ENG 6819 - Critical Making for Humanist Scholarship

Section: 0W60

College of Arts and Humanities

Dean's Office CAH

Course Information

Term: Spring 2025
Class Meeting Days: ASC
Class Meeting Location: Online
Modality: WW
Credit Hours: 3.00

Instructor Information

Emily Johnson
Office Location: TCH 256-g
Office Hours:
Virtual: Mondays 10:00am-1:00pm
Email: ekj@ucf.edu

Course Description

ENG 6819 CAH 3(3,0)Critical Making for Humanist Scholarship: PR: Graduate standing or C.I. Critical making is making as scholarship, grounded in the humanities, interweaving design, function, and theory through attention to code, software, and hardware. Occasional

Critical making is a practice of making as scholarship, grounded in the humanities, that interweaves design, function, and theory towards born-digital scholarly practice. Engaging in scholarly communication through digital platforms demands attention to code, software, and hardware. This course emphasizes building a theoretical framework and applied practice in critical making, drawing on digital humanities discourse, intentional design, minimal scripting tools, and multimodal development as part of scholarly communication.

The opportunities critical making presents for humanist work are well-documented. Jentery Sayers' Making Things and Drawing Boundaries (which we'll be drawing upon during the course) collects cutting-edge humanist work from across the field, and in doing so points to the important interventions that critical making in the digital humanities can offer in how and what we know about technology as "not made from scratch but in media res; not transparent platforms but patchworks of memory and practice." However, Sayers' collection is also a reminder of how difficult it is to get started, with participation demanding layered expertise that is constantly changing. The combination of computational and systems thinking required for critical making develops what Michael Mateas describes as procedural literacy: "the ability to read and write processes, to engage procedural representation and aesthetics, to understand the interplay between the culturally-embedded practices of human meaning-making and technically-mediated processes" (Mateas). These skills are of growing interest in transdisciplinary humanities, but still often seen as the domain of STEM programs, and the rhetoric of code and code education remains exclusionary. We will interrogate those assumptions and systems, emphasizing process over product, and building procedural literacy through play and exploration. As we explore computational creativity, we will also engage with the questions emerging from the increased availability and power of generative AI tools.

Student Learning Outcomes

After successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Define principles of inclusive design, especially accessible and intersectional approaches to user-centered making
- Use open source tools for critical making across born-digital projects, including games, installations, web-driven, critical code studies, and media archaeology approaches

- Leverage skills in interface design to work through paper and digital prototyping to emphasize both aesthetics and usability
- Identify venues for born-digital scholarship and develop proposals for publication and funding
- Analyze and critique existing born-digital scholarship, learning from methods of scholarly communication in multimodal formats
- Demonstrate improved skills in scripting and web development

Course Materials and Resources
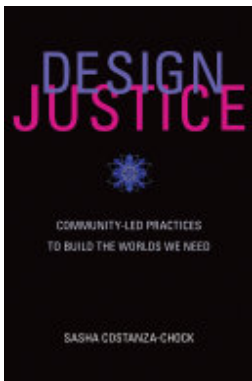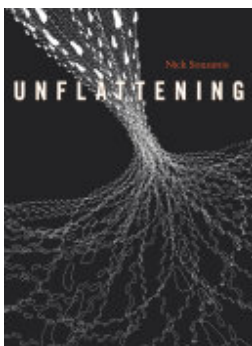
Design Justice
ISBN: 9780262043458
Authors: Sasha Costanza-Chock
Publisher: MIT Press
Publication Date: 2020-03-03
Notes: Open Access
Online Access: https://designjustice.mitpress.mit.edu/

Unflattening
ISBN: 9780674744431
Authors: Nick Sousanis
Publisher: Harvard University Press
Publication Date: 2015-04-20
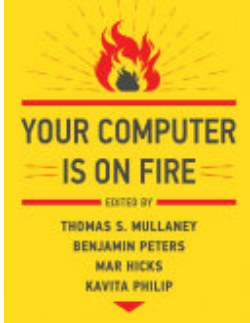**Notes:** Free eBook through UCF Library
Online Access:
https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ucf/detail.action?docID=4404111

Your Computer Is on Fire
ISBN: 9780262539739
Authors: Thomas S. Mullaney, Benjamin Peters, Mar Hicks, Kavita Philip

Course Assessment and Grading Procedure

Each week, plan on following the module for all asynchronous activities. Each module includes:

- **Weekly Readings.** Complete this combination of primary and secondary texts prior to starting the making exercise. The full schedule of required readings is listed in the syllabus, but additional recommended readings will also be provided in each module.

