

# Syllabus for Design Anthropology

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ANTH 4701/8110 University of North Texas  
Dr. Susan Squires  
Fall 2017 ♣

## Course Description

In recent years, ethnography has become popular with designers of products and technologies as a way of learning about the experience of the users. This research approach has been applied to such diverse problems as how to design:

- office environments that encourage groupwork and collaboration
- websites that fit the “mental model” and usage patterns of their target audiences
- museum exhibits that maximize the engagement between visitors and displays

“Design anthropology” is a rapidly growing field of employment for those who wish to work in applied anthropology. In this course, students learn the fundamentals of the field. By collaborating on an applied project, they gain practice in applied research methods and video ethnography. They learn to engage in collaborative analysis, and they work with customers to translate their research into practical applications. In addition to the hands-on experience, students conduct readings on topics relevant to the project and to design anthropology in general.

## Office Hours and Communication with Instructor

My office is on the third floor at 308 Chilton Hall. My office hours are Wednesday 2-4. If local, just stop in. I would also be happy to talk at other times on Skype: Susan.Squires. You can make an appointment by emailing me at [susan.squires@unt.edu](mailto:susan.squires@unt.edu) or calling me at 970-369-5404.

## Online Course Resources

The syllabus and all other course materials will be made available through Blackboard Learn online course site. Please note that the email used to send messages on Blackboard Learn is your UNT email. If you prefer to use a personal email, you **must** forward your UNT messages to that personal account!

## Project Overview

This semester we will again have a class project with a well-known corporation who will sponsor our design research. Detailed information will be provided at a later date.

**Client Meetings:** We will have two to three client meetings during the semester.

1. An initial meeting will give us the opportunity to meet our client, and allow the client to provide the project background. The first meeting with our client will be through the use of video conferencing.
2. A meeting at the end of November will be held to check in and make sure we're on the right track, and get feedback.
3. The final client presentation via videoconferencing will be given during the last class of this course.

### Summary of Research Process:

1. **Data Collection.** Students will work in teams of 2-4 using a shared platform of your choice for collaborating.
  - Each team will recruit one to two research participants.
  - Each team will conduct an in-depth interview with a consumer. The interviews will be recorded.
  - Each team will obtain visual documentation during face-to-face interviews.
  - After the interviews, the team will write careful field notes or transcribe the interview. They will place their field notes/transcriptions, the photos, and video clips from the interviews on Blackboard.
2. **Data Analysis.** Much of the analysis process will be done in teams, as a collective group. Data analysis will follow a trajectory of identifying instances, patterns, and models, and then using the models to develop design recommendations.
3. **Presentation.** Students will develop a list of themes/topics to cover in the client presentations. Each team will write a section of the presentation focused on one theme/topic. They will analyze everyone's field notes and photos/video clips to identify

overall patterns regarding the topic of their section. Teams will also present the information verbally during the final client presentation, with a couple of PowerPoint slides.

## **Course Requirements**

### **1. Teamwork and participation (20%).**

One of the key skills of a practitioner in applied anthropology is the ability to work well as part of a team. In this class, you will be evaluated on your teamwork skills, including:

- Active and thoughtful participation in class discussions, both about class readings and about the class project
- Staying focused on the client's needs
- Good communication and collaboration with your fieldwork partners
- Equal distribution of work between you and your fieldwork partners
- Carrying out your responsibilities in a timely manner
- Good communication with the team leader/professor
- Not implementing sudden inspirations that deviate from the client-approved plan without discussing them and getting agreement from the rest of class, the professor, and the client

Obviously, if you cannot contribute to discussions, your grade will go down. Students are responsible for all materials and announcements presented on Blackboard.

Failure to stay current on all class material and assignments will be cause for dismissal from class.

### **2. Two essay quizzes (15% x 2).**

These quizzes will test you on the readings. Instructions for each will be provided two weeks before they are due.

### **3. Class project (50%).**

The class project consists of three major graded activities. You will receive a grade when you have completed each activity, each of which encompasses several items. Together these will add up to 50% of your course grade.

In week 7, each team will sign up for a day to present their fieldwork findings. These dates will become your deadlines.

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Items Graded</i>	<i>% of Grade</i>
<b>1. Interviews</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Field Notes Uploaded to Website</li><li>• Photos Uploaded to Website</li><li>• Interview Video Clips Uploaded to Website</li><li>• Present Fieldwork Data in Class</li></ul>	25
<b>2. Report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Theme Development</li><li>• Slides for Client Presentation</li><li>• Verbal Presentation (if relevant)</li></ul>	25

## Required Texts

The required set of articles is available in the Assignment folder on the Design Anthropology Home page.

