

Syllabus
Anthropology through the Lens
ANT 4930 & ANG 6930
Spring Semester, AY 2011-12

Prof. Peter Schmidt
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Office Hrs.:
Thurs: 3:45—5:15
and by appt.

In this course we will experience and explore how and why the discipline of anthropology has used film as part of its mission. The course will incorporate the screening of ethnographic films juxtaposed to commercial feature films that “play” on or distort principles of anthropology.

The premise of the course is: We will learn about film in anthropology by viewing and discussing films that reflect various anthropological principles and agendas as well as films that claim to be anthropological. Thinking about anthropological film will require talking and writing about the subject. Thus, participants in the course will be expected to participate fully in discussions about the films that are viewed in class and outside of class. Your study guides will help you prepare for the discussions.

Though theory has been a major concern within anthropology, ironically visual representations about ethnographic topics either use unstated theoretical points of view or emphasize one category of ethnographic detail at the expense of other knowledge. Of equally important concern is the interrelationship between anthropological representations and Hollywood treatments of indigenous peoples around the world. We will critically explore and analyze both academic and commercial treatments of the Other with multiple goals, amongst which are: How effective is film as a medium to communicate anthropological principles and information?; What are the interwoven legacies between Hollywood and Anthropology?; How do Hollywood treatments influence and shape the images that we hold of the Other?; How do we disentangle authenticity in both ethnographic and Hollywood treatment of the Other? We will also examine themes such as the use of “objective” perspectives, tensions between positivist science and reflexive stances, and the role of indigenous perspectives and filmmakers.

This course stresses critical thinking. This perspective distresses some participants who confuse critical perspectives with negativity. If you feel uncomfortable in engaging critical perspectives, then this will not be the course for you.

Class Participation

Class participation/discussion is *a major component* of the course. Active and engaged participation is expected and will count for 40% of the final grade. Because screening and discussions of films in class are of such importance, attendance is required (see below for more on this). The instructor recognizes that there is significant variation in student comfort regarding discussion while at the same time expects that those less inclined will make a special effort to contribute to class discussion over the course of the semester. In a gesture to recognize those who steadily improve, students will have the option to select the higher of two class discussion

grades for this component of the course, should the grade improve in the second half of the course.

One of the most important indices for measurement of class participation is a film notebook. Each participant will spontaneously record key observations, impressions, queries, and thoughts about films as they are screened in class. Notebooks are also a medium for addressing key questions that arise in the study guides that accompany films. The notebook will provide the instructor with insights into the critical thought being exercised during and after screening. This requirement is also an explicit declaration to participants that screenings, even though they may be feature films, are not for entertainment value. Rather they are meant to elicit critical comparison, reflections, and association with points of anthropological value. Thus, the notebooks will provide an index into critical thinking about the films screened during the semester.

Notebooks will be reviewed twice during the semester. The notebooks will be graded on a 0 to 125 point scale based on the following criteria: quality of penetrating questions about issues of representation that arise; thoroughness of scene observations; and, quality of critical thinking manifest. Students can schedule meetings during the semester to discuss with the instructor their class participation assessment. The notebooks will be handed in for evaluation on **February 23 and April 16.**

Participation Breakdown:

In class discussion:	250 points [20%] (125 points Jan 10—March 1; 125 points March 13-April 19)
Notebooks:	250 points [20%] (125 points Jan 10—Feb 23; 125 points Feb 28-April 19)

Exams

In-Class Essay

This course focuses on a critical evaluation of both popular and ethnographic film and depends on each student's understanding of the anthropological principles that are expressed through critical viewing, discussion, and reading. One of the best ways to assess student progress in the assimilation of an evaluative approach that incorporates comparative treatments and critical thinking are spontaneous essays that draw on class discussions, readings, film screenings, and extracurricular reading and research. Accordingly, there will be an in-class essay that will address a suite of readings, discussions, and screenings, with students allowed to use their class notes as resource material. *The in-class essay will count for 20% of the grade, or 200 points.*

Total 200 points.

Final Exam

The final exam will be a take-home format, handed out April 24 at the last class. A hard copy of the exam will be due at 4 PM, April 26, at the instructor's office, 441 Grinter Hall. The final

exam counts for 30% of the grade and will be designed to elicit creative responses to issues and problems discussed during the course.

Total 300 Points

Project Option

A special project, either individual or group (not larger than 3): The special project can take a variety of forms, including the making of a short ethnographic film in video format or a project that focuses on a suite of films that may represent a particular genre or emphasis (e.g., silent films, archaeological films, films about religion, films about culture change, or possibly clips from films that illustrate an important anthropological theme or other critical commentary). The project is a chance to employ the knowledge and insights gained through class discussions, screenings, and readings. This being the case, students selecting this option will be responsible for editing their films on home or other university computers, such as in the Architecture lab with Final Cut Pro. Personal cameras are recommended but in some needy cases a camera may be made available. Video projects must be kept to a maximum of 12 minutes in running length, but commonly run between 4 and 10 minutes.

