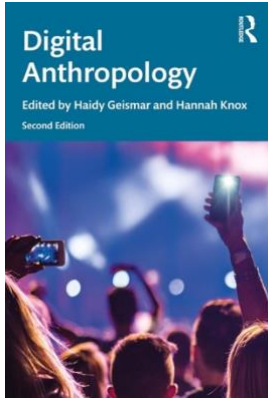# ANT 4851 Digital Anthropology

UF Online, Spring 2025

Instructor: Chloe Bennink c.bennink@ufl.edu

Office hours: Tues 10-12 and Weds 2-3. Schedule an appointment with me via Calendly. If none of the available times work for you, please reach out by email.

Course description: Digital anthropology is the study of how digital technology shapes, and is shaped by, human culture. This course introduces students to the foundational theories of this subfield, and to some of its key methodologies. In addition, the class considers some of the practical and ethical challenges of conducting research using digital technologies and/or in digital space.

Required text: *Digital Anthropology* (2021, second edition), edited by Haidy Geismar and Hannah Knox. Routledge. Additional readings will be posted on the home page of the Canvas site.

Course Design

Each weekly module includes 5 sections: **Explore, Read, Watch, Create, Reflect.**

Explore asks you to dive into a topic and explore digital spaces and your curiosities that emerge as you spend time in them. You should generally spend at least 30 minutes exploring each week's digital space. These sites are focused on the topics at hand, at times are examples of ethnographic projects, or areas you may explore deeper if you are interested. This activity is meant to stoke your curiosity as well as give you a chance to understand the work of digital ethnography. As such, I recommend taking some brief notes as you explore. (Check out Naked Fieldnotes and this guide for more helpful info about field notes.)

Read asks you to read scholarly work on the weekly topics. Weekly readings are outlined below. The required text for this course is Digital Anthropology (2021, second edition), edited by Haidy Geismar and Hannah Knox. Routledge. (Follow the link to access an eBook for free with UF Library Resources. Make sure to use the VPN to log in off campus.) Additional readings will be posted on the Canvas site. If you have any issues accessing any content or have accessibility needs that are not met, please reach out ASAP.

Watch asks you to watch recorded lectures and other media. These brief lectures focus on topics which are important within the field of Digital Anthropology. Some lectures are being reused from previous iterations of the course, so please follow instructions in the syllabus and Canvas over prompts in the lectures.

Create asks you to take the information you gained from explore, read, and watch and compile it into a brief response to a prompt. For these assignments you may submit a written reflection

based on the prompt, or if you choose you can get more creative and submit another form of media (ex. video essay or podcast inspired response).

Reflect asks you to share something you encountered online that relates to something you learned about this week. This can be a meme, an article, a picture, a video. Briefly explain how this media relates to what we have explored. You are also asked to respond to at least one classmate.

You are responsible for reading the material, watching the lectures, and completing all assignments by **Friday at 11:59pm** each week. In addition to the regular weekly assignments, you will also complete a longer essay due roughly in the middle of the class, and a final project at the end.

Course Schedule

Module 1: Introductions
Explore: Canvas course
Read: Course Syllabus
Watch: Introduction video
Create: Assignment 1   **Due Jan 17**
Reflect: Intro and Course Discussion   **Due Jan 17**

Module 2: What is Digital Anthropology
Explore: Why We Post
Read: Daniel Miller, "Digital Anthropology"
Watch: Digital Anthropology
Create: Assignment 2   **Due Jan 24**
Reflect: Module 2 Reflection   **Due Jan 24**

Module 3: Digital Space and Digital Ethics
Explore: Look through Facebook's Terms of Service. and Meta Content Library API
Read:
    -"What happens when you click 'Agree'?"
    -TikTok and Researcher Positionality
Watch: Ethics in Digital Research
Create: Assignment 3   **Due Jan 31**
Reflect: Module 3 Reflection   **Due Jan 31**

