

SPRING 2018

ANG 6930 SEC 2550

**IADIA: INFRASTRUCTURE, ARCHITECTURE & DEVICES IN AFRICA
SEMINAR IN DESIGN ANTHROPOLOGY**

Dr. Brenda Chalfin

Professor of Anthropology & Director Center for African Studies

Office 427 Grinter, bchalfin@ufl.edu, tel 352-392-2183 Office Hours: Thurs 1-3 and by appt.

Course Overview:

This is an experimental course designed as a laboratory or workshop for exploring new directions in cultural anthropology through the cultivation of interdisciplinary conversations and collaborations with design studies and science studies. Focused on examples from Africa, the course draws theory and methods from allied fields to enlarge the scope of anthropological investigations, deepen anthropology's analytics, and broaden the discipline's impacts through the mobilization of alternative mediums of representation and communication. Using the Design Laboratory as the root metaphor or touchstone for the course and diversifying array of Infrastructure, Architecture and Devices that prevalent in Africa as our field of study, the aim is to improve and innovate our understanding of the nature of contemporary humanness. The course is highly participatory and will depend on intensive exchange and student contributions to the course material and class meetings. Students will be encouraged to draw on their own research sites and interests as well as look at broader comparative cases. In addition to addressing and assessing the fundamentals of design anthropology, students will be exposed to methods of laboratory science and design research and will communicate with students and practitioners in these fields in order to expand their own capacity, skills, and vocabulary for performing research and producing research outcomes that moves beyond the conventions of ethnographic practice. To borrow from Paul Rabinow and George Marcus (2008), the course efforts to work towards the "design of an anthropology of the contemporary." The three central substantive themes of the class are Utilities, Securities, and Humanities. Student collaborations and projects will address these topics.

Course Requirements:

Classroom Participation – 20%

Project 1: Carter Conference – 15%

Project 2: Anthropological Problem Design – 15%

Project 3: Design Practice Final – 30%

Process Diary (500-1000 words, 1-2 links per class session) – 20%

Other Information and Resources

UF Anthropology Department Policy: web.anthro.ufl.edu

UF LIBRARY: <http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/instruct/neworient.html>

UF Grading System: <http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>.

UF Academic Honesty Code: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.htm>

UF Disability Services: <http://www.ufl.edu/disability>

UF Counseling Services: www.council.ufl.edu

UF Student Mental Health Services: www.shcc.ufl.edu/smhs

Course Schedule:

Class 1: Jan 9 IADIA Introduction: Anthropology as Design Lab

Anthropologies of Infrastructure, Architecture and Devices in Africa

Anthropology as a Design Lab: Critical Design Anthropology as Laboratory for Anthropological Redesign
What is Laboratory Learning?

Examples: see Limn on-line <https://limn.it/>

Exercise: Definitions

Discussion: Design Reflections – Read Brent Luvaas

<https://culanth.org/fieldsights/893-design-and-temporality-deviation>

Class 2: Jan 16 Laboratory 1 Building the Conceptual Tool Kit.

This class meeting seeks to provide the preliminary steps in exploring potential common grounds between contemporary anthropological perspectives and conceptual design. The laboratory exercise here is one of ‘distillation’. Step 1 is the distillation of the essential terms and concerns of the contemporary anthropology via Ong&Collier (2005) and experimenting with their application to student research. Step 2 is the distillation of the essential aims and approaches from conceptual design via Dunne&Raby (2013) and their comparison with the aims and approaches of contemporary anthropology.

Readings:

Selections from Ong and Collier (ed.) Global Assemblages (2005, Blackwell) Ong&Collier “Global Assemblages,” Collier&Lakoff “On Regimes of Living,” Rabinow “Midst Anthropology’s Problems,” (read only selected excerpts).

Dunne and Raby Speculative Everything (2013, MIT), Preface, Ch. 1 Beyond Radical Design, Ch.2 A Map of Unreality.

Exercise: (Collaborative) derivation of “anthropological problems” from student research sites.

Discussion: What resonance/dissonance do you find btw Dunne&Raby and anthropological practice, both in the field and beyond?

Class 3: Jan 23 Laboratory 2 - Design + Anthropology

Here we examine current directions and debates in Design Anthropology. Your job is to assess the merits of these interdisciplinary experiments. Two bodies of work will be examined: one from anthropologists (several of them, Africanists) engaging questions of design. The other comes from designers who claim the language of anthropology and ethnography. What do you make of these “compounds”? In this class we also take on the concept of laboratory as filtered through a Latourian anthropology of science.” Bringing together ‘art’and ‘science,’ we consider how the sort of “laboratory learning” cultivated by Latour and Woolgar resonates with design studies and might be applied to the study of Infrastructure, Architecture and Design in Africa (IADIA).

Proposed Design Anthropology Readings:

See Bissell and Glasgow in CA On-line.

<https://culanth.org/fieldsights/883-correspondences-design-and-temporality>

Gunn, Wendy. 2013. *Design Anthropology: Theory and Practice* (2013, Bloomsbury)

Ingold, Tim. 2013. *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art, and Architecture*. London:

Routledge
Vinck, Dominique, ed. 2003. *Everyday Engineering: An Ethnography of Design and Innovation*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Manzini, Ezio. 2015. *Design, When Everybody Designs: An Introduction to Design for Social Innovation*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press

Excerpts from B. Latour & S. Woolgar. *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts*. (Princeton 1986) and B. Latour, *How to Study Science in Action* (Harvard 1999)

Show and Tell: Bring an example of design anthropology, from the readings or elsewhere, that you find engaging, productive, relevant, etc. This can be a formal project or a 'fragment/raw material' that might lend itself to engagement through the tool box of Design Anthropology.

Exhibition: Chalfin and Binjaku "Excrementa Estates" see **Limn 9**

Class 4: Jan 30 – NO CLASS DR. CHALFIN IN SOUTH AFRICA

Class 5: Feb 6 Urban Designs in Kinshasa, Congo: Preparation for Carter Conference

Suggested Reading Deboeck and Plissart, *Kinshasa: Tales of the Invisible City* (2014, Leuven/Cornell).

Film: Cemetery State

Devise Methodology for Carter Conference Engagement

Laboratory 3: CENTER FOR AFRICAN STUDIES CARTER CONFERENCE: Feb 8,9,10

Recommended Sessions to be determined upon receipt of Final Program.

Class 6: Feb. 13 Carter Conference Recap

Design Exercise #1 Workday

Class 7: Feb. 20 Workday

Design Exercise #1 Due

Planning for Project #2

Class 8: Feb 27 Utilities: Collaborative Anthropological Problem Design – Project #2

Spring Break

Class 9: Mar 13 Securities: Collaborative Anthropological Problem Design – Project #2

Guest Lecture, DK Asare, Monday Mar 19

Class 10: Mar 20 Design/Studio Practice with DK Asare

Guest Lecture, Danny Hoffman Visit and Class Lunch Friday, March 23

Class 11: Mar 27 Humanities: Collaborative Anthropological Problem Design – Project #2

Class 12: April 3 Workday Final Projects

Class 13: April 10 Final Presentations