SYLLABUS // ANTH 7301C // SPRING 2023

DETAILS

CLASS

Type: Seminar Days: Tuesdays

Time: 3:30-6:20 PM

Room: ELA 220

PROFESSOR

Name: Dr. Angela K. VandenBroek Call me: Angela, Dr. V., or Dr. VandenBroek Pronouns: She/Her/Hers Office Hours: T & R 2:00-3:00 PM or by Appointment Email: akvbroek@txstate.edu COURSE Description This course will begin by exploring the anthropology of design, including the practices, implications, and expansion of design under contemporary capitalism. Students will then use this knowledge to examine the growing field of design anthropology and learn how anthropologists provide actionable insights and research for design work today. Design anthropology is a diverse field that includes both the study of design and the application of anthropology to design. By examining the cultural dimensions of design in professional practice and in social life, anthropologists have challenged taken-for-granted beliefs about what design is, who designs, who is designed for, and how design leads to changing social relations and practices. These insights combined with anthropological methodologies support the growing field of design anthropology in industry where anthropologists provide actionable insights and research to support design work.

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- describe the themes, concepts, and insights from the anthropology of design literature;
- discuss and critically analyze the social implications of design practice from an anthropological perspective;
- articulate how anthropology generates knowledge for design purposes and justify its use; and
- identify, assess, and apply basic anthropological design research methodologies and tactics.

REQUIRED BOOKS Hydraulic City: Water and the Infrastructures of Citizenship in Mumbai Nikhil Anand (2017) Duke University Press.

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Race After Technology: Abolitionist Tools for the New Jim Code Ruha Benjamin (2019) John Wiley & Sons.

Design for Real Life

Eric A. Meyer and Sara Wachter-Boettcher (2016) A Book Apart.

Against Creativity

Oli Mould (2018) Verso Books

Swedish Design: An Ethnography

Keith Murphy (2015) Cornell University Press.

Inventing the Future: Postcapitalism and a World without Work Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams (2015) Verso.

The Innovation Delusion: How Our Obsession with the New Has Disrupted the Work That Matters Most

Lee Vinsel and Andrew L. Russell (2020) Crown.

Made by the Office for Metropolitan Architecture: An Ethnography of Design

Albena Yaneva (2009) 010 Publishers. (PDF Only)

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- Bisschop, Lieselot, Yogi Hendlin, and Jelle Jaspers. 2022. "Designed to Break: Planned Obsolescence as Corporate Environmental Crime." Crime, Law, and Social Change 78 (3): 271–93.

Britcher, Robert N. 1999. The Limits of Software. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Downey, Greg. 2001. "Virtual Webs, Physical Technologies, and Hidden Workers: The Spaces of Labor in Information Internetworks." Technology and Culture 42 (2): 209–35.

Dumit, Joe. 2012. "How I Read." Dumit Blog (blog). September 27, 2012. https://dumit.net/how-i-read/.

Fleck, James. 1994. "Knowing Engineers?: A Response to Forsythe." Social Studies of Science 24 (1): 105–13.

Forsythe, Diana E. 1993. "Engineering Knowledge: The Construction of Knowledge in Artificial Intelligence." Social Studies of Science 23 (3): 445–77.

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Graeber, D. 2001. Toward An Anthropological Theory of Value: The False Coin of Our Own Dreams. Springer.

Hale, Tamara. 2018. "People Are Not Users." Journal of Business Anthropology 7 (2): 163–83.

Hasbrouck, Jay. 2018. Ethnographic Thinking: From Method to Mindset. New York: Routledge.

- Ingold, Tim. 2000. "Building, Dwelling, Living: How Animals and People Make Themselves at Home in the World." In The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling, and Skill, 172–88. London: Routledge.
- . 2007. "Materials Against Materiality." Archaeological Dialogues 14 (1): 1–16.
- Kopytoff, Igor. 1986. "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process." In The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective, edited by Arjun Appadurai, 64–91. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Latour, Bruno, Isabelle Stengers, Anna Tsing, and Nils Bubandt. 2018. "Anthropologists Are Talking – About Capitalism, Ecology, and Apocalypse." Ethnos 83 (3): 587–606.

Lepawsky, Josh, and Chris Mcnabb. 2010. "Mapping International Flows of Electronic Waste." The Canadian Geographer. Geographe Canadian 54 (2): 177–95.

Mantin, Jahan, and Boyuan Gao. 2019. "How to Begin Designing for Diversity." The Creative Independent (blog). September 18, 2019. https://thecreativeindependent.com/guides/how-to-begin-designing-for-diversity/.

