Spring 2025 Syllabus
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

COURSE INFORMATION
GRA6931C Research and Practice

Format: hybrid (explained below)
Meets Thursdays periods 5-7 | 11:45am-2:45pm | IFH 110

INSTRUCTORS
Dr. Frederick M. C. van Amstel (he/him)
Associate Professor, Design and Visual Communications
Personal website: http://fredvanamstel.com
Office hours: Tuesdays 12PM-2PM at FAC 313 or by appointment
Preferred written communication channel: fvanamstel@ufl.edu
Expected answer time: 2-6 hours within business hours (8AM-5PM)

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
Based on the Smathers Libraries's land acknowledgment, 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.

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. Learn more about my education profile here: https://fredvanamstel.com/about

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

COURSE DESCRIPTION
A rotating topics course focused on the integration of research and practice to address complex problems within diverse contexts. The study and use of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed research methods appropriate for an expanded practice are addressed through discussions, case studies, writing, fieldwork, and presentations.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
- Learn how to learn and design how to design
- Integrate learning skills as designing skills, i.e., learning for designing and designing for learning

- Develop metadesign skills: knowledge management, design thinking, work organizing, data visualization, and others
- Gain experience with participatory design, codesign, service design, and other collective approaches that integrate learning as part of designing
- Master creating new knowledge while learning and designing
- Be prepared to conduct independent design research that produces new knowledge by designing things

LEARNING JOURNEY MAP

Their learning journey will be characterized by developing the metacognitive skills that differentiates design research from design practice. In simpler words, students consolidate their trajectories as design researchers by learning how to learn and designing how to design. In fact, students won't be treated as students but mostly as design researchers engaged in a participatory learning/research activity.

The design reserchers in this course will have several opportunities to hone their metacognitive skills: lectures, codesign experiments, seminar presentations, visual diaries, writing assignment, review assignment, and book autopsy. These activities will explore several designerly ways of knowing as a means to develop critical consciousness of the main product of design research: design knowledge. Instead of learning how to apply design knowledge for designing products, design researchers will learn how to apply design products to produce design knowledge. It is the opposite of what design students typically learn in their undergraduate studies.

This course is a self-managed studio, meaning students manage their studio with instructor guidance. The instructor plays the facilitator and, eventually, the complicator role. Instructor assists students in gathering, envisioning possibilities, problematizing the taken-for-granted, making decisions, and executing their plans together. Students are encouraged to take the lead in defining what to learn and what to design, following a participatory governance model.

As a proposal to organize the production of knowledge, the instructor will suggest the Rumsfeld/Zizek Matrix, a shared knowledge visualization technique. The matrix is laid on a board where post-it notes summarizing specific knowledge can be attached. The board is divided into four quadrants:

1. We know that we know

2. We don't know that we know

3. We know that we don't know

4. We don't know that we don't know

Using this matrix, students identified generative themes at the end's of Fall 2024 Research and Practice's class. These themes will be approached in the first weeks and the remaining ones will be designed with student participation following the self-managed studio approach.

The board will be updated every class as a moment of reflection on what has been collectively achieved. After updating the board, a negotiation on what to do next will follow. Students can learn and design anything that suits the studio's historical trajectory. The following sample activities provide a glimpse of the course format:

- Student or alums guest lectures and workshops
- Self-selected reading assignments
- Political leaflets and publications discussion
- Codesign experiments
- Collective text writing
- Shared resources development
- Codesigning design tools
- Mapping conceptual spaces of possibilities
- External community and organization visits
- Participatory design projects

AI POLICY

Students are expected to use ChatGPT or NaviGator Chat for their writing assignments. These are generative artificial intelligence capable of doing college assignments at a reasonable level. As they cannot be detected with 100% confidence, they have become the ultimate cheating tool. Instead of ruling out its use in this course, the pedagogical approach here is to put their capabilities in check while learning how best to use them. Students are advised to pay attention to its biases, default answers, inability to deal with nuance, and lack of criticality. Please confront AI with these limitations to get more accurate information. Be advised: Never take anything that ChatGPT or NaviGator Chat generates for granted. To stay on the safe side, always cross-check with alternative sources.

ASSIGNMENTS

1) Mid-term reflection (50 points)

The midterm reflection serves as a critical analysis of the researchers' progress in learning and designing during the initial phase of the course. It involves documenting the knowledge gained, uncovering hidden or overlooked skills, and reflecting on the designs created as a way to produce new knowledge. Particular emphasis is placed on the development of metacognitive skills, focusing on learning to learn and designing to design. This reflection also explores how the participatory and self-managed studio approach has influenced the researchers' engagement with design research.

The reflection addresses four primary areas: the categorization of knowledge using the Rumsfeld/Zizek Matrix, strategies developed to enhance the learning process, the impact of created designs in generating knowledge, and evolving perspectives on the design process. Insights from course activities, readings, and experiments form the basis of the reflection. The document, approximately 3000 words in length, is evaluated based on depth of analysis, clarity, application of course concepts, and originality of thought.

