

Syllabus
Anthropology through the Lens
ANT 4930/ANG 6930
Spring Semester 2015

Prof. Peter Schmidt
441 Grinter Hall
schmidtp@ufl.edu

Off. Hrs.:
Wed: 4-5 by appointment
Thurs: 1:30-2:30 PM

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.

Class Participation

Class participation/discussion is *a major component* of the course. Active and engaged participation is expected and will count for 45% 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. Hence, 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

One of the most important indices for measurement of class participation is a film notebook. Each participant will record, spontaneously, 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. Notes are to be taken by hand, unless there is a disability issue that requires computer use. This is a no-laptop class.

Notebooks will be reviewed twice during the semester. They will be graded on a 0 to 100 point scale based on the following criteria:

- quality of penetrating questions about issues of representation that arise;
- thoroughness of scene observations;
- 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 Oct. 3 and Nov. 21.

Participation Breakdown, based on a 1000 point overall grading scale:

In class discussion:	150 points
Notebooks:	200 points
Attendance	100 points
Total	450 points

Exams

In-Class Essays

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, twice during the semester there will be in-class essays that will address a suite of readings, discussions, and screenings. An essay will be developed within a timed setting, with students allowed to use their class notes as resource material. The essays are not intended to elicit facts; rather, then provide an opportunity to exercise interpretative skills and creativity. *Each in-class essay will count for 10% of the grade, or 100 points. Students have the option to double the highest grade on one essay and drop the lower grade.* **Total 200 points.**

Final Exam

The final exam will be a take-home format, handed out the last day of class—April 21. It is due at the time that the exam is scheduled on the University calendar. You may submit earlier if you consult the instructor. The exam may be delivered by email to the instructor's UF email account or it may be delivered in hard copy at the time of the scheduled exam to the instructor's office. The final exam counts for 15% of the grade and will be designed to elicit creative responses to issues and problems discussed during the course. **Total 150 Points**

Projects/Papers

A special project, either individual or group (not larger than 3), is an important option for the course. Students are encouraged to consider this option, for practical approaches bring home the course principles more powerfully. 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 provides a chance to employ the knowledge and insights gained through class discussions, screenings, and readings. Students 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 camera may be made available. Video projects must be kept to a maximum of 12 minutes in running length. **Those selecting projects will receive an automatic bonus of 100 points upon completion of the project, scaled according to the grade (for example a 90% grade would be $300 \times .90$ or 270 points).**

A brief three sentence sketch of your project idea must be submitted in writing to the instructor at the class meeting of **January 20**. The second step is to write a short prospectus setting out goals, methods, and themes—to be presented to the instructor by **February 3**; these ideas will be developed subsequently during tutorials with the instructor. It may be necessary to rewrite and revise project descriptions several times. The project option carries a total of 300 points.

Those who do not opt for a collaborative or individual project may write a paper that pertains to the films screened in the course. For example, a critical comparative approach of the anthropological value of films may be considered, even using another non-course film. The instructor is open to a wide range of paper topics and creative approaches. The schedule of submission of ideas and a more detailed prospectus by **February 3**. The paper option is 200 points.

Total points for Project/Paper: 300 for video; 200 for paper

Attendance Policy & its Relationship to Participation Grading

As this course strongly emphasizes participation through screenings and discussions, attendance is required. Three (3) hours of unexcused absences will be waived. Thereafter, **each 1 hour increment will result in a partial grade penalty**. You start the course with 100 points for attendance. Those with three hours or fewer absences will receive the full 100 points. For each absence beyond 3 hours, there will be a 20 point deduction from your final grade. Thus, if you

miss 7 hours of class, you will lose 80 points ($7-3 = 4 \times 20$). 9 hours of absences (three full weeks of the total of fourteen weeks) will mean a failing grade. Please remember that an **absence from a 2 hour class will be recorded as -2 hours**. You will also want to note that missing class will also result in less pertinent notes on class discussions, an integral part of the note-taking that is expected in class.

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 to arrange for permission and make-up work. Requests or presentation of excuses *after* class absences will not be accepted, so please do not embarrass yourself by asking.

Grading Summary by Total Points

Class Participation:

- Discussion 150
- Notebooks 200
- Attendance 100

Two in-class essays: 200 (2 @ 100)

Final exam: 150

Project option 300

Paper option 200

Using a 1000 point total, divide by 10 to arrive at the final grade for course.

Required texts

- Ruby, Jay. 2000. *Picturing Culture: Exploration of Film and Anthropology*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago. Available for purchase at UF Bookstore.
- Alexie, Sherman. 2005. *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fist Fight in Heaven*. Grove Press, New York. Purchase online.
- Course Packs are available at Book iT bookstore in Holiday Inn bldg, 13th St. Or, order online at: <http://book-it.myshopify.com/products/ant-4930-sect-11gh-schmidt-fall-2013>

Schedule of Screenings and Readings

* = abbreviated screening; **CP** = Course Pack

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

Schedule note: There will be no class on April 21, when the instructor will be attending a professional meeting. Your final exams will be delivered to you electronically on that day.

January 6: Film and Anthropological Ethics

Screening of several previous student projects

Readings:

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

January 8 and 13: 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 15 and 20: 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.

Short Description of Project or Paper due Jan. 20.

January 22 and 27: 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.”

January 29 & February 3: 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.”

Prospectus about Project or Paper due February 3.

February 5 and 10: 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 12 & 17: 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**

February 12: In Class Essay: 50 minutes

Notebooks Due February 12

February 19: 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**

February 24 & 26: Colonialism: Self-Justifications and Representations

Black and White in Color: 1976; 100 minutes*

Readings:

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

March 3 & 5: Spring Vacation

March 10 & 12: 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 Tragedy* by Peter Kemp:
<http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/cteq/00/10/night.html>

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

March 17 & 19: 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 Yanomamo*. 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."

March 24 & 26: 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."

Optional Viewing: *Miss Navaho*: 2007, 60 minutes

March 31: In Class Essay

April 2: 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*).

April 7 & 9: 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 9.

April 14 & 16: Screen Film Projects in class.

Key Dates

- January 20: Submission of special project idea/paper idea
- February 3: Turn in detailed prospectus for project or paper
- January 13-February 28: Schedule meetings with instructor to discuss project/paper
- February 12: 1st In-class essay + Notebooks due.
- March 31: 2nd In-class essay
- April 9: Notebooks due
- April 14 & 16: Screening of film projects

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.