Martin, Emily. 1991. "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles." Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 16 (3): 485–501.

Meyer, Eric A., and Sara Wachter-Boettcher. 2016. Design for Real Life. New York: A Book Apart.

Miller, Daniel. 2010. Stuff. Polity.

- Nilsson, J. 2019. "Know Your Customer: Client Captivation and the Epistemics of Market Research." Marketing Theory 19 (2): 149–68.
- O'Donnell, Casey. 2009. "The Everyday Lives of Video Game Developers: Experimentally Understanding Underlying Systems/structures." Transformative Works and Cultures 2.
- Pétursdóttir, Þóra. 2014. "Things Out of Hand: The Aesthetics of Abandonment." In Ruin Memories: Materialities, Aesthetics, and the Archaeology of the Recent Past, edited by Bjørnar Olsen and Þóra Pétursdóttir, 335–64. London: Routledge.

Pink, Sarah, and John Postill. 2019. "Imagining Mundane Futures." Anthropology in Action 26 (2): 31–41.

Rosenberger, Robert. 2020. "On Hostile Design: Theoretical and Empirical Prospects." Urban Studies 57 (4): 883– 93.

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- "User Research Basics." 2013. Usability.gov. Department of Health and Human Services. October 8, 2013. https://www.usability.gov/what-and-why/user-research.html.
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Welch, Peter. 2014. "Programming Sucks." Still Drinking. April 27, 2014. http://www.stilldrinking.org/programming-sucks.

1	1/17			
	1/17	Welcome to Design + Anthropology		Syllabus Dumit 2012
2	1/24	Stuff, Things & Commodities	Prep & Attend	Miller 2010 Ingold 2007 Kopytoff 1986 Graeber 2001
3	1/31	Making, Building, Dwelling	Prep & Attend	Ingold 2000 Yaneva 2009 Alexander 1979
4	2/7	Living with Designs	Assess + Prep & Attend	Pink & Postill 2019 Rosenberger 2020 Weismantel 2013 Suchman 1998
5	2/14	Design Politics	Prep & Attend	Murphy 2015
6	2/21	Design Knowledge	Prep & Attend	Martin 1991 Forsythe 1993 Fleck 1994 (Skim Only) Forsythe 1994 Nilsson 2019
7	2/28	Neoliberal Designs	Prep & Attend	Mould 2018
8	3/7	Design Wastes & Ruins	Prep & Attend	Pétursdóttir 2014 Bisschop et al. 2022 Lepawsky & Mcnabb 2010 Latour et al. 2018
9	3/14	No Class: Spring Break		
10	3/21	Subjects of Design, Pt I	Assess + Prep & Attend	Anand 2017
11	3/28	Subjects of Design, Pt II	Prep & Attend	Star 1999 Schnitzler 2008 Tufekci 2014 Hale 2018
12	4/4	Design Harms	Prep & Attend	Benjamin 2019
13	4/11	Designer Struggles	Prep & Attend	Downey 2001 Welch 2014 Britcher 1999 O'Donnell 2009 Seaver 2019
14	4/18	Design Solutions & Delusions	Prep & Attend	Vinsel & Russell 2020
15	4/25	Design Anthropologies	Prep & Attend	Usability.gov Mantin & Gao 2019 Meyer & Wachter-Boettcher 2016 Hasbrouck 2018
16	5/2	Design Futures	Assess + Prep & Attend	Srnicek & Williams 2015

GRADE BREAKDOWN

Requirement	Count	Points Each	Total Points	% of Grade
Prep & Attend	14	0	0	0%
Assess	3	300	900	60%
Design	1	600	600	40%
Total	18	—	1500	100%

COURSE REQUIREMENTS DETAILS

Prep & AttendFor each class period, students are required to prepare for and attend class. Each prep
assignment includes readings, reflections, and design show & tell to help the student
prepare for class discussions and activities. While no grade or points will be awarded, peer
and professor feedback will be provided.

Assess

Periodically throughout the semester, each student will turn in an assessment of their learning and effort up to that point. Students should use the form provided on Canvas to submit their assessments. Students will receive their self-assessed grade unless their self-assessment is dishonest (e.g., they give themselves an A but missed most of the class periods and provided no evidence of effort **or** they give themselves a C because they lack confidence but had perfect attendance and demonstrated effort in learning).

Design

The last hour of each class session will be dedicated to a design workshop. Throughout the semester, the students will develop and complete a project on design and anthropology. The topic and medium will be determined in collaboration with the professor. Students will be graded based on individual participation and the quality of the final submission. The final submission should be of publishable/presentable quality and represent a semester's worth of effort at a graduate level.

