

ANTHROPOLOGY (ANG) 6930 (Sect. 131A)

THINGS - A Readings Workshop

Class Meets: Wednesday periods 3-5 (9:30-12:30) in 1208H Tur

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Office Hours: Tu 11:30-12:30, Wed 1-3, and by appointment

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3 Credits

Course Description:

This course is a readings workshop exploring the recent burgeoning literature on “material culture.” Because this vast topic draws researchers from several disciplines, we will narrow our focus, concentrating on anthropological approaches to *materiality*—the recursive relationships enacted between humans and things. More specific topics of inquiry include thing theory, gift-commodity exchanges, the social lives of things (object biographies, itineraries, and genealogies), relational ontologies and non-human agency, phenomenological and semiotic aspects of engagement and entanglement with things, producing things, and aspects of modern Western consumption of and attitudes towards material things.

Course Format:

Class participants will read extensively on these topics as a class, as a small group, or independently, and then report on and debate the merits of different readings and approaches during class discussions and via posts on e-learning. Because this is a workshop, students will be involved in deciding what to read; thus, the weekly reading list is always a work in progress. In addition, class participants will help develop and produce pedagogical material for two future courses: a graduate seminar on Things and an undergraduate course on Consumer Culture.

Course Design: This course is designed for advanced graduate students in Anthropology, History, Art History, Sociology, and related fields dealing with the social aspects of material culture.

Course Objectives and Student Goals: Students will be made aware of the fundamental theories and topics associated with studies of material culture, focusing on anthropological approaches to materiality. They will read intensively in topics of their choice to familiarize themselves with this literature and major authors in preparation for advanced or dissertation research. They will help to develop both a graduate and an undergraduate course, thereby refining their understanding of this material and their ability to organize and communicate it in various media. At the end of the semester each student will be equipped to teach the undergraduate course on their own.

Readings:

A bibliography is supplied from which students will choose some readings; they will also be asked to help expand the bibliography. Many readings can be downloaded as journal articles; others are available in pdf form and will be posted to the e-learning site. In addition, several books are required; they are available for purchase and have been requested to be put on reserve in the library. You can share them among yourselves to avoid having to buy all of them.

Required Books:

Berger, Arthur Asa

2009 *What Objects Mean: An Introduction to Material Culture.*

Candlin, Fiona, and Raiford Guins, eds.

2009 *The Object Reader*

- Boivin, Nicole
 2008 *Material Cultures, Material Minds: The Impact of Things on Human Thought, Society, and Evolution*. available in paperback (2010)
- Ingold, Tim
 2011 *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*.
- Woodward, Ian
 2007 *Understanding Material Culture*
- Recommended books:**
- Hodder, Ian
 2012 *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things*.
- Olsen, Bjørnar
 2010 *In Defense of Things: Archaeology and the Ontology of Objects*.
- Other Books Requested to be put on Reserve:**
- Tilley, Christopher, et al.
 2006 *Handbook of Material Culture*. This **e-book** is available to all UF students.
- Hicks, Dan, and Mary Beaudry
 2010 *Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies*

Attendance: Because the course is designed around in-class discussions of the reading material, missing class will prove detrimental to your understanding of that material as well as to the other students' understandings, because your contribution will be lost. Bring the readings to each class, either in hard copy or on a electronic reading device. More than one absence and frequent tardiness will be noted and result in a drop in the final letter grade (e.g., from A to A-). Failure to be prepared for or to participate in discussion is not much different from being absent.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Class Participation: Each student is expected to be prepared to contribute to class discussion each week by finishing the reading assignments, being prepared to report on what they read, and contribute to the general discussion, review, and critique. Students will rotate taking on a discussion group leader role when the class is divided into reading groups. Class participation also includes contributing to the master reading list where appropriate.

Report on Readings: Each week students will post a brief report on the materials they have read on e-learning by Tuesday afternoon (5:00 pm). This report will normally comprise a quick summary of the major contents of the reading, a short critique of its quality and utility, and an appraisal of where it might fit in an organizational scheme for the graduate or undergraduate course. A single document (attachment) summarizing all that week's readings is sufficient.

