Syllabus
Design Anthropology

ANTH 4110/5110 | Dr. Christina Wasson | University of North Texas
Spring 2021 | W 6-8:50pm | Meet via Zoom

Course Description

"Design anthropology" is a significant field of employment for those who wish to work in applied anthropology as well as design. 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. Since students come from a mix of anthropology, design, and other backgrounds, they also learn to engage in transdisciplinary collaboration. Furthermore, they gain experience in working with clients to translate research into practical applications. Methodology and practice are situated in theoretical contexts through readings and seminar discussion.

In spring 2021, the class project will be an investigation of communication practices while gaming. Our client is Diana Hubbard, Group Design Manager for Blizzard Entertainment. The research question is:

> Do console (PlayStation/Xbox/Switch) gamers utilize devices outside of their console (mobile phones/tablets/computers) to communicate with friends/teams while playing together, and if so, what can we learn about these communication practices?

Please see the handout "Project Instructions" for more information.

Course Prerequisites

None

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:
- Demonstrate a nuanced understanding of theory and practice in design anthropology
- Conduct ethnographic fieldwork and video ethnography for design anthropological research
- Conceptualize and practice the whole trajectory of an applied research project, moving from "instances" to "patterns" to "models" to "design implications"
- Successfully engage in collaboration on a transdisciplinary team, and orient their research activities to meet client needs

Instructor Contact Information

Name: Christina Wasson
Office Location: Sycamore 123

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 3-5pm or by appointment
Email: christina.wasson@unt.edu
Communication Expectations: You are welcome to communicate with me at any time via phone or email. I will normally respond within 24 hours. I post grades within a week of assignment submission.

Online Course Resources

Zoom
We will use Zoom for our class meetings. The URL is provided inside Canvas.

Email List
For communications outside of class meeting time, we will use an email list. The address is design-anth@unt.edu. Any student can send a message to this address, and it will go out to all class members. Make sure you get the messages, because important conversations may take place on email. I'm not a fan of the messaging function in Canvas so we won't use it.

Canvas
Basic course materials are stored on Canvas, including the syllabus, project instructions, assignments, and links to readings.

Google Drive
We will use a Google Drive to store materials from the class project. It is called "UNT Design Anth 2021 Wasson." You will need to send me your gmail so I can share it with you.

We will store all field notes and video recordings on the Google Drive. Keep in mind that ethnographic data are CONFIDENTIAL. Do not show them to anyone! Maintaining confidentiality is a basic principle of ethics in anthropology. Our agreement with the UNT IRB is that the data will only be shared among students, myself, and client Diana Hubbard (who is an anthropologist).

Dedoose
In the second half of the class, we will use Dedoose to facilitate analysis of the field notes. Dedoose is an online qualitative data analysis program. You will be required to obtain a Dedoose account. Student accounts are $10.95 per month with a valid student ID; see https://www.dedoose.com/home/pricing. The first month is free if you are new to Dedoose.

Required Texts
The reading assignments for each week are identified in the course schedule, below, and full article references are provided at the end of the syllabus. Readings are **not** optional. Students will be thoroughly tested on them. Links to readings are provided in Canvas.

Course Requirements

1. Teamwork and participation (20% / 200 points).
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 research team
- Equal distribution of work among members of your research team
- Carrying out your responsibilities in a timely manner
- Good communication with the project leader/professor

Obviously, if you are absent you cannot contribute to discussions, so a high level of attendance is required for a good grade. If you have more than one unexcused absence, your grade will go down. If you miss the first class, you may be dismissed from class. If you miss two out of the first three classes, you may be dismissed from class.

Students are responsible for all materials and announcements presented in class, whether or not they were there. If you miss a day, you should first obtain class notes from a classmate. If you still have questions after that, you are welcome to contact me. Failure to stay current on all class material and assignments, regardless of attendance, will be cause for dismissal from class.

2. Two take-home essay quizzes (15% / 150 points x 2).
These quizzes will test you on the readings. Instructions for each will be handed out two weeks before they are due.

3. Class project (50% / 500 points).
The class project consists of a series of activities. Together these will add up to 50% of your course grade. For most of the activities, you will turn in several items. You will receive a grade when you have turned in all items for that activity.