Module 4: Social Media
Explore: TikTok Ethnography Collective
Read: Daniel Miller, "The Anthropology of Social Media" (Ch 5 in *Digital Anthropology*)
Watch: Setting up my Twitter
Create: Setting Up Social Media   **Due Feb 7**
Reflect: Module 4 Reflection   **Due Feb 7**

Module 5: Digital Communities
Explore: Explore a digital community you are a part of or interested in.
Read: Faye Ginsburg, "Disability in the Digital Age" (Ch 7 in *Digital Anthropology*)
Watch: Digital Communities (Alix Johnson)
Create: Digital Communities   **Due Feb 14**
Reflect: Module 5 Reflection   **Due Feb 14**

Module 6: Digital Selfhood
Read: Natasha Dow-Schüll, "Data for Life: Wearable Technology and the Design of Self-Care"
Watch: Our Data, Ourselves
Create: Self-Tracking   **Due Feb 21**
Reflect: Module 6 Reflection   **Due Feb 21**

Module 7: Digital Ethnography
Explore: A virtual world of your choice. See this week's assignment for more details.
Read: Tom Boellstorff, "Participant Observation in Virtual Worlds"
Watch: Digital Ethnography
Create: Ethnographic Observation   **Due Feb 28**
Reflect: Module 7 Reflection   **Due Feb 28**

Module 8: Artificial Intelligence and Anthropology
Explore: Chat GPT, UF GPT, or NaviGator and Human Error Project and practicumAI
Read:
1) A Short Anthropological Guide to the Study of Ethical AI
2) A Social Science Perspective on Artificial Intelligence
Watch: Guest Lecture
Create: Thinking with AI   **Due Mar 7**
Reflect: Module 8 Reflection   **Due Mar 7**

Module 9: Textual Analysis
Read: Wendy Hsu, "Digital Ethnography Toward Augmented Empiricism: A New Methodological Framework"
Watch: Natural Language Processing (Valerio Leone Sciabolazza)
Create: Midterm Paper   **Due Mar 21**
Reflect: Module 9 Reflection   **Due Mar 21**

----------------SPRING BREAK------------------

Module 11: Research Design
Read: Read 2 articles that are related to your final project.
Watch: Research Design.mp4 (Chris McCarty)
Create: Final Project Prospectus   **Due Mar 28**
Reflect: Module 11 Reflection   **Due Mar 28**

Module 12: Digital Economies
Explore: Spend time exploring a digital community related to cryptocurrency. This can be an exchange platform, reddit page, etc.
Read:
1) Bill Maurer, "Blockchain" (Ch 11 in Digital Anthropology)
2) Yathukulan Yogarajah's 'Hodling' on: Memetic storytelling and digital folklore within a cryptocurrency world
Listen:
In lieu of a lecture, this week listen to:
1) NYT's The Daily Podcast, "Cryptocurrency's New Frontier" (33m)
2) Yathu's interview on the Fiscally Challenged Podcast
Create: Digital Value, Digital Values   **Due Apr 4**
Reflect: Module 12 Reflection   **Due Apr 4**

Module 13: Digital Archives
Explore: Excavate a site, platform, or online community of your choice.
Read:
1) Quentin Jones, "Virtual Communities, Virtual Settlements & Cyber-Archaeology"
2) Rodney Harrison, "Excavating Second Life"
[No video this week]
Create: Digital Excavation   **Due Apr 11**
Reflect: Module 13 Reflection   **Due Apr 11**

Module 14: Digital Archaeology
Explore: SketchFab and NMNH Virtual Tour
Read:
1) Gemma Tarlach, "How Google Earth Has Revolutionized Archaeology"
2) International Forum of Virtual Archaeology, "International Principles of Virtual Archaeology"
3) *Anthropology of AI: Understanding the Cultural Impact of Artificial Intelligence through Research Design*. (Recommended but not required)
Watch: Digital Methods in Archaeology and Biological Anthropology(Samantha McCrane)
Create: Digital Archaeology   **Due Apr 18**
Reflect: Module 14 Reflection   **Due Apr 18**

