

Anthropology 300, Contemporary Anthropological Theory

Jan. – April, 2011. T/Th 8:00 – 9:20.

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Course Overview:

This course will explore contemporary approaches to society and culture in anthropology through an examination of ethnographic film and writing. We will take critical inspiration from the ‘experimental moment’ in anthropology of the 1970s and 1980s as we explore textual and filmic representations of anthropological subjects. Our course will be more workshop than lecture hall as we play with the ‘fictions’ of anthropology and develop our own understanding of the possibilities of developing an ethnographic fidelity to social reality.

Course Readings

Primary Text and Ethnographies

- George E. Marcus and Michael M. J. Fischer. 1986. **Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences.**
- Ruth Behar. 2007. **An Island Called Home.**
- Karen Brodtkin. 2009. **Power Politics.**
- Les Field. 2008. **Abalone Tales.**
- Sherry Ortner. 2003. **New Jersey Dreaming.**
- Gerald Sider. 2003. **Between History and Tomorrow.**

Required Secondary Sources:

- Posted online at http://www.charlesmenzies.ca/co300_2010.html or retrievable via UBC Library online.

Films:

- *The Hunters*, directed by Jon Marshall. 1957.
- *Chronique d'un Été*, directed by Jean Rouch. 1960
- *Lorang's Way*, directed by David MacDougal, 1980
- *Harlan County, USA*, directed by Barbar Kopple. 1977
- *Bax Laansk: Pulling together* (a contemporary story of an ancient people), directed by C. Menzies and Jennifer Rashleigh. 2009.

Evaluation Profile:

Assignment	Marks
Participation in class	10 marks
Essay	35 marks
Course Journal and Reading Log	25 marks
Final Exam	30 marks
Total	100 marks

Course Topics, Reading List, and Tentative Schedule of Lectures

Readings are listed in approximate order in which they will be discussed in class. Prepare yourself for each unit by reading the assigned chapter from Marcus and Fischer, required secondary readings, and at least the first chapter of the assigned ethnography prior to the first lecture of each unit. A good method is to read the required ethnography prior to the first class of the unit and then reread two or more chapters per session as we go along. Your success, and the success of our discussions, relies upon each person having read all of the appropriate materials.

Semester at a Glance

Week	Tuesday	Topic	Thursday	Topic
Week 1.	<i>Jan. 4</i>	Unit 1	<i>Jan. 6</i>	Unit 1
Week 2.	<i>Jan. 11</i>	Unit 1 (film)	<i>Jan. 13</i>	Unit 2
Week 3.	<i>Jan. 18</i>	Unit 2	<i>Jan. 20</i>	Unit 2 (film)
Week 4.	<i>Jan. 25</i>	Unit 3 (M&F)	<i>Jan. 27</i>	Unit 3 (M&F)
Week 5.	<i>Feb. 1</i>	Unit 3	<i>Feb. 3</i>	Unit 3 (Behar)
Week 6.	<i>Feb. 8</i>	Unit 3 (Behar)	<i>Feb. 10</i>	Unit 3 (film)
Week 7.	<i>Feb. 22</i>	Unit 4	<i>Feb. 24</i>	Unit 4
Week 8.	<i>March 1</i>	Unit 4 (Sider)	<i>March 3</i>	Unit 4 (Sider)
Week 9.	<i>March 8</i>	Unit 4 (Brodkin)	<i>March 10</i>	Unit 5 (Brodkin)
Week 10.	<i>March 15</i>	Unit 4 (Ortner)	<i>March 17</i>	Unit 4 (Ortner)
Week 11.	<i>March 22</i>	Unit 4 (film)	<i>March 24</i>	No class
Week 12.	<i>March 29</i>	Unit 5	<i>March 31</i>	Unit 5 (Field)
Week 13.	<i>April 5</i>	Unit 5 (Field)	<i>April 7</i>	Unit 5 (film)

Laptops, Cell phones, etc..

