

Spring 2024 Syllabus
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

COURSE INFORMATION

GRA 6930 Seminar

Meets Thursdays | periods 8–10 | 03:00pm–6:00pm | IFH 110

INSTRUCTOR

Frederick M. C. van Amstel (he/him/his)

Personal website: <http://fredvanamstel.com>

Office hours: Tuesdays 03:00pm – 05:00 pm or by appointment (link can be found in Canvas)

Preferred written communication channel: fvanamstel@ufl.edu

Alternative messaging channel: Microsoft Teams

Expected answer time: 2–6 hours within business hours (8AM–5PM)

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge that for thousands of years the area now comprising the state of Florida has been and continues to be home to many Native Nations. I further recognize that the main campus of the University of Florida is in the heartland territory of two historically-known Native societies: those of the Potano and of the Alachua Seminole. The Potano, of Timucua affiliation, lived here in the Alachua region from before European arrival until the destruction of their towns in the early 1700s. The Seminole, also known as the Alachua Seminole, established towns here shortly after but were forced from the land as a result of a series of wars with the United States known as the Seminole Wars (based on the Smathers Libraries land acknowledgement).

PEDAGOGICAL NOTE

As a design educator, I wish to train my students to become conscious political subjects in society. Henceforth, most of my assignments request students to respectfully learn with a different kind of person, culture, or technology they are used to. With that, I cultivate an atmosphere that favors creativity as much as criticism. I address creativity through engagements with artistic movements and criticism through reading and discussing social theory.

SYLLABUS CHANGES

Please note that the instructor may need to make modifications to the course syllabus and may do so at any time. Notice of such changes will be announced as quickly as possible through email & Canvas.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

GRA 6930 Seminar catalog description: Contemporary issues pertaining to design and visual communications and related areas. Discussion of literature, development of research questions, and framing methodologies. Corequisite: GRA 6931c: Research and Practice.

LEARNING JOURNEY MAP

The seminar is organized as an expansive learning journey that will begin with the barebones of becoming a design researcher and end with joining a design research community. The goal of the seminar is to prepare students to become self-directed researchers who can contribute to an existing or develop a new design research program. Each class will offer the opportunity to discuss a mandatory reading assignment and participate in a subject-related design experiment. The first 9 seminars will be organized by the instructor, whereas the last 6 will be organized by the student teams.

The main graded assignment consists of a written summary of the seminar led by the student. These seminars must include a reading assignment and a design experiment. Additionally, they may include project presentations, annotated portfolios, or any material the student would like to discuss with the class. Before this final assignment, students will be graded by their participation in the instructor-led seminars. Spoken or written participations are expected. To make a written contribution, students must discuss the reading assignment text with ChatGPT and send their conversation history link. This chat will prepare the student for the in-class face-to-face debate. You can copy and paste the reading text in the chat box to prepare ChatGPT for the conversation.

If you miss a class, you can still get the grade if you submit a conversation history with 20 prompts minimum. ChatGPT is a generative artificial intelligence that is capable of doing college assignments at a reasonable level. Since it cannot be detected, it has become the ultimate cheating tool. Instead of ruling out its use in this course, the pedagogical approach here is to put its capabilities in check during in-class debates. Pay attention to its biases, default answers, inability to deal with nuance, and lack of criticality. You can explore these shortcomings in the chats you have with it. Never take anything that ChatGPT generates for granted. To stay on the safe side, always cross-check with alternative sources.

SEMESTER OUTLINE

Week 1 – 01/11/2024 – Becoming a design researcher

Design experiment: Reading a professor of design's CV and speculating on your own journey

Reading assignment for this class:

Goldschmidt, G. (2013). How I became a design researcher. In ICoRD'13: Global Product Development (pp. 3–13). Springer India.

Week 2 – 01/18/2024 – Positionality, positioning, and critical consciousness

Design experiment: I am my trash. Bring to class your recyclable trash accumulated in a week.

Reading assignment for this class:

Moses, T. and Mercer, L. E. "Examining the Influence of Positionality on the Facilitation of Design Processes." *Dialectic*, 3.1 (2021): pgs. 97–122.
<https://doi.org/10.3998/dialectic.14932326.0003.105>

Week 3 – 01/25/2024 – Contemporary expansion of the design object

Design experiment: Mapping things as network of relations and processes

Reading assignment for this class:

Van Amstel, Frederick M.C. (2015) *Expansive design: designing with contradictions*. Doctoral thesis, University of

Twente. <https://fredvanamstel.com/publications/expansive-design-designing-with-contradictions-2> p. 146–166

Week 4 – 02/01/2024 – Who's who in design research: mapping an expanding field

Design experiment: Mapping design research publications, conferences, schools, and firms

Reading assignment for this class:

Engholm, I. (2011). Positions in contemporary design research. *Swedish Design Research Journal*, 2(11), 48–62. <https://svid.ep.liu.se/issue/view/128>

