

Gender, Sex and Ethnographic Fieldwork (ANT 4930 / ANG 6930)

M 12:50-1:40 (TUR 2305) / W 12:50-2:45 (TUR 2306)

Instructor: Alix Johnson (*she/her/hers*)

Email: alix.johnson@ufl.edu

Office: Turlington B129

Office hours: T 1-2:00 & Th 2-3:00

Course description: This course centers questions of gender, sex, and sexuality (understood as inextricably bound up with race, ethnicity, class, and dis/ability) in an exploration of ethnographic practice and knowledge production. Through close-reading and seminar-style discussion of classic and contemporary ethnographies, we will ask how the ethnographer is gendered – historically, normatively, and in practice. We will examine how the embodiment and subjectivity of the researcher can shape their research; and how the range of choices made around this relationship come to shape the field of anthropology. We will also explore ethical issues related to intimacy and accountability, and pragmatic questions of fieldwork safety, risk, and violence.

In a field where research is not only intensely interpersonal, but often requires the researcher to serve as their own research instrument, attending to gender, sex, and sexuality can help us unpack some of the challenges, potentials, and complexities of our work. Topics considered will include: access, reflexivity, objectivity, authority, intimacy, and voice.

This course is open to all students who meet the prerequisites, but is best suited for students who have conducted, or are planning to conduct, ethnographic field research.

Learning objectives: To succeed in this course, students will demonstrate their ability to:

- Situate questions of gender, sex, and sexuality within a historical trajectory of American anthropological thought
- Analyze the role that gender, sex, and sexuality play in ethnographic research and writing across a range of classic and contemporary texts
- Engage with practical and ethical questions related to gender, sex, and sexuality in the practice of ethnographic research

Course format: This course will be taught as an online course with synchronous (real-time) and asynchronous (at-your-own-pace) components. Our first synchronous meeting will be Monday, August 31 from 12:50-1:40pm. After that, *all synchronous sessions will be on Wednesdays* from 12:50-2:45pm. On Mondays after Week 1, you are expected to use the course time to watch the short lectures I will be posting, and engage with the course reading in Perusall.

Assessment: Your grade will be determined based on the following components:

Participation	10%	Ongoing
Reading responses	30%	Mondays (Wk 2-14) by 5:00pm
Discussion leadership	10%	To be scheduled
Paper 1	20%	Mon, Oct 12 by 5:00pm
Paper 2		
Proposal	5%	Mon, