ANT4851 Digital Anthropology (Online)Spring 2026

Credit Hours: 3.0
Section Numbers: 10326, 10327
Prereq: one 2000 or 3000 level ANT, LAS, or AFS course or instructor permission.

Instructor:

Chloe Bennink
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Office Hours: Mon and Thurs 2-5pm (online)

Phone: (352)392-2253
Please arrange a meeting through www.calendly.com/cjbennink . You will receive a zoom link when you schedule.

Course Meeting Information

This is an asynchronous online course that uses Canvas to distribute and submit all course materials. You will find the syllabus, modules, quizzes, additional readings, assignments, videos, grades, and course updates and announcements on the Canvas page. The student is responsible for checking Canvas regularly.

Prerequisite Knowledge and Skills

One 2000 or 3000 level ANT, LAS, or AFS course or instructor permission is required as a prerequisite for this course. The following resources may be helpful to students who wish to gain more information about Anthropology before/while taking this course:

- [Living Anthropologically](): This website/blog provides links to additional resources and up-to-date information.
- [American Anthropological Association](): Official website for the American Anthropological Association.
- [Anthropology Department at UF]() offers a wide variety of courses every semester. See this site for additional information on course offerings.

Catalog Description: Investigation into how the emerging digital environment affects humans and societies. The study of digital technologies in comparative cultural contexts. Analysis of digital technology as a form of material culture. Introduction to theoretical perspectives on digital phenomena and the applications of these technologies in anthropology and other disciplines.

Course Overview

Anthropology is the academic discipline that studies humanity across all space and time. Cultural anthropologists study the distinctive ways people create, negotiate, and make sense of their own social worlds in relation to the worlds of others. Through research in places both far away and near to home, anthropologists examine relations and events that influence and determine social belonging and exclusion, whether based on gender, kinship, religion, language, political economy, or historical constructions of race, ethnicity

and citizenship. The scope of cultural anthropology is thus broad. Studying culture is crucial to understanding our increasingly connected planet, human relationships, and actions. An anthropological perspective is also essential to efforts which aim to resolve the major crises that confront humanity today.

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.

This class introduces the discipline through a consideration of topics and themes that are not only of vital relevance today but also hold an enduring place in the intellectual tradition of anthropology. The purpose of this class is to increase your familiarity and comfort with concepts of cultural analysis and to show how these notions can increase awareness and understanding of your own and others' life experiences. In so doing, the course aims to enhance sensitivity to social differences while also underscoring the moral and ethical dimensions entailed by ethnographic research.

Course Objectives

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.

Student Learning Outcomes

Content: Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories, and methodologies used within the discipline of digital anthropology.
Students will acquire a basic familiarity with topics of study in the discipline as well as ethnographic research. These outcomes will be assessed through weekly exercises.
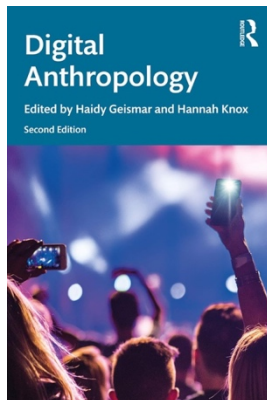
Communication: Students will frequently participate in discussions to further explore course content and to compare the breadth of human experience through anthropological

lenses. Students communicate knowledge, ideas, and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and graphic forms appropriate to the discipline of digital anthropology. These outcomes will be assessed through exercises, one final paper, and infographics. Grades will reflect how well a student communicates in these posts.

Critical Thinking: Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems. Through anthropological perspectives, students analyze transformations of cultures, variations of human experience, as well as the construction of social difference and inequality at local, national, and global scales. These outcomes will be assessed through exercises, and one final paper. Students will read papers in anthropology and watch videos with content relevant to the discipline. Students will summarize, evaluate, and critique these materials, using the methods and terminology of digital anthropology. Students will also apply anthropological knowledge in the analysis of everyday objects, real-life experiences, and pressing contemporary problems.

Course materials

There is one required **textbook**:

Digital Anthropology (2021, second edition), edited by Haidy Geismar and Hannah Knox. Routledge.

A digital copy of this book is available through the UF Library for free.

All additional required and recommended readings will be posted on the Canvas course page. Students are required to integrate textbook chapters with additional resources (articles, videos, pictures, etc.).