Laptops, cell phones, and any other form of electronic recording or communication device will not be permitted in our class for any purpose without explicit and prior approval from your instructor.

There are good reasons for some people with documented learning profiles to use laptops to take notes rather than using pen and paper. However, for most people the art and craft of writing notes by hand still remains a critical practice to engage in. As potential and aspiring anthropologists you will find yourself in locations in which the only way to take notes is by paper and pen. Please consider this to be a practicing ground for those circumstances. There are no good reasons (under normal circumstances) to use a cell phone in class.

Detailed Unit Reading List

Unit 1. Jan. 4-11: Models, concepts, and the social sciences (modes of production, power, ideology).

Reading:

- Marcus and Fischer (1986). "Preface" pp vii-xiii. "Introduction" pp 1-7 **Anthropology as Cultural Critique.**
- Wolf, Eric (1982) "Introduction" pp. 1-23 in **Europe and the People Without History**; (1999) "Introduction" and "Contested Concepts" pp. 1-67 in **Envisioning Power**; (2001) "On Fieldwork and Theory" pp. 49-62 in **Pathways of Power.**

Film:

- *The Hunters*, directed by Jon Marshall. 1957.

Unit 2. Jan. 13 – 20: Critique, Self-doubt, and The Experimental Moment in Anthropology

Primary Readings:

- Marcus and Fischer (1986). "Chapter 1" pp. 7-16.

Required Secondary Sources:

- Kathleen Gough (1968) "New Proposals for Anthropologists." *Current Anthropology*. Vol. 9(5):403-435
- Thomas Patterson (2001). **A Social History of Anthropology in the United States**. Chapters 4 & 5:103-1634

Film:

- *Chronique d'un Été*, directed by Jean Rouch. 1960

Unit 3. Jan. 25 – Feb. 10: Interpretive/Reflexive Anthropology

We begin this unit by completing our exploration of Marcus and Fischer's "Anthropology as Cultural Critique."

Primary Readings:

- Marcus and Fischer. (1986). Chapters 2-6 plus "Concluding Note" pp 17-168.

Primary Ethnography:

- Ruth Behar, **An Island Called Home**.

Required Secondary Sources:

- Clifford Geertz. (1973). "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in **The Interpretation of Cultures**. New York: Basic Books. Pp. 3-30.
- Kevin Dwyer. 1982. **Moroccan Dialogues: Anthropology in Question**. Part Two: "On the Dialogic of Anthropology." Pp. 255-286.
- Graham Watson. (1987). "Make Me Reflexive, but Not Yet: Strategies for Managing Essential Reflexivity in Ethnographic Discourse." *Journal of Anthropological Research*. 43(1):29-41

Film:

- *Lorang's Way*, directed by David MacDougal, 1980.

Unit 4. Feb 22 – March 22: Anthropology at Home

Primary Ethnographies:

- Gerald Sider. 2003. **Between History and Tomorrow**. [Originally published as **Culture and Class in Anthropology and History: A Newfoundland Illustration**, 1986]
- Karen Brodtkin. 2009. **Power Politics**.
- Sherry Ortner. 2003. **New Jersey Dreaming**.

Required Secondary Sources:

- John Cole. (1977) "Anthropology Comes Part-Way Home: Community Studies in Europe." *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 6:349-378.
- George Spindler and Louise Spindler. (1983). "Anthropologists View American Culture." *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 12:49-78.
- Mariza Peirano. (1998). "When Anthropology is at Home: The Different Contexts of a Single Discipline." *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 27:105-128.

Film:

- *Harlan County, USA*, directed by Barbar Kopple. 1977

Unit 5: March 29 – April 7: Collaborative Anthropology.

Primary Ethnography:

- Les Field. 2008. *Abalone Tales*

Required Secondary Sources:

- Delmos Jones. (1970). "Toward a Native Anthropology" *Human Organization*. Vol. 29(4):251-259.