- **Making Exercises** (84% of grade). Each week's making exercise will involve experimenting with a different tool for making: guidance will be provided on configuring and getting started with the tool, and students are encouraged to be inventive and playful. There are thirteen making exercises scheduled this semester. These exercises include reflection posts (described below) and are worth 7 points each. There are thirteen Making Exercises included in the course, but the lowest grade will be automatically dropped, which is why the last making exercise is listed as optional.

- **Reflection Post** (included in the 7 points of the Making Exercise grade). A weekly online discussion will provide the opportunity to share the process of making: the emphasis is not on "success" or "failure," but on growth, exploration, and experimentation.

Other Assignments:

- The **Academic Verification Activity** in Week One is worth 3 points (3% of grade).
- The **Introduction Discussion** is worth 3 points (3% of grade)
- The **Final Reflection** is worth 10 points (10% of grade).

- The **total** possible points in this course 100, with 7 additional points available through the optional Making Exercise.

Grading Scale

Other than the automatically dropped grade (one making exercise grade), extra credit is not offered in this course.

Grades automatically round up at 0.5% - this is set in the Grades tab at the start of the semester.

Letter Grade	Range
A	100% to 93.5%
A-	< 93.5% to 89.5%
B+	< 89.5% to 86.5%
B	< 86.5% to 83.5%
B-	< 83.5% to 79.5%
C+	< 79.5% to 76.5%
C	< 76.5% to 73.5%
C-	< 73.5% to 69.5%
D+	< 69.5% to 66.5%
D	< 66.5% to 63.5%
D-	< 63.5% to 60.5%
F	< 60.5% to 0%

Policies for Course Grade

Grace Period: Each assignment carries a **one-week**, no-penalty, no questions asked, grace period. Technical difficulties come up, and often these making projects are more time consuming than you might anticipate. Making exercises are posted in discussions, and you need to reply to two people to earn full credit on each making exercise. To accommodate all of this, the discussions are open for one full week past the deadline. I strongly suggest that you don't rely on this extra week for every exercise, but use it only when truly needed.

If you need **additional** time for an exercise, please contact me. Just note that the full learning experience includes reading and responding to each others' work, so you are doing yourself and your classmates a disservice when you turn in work beyond the one week grace period. However, things happen, and I am more than willing to make accommodations for late work when needed - please just communicate with me. **The two points for replies cannot be made up after the discussion closes, so please work to reply to peers even if you are not able to post on time.**

Late Work Policy: If you are unable to submit an assignment before the grace period closes, please contact me and **propose an extended deadline for the assignment.**

Peer Collaboration: Part of the requirements for this course include interacting with peers to discuss and provide feedback on their work. It is **expected** that your comments will be **respectful**, and your feedback must be specific and **emotionally intelligent**. This means writing your posts in a thoughtful way to **respect** others' work, feelings, and opinions. This also means you need to recognize that your opinions may not be universally held--and *that is okay*! If everyone in the world shared the same opinions about everything, it would be a very boring place. You never have to **agree** with anyone's opinions, but I do require you to **consider** their perspective before **respectfully** disagreeing.

AI Policy: AI tools are encouraged for *specific aspects* of course assignments and prohibited for others:

- When is it okay to use AI tools in this course?
    - Tutorials on any of the digital tools in this course
    - Technical help
    - Help brainstorming ideas for your making project topic or features
    - Comparing and contrasting tools or ideas
- When is it **not** okay to use AI tools in this course?
    - When it **replaces thinking.** If you are offloading the thinking to AI, you aren't learning much.