Course requirements

This course consists of 15 modules. Each week we will cover crucial concepts and ideas in Digital Anthropology. You will be asked to actively participate in the discussion boards and complete the assignment for every week. You are also required to complete a midterm project and final project.

Course format:

This is an asynchronous online course with prerecorded lectures each week and assignments with due dates. Students should keep up with the material in a timely manner and meet expected due dates. **IMPORTANT:** *The use of Canvas (eLearning) will be essential to student success in the course*. All assignments are to be submitted through Canvas. Canvas Inbox and communication is preferred.

Course Communications: Course information will be sent as "announcements" on the course Canvas page. The instructor and TA will use Canvas inbox tool to contact students directly about their work. Students are responsible for checking the Canvas page and their official UF email regularly to keep up to date with course information.

How to be Successful in an Online Course

- Adjust [Canvas Notification PreferencesLinks to an external site.](#)to enable Canvas to directly send you an email.
- Keep up with the lecture videos and take notes.
- Keep track of module assignments and quiz due dates. Many assignments need preparation time and cannot be done on the day it is due.
    - Some activities require outside class work, such as library research which could take a few days.
- Communicate with your instructor and TA about course questions, grading, and if you are falling behind.
    - Reach out as early as possible if you will be late in turning in assignments, sick, or have other extenuating circumstances that will affect your participation in the course.
    - We are willing to work with students when they communicate well about these issues.
- 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. Guidelines for online behavior and interaction are known as netiquette. See Canvas for more details.
- Keep an open mind, be respectful, be considerate, and learn! You will enjoy this class!

Assignments

This course includes weekly exercises, a midterm project, and a final digital ethnography project. All assignments are due on Sundays at 11:59 pm EST. Each assignment on Canvas includes an estimated time to complete.

Weekly Exercises
Weekly exercises introduce key concepts in digital anthropology and build your skills in digital ethnography, digital identity, community analysis, and ethical engagement with technology. These short written or video assignments ask you to reflect on your own digital practices and to apply course ideas to real online environments.

Midterm Project

The midterm is a flexible, creative project that allows you to explore a theme from the first half of the course. You may choose any topic connected to digital ethics, social media, digital communities, or the digital self. The project can take the form of a short written piece, a video essay, a podcast episode, an infographic, a zine, or another approved digital format. Your project should present a clear example, explain why it matters, and draw meaningfully on course concepts and at least two assigned readings.

Final Project

The final project is an independent digital ethnography in which you investigate a topic in digital anthropology using at least one method discussed in class. You may complete the project as a written paper or a creative digital project. All final projects must clearly present a research question, describe your methods, analyze your findings, and cite at least two course readings and two credible outside sources. Creative options include a short film, podcast, photo essay, website, or another approved format. The final project is accompanied by earlier weekly exercises designed to help you refine your topic and build your methods.

Grading scale

A	93-100	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	66-63
B-	80-82	D-	60-63
C+	77-79	E	<60

Assignments		Total Points	Total of Final Grade
Exercises	12 x 10 pts	120 points	~40%
Participation	2 x 15 pts	30 points	~10%
Midterm Project	1 x 60 pts	60 points	~20%
Final Project	1 x 90 pts	90 points	~30%
Total		**300 points**	100%

See *UF's Grading policy: https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/*
A minimum grade of C is required for credit towards the Anthro major/minor; C- does not fulfill that requirement.

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.

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 **Sunday at 11:59pm** each week. In addition to the regular weekly assignments, you will also complete a larger project due roughly in the middle of the class, and a final project at the end.

WEEK 1 (Due Sunday January 18)

Introductions + Course Foundations

Explore: Course Canvas site, syllabus, navigation, netiquette, UF policies (30 minutes)
Read: Course syllabus
Watch: Introduction (Alix Johnson) — approx. 10 minutes
Create: 1: Who Are You?
Reflect: Introduction Reflection thread

What Is Digital Anthropology?