- C. Menzies (2001). “Reflections on Research with, for and among Indigenous Peoples.”
- Louise Lamphere. “The Convergence of Applied, Practicing, and Public Anthropology in the 21st Century” *Human Organization*. Vol. 63(4):431-443.

Film:

- *Bax Laansk: Pulling together* (a contemporary story of an ancient people), directed by C. Menzies and Jennifer Rashleigh. 2009.

Assignment Guide

Assignment and Grading Policy

Late Policy: circumstances beyond one’s control may at times make it difficult for a student to hand a particular assignment in on time. In such cases, a student should speak with the instructor **in advance of the deadline** to discuss a modest extension. Assignments handed in late without prior approval or after the date of a pre-arranged extension will be docked 1 mark per day late. If a student is facing personal or health issues that are affecting their ability in one or more courses they should speak with a Faculty of Arts advisor to determine whether they should withdraw from the course or request deferred standing:

<http://tinyurl.com/277dzby>

Academic Honesty: This is a zero tolerance zone for academic dishonesty. As senior undergraduate students it is expected that you understand fully your responsibility to engage in ethical behaviour. If you have any doubts please review the university policies regarding academic misconduct as published at <http://tinyurl.com/35k6sr2>. The Faculty of Arts has an excellent outline of plagiarism and how to avoid it: <http://tinyurl.com/3am9sh2>

Grading and Distribution of Grades: Grades in this class will be assigned in accordance with the *Faculty of Arts Guidelines for Grading*. According to the Guidelines “results in an average class of reasonable size will normally fall somewhere within the following broad limits:

Grade “A”	5% to 25% of the class
Grades “A” and “B” combined	not more than 75% of the class
Grade “F”	not over 20% of the class.”

A note on grading criteria: There is a useful concept called “socially necessary labour time.” Defined as:

“The labour-time required to produce any use-value under the conditions of production normal for a given society and with the average degree of skill and intensity of labour prevalent in that society.”

What does this have to do with grades? Simply put – quantity of effort expended does not equal quality of output produced.

Part of our job is to facilitate you in the development of the skills and abilities necessary to produce quality work within a reasonable timeframe (reasonable here being defined as the socially necessary labour time required to write an ‘A’ quality paper, for example). Beginning writers and new workers typically have lower outputs (or quality) than more skilled writers or workers. Thus, the task is to ‘work-smart.’

As we go through the course we will discuss and workshop ways to develop positive outputs that don’t waste your time; that allow you to approach the socially necessary labour time in the writing of essays and reading of course materials. At the end of the day the mark you receive will be a measure of the quality of the output and will not have a direct relationship with the time inputted.

Course Journal and Reading Log (25 marks)

The course journal and reading log consists of reflective journal entries (weekly), assignments (2), a running log/index of names/concepts/books/etc that you encounter in the reading that are unfamiliar and/or intriguing to you plus such in class exercises assigned as the course progresses. Reflective journal entries are handed in weekly and recorded to document their timely completion. Assignments are handed in as indicated below. The completed course journal and reading log will be handed in on the last day of class for evaluation and the assignment of a grade. Each component will be graded according to the criteria listed below.

Reflective Journal Entries

Objectives for reflective journal entries are:

1. to reflect on the material presented in readings and lectures each week.
2. to develop critical insight
3. to engage in a process of self-evaluation

Instructions for reflective journal entries: Write a short paragraph at the end of each week in which you reflect upon and critically appraise what you have learned - no longer than one page, double-spaced. Use the following questions as a reflective guideline: What have I learned this week? What were the key concepts presented? How are these concepts linked to ethnographic data (or not, as the case maybe)? Does this new information make sense to me? And, How might I apply this knowledge in a novel/different situation? **Reflections will be handed in every Tuesday at the beginning of class starting January 11 continuing until April 5.**

Assignments

Objectives: to explore in detail (either individually and in groups) key concepts and ethnographic cases presented in the course while practicing different genres of academic writing.

Instructions: Students are to complete the following assignments by the deadline indicated below. These are mini-essays that should be no longer than 750 words each.

