/about/software/>.

- **The Writing Center**

Located in 420 4th Libe, the Writing Center has peer-writing consultants who can work with you during any stage of the writing process. Hours and more information can be found on the writing center website, <http://apps.carleton.edu/campus/asc/writingcenter/>. You can reserve specific times for conferences in 420 4th Libe by using their online appointment system. Walk-ins are welcome.

- **Academic Civic Engagement (ACE)**

“ACE” is an approach to education focusing on community-based learning, community-based research, and service learning. ACE learning goals are listed below. If you choose to do your final project with the schools, you will need to fill out a background check. For off-campus projects, make sure that at least one member of your group completes the required training on Sat., Apr. 8th from 1-2:30pm in Leighton 305. Director is Adrienne Falcón, afalcon@carleton.edu.

ACE Learning Goals

- a) Understanding issues in their real world complexity*
- b) Recognizing and honoring different forms of knowledge that may reside in/with community partners*
- c) Awareness of your positionality, or who you are as you seek to do civic engagement efforts (such as gender, race, and/or socioeconomic background)*
- d) Doing – how can you take your course content and do something with it beyond the classroom while learning in the process*
- e) Developing leadership skills*
- f) Nurturing a commitment to life-long civic engagement*

COURSE SCHEDULE

PART I: DESIGN ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE ETHNOGRAPHIC TOOLKIT		
<i>Week 1, Introduction to User Experience</i>		
Tu Mar 28	Janell and Celeste: “Learning from Users: Ethnographic Methods for Technology Design”	N/A
Th Mar 30	“How is Technology Social and Cultural?” - Skype Guest: Arah Bahn, '91, UX Consultant - In-Person Guest: Librarian Kristin Partlo	1. Intro & Ch. 3 of <i>Divining</i> 2. Ch. 1 of <i>Practical Ethnography</i> 3. Reading responses
<i>Week 2, The Ethnographic Method</i>		
Tu Apr 4	“What is Ethnography? What is it Not?” - Skype Guest: Amanda Ruzin, '01, Dir. of UX, HS2 Solutions	1. Ch. 4 of <i>Divining</i> 2. Ch. 2 of <i>Practical</i> & pp. 120-21 3. Reading responses
Th Apr 6	“What is Ethnographic Fieldwork? Notes from the Ethnography of Infrastructure in Morocco”	1. Ch. 5 of <i>Divining</i> 2. Ch. 8 of <i>Practical Ethnography</i> 3. Reading responses
<i>Week 3, The Ethnographic Method</i>		
Tu Apr 11	“Ethnographic Case Studies: Mobility and Privacy”	1. Ch. 6 of <i>Divining</i> 2. Ch. 7 of <i>Divining</i> 3. Reading responses
Th Apr 13	“Ethnographic Case Study: Smart Homes”	1. Ch. 8 of <i>Divining</i> 2. Ch. 9 of <i>Practical Ethnography</i> 3. Reading responses 4. Zotero share
<i>Week 4, Ethnographic Research Design</i>		
Tu Apr 18	“(Ethnographic) Project Management, 101” - Skype Guest: Jacque Harper, '86, Product Owner, Caxy Consultant	1. Ch. 3 of <i>Practical Ethnography</i> 2. Ch. 5 of <i>Practical Ethnography</i> 3. Ch. 7 of <i>Practical Ethnography</i> 4. Reading responses
Th Apr 20	“Ethical Ethnography” - In-Person Guest: Kim Briske, Dir. of Technology Services, Northfield Public Schools TBC	1. Ch. 6 of <i>Practical Ethnography</i> 2. Reading response **Due Friday - Quiz #1

PART II: DIVERSITY AS A DESIGN PROBLEM		
Week 5, Accessibility and Universal Design		
Tu Apr 25		1. [Reading TBD] 2. Reading response 3. Project Proposal & Task Outline
Th Apr 27	- In-Person Guest: Josh Pepper, '97, Product Manager for Cortana, Microsoft	1. [Reading TBD] 2. [Reading TBD] 3. Reading response **Class meets in Olin 004
Week 6, The Ethics of Inclusion		
Tu May 2		1. [Reading TBD] 2. [Reading TBD] 3. Reading responses
Th May 4	- In-Person Guest: Willy Lee, '97, IT Operations Manager, Minnesota Population Center	1. [Reading TBD] 2. Reading response 3. Zotero share
Week 7, Gender and Implicit Bias		
Tu May 9	- Skype Guests: Adam Canady '16 and Michael Taufen '15(Olaf), Software Engineers, Google	1. [Reading TBD] 2. [Reading TBD] 3. Reading responses 4. Take Project Implicit Test
Th May 11		1. [Reading TBD] 2. Reading response 3. Zotero share
Week 8, Cultural Difference in a Global World		
Tu May 16		1. [Reading TBD] 2. [Reading TBD] 3. Reading responses
Th May 18		1. [Reading TBD] 2. Reading response **Due Friday: Quiz #2
Week 9, TBD Student Choice		
Tu May 23		1. [Reading TBD] 2. [Reading TBD] 3. Reading responses
Th May 25		1. [Reading TBD] 2. Reading response 3. Zotero share
Week 10, Designing for Diversity Student Presentations and Report Planning		
Tu May 30		1. Ch. 10 of <i>Practical Ethnography</i> 2. Project Presentations **Due Mon. 5pm: Project Report