Read: Daniel Miller, "Digital Anthropology" (Digital Anthropology, 2nd ed., approx. 18–22 pages)
Watch: Digital Anthropology (Alix Johnson) — approx. 20 minutes
Create: 2: Who Do You Know?
Reflect: Reflection Thread 1

WEEK 2 (Due Sunday January 25)

Digital Space and Digital Ethics

Explore: Digital Platform Terms and Conditions audit, AI encounter log
Read: NYT Editorial Board, "What Happens When You Click 'Agree'?" (~3 pages); "TikTok and Researcher Positionality" (pp. 1–11)
Watch: Ethics in Digital Research (Chris McCarty) — approx. 20 minutes; Sasha Luccioni TED Talk, "AI is dangerous, but not for the reasons you think"
Create: 3: Terms of Service / Terms of Research
Reflect: Reflection Thread 2

WEEK 3 (Due Sunday February 1)

Social Media

Explore: TikTok Ethnography Collective (30 minutes); Why we post
Read: Daniel Miller, "The Anthropology of Social Media" (approx. 15–20 pages)
Watch: Setting Up My Twitter (Chris McCarty) — approx. 25 minutes, Social Network Analysis
Create: 4: Social Media
Reflect: Reflection Thread 3

WEEK 4 (Due Sunday February 8)

Digital Communities

Explore: A digital community you participate in or want to learn about
Read: Faye Ginsburg, "Disability in the Digital Age" (approx. 20–25 pages); Michelle Cera (2023) - Digital Ethnography: ethics through the case of QAnon
Watch: Digital Communities (Alix Johnson) — approx. 20 minutes
Create: 5: Digital Communities
Reflect: Reflection Thread 4

WEEK 5 (Due Sunday February 15)

Digital Selfhood / Self-Tracking

Explore: Quantified Self (30 minutes)
Read: Natasha Dow-Schüll, "Data for Life: Wearable Technology and the Design of Self-Care" (~20 pages)
Watch: Our Data, Ourselves (Alix Johnson) — approx. 20 minutes
Create: 6: Self Tracking
Reflect: Reflection Thread 5

WEEK 6 (Due Sunday February 22)

Methods I: Ethnography

Explore: Naked Fieldnotes; one virtual world of your choice (60 minutes)
Read: Tom Boellstorff, "Participant Observation in Virtual Worlds" (pp. 65–91)
Watch: Digital Ethnography (Alix Johnson) — approx. 20 minutes
Create: 7: Digital Ethnography
Reflect: Reflection Thread 6

WEEK 7 (Due Sunday March 1)

Anthropology and Artificial Intelligence

Explore: Generative AI model of your choice
Read: A Short Anthropological Guide to the Study of Ethical AI (~15 pages); A Social Science Perspective on Artificial Intelligence (~15 pages)
Watch: Can ChatGPT Replace My Degree? — approx. 15 minutes; WAU Webinar — approx. 20 minutes;
Create: 8: Thinking with AI
Reflect: Reflection Thread 7

WEEK 8 (Due Sunday March 8)

Methods II: Textual Analysis

Explore: Textual Analysis Tools
Read: Wendy Hsu, "Digital Ethnography Toward Augmented Empiricism" (~15–20 pages)
Watch: Natural Language Processing (Valerio Leone Sciabolazza) — approx. 25 minutes
Create: Textual Analysis
Reflect: Reflection Thread 8

WEEK 9: MIDTERM (Due March 15)

MIDTERM PROJECT
In order to keep submission dates easy and consistent, the midterm project is due on
Sunday March 15th.
Please feel free to submit before Spring Break begins.

SPRING BREAK (March 14–21)

No class/assignments this week. Enjoy your Spring Break!

WEEK 11 (Due Sunday March 29)

Research Design

Explore: Work on exploring digital sites and resources related to your project.
Read: Two self-selected articles for your final project (page counts vary)
Watch: Research Design (Chris McCarty) — approx. 25 minutes
Create: Final Project Proposal
Reflect: Reflection Thread 9

WEEK 12 (Due Sunday April 5)

Digital Economies

Explore: Cryptocurrency trading platform (30 minutes)
Read: Bill Maurer, "Blockchain" (approx. 20 pages); Yathukulan Yogarajah, "'Hodling' On" (pp. 467–488, 22 pages)
Listen: NYT The Daily "Cryptocurrency's New Frontier" — 33 minutes; Fiscally Challenged Podcast interview — approx. 30 minutes
Create: 11: Digital Value
Reflect: Reflection Thread 10

WEEK 13 (Due Sunday April 12)

