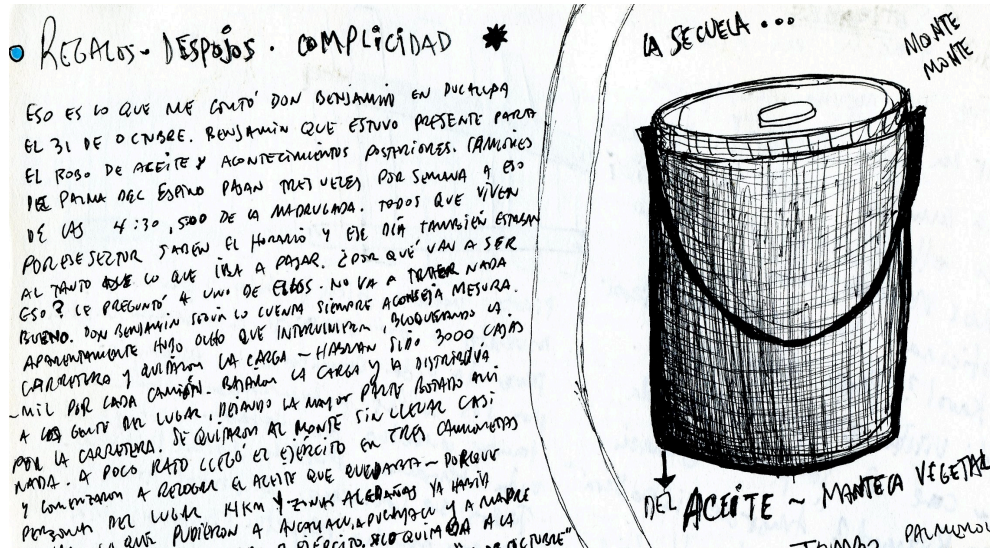


Ethnographic Writing – Spring 2015
ANG 6930 1E87

Instructor: Richard Kernaghan
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Turlington Hall B121
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Office Hours: Thursdays 2:30-5:00 pm or by appointment

Wednesdays 3-5
(9:35 am - 12:35 pm)
UST 0105



Summary: This class is an ethnographic writing workshop. Throughout the semester will explore the craft of writing in relation to events, circumstances, and predicaments that arise during ethnographic fieldwork. Our main activity as participants will be to write. However, we will also use this forum to foster an extended conversation on strategies and techniques for portraying empirical worlds. Making our own ethnographic writing more adequate to encounters with the worlds we study is the overarching aspiration of the class. To that end we will experiment with ways of rendering our texts more vivid and compelling, not in order to become “good writers” but to hone our attentiveness and sensitivities to discoveries that are pending in past fieldwork experiences and in those still to come.

Requirements: (1) regular attendance and engagement in discussions and activities; (2) a writing journal kept throughout the semester that builds upon ethnographic field notes or diaries; (3) a series of brief vignettes (five in all) each based on a different fieldwork scene, experience or encounter; (4) an annotated bibliography of works on ethnography and ethnographic writing; and (5) a term paper.

Texts: all required readings for this course can be downloaded from Canvas Course Page. The following titles are *recommended* (but not required) and will be placed on reserve at Library West:

Bennett, Jane, *Vibrant Matter*, Duke University Press, 2009.
Sobieszek & Burroughs, *Ports of Entry*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1996.
Malinowski, *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term*, Stanford University Press, 1989
Rabinow, *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco*, University of California Press, 1977
Sacco, *Footnotes in Gaza*, Metropolitan Books, 2009
Sanjek, *Fieldnotes*, Cornell University Press, 1990
Taussig, *I Swear I Saw This*, University of Chicago Press, 2011

Attendance: Please arrive punctually and remain until the end of class. An attendance sign-up sheet will be circulated each session. If you must miss class, please inform me ahead of time (or as soon as possible) and provide appropriate documentation. In the event of an absence your responsibility to contact a classmate in order to obtain notes on the materials covered while away.

Absences for reasons of religious holiday, illness, and official university business are excused; however, proper notification should be provided. **Please note:** Multiple absences will undermine performance in the course. For official UF Policy on attendance and absences please consult:
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Evaluations – Final course grades will be calculated according to a combination of four criteria:

Participation (20%): A grade will be assessed at the end of the semester based on the degree to which participants have played an active, informed role in class discussions, and in so doing contributed to the course's overall success. For that it is important to arrive at each session on time with the assigned materials in hand and prepared to share impressions, questions and interpretations. Participants are also highly encouraged to meet with me individually in office hours to talk about your writing and on-going work towards the final project.