Week 5 – 02/08/2024 – Long-term design research programs

Design experiment: Analysing and describing a design research program

Reading assignment for this class:

Redstrom, J. (2017). Chapter 5: Programs. In: *Making design theory*. MIT Press. p. 83–111

Week 6 – 02/15/2024 – Designing design at different levels of reality

Design experiment: Building an analogical generative Artificial Intelligence machine

Reading assignment for this class:

Stappers, P., and Visser, F. (2014) Meta-levels in design research: Resolving some confusions, in Lim, Y., Niedderer, K., Redström, J., Stolterman, E. and Valtonen, A. (eds.), *Design's Big Debates – DRS International Conference 2014*, 16–19 June, Umeå, Sweden. <https://dl.designresearchsociety.org/drs-conference-papers/drs2014/researchpapers/63>

Week 7 – 02/22/2024 – Design thinking and the empirical studies of design practice

Design experiment: The oppressed designer workshop

Reading assignment for this class:

Saito, Carmem; Van Amstel, Frederick M. C.; Serpa, Bibiana O; Angelon, Rafaela. Wicked rituals of contemporary design thinking. (2023). In: Mehl, Johanna and Höfler, Carolin (Eds). *Attending [to] Futures. Matters of Politics in Design Education, Research, Practice*. Hamburg: Adocs. p. 150–161. <http://doi.org/10.53198/9783943253726>

Week 8 – 02/29/2024 – Interaction analysis of collective design bodies

Design experiment: Qualitative data analysis exercise using the previous workshop' recordings

Reading assignment for this class:

Angelon, Rafaela and Van Amstel, Frederick M.C. (2021) Monster aesthetics as an expression of decolonizing the design body. *Art, Design & Communication in Higher Education*, 20(1), pp. 83–102(20). https://doi.org/10.1386/adch_00031_1

Week 9 – 03/07/2024 – Research-through design and knowledge creation

Design experiment: Lego Serious Play workshop

Reading assignment for this class:

Frayling, Christopher, 1994, Printed Publication, *Research in Art and Design* (Royal College of Art Research Papers, Vol 1, No 1, 1993/4)

<https://researchonline.rca.ac.uk/id/eprint/384>

Week 10 – 03/14/2024 – Spring break

Week 11 – 03/21/2024 – Student-led seminar #1 – topic to-be-decided (TBD)

Week 12 – 03/28/2024 – Student-led seminar #2 – topic TBD

Week 13 – 04/04/2024 – Student-led seminar #3 – topic TBD

Week 14 – 04/11/2024 – Student-led seminar #4 – topic TBD

Week 15 – 04/18/2024 – Student-led seminar #5 – topic TBD

Week 16 – 04/25/2024 – Student-led seminar #6 – topic TBD – Last day of class

GRADING & ATTENDANCE

Grading will be based on three elements:

- Spoken or written contributions to the discussion of reading assignments (36% – 4 points per class)
- Written summary of the seminar led by the student (64%)

Grades will follow this pattern:

	MEANING	% SCALE	GPA
A	Consistently Exceeds ALL expectations	95 – 100%	4.0
A-		90 – 94%	3.67
B+		87 – 89%	3.33
B	Meets, but does not exceed, ALMOST ALL to ALL expectations	84 – 86%	3.0
B-		80 – 83%	2.67
C+	Meets MANY to MOST expectations	77 – 79%	2.33
C	Meets SOME to MANY expectations	74 – 76%	2.0

C-	Does not meet MOST or ALL expectations	70 – 73%	1.67
D+		67 – 69%	1.33
D		64 – 66%	1.0
D-		60 – 63	.67
E		<60	0

Attendance is required for this class. Late arrivals (after class begins) or early departures (before class is dismissed or ends) are tolerated. If you miss a class and lose the opportunity to have your participation graded on the spot, you can submit a written reflection about a similar design experiment that you have participated previously. This reflection shall be underscored by the reading assignment, including quotes when relevant. The deadline for this is two weeks after the absence.

It is your responsibility to keep track of your attendance record in Canvas. Requirements for class attendance, make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies. Students who participate in official athletic or scholastic extracurricular activities are permitted twelve (12) scholastic day absences per semester without penalty. Along with more information on how UF assigns grade points, you'll find these by visiting:
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/graduate/regulations/>

UF POLICIES THAT APPLIES TO THIS COURSE

Non-Discrimination Policy (Regulation Number 1.006): “The University shall actively promote equal opportunity policies and practices conforming to laws against discrimination. The University is committed to nondiscrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations, genetic information and veteran status as protected under the Vietnam Era Veterans’ Readjustment Assistance Act.” <https://policy.ufl.edu/regulation/1-006/>

Multicultural environment: The Center for Inclusion and Multicultural Engagement <http://www.multicultural.ufl.edu/> has the following offices to provide student support and foster a multicultural campus environment: Office of Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer+ Student Engagement, Office of Black Student Engagement, Office of Hispanic-Latinx Student Engagement, and Office of Asian Pacific Islander Desi Student Engagement.

