

# Syllabus

## Design Anthropology

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ANTH 4701/5110 | Dr. Christina Wasson | University of North Texas  
Fall 2016 | W 6-8:50pm | Env 115

### Course Description

In recent years, ethnography has become popular with designers of products and technologies as a way of learning about the experience of the users. This research approach has been applied to such diverse problems as:

- How to design office environments that encourage groupwork and collaboration
- How to design websites that fit the “mental models” and usage patterns of their target audiences
- How to design museum exhibits that maximize the engagement between visitors and displays

“Design anthropology” is a significant field of employment for those who wish to work in applied anthropology as well as design. In this course, students learn the fundamentals of the field. By collaborating on an applied project, they gain practice in applied research methods and video ethnography. Since students come from a mix of anthropology, design, and other disciplinary backgrounds, they also learn to engage in cross-disciplinary collaboration. Furthermore, they gain experience in working with clients to translate research into practical applications. Methodology and practice are situated in theoretical contexts through weekly discussion of readings in design anthropology.

In fall 2016, the class project will be an exploratory ethnographic study to generate a foundational understanding of how different user groups might make use of a planned language archive for South Asian languages. The language archive is being developed under the guidance of Shobhana Chelliah, professor of linguistics at UNT. Dr. Chelliah is therefore the “client” for the class project and we will be collaborating with her. This project will lay the groundwork for future studies that take a deeper look at the issues surrounding the design and use of the planned language archive. The language archive is called the Computational Resource for South Asian Languages, or CoRSAL for short. It will be free and open access.

In spring 2017, a Design class at the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) will use findings from our class to develop design recommendations for the language archive. The IIT professor, Santosh Basapur, and I will create communication channels between our two classes.

For more information about user-centered design of language archives, see <https://designinglanguagearchives.com>. This website presents findings from my prior research on this topic.

### Office Hours and Communication with Instructor

My office is Chilton 330D. My office hours are Wednesdays 3-5. I would also be happy to meet at other times. You can make an appointment by calling me at 940 565 2752, or emailing me at [christina.wasson@unt.edu](mailto:christina.wasson@unt.edu).

### Online Course Resources

**Blackboard Learn:** Course readings will be available in Blackboard Learn. We will not use Blackboard Learn for any other purpose.

**Google Drive:** We will store all field notes and video recordings on the Google Drive for [untdesignanth2016@gmail.com](mailto:untdesignanth2016@gmail.com). The password will be shared in class. The data on this drive are CONFIDENTIAL. Do not show them to anyone, or share the password with anyone. Maintaining

confidentiality is a basic principle of ethics in anthropology. Our agreement with the UNT IRB is that the data will only be shared among class members, myself, and Dr. Chelliah.

**Email List:** For communications outside of the class meeting time, we will use an email list. The address is [design-anth@unt.edu](mailto:design-anth@unt.edu).

## Required Texts

A required set of articles is available on Blackboard Learn. The reading assignments for each week are summarized in the course schedule, below, and article references are provided in detail at the end of the syllabus. Readings are **not** optional. Students will be thoroughly tested on them.

## Project Overview: Exploratory User Research for CoRSAL (Computational Resource for South Asian Languages)

### Research Questions

The overarching research question for this project is:

- What are the needs of each major user group with regard to this future language archive?

Within this overarching question, we will investigate a number of subquestions:

- What is the relationship of these users to South Asian languages?
- What are their current cultural practices of depositing, accessing, using and sharing information about these languages, as relevant?
- What kinds of content would be most important to these users for a future language archive?
- What are their technological constraints and preferences? (Internet access, mobile app vs computer app, etc.)
- To the extent that these users currently use language archives, how well do the language archives meet their needs?
  - What problems do they encounter, and how do they work around those problems?
  - What would they like language archives to do that they currently don't do?

### Research Participants

Shobhana Chelliah has identified four main user groups for CoRSAL:

- Language communities
- Computational linguists
- Other linguists who want to conduct research
- Linguists who are depositors to the archive and/or archive managers

We will conduct research with representatives from each of these user groups. I will give you the names of people to contact, based on information from Shobhana.

Interviews will be conducted with at least 3 representatives from each user group.

### Fieldwork Methods

Students will be divided into four research teams, one for each user group. They will pair up in conducting each interview. Interviews will last 1-2 hours. We will discuss the interview guide and semi-structured interview techniques in class.

Some interviews will be face-to-face and some will be long distance. They will all be recorded. Here is a summary:

	<i>User Group</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Methods</i>	<i>Recording Technique</i>
1	Language community	Northeast India	Interviews via phone	Audio recording
2	Computational linguists	Some at UNT Some elsewhere	Interviews, including walk-throughs of existing archives	F2F: Video recording Skype: Call Recorder/ Screencast-o-matic
3	Other linguists	Some at UNT Some elsewhere	Interviews, including walk-throughs of existing archives	F2F: Video recording Skype: Call Recorder/ Screencast-o-matic
4	Linguist depositors and archive managers	UNT (members of Shobhana's research team)	Interviews, including walk-throughs of depositing and archiving activities	Video recording

### **Recording**

Face-to-face interviews will be videorecorded, using your own camera or one that you borrow from me.