Assignment 1: Book Review

Objective: To examine in detail one of the assigned course ethnographies.

Instructions: Write a critical book review for an informed 'lay audience.' Use examples drawn from the New York Review of Books or the Guardian Weekly as a model for your own review.

Due Jan. 27 in class.

Assignment 2: Anthropology in the news –a 'feature' article

Objective: To write an engaging feature article that presents anthropological research to a general public audience.

Instructions:

Due March 17 in class

Evaluation criteria for reflective journal entries and assignments:

A range -all reflective journal entries and assignments completed on time. Entries (reflections and assignments) clearly demonstrate critical self-reflection and contain an element of originality, indicating a high quality of thought.

B range -one or two reflective journal entries and/or one assignment missing or late. They are of a consistently good quality, though lacking the originality of an 'A' reflection.

C range -three or four reflective journal entries and/or two assignments missing or late. For assignments, inadequate and/or inappropriate use of source material without proper citation. Adequately meet the requirements.

D range -five or six reflective journal entries and/or two assignments missing or late. Largely off topic. For assignments, inadequate and/or inappropriate use of source material without proper citation.

F range -more than six reflective journal entries and/or all assignments missing or late. Does not meet the minimum requirements. For assignments, inadequate and/or inappropriate use of source material without proper citation.

Participation (10 marks)

Overview: Participation is an important aspect of the learning environment for this course. Students are expected to be prepared to **participate fully** in class room activities including, but not restricted to, small group discussions, problem solving-sessions, and short presentations based on assigned readings.

Evaluation Criteria: the chart below outlines the evaluation criteria that are being used in this course to determine participation grades. In assigning these grades peer and self-assessment will be used in conjunction with the instructor's assessment.

Mark	Category	Criteria
10	Outstanding	Continually encouraging and supportive of others, very active leadership and interpersonal skills. Volunteers, facilitates the learning of others. 100% punctual attendance and on-time assignment completion. Excellent attitude and effort.
8	Very Good	Demonstrates leadership and active support with colleagues. Near 100% punctual attendance. Assignments completed on-time. Positive attitude and high level of effort.
6	Adequate	Works well with others, willing to contribute toward class discussion. Only 2-3 sessions non-punctual/non-attendance. Completed assignments on-time. Satisfactory effort and attitude.
4	Minimal	Little contribution and support given during class processes. More than 2-3 sessions of non- punctual/non-attendance. An assignment not Completed on time. Motivation and initiative low. Minimal effort.
1	Poor	Zero contribution and support given during class processes. Poor punctual and attendance record. Assignments not completed on-time. Attitude, participation and effort do not meet acceptable standard.

Essay and Related Assignments (35 marks)

Objectives:

Your essays will be a comparison of modes of ethnographic representation in film and text. Drawing from the notion of the 'experimental moment' in anthropological representation your essay will examine the various modes of representation in film and text that have emerged over the past three decades. Possible topics for consideration:

- How might filmic representations be more suited to reflective ethnography than text?
- How did the early 'political' critique of anthropology transform into a crisis of 'textual' representation?
- Is there a 'new' orthodoxy in contemporary ethnographic representation?
- Is anthropology a 'science'?

No matter the topic, keep in mind that each essay must engage directly with contemporary ethnographies and ethnographic films. The questions, such as the ones posed above, are devices to facilitate your exploration of anthropological writing and to develop your own voice and skill in writing.

Instructions:

1. First draft. The first draft should be presented and developed as a final product. As aspiring professional writers you should anticipate that all finished products are in essence incomplete and

capable of improvement. The objective of submitting a first draft for evaluation and comment is to provide a 'real-time' opportunity for developing your ability to communicate effectively in an anthropological genre. Please keep in mind that this is a short paper. Thus, your task is to make strategic decisions concerning what needs to be put in and what has to be left out. The marked papers will contain comments that can be used as a basis for revision and resubmission of your paper. For those interested in improving their writing a good reference text is Howard Becker's *Writing for Social Sciences* (This is an informative and engaging text that should be considered an essential book in every student's library). You will be marked on the clarity and cogency of your argument. Please see the writing guide below for a detailed evaluation guide.

