

1 Anthropology 315/515: Introduction to the Anthropology of Information and Networks

Fall 2006

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:00-2:20

Herman Brown 453

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Introduction: An introduction to the historical, philosophical and anthropological study of software and networks. There is no disciplinary center to the class, the title notwithstanding: readings come from economics, anthropology, sociology, science studies, philosophy, political science, popular journalism, science and engineering.

Prerequisites: This is a research seminar-style, reading and writing-focused class. It is unofficially limited in size to 15 people. Priority is given to Anthropology majors, to those who have taken 1 or more Anthropology classes in the past, and to juniors, seniors, and graduate students. Be prepared to come to class regularly, and engage in discussion of the required reading. Students who show initiative and enthusiasm will be rewarded.

Online Component: As part of the research requirements of this course, you will be expected to engage in any of the various online activities that are studied in the course—including but not restricted to: blogs, wikis, social software, games, free and open source software, etc. You are not expected to learn detailed technical knowledge of anything, but nor will you be discouraged from doing so.

Requirements:

1. Reading and Discussion of around 100 pages of reading per week (sometimes more, sometimes less; readings vary, from popular to philosophical, so the amount will change accordingly).
2. Each week, one or two people will be designated as “discussion leaders” for the class, and will be required to pose questions and kickstart the discussion.
3. Mandatory class attendance and participation. This is not a lecture course, even though it may contain lecturing, so your participation will determine the content of the course, and a large portion of your grade.
4. Writing assignments will be issued periodically, 2-3 during the course of the semester. These assignments will be collaborative and experimental, and the grading will reflect that.
5. A research project, due at the end of the semester; a more conventional research paper on a topic TBD.

Nota Bene:

- Plagiarism is Evil. Cite *all* of your sources.
- The Library is Good. Everything is (still) not on the internet. Learn to use the library, and your life will be richer and more complete.

Grading:

Attendance and Participation in discussion: 30%

Writing Assignments: 45%

Research project: 25%

Required Texts at the Bookstore:

- William Aspray and Martin Campbell-Kelley, *Computer: A History of the Information Machine*, Basic Books 1996.
- Janet Abbate, *Inventing the Internet*, MIT Press, 1999.
- Mitchell Waldrop, *The Dream Machine: JCR Licklider and the Revolution that made computing personal* Viking Books, 2001
- Steven Weber, *The Success of Open Source*, Harvard University Press, 2004.

Other Required Readings: Other required readings are listed in the schedule. They are either available online, or will be posted at

<http://kelty.rice.edu/315/> (password to be given in class only).

You can also see last year's schedule at <http://kelty.rice.edu/315.05/> to get an idea of the details of the course

Class Mailing List: anthroinfo-l@mailman.rice.edu

Course Topics:

The culture, history and meaning of information and networks

History of computing, software, and the Internet

The cultural Significance of Free Software/Open Source

The political economy of intellectual property

Social software and the meaning of social, society and community

Other Important Information:

Incompletes are not given.

Honor Code issues: Groups will be graded as a whole, each member will receive the same grade regardless of actual or perceived contribution. Renegotiation of group members is possible, if conflicts other than scheduling occur. In the case of work done in groups, the division of labor will be up to the students, and any further honor code guidelines will be provided if requested.

Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with me during the first two weeks of class. All discussions will remain confidential. Students with disabilities will need to also contact Disability Support Services in the Ley Student Center.

2 Readings from previous years

- Abbate, Janet *Inventing the Internet*, MIT Press, 1999. Chapter 1.
- Agre, Philip “Yesterday’s Tomorrow,” *Times Literary Supplement*, 3 July 1998, pages 2-3.
- Albert-Laszlo, Barabasi, *Linked : the new science of networks* Cambridge, Mass. : Perseus Pub., 2002.
- Arendt, Hannah *The Human Condition*
- Aspray, William and Martin Campbell-Kelley, *Computer: A History of the Information Machine*, Basic Books 1996
- Benkler, Yochai “Coase’s Penguin, or, Linux and the Nature of the Firm,” 112 Yale Law Journal Winter 2002 available at <http://www.law.nyu.edu/benkclery/>
- Benkler, Yochai ”Sharing Nicely: On shareable goods and the emergence of sharing as a modality of economic production” at <http://benkler.org/SharingNicely.html>
- Boyle, James “A Politics of Intellectual Property: Environmentalism for the Net?” by James Boyle, at <http://www.law.duke.edu/boylesite/intprop.htm> or at <http://www.james-boyle.com>
- Boyle, James “Second Enclosure Movement and the construction of the public domain” available at <http://www.law.duke.edu/pd/papers/boyle.pdf>
- Brooks, Fred *The Mythical Man-Month*, Reading, Mass. : Addison-Wesley Pub. Co., c1995
- Brown, John Seely and Paul Duguid, *The Social Life of Information*, Harvard Business School Press, 2000.
- Byfield, Ted “Control.Shift.Commons,” an interview with James Boyle, by Ted Byfield, *Mute Magazine*, July 20, Issue 20.
- Coase, Ronald “The Nature of the Firm” in *The Firm, The Market, and The Law* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.
- Coleman, *The Social Construction of Freedom* (PhD Dissertation, University of Chicago, 2005) chapter 6

