

**San José State University
College of Social Sciences**

**Departments of Anthropology, Geography, & Urban & Regional Planning
ANTH 132 (27059)/GEOG 132 (29177)/URBP 132 (29176) Creating Built Worlds**

Spring 2022

Course and Contact Information

Instructor: Cari Borja
Office Location: Clark Hall 461
Telephone: 510-915-1312
Email: cari.borja@sjsu.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays + Thursdays 1:15-2:15pm
Class Days/Time: Tuesdays + Thursdays 12-1:15pm
Classroom: Clark Hall 204
Prerequisites: Upper division standing

“Give em what they never knew they wanted.” ~ diana vreeland

“Out of nothing, something.” ~ a mantra in my 4th street studio

“The way you do anything is the way you do everything.” ~ tom waits

Course Description

Cross-cultural exploration of material expressions of culture. Analysis of production and consumption of places, shelters, goods and services. Implications for design and policy.

On a more personal note: This class is centered around the three quotes above that have informed my work as an anthropologist, fashion designer, salonniere, strategist and Chief of Staff over the past 20 years. That balance between not knowing and thinking you know, of an idea and a thing, of a singular iteration and a constancy of process ~ is what we will be critically thinking about throughout this semester. Can we as designers ever really know what others want, or think we know what they might want? If we conceive of and make what doesn't exist (yet), how do we create distinct methods of research that help us answer those questions that our prototypes and products, our experiences and expertise, and our platforms solve for?

Design ethnography is the art of learning from the people, culture and contexts you are designing for. If design is in fact a human-centered discipline, the question becomes not only who are the humans we are designing for, but also why and when, how and why. Whether we call this type of research market research, usability research, user experience research, or ethnographic research, such methods can be applied in such a wide array of disciplines.

This course will look at how it is applied by anthropologists, sociologists, journalists and artists more generally in the fields of fashion design, food and film as well as larger corporate entities like Pixar, Apple, Netflix and Intel.

As a designer of things that people use or experience, products and services, you need to understand the various methods of research that can shape your process and outcomes. What are your goals, how will you get there and what happens when you do? At this stage it's all about experimenting and coming up with a set of questions you might be curious about. Then, how might you learn more by interviewing processes and focus groups, and then what? Implement and even changing behavior. This class hopes to ignite your curiosity around how and why we come to make the things we make, by studying the how's and why's of previous designers and visionaries, and how they might have integrated research into their design processes, or not. Ultimately, it is about our own personal explorations of why we do what we do, and how to do it more thoughtfully with an end user in mind, whether to give them what they want or what we think they might want, or to give them something they never knew they wanted.

Course Format

In-person / per SJSU, on-line through Friday, February 11, 2022.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Students who successfully complete this course will:

- 1. Be knowledgeable about the diversity of built environments and material artifacts, and the way they are patterned and can be understood. This outcome will be accomplished through course readings, and demonstrated in essay examinations.**
- 2. Be able to analyze the relationships of artifacts and the built environment to social organization and ideology. This learning outcome will be accomplished through lectures and readings during the entire semester, midterm examination essays, and the final exam project.**
- 3. Be able to analyze aesthetic, functional, adaptive and policy implications of artifacts and the built environment using different theoretical perspectives. This outcome will be accomplished through midterm essays, the final exam project, and an individual term project completed by each student.**
- 4. Be able to create alternative scenarios for artifacts and built environments. This outcome will be accomplished by completion of a final exam design scenario project.**

Required Texts/Readings

Textbooks

Edgerton, David (2007). *The Shock of the Old: Technology and Global History Since 1900*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Murphy, Keith (2015). *Swedish Design: An Ethnography*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Zeisel, John (2006). *Inquiry by Design*, 2nd edition. New York: W. W. Norton Publishers.