Course Authorship Policy: All work that you submit for this class must be your own, and it must be created **exclusively for this course**. If you wish to build on a project from another course, you must **ask for permission <u>before</u> submitting it.**

Grade Dissemination: Grades in this course will be posted in Canvas within two weeks of submission. Please contact me immediately if you see an error or have a question about your grade or feedback. Grades in the Canvas Grade tab will be updated weekly throughout the semester.

Course Accessibility

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing access and inclusion for all persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who need access to course content due to course design limitations should contact the professor as soon as possible. Students should also connect with [Student Accessibility Services (SAS)](#) (Ferrell Commons 185, [sas@ucf.edu](#), phone 407-823-2371). For students connected with SAS, a Course Accessibility Letter may be created and sent to professors, which informs faculty of potential course access and accommodations that might be necessary and reasonable. Determining reasonable access and accommodations requires consideration of the course design, course learning objectives and the individual academic and course barriers experienced by the student. Further conversation with SAS, faculty and the student may be warranted to ensure an accessible course experience.

Academic Integrity

Students should familiarize themselves with UCF's Code of Conduct at [Student Conduct and Integrity Office](#). According to Section 1, "Academic Misconduct," students are prohibited from engaging in:

a. Academic misconduct is defined as any submitted work or behavior that obstructs the instructor of record's ability to accurately assess the student's understanding or completion of the course materials or degree requirements (e.g., assignment, quiz, and/or exam). Examples of academic misconduct include but are not limited to: plagiarism, unauthorized assistance to complete an academic exercise; unauthorized communication with others during an examination, course assignment, or project; falsifying or misrepresenting academic work; providing misleading information to create a personal advantage to complete course/degree requirements; or multiple submission(s) of academic work without permission of the instructor of record.

b. Any student who knowingly helps another violate academic behavior standards is also in violation of the standards.

c. Commercial Use of Academic Material. Selling of course material to another person and/or uploading course material to a third-party vendor without authorization or without the express written permission of the University and the instructor of record. Course materials include but are not limited to class notes, the instructor of record's slide deck, tests, quizzes, labs, instruction sheets, homework, study guides, and handouts.

d. Soliciting assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements. The solicitation of assistance with an assignment, lab, quiz, test, paper, etc., without authorization of the instructor of record or designee is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to asking for answers to a quiz, trading answers, or offering to pay another to complete an assignment. It is considered Academic Misconduct to solicit assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements, even if the solicitation did not yield actual assistance (for example, if there was no response to the solicitation).

Responses to Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism, or Cheating

Students should also familiarize themselves with the procedures for academic misconduct in UCF's student handbook, *The Golden Rule*. UCF faculty members have a responsibility for students' education and the value of a UCF degree, and so seek to prevent unethical behavior and respond to academic misconduct when necessary. Penalties for violating rules, policies, and instructions within this course can range from a zero on the exercise to an "F" letter grade in the course. In addition, an Academic Misconduct report could be filed with the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity, which could lead to disciplinary warning, disciplinary probation, or deferred suspension or separation from the University through suspension, dismissal, or expulsion with the addition of a "Z" designation on one's transcript.

Being found in violation of academic conduct standards could result in a student having to disclose such behavior on a graduate school application, being removed from a leadership position within a student organization, the recipient of scholarships, participation in University activities such as study abroad, internships, etc.

Let's avoid all of this by demonstrating values of honesty, trust, and integrity. No grade is worth compromising your integrity and moving your moral compass. Stay true to doing the right thing: take the zero, not a shortcut.

Title IX

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and retaliation. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find resources available to support the victim, including confidential resources and information concerning reporting options at [Let's Be Clear](#) and [UCF Cares](#).