Activity	Items Graded	Due Date	% of Grade
1. CITI Training	CITI Training Certificate for "Social & Behavioral Research Investigators"	Jan 20	N/A (gateway assignment)
2. Fieldwork (team grade)	• All field notes uploaded to Google Drive • All video recordings uploaded to Google Drive • Presentation to class	Date of team presentation (see course schedule below)	25% / 250 points

3. Analysis and Deliverables (may be team grade)	• Report chapter (assessed with respect to quality of analysis) • Slides for client presentation • Verbal presentation	v1: Apr 7 v2: Apr 14 present: Apr 28	25% / 250 points

Grading

I am used to grading on an A/B/etc. system, and translating A = 4.0, A- = 3.7, etc. However, the gradebook in Canvas requires me to use a point system. The table below shows how I have translated one system to the other.

Letter Grade	Traditional Numerical Scale	150 Points (Traditional x 37.5)	200 Points (Traditional x 50)	250 Points (Traditional x 62.5)
A	4	150	200	250
A-	3.7	139	185	231
B+	3.3	124	165	206
B	3	113	150	188
B-	2.7	101	135	169
C+	2.3	86	115	144
C	2	75	100	125
C-	1.7	64	85	106
D+	1.3	49	65	81
D	1	38	50	63
D-	0.7	26	35	44
F	0	0	0	0

An A on all assignments will result in a final score of 1000. A final score of 875-1000 (3.5-4.0 on a traditional scale) will result in an A in the course. A final score of 625-874 will result in a B in the course. According to UNT policy, final grades do not have plusses or minuses.

UNT Policies

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences. According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

ADA Policy

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's

specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website.

Emergency Notification & Procedures
UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Course Schedule

	Reading Topics and Assignments	Readings to Complete Before Class	Project Activities During Class
WEEK 1 Jan 13	Introduction and Course Objectives **Receive Instructions for CITI Training Certificate**	N/A	Introduction to Project **Client Meeting**
WEEK 2 Jan 20	Design Anthropology Anth of Gaming – Overview **CITI Training Certificate Due**	Wasson 2000 O'Donnell 2014	Choose Research Partner Field Methods Training
WEEK 3 Jan 27	Design Anthropology Anth of Gaming – Overview	Wasson 2002 Malaby 2009	Finalize Interview Guide
WEEK 4 Feb 3	Design Anthropology Anth of Gaming – Intersectionality	Wasson and Squires 2012 Gray 2020	Field Notes Training
WEEK 5 Feb 10	Ethnographic Analysis Anth of Gaming – Intersectionality **Receive Quiz 1 Instructions**	Ryan and Bernard 2003 Leonard 2016	Training in Analysis
WEEK 6 Feb 17	Design Anthropology Multimodal Analysis	Otto and Smith 2013 Keating and Sunakawa 2010	Teams 1 and 2 Present
WEEK 7 Feb 24	Multimodal Analysis **Quiz 1 Due**	Mondada 2012	Teams 3 and 4 Present Class Analyzes Data
WEEK 8 Mar 3	Design Anthropology Anthropology of Consumption	Hanson 2018 Selections from Chin 2016	Teams 5 and 6 Present Class Analyzes Data
WEEK 9 Mar 10	Big Data + Ethnography Agile + Ethnography	[Rattenbury and Nafus 2018](#) Hanson 2014	**Client Meeting** Teams 7 and 8 Present Class Analyzes Data
WEEK 10 Mar 17	Cog Psych in Design and its Critique **Receive Quiz 2 Instructions**	Norman 1988 Bannon 1991	Teams 9 and 10 Present Class Analyzes Data
WEEK 11 Mar 24	Participatory Design Social Design	Robertson and Simonsen 2013 Selections from Resnick 2019	Class Analyzes Data Prepare Deliverables and Presentation

WEEK 12 Mar 31	Decolonizing Design **Quiz 2 Due**	Tunstall 2013	Students Choose Report Topics Prepare Deliverables and Presentation
WEEK 13 Apr 7	**Deliverables and PPT Slides Due**	N/A	Prepare Deliverables and Presentation

WEEK 14
Apr 14
	**Revisions to Deliverables and PPT
	   Slides Due**
		N/A	Finalize Deliverables and
			   Presentation

WEEK 15 Apr 21		N/A	Rehearse Presentation Send Deliverables to Client
FINALS Apr 28			**Client Presentation**

Full References for Readings

Bannon, Liam. 1991. From human factors to human actors: The role of psychology and human-computer interaction studies in system design. In *Design at work: Cooperative design of computer systems*, ed. Joan Greenbaum and Morton Kyng. Hillsdale, NU: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 25-44.

