



Department of Anthropology

ANTHRO 3379F-001: ENGINEERING OURSELVES: The Anthropology of Cyborgs

BRIEF COURSE OUTLINE

Fall 2026

Date: June 8, 2026

Instructor and course information:

Instructor: Dr. Jay Stock

Method of delivery: in person.

Credit value: 0.5

Antirequisites: None.

Prerequisites: Completion of first year, including at least one course in Social Science, Science, or Health Sciences. Recommended but not required: Anthropology 2226A/B, 2237A/B or 2240A/B..

Please ensure you have the correct requisites by checking [the Academic Calendar](#).

Course Description:

We are the only species on earth to surround ourselves with technology, which we use to extend the capabilities of our own bodies and minds and to engineer the world around us. There are also many ways that humans deliberately engineer our own bodies, but also ways that the technologies we use daily have passive influences on our biology, social interactions, and even the way we think. As Donna Haraway writes, we are "theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism: in short, we are all cyborgs". The course begins with evolutionary perspectives on the relationship between technology and biology. We then consider problems of the Eugenics movement as an example of how poor understandings of biology, when combined with racism and ableism, were responsible for human atrocities in pursuit of 'self-directed evolution'. This helps to contextualize the ethical landscape of the use of technologies to deliberately engineer human bodies and mind. The majority of the course considers the way that our everyday technologies influence and modify our biology, and how new technologies are being developed to alter and enhance our bodies and minds. Through problem based learning, we explore contemporary issues in human self-modification, including the rise of chemical biohacking and nanomedicine, genetic modification and synthetic biology, replacement organs and body parts, neural hacking, aging and immortality, and the consequences of artificial intelligence on the human mind. The course concludes by considering possible future relationships between humans and technology, such as technosymbiosis or the 'singularity'.

A full course schedule including a week-by-week breakdown of topics and assigned readings will be available on the course's OWL Brightspace site before the first day of class.

Course Materials:

Required readings will be available through the Course Readings tool on the course site

Evaluation:

Grades will be based on the following:

- 2 Annotated Bibliographies (Two short descriptions of academic research papers to be submitted in early October and November. They may be related to potential topics for your research paper)
- Research paper or alternate assignment (2000 words on a topic of your choice that relates to the course content)
- 6 Group Briefing Notes (Written and submitted as a group in class time to summarize discussion of specific problems in Self-Engineering)
- Final Exam (Mixed format: multiple-choice questions, short answer questions, and a short essay; will take place during the December exam period)

Annotated Bibliographies	10%
Research Paper or Alternate Assignment	35%
Problem Based Learning – Briefing Notes	20%
Final Exam (multiple choice)	25%
Participation	10%

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