Other Referenced Textbooks

Interviewing Users, by Steve Portigal, is a guide to the mindset of a design ethnographer
https://www.academia.edu/34778394/Interviewing_Users

Observing the User Experience, 2nd Edition by Elizabeth Goodman, Mike Kuniavsky and Andrea Moed provides similar information about several of the methods we will use /

<https://www.pdfdrive.com/observing-the-user-experience-second-edition-a-practitioners-guide-to-user-research-d165110205.html>

Other Readings

Fallman, Daniel (2003). *Design-oriented human-computer interaction*. In Proceedings of the SIGCHI conference on Human factors in computing systems (pp. 225-232).

Creating Built Worlds, Anth 132, Spring, 2021 Page 2 of 6

Jupiter, Alex (2017). Jobs To Be Done Framework: Scrapping the persona and approaching product design in a different way. Medium.com

Manzini, Ezio (2015). *Design, When Everybody Designs*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (pp. 121-202)

Ranadive, Ameet (2015). Jobs to Be Done, Milkshakes, and Online Learning. Medium.com

Resmini, Andrea, and Luca Rosati (2012). A brief history of information architecture. *Journal of information architecture*, 3(2).

Rohrer, Christian (2014). When to use which UX research method. NNGroup.com

UXBooth (2018). Complete Beginners Guide to Design Research. UXBooth.com

West, Harry. (2014). A Chain of Innovation: The Creation of Swiffer. *Research-Technology Management*, 57(3), pp 20-23.

*** there will be weekly short videos in lieu (or in addition to) some of the textbook readings...

Library Liaison (Delete if not applicable)

Silke Higgins is our department's library liaison and she can be contacted at silke.higgins@sjsu.edu. She is a graduate of our program and knows the department very well.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Course grades will be based on the following assignments that must be submitted as per the course schedule deadlines. The weighting of assignments follows in parentheses.

1. Conduct a participant **observation** or structured observation per the guidelines that will be provided (20%).

- In this assignment, you will be asked to write a description of an observation of a physical space and the physical artifacts within it. This project will serve as the basis for projects 2 and 3 as well.

2. **Analyze** the results of the observation using a protocol that will be provided. The analysis must also include two specified "deliverables" that facilitate presentation of the analysis (20%).

- In this assignment, you will use an analysis framework delivered by the instructor that will allow you to generate an analysis of the observation you engaged in. The insights you generate will give you inspiration to formulate a design intervention which is the substance of project 3.

3. A **proposal for a design intervention** into the social-environmental setting that has been observed and analyzed that takes the form of a modification to the setting or a "new" artifact that can be incorporated into it (20%).

- Here you will get a chance to put on your designer hat and formulate a design intervention and put into a Google Slides document for you to submit to me.

4. Submit an **essay midterm** that you will have a week to prepare (15%).

5. Submit an **essay final exam** that you will have a week + to prepare (15%).

6. Class Participation (10%).

“Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.”

Final Examination or Evaluation

The final exam is take-home and you will have the questions over a week in advance. It must be submitted by the ending time of the final exam period. This format might change during the semester to a FINAL PRESENTATION instead. TBD.

“Faculty members are required to have a culminating activity for their courses, which can include a final examination, a final research paper or project, a final creative work or performance, a final portfolio of work, or other appropriate assignment.”

Grading Information (Required - Delete the word “Required” in final draft)

The instructor will return materials submitted for grade within 10 days over Canva. The actual grading will also happen on Canva using comments, or comments will be given on assignment 3 over Google Drive. YOU WILL NOT TURN IN PHYSICAL COPIES, NOR RECEIVE PHYSICAL COPIES OF YOUR GRADED WORK. I am happy to discuss student grades during office hours, but I will not do so by phone or email or in class. You will receive detailed feedback on all assignments submitted and you are invited to discuss with the instructor any questions you have about your grade and how we can work together so you learn the most in the class. Along with the feedback you will receive a numerical score on any assignments submitted for grade that corresponds to the following assignment of letter grades. The instructor will assign plus and minus course grades at the end of semester.