Interviews with community members in India will be conducted via telephone (you can arrange with Christina to use her office or home phone, if necessary). In these language communities, phone access is apparently easier than Internet access. Also receiving a phone call is free, while using the Internet is not free.

All other interviews with people who are not local should be conducted using Skype, and recorded using software such as Call Recorder for Mac, or Screencast-o-matic for Windows.

### **Interview Methods**

The interview methods will vary according to the user group. For groups 2-4, the interviews will include walk-throughs where the research participants show you how they use language archives and other relevant software. The research participants should therefore be interviewed at their computers.

### **Documentation**

- After each interview, the pair of students who conducted the interview will write detailed field notes.
- They will place their field notes and recordings on the Google Drive for [untdesignanth2016@gmail.com](mailto:untdesignanth2016@gmail.com). The password will be shared in class. As noted earlier, these data are confidential. Do not show them to anyone other than class members and Dr. Chelliah.

### **Analysis**

- Analysis of the field data will begin when the research teams report on their fieldwork.
- The initial analysis process will be done in class, brainstorming as a collective group. It will follow a trajectory of identifying instances, patterns, and models, and then using the models to develop design implications.
- Through this process, students will develop a list of topics to cover in the client report.
- Each student will select a chapter to write, or possibly students will team up to write chapters, depending on how many topics we end up with.
- Students will use the online software Dedoose to complete the analysis process, examining everyone's field notes and recordings to identify overall patterns regarding the topic of their chapter.

### **Report**

Students will use the results of their analysis in Dedoose to prepare a chapter for the final report. They will also present the information verbally during the final client presentation, with a couple of PowerPoint slides.

## **Client Meetings**

We will have three client meetings during the semester. On each occasion, Shobhana Chelliah will join us along with the students in her LING 4130/5400 class. It just so happens that this class meets at the same time as our class, and there are interesting overlaps between them.

LING 4130/5400 focuses on the process of language documentation. Students will take linguistic data through the whole trajectory from recording to analysis to preparation of a packet that can be uploaded to a digital repository. We thought it would be interesting for students in each class to learn about each others' work. Our interactions will promote interdisciplinarity and help each class gain a broader perspective on their activities.

Our meetings will be as follows:

1. An initial meeting, in **Week 2, Sep 7**. This will be an opportunity for Shobhana to explain the background of CoRSAL and for everyone to meet.
2. A meeting halfway through the project to check in, make sure we're on the right track, and get ideas. This is the day the research teams will present their data. **Week 8, Oct 19**.
3. Our presentation of findings to Shobhana and her class. Shobhana's class will also present the results of their work. **Week 15, Dec 7**.

## **Course Requirements**

### **1. Teamwork and participation (20%).**

One of the key skills of a practitioner in applied anthropology is the ability to work well as part of a team. In this class, you will be evaluated on your teamwork skills, including:

- Active and thoughtful participation in class discussions, both about class readings and about the class project
- Staying focused on the client's needs
- Good communication and collaboration with your research team
- Equal distribution of work among members of your research team
- Carrying out your responsibilities in a timely manner
- Good communication with the project leader/professor

Obviously, if you are absent you cannot contribute to discussions, so a high level of attendance is required for a good grade. If you have more than one unexcused absence, your grade will go down. If you miss the first class, you may be dismissed from class. If you miss two out of the first three classes, you may be dismissed from class.

Students are responsible for all materials and announcements presented in class, whether or not they were there. If you miss a day, you should first obtain class notes from a classmate. If you still have questions after that, you are welcome to contact me. Failure to stay current on all class material and assignments, regardless of attendance, will be cause for dismissal from class.

### **2. Two take-home essay quizzes (15% x 2).**

These quizzes will test you on the readings. Instructions for each will be handed out two weeks before they are due.

### **3. Class project (50%).**

The class project consists of a series of activities. Together these will add up to 50% of your course grade. For most of the activities, you will turn in several items. You will receive a grade when you have turned in all items for that activity.

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Items Graded</i>	<i>Due Date</i>	<i>% of Grade</i>
1. IRB tutorial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IRB Completion Certificate</li> </ul>	Sep 7	N/A (gateway assignment)
2. Interviews of your research team (3 or more)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Field notes of all interviews uploaded to Google Drive</li> <li>Recordings of all interviews uploaded to Google Drive</li> <li>Presentation to class on highlights of interviews</li> </ul>	Oct 19	30%
3. Report chapter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter of written report</li> <li>Slides for client presentation</li> <li>Verbal Presentation (if relevant)</li> </ul>	Nov 16	20%

## Plagiarism Policy

The department of anthropology considers graduate students to be new members of the community of professional anthropologists, who are thus held to the high ethical standards of practicing professionals. They are expected to follow the American Anthropological Association's code of ethics: "*In their capacity as researchers, anthropologists are subject to the ethical principles guiding all scientific and scholarly conduct. They must not plagiarize, nor fabricate or falsify evidence, or knowingly misrepresent information or its source*" (<http://ethics.americananthro.org/category/statement/>). Any work not meeting this standard will be evaluated in a hearing before the student; infractions will merit dismissal from the master's program.