2) End-term reflection (50 points)

The end-term reflection provides a comprehensive evaluation of the researchers' learning and designing journey throughout the course. It examines the evolution of their understanding of design research, focusing on key moments, strategies, and outcomes that defined their experience. The reflection emphasizes the relationship between created designs and the production of new knowledge, while contrasting this approach with traditional design practices.

Key areas of focus include the progress made since the midterm, significant learning moments that shaped the journey, the refinement of metacognitive and design skills, and the contribution of designs to knowledge production. Additionally, the reflection considers how these insights can inform future research or projects. The document, approximately 3000

words in length, is assessed on the depth and clarity of analysis, integration of course concepts, and originality of reflection.

GRADING & ATTENDANCE
All assignments are for individual work and each student is allowed only one submission. There is no redo possibility. Late assignments without a prior agreement to accommodate special needs will be accepted in the following pattern:

- 1 week later: 70% of the grade
- 2 weeks later: 50 % of the grade
- 3 weeks later: no longer accepted

Students will receive qualitative feedback on their assignments on Canvas. The resulting grade means the following:

	Meaning	% Scale	GPA
A	Consistently Exceeds ALL expectations	95 - 100%	4
A-	Meets, but does not exceed, ALMOST ALL to ALL expectations	90 - 94%	3.67
B+		87 - 89%	3.33
B	Meets MANY TO MOST EXPECTATIONS	84 - 86%	3
B-		80 - 83%	2.67
C+	Meets SOME to MANY expectations	77 - 79%	2.33
C		74 - 76%	2
C-		70 - 73%	1.67
D+	Does not meet MOST or ALL expectations	67 - 69%	1.33
D		64 - 66%	1
D-		60 - 63	0.67
E		<60	0

Attendance is required for in-person sessions but it won't be registered.

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 APPLY TO THIS COURSE
Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) policy (Regulation Number: 4.040): "A Student must not submit as their own work any academic work in any form that the Student purchased or otherwise obtained from an outside source, including but not limited to: academic work in any form generated by an Entity; academic materials in any form prepared by a commercial or individual vendor of academic materials; a collection of research papers, tests, or academic materials maintained by a Student Organization or other entity or person, or any other sources

of academic work. [⋯] This includes but is not limited to generative artificial intelligence, large language models, content generation bots, or other non-human intelligence or digital tools."

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/

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/eeo/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

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

SEMESTER OUTLINE
Week 1 - Self-management in design education

Lecture: The Self-Managed Studio https://fredvanamstel.com/talks/the-self-managed-studio

Suggested readings:
Bizotto dos Santos, W.B., Mazzarotto, M.,and Van Amstel, F.(2023) Learning design as a human right: the beginnings of a design lab founded on critical pedagogy, in Derek Jones, Naz Borekci, Violeta Clemente, James Corazzo, Nicole Lotz, Liv Merete Nielsen, Lesley-Ann Noel (eds.), The 7th International Conference for Design Education Researchers, 29 November - 1 December 2023, London, United Kingdom. https://doi.org/10.21606/drslxd.2023.104

Bonus links:
https://pt.crimethinc.com/posters/capitalism-is-a-pyramid-scheme

Week 2 - Self-management in social movements

Lecture: Designing as a user https://fredvanamstel.com/talks/designing-as-a-user

Suggested reading:
Gonzatto, R.F., van Amstel, F.,and Jatobá, P.H. (2021) Redesigning money as a tool for self-management in cultural production, in Leitão, R.M., Men, I., Noel, L-A., Lima, J., Meninato, T. (eds.), Pivot 2021: Dismantling/Reassembling, 22-23 July, Toronto, Canada. https://doi.org/10.21606/pluriversal.2021.0003

de Siqueira, I. L. M., & van Amstel, F. M. (2023). Service design as a practice of freedom in collaborative cultural producers. In Proceedings of the Service Design and Innovation Conference (ServDes 2023), Rio de Janeiro. pp. 315-325. https://doi.org/10.3384/ecp203016

Bonus links:
https://fredvanamstel.com/portfolio/corais-ecosystem

Week 3 - Self-management in entrepreneurship

Lecture by MFA student Narayan Ghiotti

Movie: Lord of the Flies (1963)

Suggested reading:
Brendel, W., Hankerson, S., Byun, S., & Cunningham, B. (2016). Cultivating leadership Dharma: Measuring the impact of regular mindfulness practice on creativity, resilience, tolerance for ambiguity, anxiety and stress. Journal of Management Development, 35(8), 1056-1078. https://doi.org/10.1108/JMD-09-2015-0127

Week 4 - Self-management in public life

Lecture: Knowledge self-management in design research
https://fredvanamstel.com/talks/knowledge-self-management-in-design-research

Movie: The Pervert's Guide To Ideology (2012)

Videos:
Donald Rumsfeld Unknown Unknowns ! https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GiPe1OiKQuk
Slavoj Žižek - 'Los conocimientos desconocidos' https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8diRggDUic
Philosopher Slavoj Žižek on the re-election of Donald Trump & his fears for Western values
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8m13m1PS6M&t=573s

Suggested readings:

Žižek, S. Philosophy, the "unknown knowns," and the public use of reason. Topoi 25, 137-142
(2006). https://doi.org/10.1007/s11245-006-0021-2

Week 5 - Self-management in culture circles

Movies:
Peru: Literacy for Social Change (1978) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mSgBkbJbzRs
Absolute Majority (1964) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Egzl9AW4dFo

Suggested readings:
Souto-Manning, M. (2010). Chapter Culture Circles and Critical Pedagogy In: Freire, teaching,
and learning: Culture circles across contexts (Vol. 350). Peter Lang.

