

# **ANT 3930 Digital Anthropology**

New Virtual Realities, Social Networks, Cybernetics, and More!

Course Information for Spring 2016:

3 credits

Instructor Information:

Jeffrey Vadala

email: Canvas

Office: Skype/Hangouts,

Office Hours MWF 1:45-2:45

EMAIL topics may only include topics regarding documents and absences that can be excused for the reasons listed below.

For general class questions contact me on Skype, or Google Hangouts during the listed office hours. This means you may have to get to know your online instructor! General topics and inquiries will not be addressed through email. Video chats will be publicly viewable to other students unless otherwise specified.

## **Course description and goals:**

Humans are becoming cybernetic hybrids, communities are becoming social networks, language is changing in response to technologies, popular digital fiat currencies are emerging, and ancient worlds are being recreated in virtual reality. These transformations are radically changing the way social and anthropological research is done. It is clear that humans are becoming increasingly "digital." This course is a preliminary investigation of how our emerging digital environment is affecting humans and how we must study ourselves in this new world. Thus, it introduces students to emerging theoretical perspectives on digital phenomena and familiarizes students with the potentials of these technologies for enhancing human investigations into a variety of subjects. Class work will be grounded in real world examples drawn from Linguistic, Biological, Archaeological, and Cultural Anthropology, while emphasizing the potential of a four-field digital anthropology in our rapidly changing worlds. Specific topics are listed below:

1. Using technology as the basis for a wider discussion on what it means to be human.
2. The study of cybernetic systems of humans and technology.
3. Study of emergent, technology-based communities
4. Using anthropology to better understand and optimize our use of technology.
5. The use of technology as a tool for anthropologists both in teaching and research.
6. The study of digital technologies in comparative cultural contexts
1. The contextualization of digital technologies: the social and cultural frameworks that produce and consume
1. The study of digital technology as a form of material culture

**Course Goals:**

- Identify new digital objects of anthropological study
- Identify and describe new digital anthropology methodologies used in anthropological and social research
- **Overall Student Objectives: Students completing this course should be able to:**
- Identify, describe, and use new theoretical perspectives used to understand digital phenomena
- Identify and explain how anthropology and society is changing and what key social processes should be studied by future anthropologists
- Explain why a digital anthropology is necessary for each sub-discipline and important to social research as a whole

**Required Readings:**

The following book is a required text and available for purchase in the bookstores, as well as on reserve in Library West. Other Readings will be required and available online. Each week's readings are reflected in the course schedule below. These readings are subject to change.

DeLanda, Manuel. *A new philosophy of society: Assemblage theory and social complexity*. A&C Black, 2006.

**Recommended:**

*Digital Anthropology*

Edited by Daniel Miller and Heather Horst, Bloomsbury Academic (2012)

*Human No More: Digital Subjectivities, Unhuman Subjects, and the End of Anthropology*

Edited by Neil L. Whitehead, University Press of Colorado (2012)

Additional Required readings will be available on the class E-learning site.

**E-learning site:**

This course uses the Canvas environment in E-learning for posting the syllabus, assignments, taking exams, viewing grades, and posting supplementary readings. Go to <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/>, click on Canvas (2<sup>nd</sup> button down on left), and login with your gatorlink log-in.

**Online Content**

This is an online course. All assignments will be provided and submitted online. Course materials include offline reading, online discussion boards, short view lectures, video interviews, and Microsoft Sway interactive webpages. Additionally, you will have group projects that you present online and collaborate with a groups. Being that there are no traditional lectures, a fair amount of online content and activities have been provided to guide your learning. To succeed in this course, you must carefully read all of each modules provided materials.

**Online Behavior**

FOR THIS COURSE THERE ARE NO EXCUSES ACCEPTED THAT ARE RELATED TO  
INTERNET AVAILABILITY!!! IF YOU CAN'T BE ASSURED

TO HAVE RELIABLE INTERNET ACCESS. AN ONLINE  
COURSE IS NOT FOR YOU.

When communicating online in this course, you should always

1. Treat instructor, teaching assistant, and fellow classmates with respect, even in email or in any other online communication
2. Always use your professors' proper title: Dr. or Prof. Do not use the instructor's first name
3. Use clear and concise language and correct spelling and grammar
4. Avoid slang terms and texting abbreviations. Use full sentences in communication.
5. Avoid using the caps lock feature AS IT CAN BE INTERPRETED AS YELLING
6. 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
7. In emails, put the topic in the subject line (e.g., ANT3930 Digital Anthropology Question). Remember to use the canvas email to contact the professor for this course. The teaching assistant's email will be posted on Canvas.
8. Be careful with personal information (both yours and other's) When posting on the Discussion Board in your online class, you should:
9. Make posts that are on topic and within the scope of the course material
10. Take your posts seriously and review and edit your posts before sending. Use full sentences and proper grammar. Do not use texting shorthand.
11. Be as brief as possible while still making a thorough comment
12. Always give proper credit when referencing or quoting another source
13. Be sure to read all messages in a thread before replying
14. Don't repeat someone else's post without adding something of your own to it
15. Avoid short, generic replies such as, "I agree." You should include why you agree or add to the previous point
16. Always be respectful of others' opinions even when they differ from your own
17. When you disagree with someone, you should express your differing opinion in a respectful, non-critical way
18. Do not make personal or insulting remarks
19. Be open-minded
20. **IMPORTANT NOTE: IF YOU ARE NOT RESPECTFUL TO OTHERS ON DISCUSSION BOARDS, WE WILL 1) WARN YOU TO CHANGE YOUR TONE/WORDS/APPROACH VIA EMAIL AND IF THE BEHAVIOR CONTINUES 2) WILL NOT GIVE YOU CREDIT FOR THE DISCUSSION POST IN**

WHICH YOU WERE DISRESPECTFUL.

