

World Ethnographies

Anthropology 3212

Fall 2007

Mondays 5-7:40pm, PC 424

Instructor: Prof. Juliet Erazo

Office: DM 341A

Office Hours: Monday 7:45-8:45 pm and Thursday 5:15-6:15 pm

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an introduction to ethnography (*ethno-* = Greek for “nation”, used to refer to the study of people or cultures; *-graphy* = “writing,” used to denote scientific descriptions). Ethnography has long been the principle genre of writing in cultural anthropology and is increasingly used in qualitative sociology and some subfields of history. We will study how ethnographic research is done and the process of converting that research into a meaningful book or essay. Then, we will explore some of the many directions that anthropology has taken, including greater attention to history and cultural change. Finally, we will explore some of the ways in which ethnography can be used to help bring about positive social change. Throughout the course, we will read ethnographies of various styles and from various places (Botswana, Morocco, Sweden, Ecuador, and the United States.) These readings illustrate the breadth and depth of ethnographic writing, and will introduce students to different cultures and societies. Additionally, we will watch several films in class that correspond to the ethnographies in terms of location, topic, approach and/or theoretical orientation. This course will enable students to compare cultures and societies, and to critically examine the methods, writing styles and formats of ethnographies.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Five Quizzes (10% each, with lowest grade dropped – totals 40% of your grade)

For each of the five book-length ethnographies, you will take a short quiz, which will test your understanding of the main points of the book. You must be present on these days to take the quiz. I will not be offering any make-up quizzes. If you miss a quiz, you will receive a zero. Although you will take all five quizzes, I will only count your four best grades.

Three take-home essay exams (20% each for Exams 1 & 2; 10% for Exam 3 – totals 50% of your grade)

These essays will test your ability to integrate concepts from the readings, ethnographic films, lectures, and class discussions. The first two essays will be 5-6 pages each, double-spaced, in a standard font (Times or Times New Roman), with standard margins, and with proper citations. The

third essay will be 2 pages long, double-spaced, standard font (Times or Times New Roman), with standard margins, and with proper citations. Though I will not be grading specifically for grammar, poor writing will get in the way of your argument and possibly lower your grade.

Students must submit all essays to the on-line analysis program available at www.turnitin.com and turn in the analysis results with their papers (note: the web program often takes a half hour or more to run the results, so students should plan accordingly). This program is designed to identify acts of plagiarism (copying sections of other people's work without citing that work; purchasing or using papers from the internet) and of "double-dipping," or using the same paper for multiple classes. The essay exam questions for this class are very specific to the materials we will cover together, so I would expect plagiarism to be minimal, but this program provides an extra level of assurance that all students are being evaluated equally for their own work. If you are unsure about what does or does not constitute plagiarism, please ask during class (general questions) or come to speak to me personally about your specific case.

Class Participation (10% of your grade)

Your participation grade will be based on regular attendance, in-class participation and occasional short assignments. Missing class twice means that you have missed 15% of the class, which is significant. Thus, if you miss class more than once and do not demonstrate sincere effort and time invested to make up the missed material, your grade will be lowered, whether or not you have a legitimate excuse for having missed class.

If you do miss class, the first place to check is the WebCT site at <http://webct.fiu.edu>. There, I will post lecture materials, in-class exercises, essay exams and your grades. The syllabus that is posted on the WebCT site will also be kept up-to-date, so you can check there to see if you have missed a film. All films for the course will be available for 2-hour check-out in the Green Library (5th floor, AudioVisual check-out desk.) After viewing this material, you can meet with me to further discuss what you missed. You can also email me with a summary of the readings to receive partial credit for having missed class.

The class is mainly discussion-based and will demand a high degree of participation from students. In turn, students' knowledge and critical thinking skills will be alternately challenged and reinforced by other students. I expect each of you to participate regularly in class by asking/answering questions, analyzing key issues, constructively debating topics, taking part in class activities, etc. If you are apprehensive about speaking in front of your peers, you may fulfill this part of your grade by e-mailing me some of your thoughts about the readings prior to class. I expect that you will come to class having read and annotated all materials assigned for that class. Questions, confusions and unsure ideas are very welcome, as they show engagement with the material.