- David Touretsky's "Gallery of CSS descramblers" at <http://www-2.cs.cmu.edu/~dst/DeCSS/Gallery/>
- Dodge, Martin and Rob Kitchin, *Atlas of Cyberspace* New York: Addison Wesley, 2001. (On Reserve)
- Downey Greg "Virtual Webs, Physical Technologies and Hidden Workers" *Technology and Culture* 42, April 2001.
- Eames, Ray and Charles A *Computer Perspective*, Harvard University Press, 1973.
- Englebart, Douglas the Mother of All Demos <http://sloan.stanford.edu/MouseSite/1968Demo.html>
- Feller, Fitzgerald, Hissam, and Lakhani, *Perspectives on Free and Open Source Software*, MIT Press, 2005.
- Fischer, Michael M.J. "Worlding Cyberspace" in *Emergent Forms of Life and the Anthropological Voice* Duke University Press, 2003 pgs. 261-305.
- Freeman, Carla *High Tech and High Heels*, Chapel Hill: Duke University Press, 2000 pgs 1-20, 141-178
- Galloway, Alex *Protocol, or How control exists after decentralization* MIT Press 2004,
- Geertz, Clifford "The Bazaar Economy: Information and Search in Peasant Marketing," *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 68, No. 2, (May, 1978), pp. 28-32. (JSTOR)
- Ghosh, Rishab Ayer *CODE: Collaborative ownership in the New Economy*, MIT Press, 2005.
- Ghosh, Rishab Ayer "Cooking Pot Markets: an economic model for trade in free goods and services on the internet" *First Monday*, Volume 3, Issue 3, March 2, 1998. At http://www.firstmonday.dk/issues/issue3_3/
- Harden, Blaine "The Dirt in the New Machine," *The New York Times Magazine*, August 12, 2001.
- Hauben Rhonda *Netizens* pgs 35-66, 127-152.
- Hookway, Brandon *Pandemonium: The Rise of Predatory Locales in the Post-War World*, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999.
- Johns, Adrian "Pop Music Pirate Hunters" *Daedalus*, Spring 2002, pg 67.
- Johns, Adrian "The Great Oscillation Controversy" manuscript.
- Kelty, Christopher "Free Software/Free Science" *First Monday*, Volume 6, Number 12 - December 3rd 2001

- Kelty, Christopher ed. “Cultures Open Sources” *Anthropological Quarterly* 77(3) at http://aq.gwu.edu/archive/table_summer04.htm (read at least, introduction by Kelty, and the article by Alex Golub “Copyright and Taboo”).
- Kochen Manfred and Ithiel De Sola Pool “Contacts and Influence” *Social Networks*, 1, (1978/9)pgs 5-51.
- Lateef, Asma “Linking up with the Global Economy: a case study of the Bangalore software industry,” *International Institute for Labor Studies Report DP/96/1997*, 1997.
- Lessig, Larry “The Internet Under Seige,” *Foreign Policy*, November 2001, p 56.
- Licklider J.C.R. “Man-Computer Symbiosis” from *IRE Transactions on Human Factors in Electronics*, volume HFE-1, Pages 4-11, March 1960.
- Mahoney, Michael “Roots of Software Engineering,” *CWI Quarterly*, 3,4(1990), 325-334
- Mauss, Marcel *The Gift*, preface (by Mary Douglas), Introduction and Chapters 1-2.
- Milgram, Stanley “The Small World Problem” in *The Individual in a Social World*, Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1977,pps. 281-295.
- Oram, Andy ed. *Peer to Peer*, Oreilly Press, 2001 chs. 1
- Parry, Jonathan “On the Moral Perils of Exchange” in Bloch and Parry eds. *Money and the Morality of Exchange*, Cambridge University Press, 1987
- Raymond, Eric “The Cathedral and The Bazaar,” <http://tuxedo.org/esr/writings/>
- Ronfeldt, David and John Arquilla, *Networks and Netwars*, Santa Monica: Rand Publications, 2001. Read chapter 1 and pick one other chapter to read. At <http://www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR1382/>
- Samuelson, Pamela “Anticircumvention Rules: A Threat to Science” *Science*, Volume 293(5537) 14 September 2001 p. 2028.
- Saper,Craig J. *Networked Art*, St. Paul:Minnesota University Press, 2001. Selections TBD
- Standage, Tom *The Victorian Internet*, New York: Walker and Company, 1998. (On Reserve)
- Star Susan Leigh and Geoffrey Bowker “ICD as Information Infrastructure” in *Sorting Things Out*, MIT Press, 1999.

- Stephenson, Neal “Mother Earth, Mother Board” *Wired*, 4.12, December 1996, pps 97-160. (www.wired.com).
- Stigler, George “The Economics of Information,” *The Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 69, No. 3 (June 1961).(JSTOR)
- Timothy Druckery and Peter Weibel *net_condition*, Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2001. Selections TBD
- Waldrop, Mitchell *The Dream Machine:JCR Licklider*, pgs. 24-99
- Weber, Steven *The Success of Open Source*, pgs 54-93.
- “Founding Father” (Interview with Paul Baran), *Wired Magazine*, March 2001. At <http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/9.03/baran.html?pg=1>
- “Hi I’m in Bangalore (but I can’t say so)” *New York Times* March 21, 2001.
- “Software’s Chronic crisis,” *Scientific American* , September 1994
- Selected Salon.com articles concerning Napster, p2p technology and the entertainment industry:
 - “The Music Revolution will not be Digitized” 1 June 2001:
http://www.salon.com/tech/feature/2001/06/01/digital_music/index.html
 - “Revenge of the File-Sharing Masses!” 20 July, 2001:
http://www.salon.com/tech/col/rose/2001/07/20/napster_diaspora/index.html
 - “Courtney Love does the Math” 14 June, 2000:
<http://www.salon.com/tech/feature/2000/06/14/love/index.html>