Fonseca Braga, M., M. C. van Amstel, F., and Perez, D. (2024) Social Design at the Brink: Hopes
and Fears., in Gray, C., Hekkert, P ., Forlano, L., Ciuccarelli, P . (eds.),*DRS2024: Boston*, 23-28
June, Boston, USA. https://doi.org/10.21606/drs.2024.1538

Week 6 - Critical analysis of media representations

Movie:

Bell Hooks On Cultural Criticism (1997) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u3hY6p6kyAM

Suggested readings:

Madison, Roberts (student). Who Gets the Spotlight? Unpublished draft.

Mannion, K. A. (2016). Play like a girl: An analysis of media representation of female athletes.
Proceedings of GREAT Day, 2015(1), 17. https://knightscholar.geneseo.edu/proceedings-of-
great-day/vol2015/iss1/17/

Week 7 - Encoding and decoding representations of diversity

Movie:
Stuart Hall: Representation & the Media (1997) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84depWskwu0

Videos:
Everything is Awesome Lego Movie song https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9cQgQIMlwWw

LEGO Designer Interview | LEGO Everyone is Awesome (Matthew Ashton)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mC6H15Z8d6w

Suggested readings:
Hall, S. (1973). Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse. Paper for the Council of Europe Colloquy on "Training in the Critical Reading of Televisual Language" (CCCS Stencilled Paper 7), Organized by the Council and the Centre for Mass Communication Research, University of Leicester. Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham. http://epapers.bham.ac.uk/2962/

Hall, S. (1981). Encoding/Decodings. In: Culture, Media, Language, Routledge, London.

Week 8 - Self-evaluation in design education

Movie:
Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take one (1968) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gN1tjjJyazA

Suggested readings:
Coorey, J. (2012) Reflective Methods in Design Pedagogy, in Israsena, P., Tangsantikul, J. and Durling, D. (eds.), Research: Uncertainty Contradiction Value - DRS International Conference 2012, 1-4 July, Bangkok, Thailand. https://dl.designresearchsociety.org/drs-conference-papers/drs2012/researchpapers/27

Week 9 - Interaction analysis lab of week 5's culture circle

Task: For this class, students select a 1-2 minutes video segment from the culture circle recordings found in the Dropbox folders bellow. There is no need to edit the video file, just bring the timestamp or an edited excel transcript. The segment must show the student in action as we will self-reflect about that student's presence in the culture circle.

Suggested readings:
Freire, P. (1974). Chapter Education and Conscientização and Appendix I. In: Education for Critical Consciousness. Continuum.

Boal, A. (1995). Chapter 1. The rainbow of desire: The Boal method of theatre and therapy. Routledge.

Week 10 - Spring break
Week 11 - Self-management in Government

Suggested readings:
Blomkamp, E. (2018). The promise of co-design for public policy 1. In Routledge handbook of policy design (pp. 59-73). Routledge.

Week 11 - Self-management in the Arts

Suggested readings:
Santos, Barbara. The Art of the Kuringa (English).
http://kuringa-barbarasantos.blogspot.com/2010/08/art-of-kuringa.html

Phan, Hien; Van Amstel, F. M. C. (under review). Mapping migration paths.

Week 13 - Forum Theater experiment

Suggested reading:
Van Amstel, F. M. C., & Secomandi, F. (upcoming). Collective embodiment in service interfaces.
In D. Sangiorgi, L. Penin, & A. Prendiville (Eds), Handbook of Service Design:
Plural perspectives and a critical contemporary agenda. Bloomsbury.

Bonus links:
Forum Theater https://fredvanamstel.com/tools/remote-forum-theater

Week 14 - Design Theater experiment

Lecture by Cassie Urbenz (student): Privatization of Public Higher Education and Graduate Labor

Suggested reading:
Van Amstel, Frederick M. C., Serpa, Bibibiana, Secomandi, Fernando. (2025). Systemic oppression in service design. In: Suoheimo, M., Jones, P., Lee, S., Sevaldson, B (Eds). Systemic service design. Routledge. http://dx.doi.org/10.4324/9781003501039-7

Bonus links:
https://fredvanamstel.com/portfolio/design-and-precarious-work-in-digital-platforms-2021

Week 15 - Speculative Object Theater experiment

Videos:
https://tamtamtheater.nl/en/voorstellingen/to-have-or-not-to-have-en/

Suggested reading:
Van Amstel, Frederick M. C. and Gonzatto, Rodrigo Freese. (2022). Existential time and historicity in interaction design. Human-Computer Interaction, 37(1), pp.29-68. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/07370024.2021.1912607