REQUIRED MATERIALS: (any edition of the books is fine)

1. Shostak, Marjorie. 2002 [1981]. *Nisa: The Life and Words of a !Kung Woman*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
2. Rabinow, Paul. 1977. *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
3. Frykman, Jonas, and Orvar Löfgren. 1987. *Culture Builders: A Historical Anthropology of Middle-Class Life*. Trans. Alan Crozier. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
4. Rothenberg, Daniel. 1998. *With these Hands: The Hidden World of Migrant Farmworkers Today*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
5. Rubenstein, Steven. 2002. *Alejandro Tsakimp: A Shuar Healer in the Margins of History*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
6. Short coursepack [CP], which can be purchased from me or from Michelle Lamarre, DM 334. Cost: \$1.

UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION TO ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH AND WRITING

Monday, August 27: Introductions and Review of Course Objectives and Expectations

September 3: NO CLASS – LABOR DAY

September 10: What makes cultural anthropology different from other disciplines?

Readings:

1. Malinowski, Bronislaw (1922) “Introduction: The Subject, Method and Scope of This Enquiry.” In *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. London: Routledge, p. 1-18, reprinted in *Readings for a History of Anthropological Theory* (2001), Paul A. Erickson and Liam D. Murphy, eds. New York: Broadview Press, p. 206-215. [CP]
2. *Nisa*, pp. 1-92. (Introduction and chapters 1-3)

IN CLASS FILM: *Off the Verandah* (1990) Produced and directed by Andre Singer; written and presented by Bruce Dakowski. A video biography of Bronislaw Malinowski and his pioneering fieldwork in the Trobriand Islands.

September 17: How to read and evaluate ethnographies

Readings:

1. *Nisa*, pp. 95-179 (chapters 4-8)

IN CLASS QUIZ on *Nisa*, covering all assigned chapters (Introduction and 1-8).

September 24: The process of fieldwork

Readings: *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco*, pp. 1-69 (Introduction and chapters 1-3)

IN CLASS FILM: *Daughter from Danang*. Directed by Gail Dolgin and Vicente Franco.

October 1: The process of fieldwork, Part II

Readings: *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco*, pp. 70-149 (chapters 4-8)

IN CLASS QUIZ on *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco* (entire book).

UNIT 2: DIVERSIFYING METHODS, NEW QUESTIONS

October 8: Globalization and Cultural Change

***** **ESSAY EXAM #1** due at beginning of class*****
(No readings due)

IN CLASS LECTURE on McDonald's in China

IN CLASS FILM: *Cricket the Trobriand Way: A Case Study in Cultural Change* (1983).
KOCE-TV, produced by the Coast Community College in association with Holt, Rinehart, and
Winston. A film that documents how Trobrianders have altered the British sport of cricket.

October 15: Incorporating history into anthropological studies

Readings: *Culture Builders*, pp. vii-ix, 1-10, 88-153. (Foreward, Introduction, & chapter 3)

October 22: Space, place and identity

Readings: *Culture Builders*, pp. 174-263. (chapters 5 & 6)

IN CLASS QUIZ on *Culture Builders* (all assigned chapters).

October 29: Knowing the other, knowing ourselves

Readings: *Alejandro Tsakimp*, pp. xi-xiii, xxi, and 3-82.

IN CLASS FILM: *The Ax Fight* (1989). A four-part analysis of a fight in a Yanomamo Indian
village between local descent groups, by Timothy Asch and Napoleon Chagnon.

November 5: Indigenous peoples' social movements.

Readings: *Alejandro Tsakimp*, pp. 85-190.

IN CLASS QUIZ on *Alejandro Tsakimp* (all assigned chapters).

UNIT 3: CHANGING THE WORLD WITH ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

November 12: Ethnography and Development Projects

(No readings due)

*******Essay exam #2 due, beginning of class*******

IN CLASS FILM: *The Angel Returns: Changing the Tradition of Female Circumcision* (2002). Director, Jacqueline Bakker ; script, Jacqueline Persson, Henk Suer ; editors, Gulay Orhan, Ebra Baskan, Andries Udink. Film that documents internal controversies about female circumcision within a Somali community.

November 19: Studying Public Policy Issues Holistically and Ethical Issues in Combining Ethnography and Activism

Readings: *With These Hands*, pp. xvii – xxii and 1-90 (Preface and chapters 1-3)

November 26: **CLASS CANCELLED** -- (happy recovery from Thanksgiving...)

December 3: Student Presentations, class evaluations and wrap-up

Readings: *With These Hands*, pp. 90-180 and 323-326 (chapters 4-6 and “The Space between These Hands”)

*******Essay exam #3 due*******

(Students who have selected to write their papers should turn them in at the beginning of class. Students who have elected to do oral papers will present them today).

IN CLASS QUIZ on *With These Hands* (all assigned chapters)