Determination of Grades

Course grades will be assigned as follows:

A plus = 98-100% A = 94-97%

A minus = 90-93% B plus = 88-89%

B = 84-87%

B minus = 80-83% C plus = 78-79%

C = 74-77%

C minus = 70-73% D plus = 68-69%

D = 64-67%

D minus = 60-63% F = lower than 60%

Late Papers, Missed Exams. All assignments must be completed during the designated period. You may be allowed to make up an assignment only if (1) you first provide a compelling *and documented* excuse for your absence via email (e.g. family emergency, sickness, injury, etc. and (2) you contact me immediately via text message. You CANNOT SUBMIT THE FINAL PAST THE DESIGNATED PERIOD. Please remember that it is unfair to both your classmates and the instructor to request exceptions to the official examination dates or other assignment deadlines.

Classroom Protocol

Be on time. No cell phone use. Participation is essential.

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9](#), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on [Syllabus Information web page](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>). Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

ANTH / GEOG / URBP 132 Creating Built Worlds, Spring 2022

Course Schedule / subject to change with fair notice, to be emailed/communicated one week in advance

Week/Lesson/Module	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	Th 1/27 (zoom)	Intro / Genevieve Bell's "Context is Everything" ~ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_A2481RJsUg Biography exercise: mapping Gauguin's 1897 " <i>Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?</i> "
2	Tu 2/1 Th 2/3 (zoom)	An Anthropological Approach / Reading: Murphy Ch. 1 Introduction to Built Worlds: Components & Processes Reading: Zeisel Ch. 1 & 2
3	Tu 2/8 Th 2/10 (zoom)	Thinking About Looking: Promises & Pitfalls of Usability Reading Zeisel Chs. 3 & 4 / Thinking About Looking: An Ethnographic Approach and its Implications Reading Zeisel Chs. 5 & 6
4	Tu 2/15 Th 2/17 In-person	Getting Started: Observing Reading: Zeisel Ch. 8, 9, & 13
5	Tu 2/22 Th 2/24	An analysis framework: Jobs To Be Done Reading: Ranadive (2015), Jupiter (2017)
6	Tu 3/1 Tu 3/3	Back to the Built World: Reading: Edgerton Chs. 1-3 Information & Meaning: Agency & Smartness Reading: Edgerton Chs. 6 & 7
7	Tu 3/8 Th 3/10	Information & Meaning: Patterns/Structures Reading: Edgerton Chs. 4-5 Information & Meaning: Agency & Smartness Reading: Edgerton Chs. 6 & 7
8	Tu 3/15 Th 3/17	Creating & Constructing: Technological Evolution OBSERVATION ANALYSIS DUE MIDTERM EXAM DISTRIBUTED Creating & Constructing: Innovation & Users Reading: Edgerton Ch. 8
9	Tu 3/22 Th 3/24	MIDTERMS + presentations DUE
10	NO CLASS Break	Spring Break
11	Tu 4/5 Th 4/7	DESIGN INTERVENTION ASSIGNMENT DISTRIBUTED Built Worlds & the People they Create Reading: Murphy Ch. 2
12	Tu 4/12 Th 4/14	<i>Homo faber: A Designing Species</i> Reading: Murphy Ch. 3

Week/L esson/M odule	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines	
		Designing & Making as Ambiguous Systems Reading: Murphy Ch. 4 A case study in product design: Harry (2014)	
13	Tu 4/19 Th 4/21	Senses, Proxemics, and Materializing Readings: Murphy Ch. 5 and Zeisel Chs. 7 & 14, Manzini Chs. 6-8	
14	Tu 4/26 Th 4/28	Introduction to building digital worlds and information architecture Reading: Resmini (2012) and Fallman (2003)	
15	Tu 5/3 Th 5/5	Introduction to UX Research in Industry Reading: UXBooth (2018) & Rohrer (2014)	
16	Tu 5/10 Th 5/12	Industry Panel, TBD Final Presentations	
Final Exam		TBD	