- o Disrespect includes personal attacks or insults, cursing, etc.

#### **GRADING:**

**Points accumulated over the course add up to an overall grade which is calculated out of the total point score. Percentages of out of the total grade are used to calculate your final grade. Grades are composed of:**

Percentage calculations are as follows:

A 93–100 A– 90–92 B+ 87–89 B 83–86 B– 80–82 C+ 77–79 C 70–76 C– 65–69 D+ 63–64 D 61–62 E 60\*

#### **Assignment types:**

Weekly Quizzes 15 pts. Midterm

100 pts. Secondary Exam 100 pts.

each Personal assignments 10-30

Pts. Group Assignments 20 pts.

Group self Survey 5 pts. 3d Model

Assignments - 10 pts. Final Project

60 pts. Discussion boards 10 pts.

For Information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points:

**<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>**

#### **Group Projects "Analysis and Exchange Presentations"**

There will be online collaborate group projects that you will be responsible for virtually attending. For each group assignment you will use the application "Slack" to collaborate and communicate with your assigned groups. Slack is free software that is compatible with mobile and PC devices. Get it at [slack.com](https://slack.com). The instructor will control and monitor each Slack project and chat to assess student effort and contribution. In these sessions students will be organized into groups that will democratically elect a speaker. This speaker will provide and answer both student and instructor generated questions to the broader class to stimulate discussion.

#### **Make-up Policy:**

There will be no makeup exams, makeup exercises, or makeup assignments without an excused absence. Per University of Florida policy, excused absences (missing a scheduled assignment or exam window) include medical appointments and illness (with doctor's note), deaths in the family (with documentation) and school events (with documentation on school letterhead). If you miss more than two classes without an excused absence you will be docked one letter grade. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

**HONESTY AND ETHICS:** Although study groups and other forms of intellectual interaction outside of class are strongly encouraged, each student is expected to produce independent written work on exams, and other assignments. Copying the published abstract of an article or text from the readings guide is plagiarism; all writings should be in your own words as your own original

work. The same rules of conduct and ethics apply to at-home assignments as to in-class exams. The minimal penalty for using someone else's work is the loss of 15% of the entire course grade. The penalty for collaboration or copying on an exam is a failing course grade (E).

**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.

Course Schedule:

Module	Topics
1	The Human Assemblage
2	Assemblage Theory
3	Cyborgs and Essences
4	Principles of Digital Anthropology
5	Persons and Networks
6	Virtual Worlds Part 1
7	Virtual Worlds Part 2
8	Midterm Exam
9	Creating Virtual Worlds
10	Creating Virtual Worlds Part 2
11	Analyzing Virtual Space
12	Digital Methods for Biological Anthropology
13	Digital Others and Society
14	Emerging Digital Entities
15	Exam 2

The following information is provided in conformance with University Policy:

**Policy related to class attendance, make-up exams, and other work**

Requirements for class attendance, make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the online catalog at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

**Accommodations for students with disabilities**

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Professor when requesting accommodation. Upon receipt of documentation, the Professor will grant the accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow these procedures as early as possible in the semester.<sup>5</sup>

**Online course evaluation process**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester; students will be provided specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students and faculty at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>

Religious Observances Students seeking modification of due dates for assignments and exams for religious reasons (e.g., holiday observances) should contact the Professor and request this modification; it will then be granted.

**Academic Honesty**

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 Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Instances of dishonesty include conducting unauthorized research on the internet and failing to cite sources of information on any

work submitted, as well as unauthorized collaboration with current or former students or others to determine the answers on assignments and exams.

### **Counseling and Emergency Services**

- The University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall,  
352 392 1575  
<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>
- 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, 352 392-1161 -University Police Department 392-1111 (non-emergency); call 9-1-1 for emergencies

### **Electronic Course Reserves**

The electronic course reserve service is 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 UF Disability Resource Center at 352-392-8565 or at [accessuf@dso.ufl.edu](mailto:accessuf@dso.ufl.edu). For general information on course reserves, please contact the Course Reserves Unit at 352-273-2520, or email [ateres@uflib.ufl.edu](mailto:ateres@uflib.ufl.edu). It is best to use the UF (Cisco) VPN client when accessing electronic materials course reserve materials as well as e-books, on-line journals, databases, etc. offered by the library. The VPN client is easily installed and configured, and provides easy access to electronic materials using off-campus computers. For more information on using the VPN client, go to <http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/login/vpn.html>

### **Software Regulations**

All faculty, staff, and students 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.