The reading assignments for each week are summarized in the course schedule, below, and article references are provided in detail at the end of the syllabus. Readings are **not** optional. Students will be thoroughly tested on them.

## Plagiarism Policy

The department of anthropology does not tolerate plagiarism, cheating, or helping others to cheat. Students suspected of any of these will be provided the opportunity for a hearing; a guilty finding will merit an automatic “F” in the course. In addition, I reserve the right to pursue further disciplinary action within the UNT legal system, which may result in dismissal from the university. Plagiarism is defined as misrepresenting the work of others (whether published or not) as your own. It may be inadvertent or intentional. Any facts, statistics, quotations, or paraphrasing of any information that is not common knowledge, should be cited. For more information on paper writing, including how to avoid plagiarism, and how to use citations, see <http://www.unt.edu/anthropology/writing.htm>. For

information on the University's policies regarding academic integrity and dishonesty, see the UNT Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities, <http://www.unt.edu/csrr/>.

## **Non-Discrimination Policy**

It is the policy of the University of North Texas not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability (where reasonable accommodations can be made), disabled veteran status or veteran of the Vietnam era status in its educational programs, activities, admissions or employment policies. In addition to complying with federal and state equal opportunity laws and regulations, the university through its diversity policy declares harassment based on individual differences (including sexual orientation) inconsistent with its mission and education goals. Direct questions and concerns to the Equal Opportunity Office, 940 565 2456, or the Dean of Students, 940 565 2648. TDD access is available through Relay Texas, 800 735 2989.

Anthropology does not discriminate on the basis of an individual's disability as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. The program provides academic adjustments and aid to individuals with disabilities in its programs and activities. If you have a disability, you are strongly advised to contact the Office of Disability Accommodations (UU 318A) or by telephone at 940 565 4323. **It is the responsibility of the student to make the necessary arrangements with the instructors.**

## **Student Behavior in the Classroom and in Online Discussion:**

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom/discussion and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at [www.unt.edu/csrr](http://www.unt.edu/csrr)

## Course Schedule

	<b>Topics and Assignments</b>	<b>Weekly Readings</b>	<b>Activities</b>
<b>WEEK 1</b> <b>Aug 28</b>	Introductions and Course Objectives		Create and Upload your Bio
<b>WEEK 2</b> <b>Sept 4</b>	Overview of Design Anthropology	Squires 2002 Fluehr-Lobban 1994	Completion Online Tutorial for IRB Certificate if necessary
<b>WEEK 3</b> <b>Sept 11</b>	Theory on Material Culture: The Partnership of Design and Anthropology	Sacher 2002 Byrnes & Sands 2002	Choose Team Partners
<b>WEEK 4</b> <b>Sept 18</b>	Psychology & HCI in Design Research	Norman 1988 Sanders 2002 Frascara 2002	
<b>Week 5</b> <b>Sept 25</b>	Anthropology & Ethnography in Design Research	Sunderland and Denny 2003 Blomberg et al. 1993	
<b>Week 6</b> <b>Oct 2</b>	Working in Multidisciplinary Teams	Wasson 2002 Bailey et al 2011	
<b>Week 7</b> <b>Oct 9</b>	Big Questions	Overview of Client Project  Engeström and Escalante 1996	
<b>Week 8</b> <b>Oct 16</b>	Interviewing and Observation	Metcalf 2009 LeCompte 1999	Design Interview Guide

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**Receive Quiz 1 Instructions**

<b>Week 9</b> <b>Oct 23</b>	Interview Guide (continued)  <b>Quiz 1 Due Wednesday Oct 25</b>		Recruit Interviewees  Write up interviews notes or transcribe
<b>Week 10</b> <b>Oct 30</b>	Interviews		Interview Write up interviews notes or transcribe
<b>Week 11</b> <b>Nov 6</b>	Analysis  <b>Receive Quiz 2 Instructions</b>	Sunderland and Denny 2007  Woodruff and Aoki 2004	Team Field Work Report Out Class Analyzes Data
<b>Week 12</b> <b>Nov 8</b>	Finding Themes in Analysis	Ryan and Bernard 2003	Team Field Work Report Out Class Analyzes Data
<b>Week 13</b> <b>Nov 13</b>	Finding Themes in Analysis <b>Quiz 2 Due</b>	N/A	Class Analyzes Data Teams Develop Themes and Post
<b>Nov 20</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Week: Flexible schedule</b>		All teams work together to develop one set of themes. Each team choose themes to present
<b>Week 14</b> <b>Nov 27</b>	Team Themes  Draft PPT Slides Due December 4	N/A	Each team prepares Client Presentation section for the themes they have chosen
<b>Week 15</b> <b>Dec 4</b>	Revisions PPT Slides Presentation date tbd		Finalize Presentation Present to Client