ASSESSMENT

Prep & Attend + Assess

Student will be evaluated based on their overall learning, participation, and effort. Each class period, students will receive peer and faculty feedback on their work, contributions, and collaborative behavior as part of the Prep & Attend assignment. This feedback will help the student understand how they are doing and progressing. At the end of each unit, students will conduct a guided self-assessment and give themselves a grade. I will review their assessment for honesty and accuracy and either award the grade or adjust if needed. The guided self-assessment will include written reflections as well as grading rubrics.

Rubrics, Letters, & Points

Rubrics will use letter grades for each assessment criteria. These grades are equal to a percentage of the points for that assessment. This means that students will receive points using the following categorical scale (rather than a sliding scale). I find that categorical scales for qualitative assessments are better for me to assess student work fairly—as the difference between an A and a B can be meaningfully described while the difference between an 84 and an 83 is largely subjective and prone to bias.

Letter Grades	А	В	С	D	F (Credit)	F (No Credit)
% of Points	100%	85%	75%	65%	55%	0%

This scale includes two failing grades. An F with credit acknowledges that the student tried and put in a minimal amount of effort. An F without credit is used for missed assignments or criteria, issues of academic honesty, and for extreme cases of poor quality. This means that a student that attempts an assignment and puts in minimal effort will receive at least 55% of the assignment's points. This is still failing, but it has a significantly lower impact on the student's overall grade.

Final grades will be calculated by totaling the student's earned points and comparing to this scale.

Letter Grades	А	В	С	D	F
% of Points	100 %	< 90.0 %	< 80.0 %	< 70.0 %	< 60.0 %
	to 90.0%	to 80.0%	to 70.0%	to 60.0%	to 0%
Total Points	1000-900	899-800	799-700	699-600	599-0

TURNING IN ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments should be turned in via Canvas. As a last resort, if you are experiencing a technical issue with Canvas, you may submit the assignment via email to akvbroek@txstate.edu from your TXST email account with the subject line "COURSE NAME, ASSIGNMENT NAME."

COMMUNICATION

Name

Please call me Angela, Dr. VandenBroek or Dr. V. Please never call me Miss, Ms., or Mrs. VandenBroek as I do not wish to use honorifics focused on my gender and marriage status. I use she/her/hers pronouns.

Sometimes, students mistake using my first name as a sign of a personal (non-professional) relationship. While I think I am friendly and tend to have a fairly casual communication style with students, it is important to me that I have a professional relationship with my students, as I do hold power over you as a necessity of the program and, as an employee of the university, I am bound by policies and laws that restrict our relationship. These kinds of restrictions and responsibilities make it dangerous for you to treat me as a friend rather than a colleague. All that said, I am not a big fan of strict hierarchical thinking in academics—so call me Angela if you are comfortable doing so. Just always remember that we have a professional mentor-mentee relationship and so you are talking to Angela, the professor and your colleague, not Angela, the private person.

Communicating

The best way to reach me is by email or by coming to office hours. Students should contact me as soon as possible, if they are struggling, have questions, or need assistance. You are also encouraged to come talk about your research interests, career plans, graduate school, or professionalization. I am a first-gen academic and so I know how difficult it is to navigate academics and a career without the knowledge others had. Please do not hesitate to reach out.

Hours

I am available in my office (ELA 271A) on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:00-3:00 PM.

I am generally reachable by email at any time. However, I receive a large volume of emails and requests. So, I may not respond immediately to your email, especially at night and on weekends. Please note any deadlines or urgent circumstances in the email to help me triage your request and respond appropriately.

MANDATORY REPORTING

As a faculty member, I am legally obligated to report all incidents of sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, and dating violence students tell me about (including in assignments, Canvas communications, classroom discussions, etc.) to the Office of Equal Opportunity and Title IX. If you would like to talk confidentially to someone who is not a mandatory reporter, please contact the Student Health Center, University Counseling, or the Attorney for Students.

RESTRICTIONS ON USE OF COURSE NOTES & MATERIALS

My lectures are protected by copyright law. They are my own original expression, and I record them at the same time that I deliver them in order to bring them under the protection of the U.S. copyright laws. Although you are authorized to take notes in class and create a derivative work from my lectures, the authorization extends only to recordings, notes, and other captures for your own personal use, to share with classmates in your section of this course, and no other. You are not authorized to provide class recordings, photographs, materials, or notes to outside parties, or to make any commercial use of them without my express prior permission.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is mandatory for every class period. However, I understand that life is not simple and strict rules can create barriers for students unnecessarily. Thus, you are responsible for making good decisions about your attendance and to communicate with me in a timely and professional manner about your absences. Additionally, you are responsible for grading yourself fairly and honestly when absences occur.