Module 15: Applied Digital Anthropology
Read:
1) Haidy Geismar, "Museum + Digital = ?" (Ch 14 in *Digital Anthropology*)
2) Charles Zange, "Community-makers, Major Museums, and the Keet S'aaxw: Learning About the Role of Museums in Interpreting Cultural Objects"
Watch: In lieu of a video lecture, this week check out the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography's Online Exhibitions.
Create: Digital Exhibitions   **Due Apr 25**
[Note: this last weekly assignment is optional. You may choose to complete it to add points to your grade, but if you skip it you will not be penalized]
Reflect: Module 15 Reflection   **Due Apr 25**

Module 16: Final Project
Read (recommended, not required): Sarah Pink, "Digital Futures Anthropology" (Ch 16 in *Digital Anthropology*)
Watch (recommended, not required): Sarah Pink discusses Digital Ethnography
Create: Final Project   **Due Apr 30**

Course expectations and assessment

Digital Anthropology is a fully online, asynchronous course. Each week you will be expected to: 1) complete a reading (or set of readings), 2) watch a video lecture, and 3) complete a short assignment – all of which can be found on the home page of this site.

Weekly assignments ask you to reflect briefly on a topic related to the week's readings and video. There are 12 required assignments and 13 discussion posts, with the assignments in Week 15 offered as an optional opportunity to gain additional points toward your grade.

The Midterm Paper uses a course theme from weeks 1-6 to analyze a real-life example of your choice.

The Final Project invites you to conduct independent research on a topic related to digital anthropology

Grading scale:

A	100-93	C+	78-77
A-	92-89	C	76-73
B+	88-87	C-	72-69
B	83-86	D+	68-67
B-	79-82	D	66-60

Your grade will be calculated based on the following components:

Weekly assignments: **40%**
Participation: **10%**
Midterm paper: **20%**
Final project: **30%**

Late work: All assignments are due by 11:59pm on their listed due dates. Late work will drop one-half letter grade per day and will not be accepted after one week (7 days), unless arrangements are made before the assignment is due.

For more information on official policy, check out UF grades and grading policy.

Academic integrity: UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this

assignment." The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. See the UF Conduct Code website for more information.

If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class. If you plagiarize, you will receive a zero for that assignment and the matter will be referred to the Dean of Students for further disciplinary action. You must be familiar with the College's policies on plagiarism. If you have any questions please refer to the University's Honor Code.

Netiquette: It is important to recognize that the online classroom is in fact a classroom, and certain behaviors are expected when you communicate with both your peers and your instructors. These guidelines for online behavior and interaction are known as netiquette.
When communicating online, you should always:
- Treat your instructor with respect, even in email or in any other online communication
- Always use your professors' proper title: Dr. or Prof., or if you in doubt use Mr. or Ms.
- Unless specifically invited, don't refer to them by first name.
    - Use clear and concise language
    - Remember that all college level communication should have correct spelling and grammar
    - Avoid slang terms such as "wassup?" and texting abbreviations such as "u" instead of "you"
    - Use standard fonts such as Times New Roman and use a size 12 or 14 pt. font
    - Avoid using the caps lock feature AS IT CAN BE INTERPRETTED AS YELLING
    - Limit and possibly avoid the use of emoticons like :)
    - Be cautious when using humor or sarcasm as tone is sometimes lost in an email or discussion post and your message might be taken seriously or offensive
    - Be careful with personal information (both yours and other's)
    - Do not send confidential patient information via e-mail

Email Netiquette
When you send an email to your instructor, teaching assistant, or classmates, you should:
- Use a descriptive subject line
- Be brief
- Avoid attachments unless you are sure your recipients can open them
- Avoid HTML in favor of plain text
- Sign your message with your name and return e-mail address

Message Board Netiquette and Guidelines
When posting on the Discussion Board in your online class, you should:
- Make posts that are on topic and within the scope of the course material
- Take your posts seriously and review and edit your posts before sending
- Be as brief as possible while still making a thorough comment
- Always give proper credit when referencing or quoting another source
- Be sure to read all messages in a thread before replying
- Don't repeat someone else's post without adding something of your own to it