Due March 3. Draft essays will be returned to students March 15 with suggestions for revision.

35 marks.

2. Final draft (optional – but recommended). If you wish to rewrite your paper you can revise and resubmit by April 7. The final draft will be evaluated in terms of the effectiveness of the revisions and additional improvements that are made. If warranted the draft paper grade will be revised upward (criteria based upon writing guidelines below).

Due April 7.

Formatting instructions. Please use a standard font (such as Times New Roman) with a minimum font size of 12. Use standard margins (for example, top/bottom = 1", left/right = 1.25").

Evaluation:

For a detailed explanation, please refer to the writing formal essays guide and evaluation scheme below.

Writing Formal Essays (Guide and Evaluation Scheme)

1. General Expectations
 - Evidence that you have really explored and understood the issue under discussion.
 - Evidence that you have understood the assignment and have successfully conveyed that understanding in your treatment of the material.
 - Evidence that you have managed to properly limit and focus your argument (appropriate register to topic; try not to get lost in a discussion of broad general issues but focus on specifics of the topic, making reference to broader issues only as appropriate).
2. Argument
 - Thesis: appropriate to assignment, focused, thoughtful, original.
 - Support of thesis: consistent throughout (no internal contradictions), logically developed, persuasive, original.
3. Organization
 - Introduction: Should get the reader's attention, let the reader know what the essay will be about, give some sense of what your argument will be.
 - Body: Paragraph should be well organized. Each paragraph should have a topic sentence and should deal with one general idea. Paragraphs should be logically ordered – ordered in a way that best conveys your ideas and argument. There should be smooth transitions between sentences and paragraphs, with no abrupt shifts in topic or "gaps" where your reader is left wondering what the connection is between what you have just said and what comes next. Your sentences and paragraphs should be devoted to analysis and argument. Avoid plot summary or highly descriptive paragraphs.
 - Conclusion: May involve some summary or very brief overview of your argument or analysis, and should convey some sense of the significance of your argument.

4. Style
 - Diction: Avoid slang, clichés, euphemisms, jargon. Try to be conscious of the language you are using and find language that specifically states what you are trying to convey (rather than implying the meaning).
 - Spelling: Check your spelling; use a spell check if you have one and/or ask someone to read your essay for you.
 - Syntax: Check your writing for sentence fragments, run-on sentences, comma splices, subject/verb agreement, and dangling modifiers. If you are not familiar with syntax errors, please check a grammar handbook.
 - Tense: Try to use the present tense as much as possible. Try not to shift tenses unless it is necessary.
5. Form and Research Methods
 - Incorporation of primary sources: It is important that you make adequate and specific reference to relevant literature. When you cite a text, you need to analyze the specific features of the passage you are quoting and comment on the significance of the passage in relation to your larger argument. Do not over-quote. Quotations from sources should support or supplement rather than “prove” or overwhelm your own argument.
 - Quotation format: Quotations should be introduced with smooth transitions and incorporated within the flow of your argument.
 - Citation format: You always need to include a References Cited list. For format style, check the *American Ethnologist* guide to authors included in each issue.

Essay Letter Grades

A range - is strong in all of the above domains. In particular, it contains an element of originality in its argument, indicating a high quality of thought. It must not contain any serious organizational or stylistic errors.

B range - is good, but lacks the original quality of an A essay. It also may contain serious stylistic and/or organizational errors, or show some hint of interpretive difficulties.

C range - is on topic and for the most part makes valid observations, but is problematic in argument and/or style, provides little concrete and effective reference to the text under study, or makes a fairly wide range of organizational and stylistic errors.

D range - is largely off topic and/or contains numerous and serious compositional errors.

F range - does not meet any of the above minimum requirements. For example, the essay is completely off topic, is incomprehensible, or has been plagiarized.