In a seminar style class, like this one, your learning stems from a combination of reading, individual thinking, and collaborative discussions and activities. This latter category cannot be simply reproduced or summarized if you miss class—as it is the act of discussing and engaging that generates learning not merely the content of what is said. So, if you must miss class, you are encouraged to engage in alternative learning methods, such as discussing with peers or friends, writing an essay synthesizing the texts, conducting additional research, or some other such activity. You should document these efforts for your Assess assignments to offset your attendance assessment.

Additionally, if you miss class, you will miss the design workshop portion of the class for the class project. You should communicate with your peers to determine what you missed and what you will need to contribute.

Casually skipping class is not recommended. Due to technological limitations and the nature of the course, video calls will not be available to attend in-person class sessions under any circumstances.

ACCESSIBILITY

I strive to create an inclusive and accessible learning environment. However, I may not always be aware of specific student's needs. If you require an accommodation to be successful and participate in the course, please privately contact me as soon as possible. I will ask you to register with the university's office of disability services so that we can access the full range of resources needed to best support your learning. (More information: https://www.ods.txstate.edu/)

"It is the University's goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability or pregnancy, contact the Office of Disability Services as soon as possible at 512.245.3451 to establish reasonable accommodations. Please be aware that the accessible table and chairs in this room should remain available for students who find that standard classroom seating is not usable."

Note About Zoom

After classes were moved online during the pandemic, many students assumed that faculty's ability to move classes online meant that hybrid class accommodations were both easy to implement and a good accessibility accommodation. This is not true for many classes, including this one. Fully online classes and fully in-person classes are fundamentally different from a hybrid class where some students are in-person, and some are on Zoom. Hybrid classes require special equipment that we do not have, including classroom microphones, accurate captioning, and multiple projection systems. Without this equipment, it is not possible to conduct activities or discussions that are accessible to all students. Thus, I will not accommodate requests for Zoom attendance to in-person class. Zoom will only be used if we experience an extreme circumstance that requires the entire class to be moved online for a period of time.

DEADLINES

You are expected to turn in all assignments by the deadline in the syllabus. That said, life is not simple and strict deadlines can create barriers for students unnecessarily. So, you will be responsible for making good choices about your workload and deadlines. I will not penalize you for late work.

The deadlines are intended to keep you on track throughout the semester and ensure that you do not fall irretrievably behind. Specifically, Prep & Attend assignments are tied to a specific class period. So, failing to prepare for class means that your experience in class will be diminished. So, although they are ungraded, these are the most important deadlines in the class.

In addition to the work you do for each deadline, I have work to do as well, including administrating grades and forms as well as providing individualized feedback. This is very labor intensive for me and when you fail to meet deadlines, it makes my work substantially more difficult.

I will always process assignments that are turned in by the deadline. For all late work, I will do my best to process them as quickly as possible. However, because the time I reserved to grade your work has passed, I cannot guarantee that the feedback will be as high quality or as timely, as it will need to be done between my other duties and responsibilities. Additionally, I cannot guarantee that late assignments submitted after the thirteenth week of class will be processed/graded, as I have a strict, unbreakable deadline to submit final grades to the university. If many students turn in late assignments after the thirteenth week, I may not have enough time to get through them all before my hard deadline. I will grade late assignments in the order they were received.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic honesty policies often focus on policing student work for violations. This creates an unproductive adversarial relationship between faculty and students. Therefore, I will not use services like TurnItIn to police your honesty. Rather, throughout the semester, we will build an educational relationship through which I will become familiar with your work. Cheating, plagiarizing, and other honesty violations in this environment thus become obvious without the need for surveillance and their discovery stems from an interest in your success and in the positive learning environment of the class.

Academic dishonesty is a breach of the positive learning environment. These breaches give students unfair advantages that create inequalities, fail to acknowledge the work and contributions of others, and impede student learning. Thus, such breaches of academic honesty will result in a mandatory meeting with me and a grade of F on the assignment or in the class dependent on severity. Students that fail to attend the meeting or who dispute my claim will have their case escalated to the university honor board.