- Avoid short, generic replies such as, "I agree." You should include why you agree or add to the previous point
- Always be respectful of others' opinions even when they differ from your own
- When you disagree with someone, you should express your differing opinion in a respectful, non-critical way
- Do not make personal or insulting remarks
- Be open-minded

Policy on AI and ChatGPT Usage for Classwork*: The use of AI tools such as ChatGPT can enhance learning and provide support in certain areas. However, their use must align with the goals of this course and maintain academic integrity.
Permitted Uses:
- Idea generation: You may use AI to brainstorm topics, generate outlines, or assist with initial drafts, provided the final work is your own.
- Clarification: You may use AI to clarify concepts or learn about course-related topics, but ensure you verify the information with reliable sources.
- Grammar and Style**:** AI tools may be used for proofreading and improving the clarity of your writing, but the content and ideas must be yours.
Prohibited Uses:
- Submitting AI-generated work as your own. All submitted assignments must reflect your original thoughts, analysis, and effort.
- Using AI tools during quizzes, tests, or other assessments unless explicitly permitted.
- Copying and pasting AI-generated text without proper attribution or adaptation.
Expectations:
- You must disclose any use of AI tools in your assignments, indicating how they were used (e.g., "I used ChatGPT to brainstorm ideas for this paper").
- Misuse of AI tools will be considered a violation of the academic integrity policy and may result in disciplinary action.
Why This Matters: The goal of this course is to help you develop your own skills and critical thinking. While AI tools can be helpful, over-reliance on them can hinder your learning and growth. If you are unsure whether your intended use of AI tools is appropriate, please consult me before proceeding. **Written with help from ChatGPT*

Student Learning Outcomes and Education Objectives

Social and behavioral science courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and underlying theory or methodologies used in the social and behavioral sciences. Students will learn to identify, describe and explain social institutions, structures or processes. These courses emphasize the effective application of accepted problem-solving techniques. Students will apply formal and informal qualitative or quantitative analysis to examine the processes and means by which individuals make personal and group decisions, as well as the evaluation of opinions, outcomes or human behavior. Students are expected to assess and analyze ethical perspectives in individual and societal decisions.

Throughout this semester, students will:

1. Understand and apply foundational theories and methodologies of digital anthropology to analyze the interactions between digital technologies and human culture.
2. Examine the ethical, social, and cultural implications of digital technologies in areas such as social media, artificial intelligence, and economics.
3. Conduct digital ethnographic research to explore virtual spaces, communities, and interactions, using qualitative methods to analyze cultural phenomena.
4. Critically evaluate the historical and social dimensions of digital practices, including their intersections with power, class, and identity.
5. Reflect on personal digital practices and experiences, connecting them to broader theoretical frameworks and cultural contexts.

Course Feedback

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/

Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/

Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/

University Resources

Accessibility and accommodations: Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Mental health: The university offers confidential counseling services to help students deal with personal concerns that interfere with learning and academic progress. The Counseling Center's professional counselors provide individual and group counseling and crisis intervention on short-term and emergency issues as well as consultation and referral services. All services are strictly confidential and are not part of students' college records.

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit U Matter, We Care website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Additional Campus Resources:

• *Health and Wellness*

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the Student Health Care Center website.

University Police Department: Visit UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website.

GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the GatorWell website or call 352-2734450.

• *Academic Resources:*

E-learning technical support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-3921601. Career assistance and counseling services.

Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. Call 866-281-6309 or email ask@ufl.libanswers.com for more information.

Teaching Center: 1317 Turlington Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

Writing Studio: Daytime (9:30am-3:30pm): 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138 | Evening (5:00pm-7:00pm): 1545 W University Avenue (Library West, Rm. 339). Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

Academic Complaints: Office of the Ombuds; Visit the Complaint Portal webpage for more information.

Enrollment Management Complaints (Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions): View the Student Complaint Procedure webpage for more information.