Digital Archives

Explore: Excavation of a digital site or platform of your choice (45 minutes)
Read: Quentin Jones, "Virtual Communities, Virtual Settlements & Cyber-Archaeology" (approx. 12–15 pages); Rodney Harrison, "Excavating Second Life" (approx. 15–20 pages)
Watch: [How to Fix the Internet (EFF) - "Building and Preserving the Library of Everything"](#) ; [YouTube - "How to use the Wayback Machine"](#) ; [The Archive Documentary Part 1](#)
Create: 12: Digital Excavation
Reflect: Reflection Thread 11

WEEK 14 (Due Sunday April 19)

Applied Digital Anthropology

Explore: Peabody Museum Online Exhibitions (45 minutes)
Read: Haidy Geismar, "Museum + Digital = ?" (approx. 20 pages); Charles Zange, "Community-Makers, Major Museums, and the Keet S'aaxw" (approx. 15 pages)
Watch: No required lecture this week
Create: 13: Digital Exhibitions (optional)
Reflect: Reflection Thread 12

WEEK 15 (Due Sunday April 26)

Final Project Submission

Read (optional): Sarah Pink, "Digital Futures Anthropology" (~15 pages)
Watch (optional): Sarah Pink on Digital Ethnography — approx. 15 minutes
Create: Final Project **Due Sunday April 26 at 11:59 pm EST**
Reflect: Final Reflection

Course Policies

This course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those polices and for resources for students, please see [this link](#)

Late Work Policy

Late assignments will be subject to a late penalty of 10% off per day unless I've been notified prior to the due date, and we have agreed on an alternative arrangement and/or it is an excused absence. Please also notify me directly if you will be out.

Communication

Please contact the instructor and the TAs via email. If contacted, we will attempt to respond to messages within 48 hours of receiving them. We do not normally check the

inbox over the weekend. We cannot address *same-day* requests for deadline extensions (with proper documentation), so please be in touch in as much advance as possible if you need an assignment extension. I may use email to make general class announcements or to contact you directly about your work. You are responsible for checking your official UF email regularly to be aware of communication from your instructors. There are no allowances for students who fail to read their email announcements or whose inboxes are full at the time an announcement is sent.

You are responsible for materials posted on E-Learning (Canvas) at https://elearning.ufl.edu/, including required readings, announcements, details on assignments, and other supplementary material. Canvas technical support available at https://elearning.ufl.edu/student-help-faqs/.

Religious observances

Students seeking modification of due dates for class participation, assignments, and exams for religious reasons should contact the instructor well in advance to request this modification, which will then be granted.

https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/#religiousholidaystext

The Florida Board of Education and state law govern university policy regarding observance of religious holidays. The following guidelines apply:

- Students, upon prior notification to their instructors, shall be excused from class or other scheduled academic activity to observe a religious holy day of their faith.
- Students shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up the material or activities covered in their absence.
- Students shall not be penalized due to absence from class or other scheduled academic activity because of religious observances.

Procedure for Conflict Resolution

Any issues, disagreements or grade disputes should be discussed first between the instructor and the student. If the problem cannot be resolved, please contact Prof. John Krigbaum (krigbaum@ufl.edu, (352) 294-7540), Chair of Anthropology. Be prepared to provide documentation of the problem, as well as all graded materials for the semester. Issues that cannot be resolved departmentally will be referred to the University Ombuds Office (http://www.ombuds.ufl.eduLinks to an external site.; 352-392-1308) or the Dean of Students Office (http://www.dso.ufl.eduLinks to an external site.; 352-392-1261).

AI Policy

The use of AI tools 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 academic planning 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, 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.

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 or this UF guide on AI use before proceeding

University Resources

Library Resources

The UF Libraries provide access to numerous resources and services that will help you succeed in this course. Access thousands of online databases, books, and articles or visit one of the branch locations for additional resources, services, and study spaces. Can't find what you are looking for? You can Ask A Librarian for help by email, chat, text, or phone.

- **Ginessa Mahar** (Anthropology Librarian): gjmahar@ufl.edu, office: Library West Room 539
- Digital Anthropology Library Guide

Mental health
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.

Health and Wellness

Student Health Care Center

2140 Stadium Rd Gainesville, FL 32611

352-392-1161

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

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.