Students who want to take the Project Option must do so by January 26, presenting their proposal idea in writing to the instructor at the class meeting of January 26. Those selecting the project option must then write a short prospectus setting out their goals, methods, and themes—to be presented to the instructor by February 2, and then subsequently meet in tutorials with the instructor. Those selecting projects can expect to rewrite and revise their project descriptions several times and may want to schedule extra meetings with the instructor for advice and guidance if necessary. Finally, those selecting the Project Option will receive up to a maximum of 275 points (27.5% of the total points): exceptional work will receive up to a 50 point [5% of the total grade] bonus. Those selecting a special project will receive a reduction in the number of possible points for in-class essays from 150 to 75 [for a total of 150 possible points], and a reduction in the Final Exam points from 300 to 150 [see grade summary at end].

Attendance Policy & its Relationship to Grading

As this course strongly emphasizes participation through screenings and discussions, attendance is required. Only three (3) hours of unexcused absences are waived. Thereafter, **each 1 hour increment will result in a partial grade penalty**. For example, if you have an A after all course work is completed, then your unexcused absences (after three are waived) will be calculated as follows: 1 hr = A to A-; 2 hrs = A to B+; 3 hrs = A to B; 4 hours = A to B-, etc.). This works out to -.33 grade point for each hour absent, bringing home the strongly participatory quality of the course. Please remember that an **absence from a 2 hour class will be recorded as just that, -2 hours**. Illness or family emergencies must be documented. If you have some other compelling reason to miss class (e.g., an athletic event in which you are participating, death of a loved one, job interview, etc.), please contact the instructor well *before* class by email or in person to arrange for permission and make-up work. *After class* requests and/or presentation of excuses for absences will not be accepted, so please do not embarrass yourself by asking.

Guidelines

Enjoy, but
Think critically, and
Bring your own popcorn, and clean up afterwards because of vermin.

Required texts

- Ruby, Jay. 2000. *Picturing Culture: Exploration of Film and Anthropology*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago. Available for purchase at Goerings Book Store near Bageland.
- Alexie, Sherman. 2005. *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fist Fight in Heaven*. Grove Press, New York. Available for purchase at Goerings Book Store near Bageland.
- Collected Readings: Available at Blue and Orange Textbooks, 13th St.

Schedule of Screenings and Readings

* = abbreviated screening;

CP = Course Pack

The instructor reserves the right to add additional background readings for specific films.

January 10: Introduction to course and course expectations

January 12: Romance and Struggle vis-à-vis Anthropological Ethics

Screenings to be announced

Readings:

- *Picturing Culture*: Chapter 1; “Introduction”

January 17, 19: The Origins of Romance and Struggle

In the Land of the War Canoes: 1914, black and white; silent; 47 minutes

Nanook of the North: 1922, black and white, silent; 55 minutes

Readings:

- *Picturing Culture*: Chapter 2; “Researching with a Camera: The Anthropologist as Picture Taker” and
- *Picturing Culture*: Chapter 3; “The Aggie Must Come First: Robert Flaherty’s Place in Ethnographic Film Making”
- Elliot Weinberger. “The Camera People”, pp. 3-26 (*Visualizing Theory*).CP

January 24, 26: The *Other* in the “Dark Continent”

King Solomon’s Mines 1950; 103 minutes*

Man and his Culture: 1955, 15 minutes

Readings:

- Carter Horsley. Review of King Solomon’s Mines @ <http://www.thecityreview.com/kingsol.html>

- Anne McClintock. *Imperial Leather: race, gender and sexuality in the colonial contest*; Chapter 4, pp. 132-180; focus on following sections: The Slave Band; The Labor of Leisure' The Invisible Servant. An electronic book available in UF libraries. This is for background reading on the Victorian era, when H. Rider Haggard wrote King Solomon's Mines.

January 31, Feb. 2: The Other, with History and Agency

Kenya: Where Women Rule: 2006; 20 minutes

The Tree of Iron: 1988; 57 minutes

Readings:

- *Iron Technology in East Africa*. 1997. P. Schmidt; Chapter 3-4. **CP**
- *Picturing Culture*: Chapter 6; "Exposing Yourself: Reflexivity, Anthropology, and Film."

February 7, 9: The Timeless Savage

The Gods Must be Crazy: 1980, 109 minutes*

N/Um Tchau: Kung Bushmen: 1969, 20 minutes

Hunters: 1952, 72 minutes*

Readings:

- *The Dobe Ju/'Hoansi*. 2001. R. Lee. Chapter 9 (Coping with Life: Religion, World View, and Healing); Optional: Chapter 2 (The People of the Dobe Area). **CP**
- *Picturing Culture*: Chapter 5; "The Ethics of Image-Making; or, "They're Going to Put Me in the Movies. They're Going to Make a Big Star Out of Me."

February 14, 16: Authenticity and the Other?