Note about ChatGPT and Other AI Tools

Students are welcome to experiment with artificial intelligence tools in their work for this class. However, all text generated with AI, even if edited, should include a statement in a footnote that includes: (1) what service was used and what prompt(s); (2) how you used the generated text (e.g., whole paper but thoroughly revised; reorganizing existing text for clarity; etc.); (3) why you used the AI for this text (e.g., inspiration, summarizing, editing, etc.). Shorter passages should be encased in quotation marks or block quotes and cited. AI writing tools can be really helpful. But, to maintain the integrity of our work the use of such tools must be transparent, and we must never claim sole authorship of text we did not write. Further beware the trap of "sounding good." AI often sounds like high quality writing. However, it lacks depth of knowledge and reasoning and so, while sounding good, it is generally quite shallow and often inaccurate. It is up to you to add depth, analysis, and thoughtfulness.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Every student has the right to a learning environment where you feel safe and welcome. This means statements and actions that promote—knowingly or unknowingly—discrimination or judgement based on race, sex, gender, age, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, religion, physical appearance, physical or mental ability, or other aspect of one's identity will not be tolerated. If you feel unsafe or unwelcome in the classroom, please approach me in confidence outside of class. If you are not comfortable speaking to me, please contact the university ombudsman for confidential consultation.

While every student has the right to feel safe and welcome, this does not mean that you will always feel comfortable. We will be discussing topics, such as politics, gender, and racism, that may be difficult for you or for your classmates. In order to discuss these issues while maintaining a safe and welcoming learning environment, we all must understand that we are all learning—including me—and in good faith engage in respectful conversation free from attacks, accusations, and microaggressions. This means classroom discussions are for listening, learning, curiosity, and growth; they are not for anger, adversarialism, debate, or shame. Every student has the right to ask questions, share their experiences, and to say things that might be wrong. Likewise, every student is responsible for learning from their mistakes, maintaining empathy for others' experiences, and learning to accept reasonable feedback and criticism as an opportunity to learn rather than as a failure or attack.

PARTICIPATING IN DISCUSSIONS

Academic discussions are a fraught practice—often associated with bombastic and meandering speeches, unproductive performances of knowledge, and deep anxieties of inadequacies and imposter syndrome. These bad discussion habits do not lead to understanding, exchange of ideas, or productive outcomes. Rather, they tend only to lift up the most confident voices, marginalize already marginalized voices, and generate egos rather than conversation. In this course, we will attend to our discussion practice as a methodology and take seriously the impacts of how our participation affects each other and the productiveness of the conversation. To that end we will use the following as a guide to improve our discussion practices.

(1) How we will read. Following Dumit (2012) we will adopt a reading practice that is close, constructive, positive, generous, archaeological, methodological, and ethical. In short, we will not indulge in easy highly critical discussions aimed only to demonstrate our cleverness and superiority over the authors we read. Rather, we will read for what coherent arguments are made, what they can teach us, how they fit within larger conversations within anthropology and design, and how they fit within our own understandings. That doesn't mean we cannot disagree with a text, only that we will treat each other and the authors we read as collaborators in the anthropological project not as adversaries to our own careers.

(2) How we will prepare. We will all arrive prepared to discuss the assigned readings and to share our Show & Tell designs every discussion period. You are not expected to have lavished over every word of every text. However, you should be able to discuss the main arguments of the text, how the arguments were supported, and have considered how they may be deployed.

(3) How we will participate. Participation is not just speaking, but also active listening, engaging your peers in thoughtful discussion, and making room for all students to contribute. We will begin with the assumption that we all have valid and insightful perspectives on anthropology and that lack of knowledge of a particular theory or literature is not invalidating of that person's contribution to the conversation. When we speak in discussion it will be "to" each other not "at" each other. We will pose questions, articulate ideas for discussion, share relevant stories and knowledge, and provide constructive and thoughtful responses to each other.

Resource	Address
Professionalization in Anthropology	https://matthewwolfmeyer.com/professionalization-material/
Online Chicago Manual of Style	http://libproxy.txstate.edu/login?url=http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org
Purdue Writing Lab Logical Fallacies Reference	https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/ logic_in_argumentative_writing/fallacies.html
UNC Writing Center Clichés Guide	https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/cliches/
Writing Center	https://www.writingcenter.txstate.edu/
Student Learning Assistance Center	https://www.txstate.edu/slac/
Library Research Tutorials	https://www.library.txstate.edu/research/diy-research.html
Library Research Consultation	https://txstate.libinsight.com/consultation/
Anthropology Librarian & Guides	https://guides.library.txstate.edu/prf.php?account_id=32671
University Counseling Center	https://www.counseling.txstate.edu/
Office of Disability Services	https://www.ods.txstate.edu/
Student Health Center	https://www.healthcenter.txstate.edu/
University Ombudsman	https://www.dos.txstate.edu/services/Ombuds-Services.html
University Honor Board	https://www.txstate.edu/honorcodecouncil/Student-Resources.html