ANTH 5401: Reading Ethnography
SPRING 2018

However far from the groves of academe anthropologists seek out their subjects – a shelved beach in Polynesia, a charred plateau in Amazonia; Akobo, Meknes, Panther Burn – they write their accounts with the world of lecterns, libraries, blackboards, and seminars all about them. This is the world that produces anthropologists, that licenses them to do the kind of work that they do, and within which the kind of work that they do must find a place if it is to count as worth attention. .. It is Being Here, a scholar among scholars, that gets your anthropology read ... published, reviewed, cited, taught.


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<tr>
<th>Lecture Time: Monday 6:30 p.m. to 9.15 p.m.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Venue: MMW 715</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecturer: Dr. Erika Evasdottir (Evasdottir at gmail dot com)</td>
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<td>Consultation Hours: After class and by appointment</td>
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<td>Teaching Assistant: Zoe DUAN</td>
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**Course Description:**
Reading, doing, and writing ethnography is crucial to becoming an anthropologist and understanding our discipline and its role among other disciplines and in society. This course uses a mix of theoretical and ethnographic readings to provide tools to unpack all aspects of ethnography.

**Learning Outcomes:**
- Learn how to read an ethnography (a.k.a. critical reading)
- Learn how to critique the writing of anthropologists (and your own)
- Understand the connection between anthropology as a discipline and ethnography
- Understand the use of method and theory in ethnography
- Explore methodological and theoretical debates in ethnography

**Medium of Instruction:** Lecture: In English

**Assessment:**
- Participation: 10%
- Presentation 1: 10%
- Presentation 2: 10%
- Presentation 3: 20%
- Short Paper 1: 5%
- Short Paper 2: 20%
- Final Paper: 25%
Course Texts

We will not be using any particular text book in this course as readings will be taken from a number of books and articles which will all be put on reserve at the Central Library.

Academic Honesty

The Chinese University of Hong Kong places very high importance on academic honesty, and adopts a policy of zero tolerance on cheating in examinations and plagiarism. Any such offence will lead to disciplinary action including possibly termination of studies at the University. Students should know how to properly use source material and how to avoid plagiarism. Students should read the detailed guidelines and examples for the acknowledgement of sources in the University’s website at http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty.

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Classes

Week 1: January 8  Introduction: Learning how to Read
Week 2: January 15  How to read a “thing”
Week 3: January 22  Words
[1st paper due: Jan 28, by midnight]
Week 4: January 29  Stereotypes
Week 5: February 5  No fear: method and theory
Week 6: February 12  Presentations 1
[Feb 19 = New Year’s = no class = Holidays from Feb 15 through Feb 21]
Week 7: February 26  The Ethnographer: Performance
Week 8: March 5  Your Audience is in Control: Reception & Writing
Week 9: March 12  Presentations 2
[2nd paper due: March 18, by midnight]
Week 10: March 19  Learning to Critique
Week 11: March 26  Disciplinary Politics
[April 2 = Easter = no class = Holiday]
Week 12: April 9  Instrumental Anthropology
Week 13: April 16  Final Presentations
[Final Papers due: TBA]
Readings

Class 1: Introduction & Learning to “Read”

Introduction: Our goals for the class & how we are going to achieve them.
- Introduction to Ethnography
- Introduction to Critical Reading and the art of Critique

READING: we will read together excerpts in class of Malinowski, A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term. We will be looking at his experiences from December 20, 1817 through December 25, 1817.

Class 2: Reading Space, Time & Things

The Interpretation of Things: What is “observation” to an anthropologist?

READING:
- “Why Late Night Hosts Place their Desks on the Right”, Slate Magazine Article, at url: http://www.slate.com/id/2242937/
- Clifford Geertz: Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture: Chapter 1 and “the wink”

Extra Reading (Voluntary)
- “From workplace to my place”, Haaretz.com [Teacher will provide pdf]


Class 3: An Introduction to Words

An Introduction to Words and Writing: dictionary definitions; history of use; language in context; antonyms & synonyms: the biography of a word; words and numbers

READING:
- Mary Douglas, Introduction to How Institutions Think.
- Edmund Leach, Introduction to Political Systems of Highland Burma (on “kachin” and “shan”)
- “Why 9 out of 10 Americans like statistics”, The Independent, 10 October 2010 [Teacher will provide PDF]
- “Work” and its meanings [Teacher will provide PDF]

Extra Reading (voluntary):
- J.L. Austin: How to do Things with Words
******PAPER 1:

Assignment: A descriptive observational paper about a meal you had. Will be further explained in class.

Class 4: An Advanced Course in Words

*Words are never alone:* genre, metaphors, poetics & stories, stereotypes: ways of world-making

**READING:**
- Chapters 1 through 10 (and beyond if this topic fascinates you) of *Metaphors We Live By*, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. 1980.