Harassment: UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. More information at <http://www.hr.ufl.edu/eo/sexharassment.html>

Title IX: it is a federal law that requires officials with the authority to take action, to report violations of the gender equity policy. Officials with authority must report these violations to the Title IX Coordinator or their deputies. The obligation to report applies whenever an Official with Authority receives, in the course and scope of employment, information about the alleged misconduct and policy violation. The report must include all information known to the employee which would be relevant to an investigation or redress of the incident, including whether the alleged victim has expressed a desire for confidentiality. Please know that your instructor in this course is considered an Official with Authority who is required to report violations of the gender equity policy. You can also find details of specialist support services at the end of the syllabus. You might not need them, but you might know someone who does. The Office for Accessibility and Gender Equity provides support to anyone affected by sexual or gender-based misconduct, harassment, or discrimination. <https://titleix.ufl.edu>

Academic Freedom and Responsibility: “In the development of knowledge, research endeavors, and creative activities, the faculty and student body must be free to cultivate a spirit of inquiry and scholarly criticism and to examine ideas in an atmosphere of freedom and confidence. The faculty must be free to engage in scholarly and creative activity and publish the results in a manner consistent with professional obligations. A similar atmosphere is required for university teaching. Consistent with the exercise of academic responsibility, a teacher must have freedom in the classroom in discussing academic subjects selecting instructional materials and determining grades. The university student must likewise have the opportunity to study a full spectrum of ideas, opinions, and beliefs, so that the student may acquire maturity for analysis and judgment. Objective and skillful exposition of such matters is the duty of every instructor.” <https://policy.ufl.edu/regulation/7-018>

Academic integrity: if you use words, images, or ideas that are not your own, you must cite them. Claiming the work of others as your own is a serious breach of professional ethics and will result in a failing grade in this class. The UF Honor Code specifies a number of other behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions.

Academic honesty: the act of lying, cheating, or stealing academic information so that one gains academic advantage is strongly discouraged. As a University of Florida student, you are expected to neither commit nor assist another in committing an academic honesty violation. Additionally, it is the student’s duty to report observed academic honesty violations. These can include: cheating, copying ideas, plagiarism, bribery, misrepresentation, conspiracy, or fabrication. You can find UF’s Student Conduct Code, here.

Course evaluations: Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Click here for guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner. Students will be notified when the evaluation

period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students here.

Disruptive behavior: All member(s) of the University who intentionally act to impair, interfere with, or obstruct the mission, purposes, order, operations, processes, and functions of the University shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action by University authorities for misconduct, as set forth in the applicable rules of the Board of Regents and the University and state law governing such actions. Be advised that you can and will be dismissed from class if you engage in disruptive behavior. For more information, visit: <https://policy.ufl.edu/regulation/1-008/>

Student Privacy: There are federal laws protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, see <https://registrar.ufl.edu/ferpa/>

In Class Recording: Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. For more information, visit: <https://aa.ufl.edu/policies/in-class-recording>

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Students studying in the Design and Visual Communications MFA program are required to have appropriate hardware, software, and access to the Internet and perform design and design-related tasks, including access to UF's Canvas, UF GSuite/Google Drive, Teams, OneDrive, and Adobe Creative Cloud. Because computer access is an institutional requirement, computer costs are designated as allowable costs for students who qualify for Financial Aid. Accordingly, Student Financial Affairs has added costs for access to a computer into budgets. For more information, contact your financial adviser in the Office of Student Financial Affairs directly. Adobe CC Discounted for Students is a special UF student pricing on a one-year subscription to the entire Adobe Creative Cloud Suite. To purchase your Adobe CC Discounted for Students subscription, please log in at <https://portal.helpdesk.ufl.edu> and if eligible to purchase click on "Eligible, take me to OnTheHub" button. The service will run for one year from the time the software is activated. Distribution is provided by Kivuto/OnTheHub who is an authorized distributor for Adobe not affiliated with UF Computing Help Desk.

With questions related to your computer system and technology in the Graphic Design area, you can contact our Lab Technician, Michael Christopher (mchristo@ufl.edu). He can help diagnose problems and provide solutions.

All course readings are posted on Canvas.

UF RESOURCES

Students Requiring Accommodation: Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/> It's important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Teaching Center: General study skills and tutoring. <https://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/> or Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420.

Mental health support: The university has several services to support student's mental health. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact U Matter, We Care at umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student. If you need guidance yourself, please see the Counseling and Wellness Center: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/services/> or 392-1575.

Writing. If you are struggling with writing in English, please seek guidance from the Writing Studio at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 2215 Turlington Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

Career Connections Center: Career assistance and counseling services. <https://career.ufl.edu/> Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601.

Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. <https://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>