For more information on diversity and inclusion, Title IX, accessibility, or UCF's complaint processes contact:

- Title IX – OIE – [Office of Institutional Equity](#) & [askanadvocate@ucf.edu](#)
- Disability Accommodation – Student Accessibility Services – [Student Accessibility Services](#) & [sas@ucf.edu](#)
- [Access and Community Engagement](#) (including the Ginsberg Center for Inclusion and Community Engagement, Military and Veteran Student Success, and HSI Initiatives)
- UCF Compliance and Ethics Office – [Compliance, Ethics, and Risk Office](#) & [complianceandethics@ucf.edu](#)
- The [Ombuds Office](#) is a safe place to discuss concerns.

Reporting an Incident or Issue

If you believe you have experienced abusive or discriminatory behavior by any faculty or staff member, contact the Office of Institutional Equity [online](#) or at 407-823-1336. You can also choose to report using the UCF Integrity Line and can report anonymously or as yourself at 1-855-877-6049 or using the [online form](#). UCF cares about you and takes every report seriously. For more information see the [Reporting an Incident or Issue Webpage](#).

Deployed Active-Duty Military Students

Students who are deployed active duty military and/or National Guard personnel and require accommodation should contact their instructors as soon as possible after the semester begins and/or after they receive notification of deployment to make related arrangements.

Campus Safety

At UCF Public Safety and Police, safety is the top priority. Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise, it's important to be familiar with some basic safety and security concepts.

- In an emergency, always dial 911.

- Every UCF classroom has an **Emergency Procedure Guide** posted on a wall near the door, which will show you how to respond to a variety of situations. This guide can also be found online here.

- In the event of an active threat, remember **AVOID, DENY, DEFEND**. Choose the best course of action and act immediately. Watch the video here to learn more.

  - **AVOID**. Pay attention to your surroundings and have an exit plan. Get as much distance and as many barriers between you and the threat as quickly as possible.

  - **DENY.** When avoiding is difficult or impossible, deny the threat access to you and your space. Lockdown by creating barriers, turning the lights off and remaining quiet and out of sight. Make sure your cell phone is silenced, but do not turn it off.

  - **DEFEND.** When you are unable to put distance between yourself and the threat, be prepared to protect yourself. Commit to your actions, be aggressive and do not fight fairly. Do whatever it takes to survive.

- For emergencies on campus, UCF will utilize the UCF Alert system. All UCF students, faculty and staff are automatically enrolled to receive these email and text alerts, however, it's a good idea to frequently ensure your contact information is up to date.

Financial Aid Accountability

All instructors/faculty are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete this activity by the end of the first week of classes or as soon as possible after adding the course. Failure to do so may result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.

Class Schedule

Weekly Schedule

Week One: Provocations (Monday, January 6 - Sunday, January 12)

Read by Sunday (January 12) :

- Matt Ratto, "Critical Making: Conceptual and Material Studies in Technology and Social Life." (PDF)
- Jentery Sayers, "I Don't Know All the Circuitry"
- Bill Endres, "A Literacy of Building: Making in the Digital Humanities"
- Johnson and Salter, "Provocations for Making"

Create (different deadlines):

- Academic Verification Activity (by Friday, January 10)
- Discussion 1 (by Sunday, January 12)

Week Two: Selfie (Monday, January 13- Sunday, January 19)
Read (by Sunday):

- *Unflattening* - First Half (pp. 1-84)
- Frank Auerbach, "Twenty Self-Portraits (Review)"
- Piecework Collective, "Self Portrait"
- Johnson and Salter, "Chapter One: Selfie"

Create (by Sunday):

- Making Exercise One: "Selfie"

Week Three: Comic (January 20-26)
Read:

- *Unflattening* - Second Half (pp. 85 - end)
- Garnet Hertz, "Making Critical Making" (PDF)
- Scott McCloud, "My Obsession with Chess."
- Jason Helms, *Rhizcomics*
- Johnson and Salter, "Chapter Two: Comic"

Create:

- Making Exercise Two: Comic

Week Four: GIF (January 27-February 2)

Read:

- *Your Computer is On Fire* - Introductions
- David Staley, "On the 'Maker Turn' in Digital Humanities." in *Making Things and Drawing Boundaries*
- Explore: *Buzzademia*
- Johnson and Salter, "Chapter Three: GIF"

Create:

- Making Exercise Three: GIF

Week Five: Map (February 3-9)
Read:

- *Your Computer is On Fire* - Part I
- Nesbit and Ayers, "Visualizing Emancipation."
- Crider and Anderson, "Disney Death Tour"
- Johnson and Salter, "Chapter Four: Map"

Create:

- Making Exercise Four: Map

Week Six: Hypertext (February 10-16)
Read:

- Laura Okkema, *Hearing the Voices of the Deserters*
- Rachel Ponce, Surviving History: The Fever!
- Explore: *The Digital Review*
- Johnson and Salter, "Chapter Five: Hypertext"

Create:

- Making Exercise Five: Hypertext

Week Seven: Game (February 17-23)
Read:

- *Your Computer is On Fire* - Part II
- Sabinne Harrer, "Radical Jamming." (PDF)
- cecile richard, *Endless Scroll*
- Explore: The Bitsy Essay Jam

- Johnson and Salter, "Chapter Six: Game"

Create:

- Making Exercise Six: Game

Week Eight: Grammar (February 24-March 2)

Read:

- *Your Computer is On Fire* - Part III
- Mark Sample, "The Infinite Catalog of Crushed Dreams."
- Leonardo Flores, "Genre: Bot:
- Explore: NaNoGenMo
- Johnson and Salter, "Chapter Seven: Grammar"

Create:

- Making Exercise Seven: Grammar

Week Nine: Analysis (March 3-9)

Read:

- *Your Computer is On Fire* - Afterwords
- *Design Justice* - Introduction
- Catherine D'Ignazio and Lauren Klein, "Feminist Data Visualization." (PDF)
- Micki Kaufman, *Quantifying Kissinger*
- Johnson and Salter, "Chapter Eight: Analysis"

Create:

- Making Exercise Eight: Analysis

Week Ten: Generation (March 10-16)

Read:

- *Design Justice*: Design Values
- Ian Demsky, "My Month with Midjourney"
- Steven Levy, "Google's NotebookLM Aims to Be the Ultimate Writing Assistant"
- Explore: *Kairos Special Issue: Data Visualization*
- Johnson and Salter, "Chapter Nine: Generation"

Create:

- Making Exercise Nine: Generation

Week Eleven: Spring Break (March 17-23)

- No Assignments - enjoy the break!

Week Twelve: Code (March 24-30)

Read:

- *Design Justice*: Design Practices
- Kathryn Holland and Susan Brown, "Project \ Process \ Product: Feminist Digital Subjectivity in a Shifting Scholarly Field" in <u>Bodies of Information</u> (Chapter 22)
- Salter and Johnson, "Chapter Ten: Crafting Futures in the Age of AI"

Create:

- <u>Making Exercise Ten: Visualization</u>

Week Thirteen: Narratives (March 31-April 6)
Read:

- *Design Justice*: Design Narratives
- Debbie Chachra, "Beyond Making" in <u>*Making Things and Drawing Boundaries*</u>
- Explore: <u>Games made with P5.js</u>
- <u>*Black Beaches*</u>

Create:

- <u>Making Exercise Eleven: Narrative</u>

Week Fourteen: Combinations (April 7-13)
Read:

- *Design Justice*: Design Sites
- Natalie Loveless, *How to Make Art at the End of the World* (PDF selection in Canvas)
- Vera Sebert, <u>*The Book You are Looking For Does Not Exist*</u>
- Koeser, Doroudian, Budak, Li. "Data Beyond Vision" in <u>*Startwords* Issue 1</u> Create:
- <u>Making Exercise Twelve: GitHub</u>

Week Fifteen: Futures (April 14-20) (Last week of classes)
Read:

- *Design Justice*: Design Pedagogies

- Explore: *Digital Pedagogy in the Humanities*

- Quinn Dombrowski, *Future Text*

- Joshua Reinier, *Z^k: A Zettelkablooey*

Create:

- **Optional** Making Exercise Thirteen: Multimodal

Final Reflection (Due Sunday, April 27)

- Submit & complete your Final Reflection, as well as any approved late work, by **11:59pm on Sunday, April 27**!