Chin, Elizabeth. 2016. *My life with things: The consumer diaries*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Gray, Kishonna L. 2020. #Me2, #Me4, black women, and misogynoir: Transmediated gaming practices as intersectional counterpublics. In *Intersectional tech: Black users in digital gaming*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 92-119.

Hanson, Natalie. 2014. Recognizing agile. In *Handbook of Anthropology in Business*, ed. Rita Denny and Patricia Sunderland. New York: Routledge, 540-555.

Hanson, Natalie D. 2018. An uneasy truce: Navigating interdisciplinary collaboration in the software industry. *Journal of Business Anthropology* 7(2): 184-209.

Keating, Elizabeth and Chiho Sunakawa. 2010. Participation cues: Coordinating activity and collaboration in complex online gaming worlds. *Language in Society* 39: 331-356.

Leonard, David J. 2016. *Grand Theft Auto V*: Post-racial fantasies and Ferguson realities. In *The intersectional internet: Race, sex, class, and culture online*, ed. Safiya Umoja Noble and Brendesha M. Tynes. New York: Peter Lang, 129-145.

Malaby, Thomas M. 2009. Anthropology and play: The contours of playful experience. *New Literary History* 40: 205-218.

Mondada, Lorenza. 2012. Coordinating action and talk-in-interaction in and out of video games. In *The appropriation of media in everyday life: What people do with media*, ed. Ruth Ayaß and Cornelia Gerhardt. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 231-270.

Norman, Donald. 1988. The psychopathology of everyday things. In *The design of everyday things*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1-33.

O'Donnell, Casey. 2014. On Balinese cockfights: Deeply extending play. *Games and Culture* 9(6): 406-416.

Otto, Ton and Rachel Charlotte Smith. 2013. Design anthropology: A distinct style of knowing. In *Design anthropology: Theory and practice*, edited by Wendy Gunn, Ton Otto and Rachel Charlotte Smith, 1-29. London: Bloomsbury.

Rattenbury, Tye and Dawn Nafus. 2018. Data science and ethnography: What's our common ground, and why does it matter? *EPIC Blog*, 7 March 2018. https://www.epicpeople.org/data-science-and-ethnography/.

Resnick, Elizabeth, ed. 2019. *The social design reader*. London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts.

Robertson, Toni and Jesper Simonsen. 2013. Participatory design: An introduction. In *Routledge international handbook of participatory design*, ed. Jesper Simonsen and Toni Robertson. New York: Routledge, 1-17.

Ryan, Gery W. and H. Russell Bernard. 2003. Techniques to identify themes. *Field Methods* 15(1):85-109.

Tunstall, Elizabeth (Dori). 2013. Decolonising design innovation: Design anthropology, critical anthropology, and Indigenous knowledge. In *Design Anthropology: Theory and Practice*, edited by Wendy Gunn, Ton Otto and Rachel Charlotte Smith, 232-250. London: Bloomsbury.

Wasson, Christina. 2000. Ethnography in the field of design. *Human Organization* 59(4):377-388.

Wasson, Christina. 2002. Collaborative work: Integrating the roles of ethnographers and designers. In *Creating breakthrough ideas: The collaboration of anthropologists and designers in the product development industry*, ed. Susan Squires and Bryan Byrne. Westport: Bergin & Garvey, 71-90.

Wasson, Christina and Susan Squires. 2012. Localizing the global in the field of technology design. In *Applying anthropology in the global village*, ed. Christina Wasson, Mary Odell Butler and Jacqueline Copeland-Carson. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 251-284.