For more information on paper writing, including how to avoid plagiarism, and how to use citations, see <http://anthropology.unt.edu/resources-writingpaper.php>. For information on the University's policies regarding academic integrity and dishonesty, see the UNT Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities, <http://www.unt.edu/csrr/>.

## Non-Discrimination Policy

It is the policy of the University of North Texas not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability (where reasonable accommodations can be made), disabled veteran status or veteran of the Vietnam era status in its educational programs, activities, admissions or employment policies. In addition to complying with federal and state equal opportunity laws and regulations, the university through its diversity policy declares harassment based on individual differences (including sexual orientation) inconsistent with its mission and education goals. Direct questions and concerns to the Equal Opportunity Office, 940 565 2456, or the Dean of Students, 940 565 2648. TDD access is available through Relay Texas, 800 735 2989.

Anthropology does not discriminate on the basis of an individual's disability as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. The program provides academic adjustments and aid to individuals with disabilities in its programs and activities. If you have a disability, you are strongly advised to contact the Office of Disability Accommodations (UU 318A) or by telephone at 940 565 4323. **It is the responsibility of the student to make the necessary arrangements with the instructors.**

## Course Schedule

	Reading Topics and Assignments	Readings to Complete Before Class	Project Activities During Class
<b>WEEK 1</b> Aug 31	Introduction and Course Objectives <b>Receive Instructions for IRB Online Tutorial</b>	N/A	Introduction to Project
<b>WEEK 2</b> Sep 7	User-Centered Design of Language Archives <b>Completion Certificate Due for IRB Online Tutorial</b>	Wasson et al. 2016 Browse <a href="https://designinglanguagearchives.com">https://designinglanguagearchives.com</a>	<b>6:30-7:30 Client Meeting, Discovery Park D-212</b> Choose Research Team
<b>WEEK 3</b> Sep 14	Design Anthropology + Language Archives	Wasson 2000 Language Archive Review (instructions handed out in Week 2)	Interview Training
<b>WEEK 4</b> Sep 21	Design Anthropology + Language Archives <b>Receive Quiz 1 Instructions</b>	Wasson 2002 Shilton and Srinivasan 2007	Fieldnotes Training
<b>WEEK 5</b> Sep 28	Design Anthropology	Ladner 2014 Wasson and Squires 2012	
<b>WEEK 6</b> Oct 5	Design Anthropology Case Studies <b>Quiz 1 Due</b>	Ray et al. 2016 Birtel et al. 2016 Yury 2015	
<b>WEEK 7</b> Oct 12	Analysis Methods + User Experience	Ryan and Bernard 2003 Baxter et al. 2015	Training in Analysis
<b>WEEK 8</b> Oct 19	N/A		<b>6:30-9:20 Client Meeting, ENV 115</b> All Research Teams Present Data Class Analyzes Data
<b>WEEK 9</b> Oct 26	Cog Psych in Design and Its Critique <b>Receive Quiz 2 Instructions</b>	Norman 1988 Bannon 1991	
<b>WEEK 10</b> Nov 2	Participatory Design + Design Thinking	Brown 2008 Gregory 2003	Class Analyzes Data Prepare Client Report and Presentation Assign Chapters for Client Report
<b>WEEK 11</b> Nov 9	Recent Critical Approaches <b>Quiz 2 Due</b>	Leach and Wilson 2013 Hasbrouck 2015 Peake 2015	Prepare Client Report and Presentation
<b>WEEK 12</b> Nov 16	<b>Report Chapters and PPT Slides Due</b>	N/A	NO CLASS – AAA Meetings

<b>WEEK 13</b> Nov 23	<b>Revisions to Chapters and PPT Slides Due</b>	N/A	<b>NO CLASS – Thanksgiving?</b> Finalize Client Report and Presentation
<b>WEEK 14</b> Nov 30		N/A	Rehearse Presentation Send Report to Client
<b>WEEK 15</b> Dec 7		N/A	<b>6:30-9:20 Client Presentation, Discovery Park D-212</b>
<b>FINALS</b> Dec 14			Due to our client's travel schedule, the class will be completed in Week 15

## Full References for Readings

- Bannon, Liam. 1991. From human factors to human actors: The role of psychology and human-computer interaction studies in system design. In *Design at work: Cooperative design of computer systems*, ed. Joan Greenbaum and Morton Kyng. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 25-44.
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- Ladner, Sam. 2014. Chapter 3: Managing a private-sector ethnography project. In *Practical ethnography: A guide to doing ethnography in the private sector*. London: Routledge, 39-54.
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- Wasson, Christina and Susan Squires. 2012. Localizing the global in the field of technology design. In *Applying anthropology in the global village*, ed. Christina Wasson, Mary Odell Butler and Jacqueline Copeland-Carson. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 251-284.
- Yury, Carrie. 2015. Breaking it down: Integrating agile methods and ethnographic praxis. *EPIC Forum*, 4 August. <https://www.epicpeople.org/breaking-it-down-integrating-agile-methods-and-ethnographic-praxis/>.