**Extra Reading (voluntary):**
- Dorothy Holland and Andrew Kipnis, “Metaphors for Embarrassment and Stories of Exposure: The Not-So-Egocentric Self in American Culture,” *Ethos*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Sep., 1994), pp. 316-342. – example of how to use this kind of approach in ethnography
- Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking*
- Charles Briggs: *Learning How to Ask: A Sociolinguistic Appraisal of the Role of the Interview in Social Science Research*

**VIDEO:** *The ax fight* [videorecording] / Center for Documentary Anthropology ... [et al.] ; film by Timothy Asch and Napoleon A. Chagnon ; script, Napoleon A. Chagnon
Publisher Watertown, MA : Documentary Educational Resources, [2001?], c1975. (30 mins)
Class 5: Method and Theory

*Method and Theory are your friends*: learning to use method and theory (rather than being used by them).

**READING:**
- *Shane, the lone ethnographer: a beginner's guide to ethnography*, by Sally Campbell Galman. GN345.G35 2007
- “Introduction”, *Hunting and Gathering in the Corporate Tribe*, Wilcock, Keith, 2004, Agora. [Teacher will provide PDF]

Extra Reading (voluntary):
- Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis*
- Wayne Fife, *Doing fieldwork: ethnographic methods for research in developing countries and beyond."

**A RETURN to the same VIDEO:** *The ax fight* [videorecording] / Center for Documentary Anthropology ... [et al.] ; film by Timothy Asch and Napoleon A. Chagnon ; script, Napoleon A.Chagnon Publisher Watertown, MA : Documentary Educational Resources, [2001?], c1975. (30 mins)

**** Prepare for Presentation 1: “dissecting your ethnography” ****
- Will be discussed further in class. Depending on student wishes, will be either something I will tell you about OR the task below. We’ll see.
- **Task:**
  - Read introduction in either of the following:
    - *MediaSpace* [electronic resource]: place, scale and culture in a media age, edited by Nick Couldry and Anna McCarthy.
    - Bettina Gransow’s introduction (pp. 3-18) in *China: New Faces of Ethnography*
  - Choose one article to present. Presentation: (1) what method was used; (2) what other methods could have been used; (3) what theory was used; (4) what other theory could have been used and why

Class 6: Presentations: Method & Theory

[HOLIDAYS!! See you in the New Year]
Class 7: The Ethnographer

Performance Theory: Beyond Etic/Emic: Who is the Ethnographer and Why does it matter?

READING:
- Norah Vincent; Chapter I “Getting Started” in The Self-Made Man (in Chinese or English
- Lifehacker, “Know what your Email Address says about you”; from http://lifehacker.com/5447335/know-what-your-email-address-says-about-you
- Introduction to Sex, sexuality, and the anthropologist, edited by Fran Markowitz and Michael Ashkenazi


Class 8: Your Audience is in Control

Reception Theory (Part 1): What Audience do you want to speak to, and why does it matter?
Extra Reading (voluntary):

What do Anthropologists study and what do they not study: What is the difference between sociology and anthropology? Economics and anthropology? Material science and anthropology?!
LAW and anthropology?

In other words…. Reception Theory (gasp!) aka Consumption aka fun stuff.

For the presentation: http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/ Writing for Specific Fields

- Anthropology
- Art History
- Communication Studies
- Drama
- History
- Literature (Fiction)
- Music
- Philosophy
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Religious Studies
- Sciences
- Sociology
***** Prepare for Presentation 2 “Being a Different Person” *****
- Your paper in a different genre

Class 9: Presentations 2

*****PAPER 2:

Assignment: Rewrite your first paper per instructions.
- See the very helpful hints on writing at: http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/

Class 10: Learning to Critique

Method, Theory, Audience… You can read, you can write, you can act like different people … now, can you critique: [Example: ethnography with (overt) political goals]

READING:
- Huan Hsu, “The Name’s Du Xiao Hua, but call me Steve”, Slate Magazine; http://www.slate.com/id/2217001

Extra Reading (voluntary):
- Edmund Leach, Conclusion to Political Systems of Highland Burma.
Class 11: The Politics of Academic Anthropology

Reception Theory, (part 2): Being the Right Kind of Anthropologist

READING:

Extra Reading (Voluntary)
  - Guide to reading: Why is Mr. Freeman famous?

VIDEO: Margaret Mead and Samoa [videorecording] / Wombat Film & Video, ; produced, directed & written by Frank Heimans. c1988. (51 mins)

Class 12: Instrumental Anthropology and Ethnography

An instrumental approach to ethnography. How anthropologists can use their skills outside anthropology.

READING:
- Stein, Howard, Chapter 5, “’How Long Can We Circle the Wagons?’ A Study in the Sense of Doom at Work”, in Nothing Personal, Just Business: A Guided Journey into Organizational Darkness.

Extra Reading (voluntary)


***********Prepare for Final Presentation: Topic to be discussed
- Presentations in genre of your “choice” of your proposed Final Paper

**Class 13: Final Presentations**

*****FINAL PAPER:

*Due: TBA, by email.*

Assignment: This is the real thing. Your first paper (that meal one) gets entirely rewritten. 10-15 pages, proper title, full citations, linking paragraphs, excellent deployment of words, with method, theory, understanding of positionality, evaluation of audience, and critique of some other theorist/ethnographer…