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## Readings

<p><b>WEEK 2</b></p>	<p>Squires, Susan. 2002. <b>Doing the Work. In Creating breakthrough ideas: the collaboration of anthropologists and designers in the product development industry</b>, ed. Susan Squires and Bryan Byrne. Westport: Bergin &amp; Garvey, 103-124.</p> <p>Fluehr-Lobban, Carolyn. 1994. <b>Informed Consent in Anthropological Research: We are not exempt. Human Organization</b>, 53 (1): 1-10.</p>
<p><b>WEEK 3</b></p>	<p>Byrnes, Bryan and Edward Sands. 2002. In <i>Creating breakthrough ideas: the collaboration of anthropologists and designers in the product development industry</i>, ed. Susan Squires and Bryan Byrne. Westport: Bergin &amp; Garvey, 47-69</p> <p>Sacher, Heiko. 2002. In <i>Creating breakthrough ideas: the collaboration of anthropologists and designers in the product development industry</i>, ed. Susan Squires and Bryan Byrne. Westport: Bergin &amp; Garvey, 175-195.</p>
<p><b>WEEK 4</b></p>	<p>Norman, Donald. 1988. <i>The psychopathology of everyday things</i>. In <i>The design of everyday things</i>. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1-33.</p> <p>Sanders, Liz. 2002. <i>From user-centered to participatory design approaches</i>. In <i>Design and the social sciences: making connections</i>, ed. Jorge Frascara. London: Taylor and Francis, 1-8.</p> <p>Frascara, Jorge. 2002. <i>People centered design: complexities and uncertainties</i>. In <i>Design and the social sciences: making connections</i>, ed. Jorge Frascara. London: Taylor and Francis, 33-39.</p>
<p><b>WEEK 5</b></p>	<p>Blomberg, Jeanette, Jean Giacomi, Andrea Mosher and Pat Swenton-Wall. 1993. <i>Ethnographic field methods and their relation to design</i>. In <i>Participatory design: principles and practices</i>, ed. Douglas Schuler and Aki Namioka. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 123-155.</p> <p>Sunderland, Patricia L. and Rita M. Denny. 2003. <i>Psychology vs. anthropology: where is culture in marketplace ethnography?</i> In <i>Advertising cultures</i>, ed. Timothy deWaal Malefyt and Brian Moeran. Oxford: Berg, 187-202.</p>
<p><b>WEEK 6</b></p>	<p>Bailey, Kathy, Julie Doyle, Susan Squires, Cliodhna Ni Scanail, Chie Wei Fan, Clodagh Cunningham, Ben Dromey. 2011 <i>Multidisciplinary Practice For Creating Successful Assisted Living Technologies For Older Adults In Ireland</i>.</p> <p>Wasson, Christina. 2002. <i>Collaborative work: integrating the roles of ethnographers and designers</i>. In <i>Creating breakthrough ideas: the collaboration of anthropologists and designers in the product development industry</i>, ed. Susan Squires and Bryan Byrne. Westport: Bergin &amp; Garvey, 71-90.</p>



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**WEEK 7** Readings about Client

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**WEEK 8** Metcalf, Crysta. 2009. Interviewing methodology. Unpublished manuscript.  
LeCompte, Margaret Diane. 1999. Chapter 6: In-depth, open-ended interviewing. In *Essential ethnographic methods: observations, interviews, and questionnaires (Ethnographer's Toolkit V.2)*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 121-148.

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**WEEK 11** Woodruff, Allison and Paul M. Aoki. 2004. Conversation analysis and the user experience. *Digital Creativity* 15(4):232-238.  
<https://libproxy.library.unt.edu:9443/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=16258197&site=ehost-live&scope=site>  
Sunderland, Patricia L. and Rita M. Denny. 2007. Chapter 2: What does cultural analysis mean? In *Doing anthropology in consumer research*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 43-56.

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**Week 12** Ryan, Gery W. and H. Russell Bernard. 2003. Techniques to identify themes. *Field Methods* 15(1):85-109.  
<http://fmx.sagepub.com/content/15/1/85.full.pdf+html>

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