Ethnographic vignettes (30%): These five writing exercises (maximum 500 words each) are intended to give you a chance to narrate a crucial event or work up a striking detail from your own fieldwork experiences. The vignette could explore the play of light, shadow and dust at a certain hour of the day in a place you have frequented. It might register the sonorous reverberations of water upon a nearby shore—or else the colors and textures of boats you found beached there as you watched the daily rhythms of men and women whose livelihoods depend on the sea. Perhaps, you will write about the sensory/corporeal demands of a busy city intersection at night or about the crash that almost happened there. You might describe the signature way in which a close friend tells stories or even reveal the fieldwork discovery that came to you in a dream. Here the 'what' matters but only in proportion to the vividness with which it is brought forth in writing.

Annotated bibliography (20%): This document should be selective, not exhaustive, featuring at least ten but no more than twenty entries. The relevance of each title to the participant's ethnographic writing should be made explicit in the brief description that accompanies it.

Term project paper (30%): The final paper will be an original and creative piece of ethnographic

writing. Of approximately 5500-7000 words in length, it should contribute directly towards the development of a conference paper, journal article or dissertation chapter.

The final paper must be typed and double-spaced with one-inch margins and pages numbered. Please don't forget to staple. In addition to handing in a hard copy of the assignment, *you are also required to submit an electronic version via Sakai.*

Assignment Deadlines:

- 1) ethnographic vignette deadlines : TBA
- 2) final paper & annotated bibliography: Apr. 22

Late policy: Assignments are due at the beginning of class of the calendar deadline. Papers handed in late but still within one week of the original due date will be docked the equivalent of a full letter grade. After that they will no longer be accepted. No extensions will be granted for the final term paper.

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism and cheating are serious academic offenses. All work submitted for a grade must be free from unauthorized assistance or deliberate misrepresentations of one's own effort. The penalty for plagiarism or cheating is a grade of zero points on the assignment in question. In such cases an incident form will also be sent to the Office of the Dean of Students.

If you have questions about what constitutes academic misconduct, please consult the UF Honor Code as well as the UF Policies on Academic Honesty, Student Rights and Responsibilities. These are available online at

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studenthandbook/studentrights.php#academichonestyguidelines>

ADA Statement: "Students with disabilities, who need reasonable modifications to complete assignments successfully and otherwise satisfy course criteria, are encouraged to meet with the instructor as early in the course as possible to identify and plan specific accommodations. Students will be asked to supply a letter from the Disability Resource Center to assist in planning accommodations."

Grading: The following scale will be used for grades on all assignments and exams: 94-100=A; 90-93=A-; 87-89=B+; 83-86=B; 79-82=B-; 76-78=C+; 72-75=C; 69-71=C-; 66-68=D+; 62-65=D; 59-61=D-; 58 and below=E (failing).

Regarding university grading policies, be advised that a grade of C- is not valid for major, minor, Gen Ed, Gordon Rule, or for college basic distribution credit. For questions about minus grades, please see <http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>.

You may consult current UF policy on how grade point averages are calculated at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx#calculating>.

Additional UF Resources:

Reading & Writing Center (Broward Hall, 392-0791)
Career Resource Center (Reitz Union, 392-1601)
University Counseling Center (301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575),
Student Mental Health (Student Health Care Center, 392-1171), and
Sexual Assault Recovery Services (Student Health Care Center, 392-1161)

Please note: I may make minor adjustments to class readings during the course of the semester. Any and all modifications will be announced ahead of time.

Course Schedule

week 1 introductions

1/7 Raffles, "The Deepest of Reveries"

week 2 writing encounters

1/14 Hurston, "Turpentine Camp – Cross City"

Malinowski, *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term* (excerpt)

week 3 drawing

1/21 Taussig, *I Swear I Saw This* (selected passages)

Sacco, *Footnotes in Gaza* (excerpts)

week 4 field work / field notes

1/28 Rabinow, "Ali: An Insider's Outsider"

images of notebooks from Burroughs' *Ports of Entry* exhibition

week 5 which voices?

2/4 Stewart, "Precarity's Forms"

week 6 where nothing happens

2/11 Benjamin, "The Handkerchief"

Cadava, "Traces" & "Nightdreams" from *Words of Light*

week 7	pictures still, and moving
2/18	<u>guest presentation</u> : Dr. Richard Freeman Harper, <i>Good Company</i> (selected chapters) <u>screening</u> : Rebecca Baron's, "The Idea of North"
week 8	no class
2/25	out of town presentation
week 9	no class
3/4	Spring Break
week 10	speech situations
3/11	Sarraute, "Conversations and sub-conversations"
week 11	clichés
3/18	D.H. Lawrence, "Cezanne" Deleuze, "The Painting before Painting"
week 12	of dreams
3/25	Blanchot, "Dreaming, Writing" Leiris, <i>Night without Day, Day without Night</i> (excerpts)
week 13	portraits if not faces
4/1	Siegel, "Georg Simmel Reappears: the Aesthetic Significance of the Face"
week 14	when things look back
4/8	Bennett, "The Force of Things"

week 15 **final presentations**

4/15

week 16 **final presentations**

4/22