Dead Birds: 1964, 83 minutes*

Cannibal Tours: 1988, 70 minutes*

Readings:

- *Picturing Culture*: Chapter 3; Robert Gardener and Anthropological Cinema.
- Curtis Hinsley. 1991. "The World as Marketplace: Commodification of the Exotic at the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893." **CP**
- Dean McCannell. "Cannibal Tours", pp. 99-114 (*Visualizing Theory*). **CP**

February 21, 23: The Other as Outcast and Object (& Racism)

Born Into Brothels: 2005, 85 minutes*

Couple in the Cage: 1993; 31 minutes

Readings:

- Catherine Lutz and Jane Collins. "The Photograph as an Intersection of Gazes: The Example of *National Geographic*," pp. 363-384 (*Visualizing Theory*). **CP**

Notebooks due February 23

February 28; March 1: Ritual and Resistance

Trobriand Cricket: An Indigenous Response to Colonialism: 1976, 54 minutes.

Readings:

- Weiner, A. 1988. *The Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea*, pp. 111-123 (Chap. 7). Optional: pp. 139-157 (Chap. 9). **CP**
- Leach, J. W. "Structure and Message in Torbriand Cricket" **CP**
- Weiner, A. "Trobrianders on Camera and Off," pp. 54-59 (*Visualizing Theory*). **CP**

March 6, 8: Spring Vacation

March 13: In Class Essay

March 15: Colonialism: Self-Justifications, Parody, and Romantic Representations

Black and White in Color: 1976; 100 minutes*

Out of Africa. 1985; 160 minutes.*

Readings:

- Erin Hasinoff. 2005. "Faith in Objects: American Indian Object Lessons at the World in Boston." **CP**

March 20, 22: Colonialism: Resistance

Rabbit Proof Fence: 2002; 96 minutes*

Night Cries: 1988, 17 minutes

Readings:

- David McDougall. "Whose Story Is It", pp. 27-36 (*Visualizing Theory*). **CP**
- *Tracy Moffatt--Free Falling* by Lynne Cooke:
<http://www.diacenter.org/exhibs/moffatt/freefalling/essay.html>
- *Night Cries: A Rural Trajedy* by Peter Kemp:
<http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/cteq/00/10/night.html>

Optional Viewing: *Primitive People*: 1950; 33 minutes

March 27, 29: Indians and Violence: Issues of Representation

The Ax Fight: 1975; 30 minutes

Apocalypto: 2006, 139 minutes*

Readings:

- www.archaeology.org/online/reviews/apaca:ypto.html
- Chagnon, N. 1997. *The Yanamamo*. 5th ed., pp. 185-205 (Chap. 6).
- Robert Borofsky et al. 2005. *Yanomami: The Fierce Controversy and what we can learn from it*. Two selected chapters: Pp. 22-34 and 61-71. **CP**
- *Picturing Culture*: Chapter 4; "Out of Sync: The Cinema of Timothy Ash."

April 3, April 5: Indians Resist and Create Paradise

Itam Hakim, Hopiit—an Indian Tale: 1984, 58 minutes

White Shamans and Plastic Medicine Men: 30 minutes

Readings:

- *Picturing Culture*: Chapter 8: "Speaking for, Speaking about, Speaking with, or Speaking Alongside."

April 10, April 12: Indians in Hollywood

Smoke Signals: 1998, 89 minutes*

Readings:

- *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fist Fight in Heaven*. 1995. Sherman Alexie
- David McDougall. "Films of Memory", pp. 260-270 (*Visualizing Theory*). CP

April 17, 19: The Marginalized

Stranger with a Camera: 1990, 62 minutes

Number Our Days: 1977, 29 minutes

Readings:

- Lawrence Daressa. "Review: Stranger with a Camera." @ <http://www.newsreel.org/articles/strangercineaste.htm> (California Newsreel).
- Tom Rankin. "Review: Stranger with a Camera." *Oral History Review* 30(2):133-135. Electronic Resource, UF Library.
- *Picturing Culture*: Chapter 10; "Toward an Anthropological Cinema: Some Conclusions and a Possible Future."
- Meyerhoff, B. 1978. "We don't wrap herring in a printed page." (Chap. 3). CP
- Edmonds, Robert. "Truth vs. Veracity" (pages 17-25) and "Objectivity vs. Aesthetics", pp. 41-45. In *Anthropology on Film*. VTBA
- http://www.indiana.edu/~wanthro/theory_pages/Myerhoff.htm; a penetrating biography of B. Meyerhoff.

Notebooks due April 19

April 19: 7—9:30 PM Screening of Projects, required attendance. Venue TBA

April 24: Screening of Projects

Key Dates

- January 26: Submission of special project idea
- January 26--February 23: Schedule meetings with instructor to discuss projects
- February 9: Turn in prospectus for special project option
- February 23: Turn in notebooks
- February 28: Notebooks returned
- March 13: In-class essay
- April 19: Turn in notebooks
- April 24: Notebooks returned, collect take home exam.
- April 26: Turn in take home exam.

Grading Summary by Total Points

Class Participation:	500 (see above for breakdown)
In-class essay:	200
Final exam:	300
Total	1000

Grading Summary with special project option:

Class Participation:	500
In-class essay	75
Final Exam:	150
Project:	275 + up to 50 point bonus
Total	1000

Divide 1000 by 10 to arrive at final average for course.

Accommodations

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to me when requesting accommodation.

University Honesty Policy: University policies on cheating, plagiarism, and related issues are available at: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/procedures/academicguide.html>. Any student caught in a dishonest act during this course will fail the course.