Course Modules: Each student will prepare two lecture modules on a chosen topic, one for the graduate course and one for the undergraduate course. The module for the undergraduate course should include an accompanying powerpoint and incorporate an active-learning assignment. These will be posted on e-learning so that they can be shared by all class members. See syllabus for due dates.

GRADES: Letter grades are assigned at the end of the semester. The final grade is composed of:

Class Participation + reading reports	50%	100 points
Course Modules	50%	100 points

FINAL GRADE: Letter grades are based on a total of 200 points; see the grading scale below. See <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html> for University policies. Any grade adjustments must be made by noon Friday, May 2; the gradebook is "closed" at that time.

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
180-200	176-179	170-175	160-169	156-159	150-155	140-149	136-139	130-135	120-129	116-119	115 or lower
4.00	3.67	3.33	3.00	2.67	2.33	2.00	1.67	1.33	1.00	.67	0.00

Federal privacy regulations prohibit the release of scores and grades over the phone or by email.

ACCEPTANCE OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS: By remaining registered in this class, you indicate your agreement to accept the course requirements and expectations as stated in this syllabus. These are in addition to other general University requirements and codes of conduct as stated in official documents. *Please fill out the grad information form on e-learning by the second class meeting.*

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF TOPICS (to be finalized during the semester)

Week	Date	Topic/Activity
1	1/9	Introduction to Material Culture Studies and Materiality
2	1/16	selected topic in materiality
3	1/23	selected topic in materiality
4	1/30	selected topic in materiality
5	2/6	selected topic in materiality
6	2/13	selected topic in materiality
7	2/20	selected topic in materiality
8	2/27	selected topic in materiality
	3/6	SPRING BREAK
9	3/13	Consumerism and Consumption: Begin Planning Undergraduate course lecture module for graduate course in Things due
10	3/20	selected topic in consumer culture
11	3/27	selected topic in consumer culture
12	4/3	selected topic in consumer culture
13	4/10	selected topic in consumer culture
14	4/17	selected topic in consumer culture
15	4/24	finalize course organization and activities for Consumer Culture course
16	5/1	lecture module + powerpoint for undergraduate course due

The following information is provided in order to conform with University Policy:

1. Students seeking modification of due dates for assignments and exams for religious reasons (e.g., holiday observance) should contact the Professor and request this modification; it will then be granted.
2. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations to facilitate their education must first register with the Disability Resource Center (www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. The DRC will provide documentation to the student to give to the Professor supporting the request for accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow these procedures as early as possible in the semester.
3. The University reminds every student of the implied pledge of Academic Honesty: on any work submitted for credit the student has neither received nor given unauthorized aid. University policy will be enforced in any instance where cheating or plagiarism is suspected. This includes conducting unauthorized research on the internet and failing to cite sources of information on any work submitted, as well as collaborating with students or others to determine the answers on assignments and exams. Consult the Student Guide at www.dso.ufl.edu/stg/ for more information.
4. Counseling services are available at
the University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575
Student Health Care Center, 392-1171
Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601
Center for Sexual Assault/Abuse Recovery and Education (CARE), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161
5. This course may utilize the electronic course reserve service offered by the George A. Smathers Libraries. Under the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, students with disabilities have the right to equal access, use and benefit of the course materials that have been placed on reserve in the Libraries.
Students who have registered with the University of Florida Disability Resource Center should initiate their request for assistance and accommodation in accessing these materials. The Center will work with the Libraries Course Reserve Unit to provide accessible course materials. All information submitted by the student to the Libraries in fulfilling the request for accommodation will be kept confidential. For more information on services for students with disabilities, contact the University of Florida Disability Resource Center at 352-392-8565 or at accessuf@dso.ufl.edu. For general information on course reserves, please contact the Course Reserves Unit at 352-273-2520, or email at eres@uflib.ufl.edu.
It is best to use the UF VPN client when accessing electronic materials course reserve materials, e-books, databases, etc.) offered by the library. The VPN client is easily installed and configured, and provides easy access to electronic materials. For more information on using the VPN client, go to <http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/login/vpn.html>.
6. All faculty, staff and student of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.
7. **Make-up Policy:** Missed work can be made up for any reason within one week of its due date. Students needing a longer period to make-up missed work should negotiate the due date with the instructor.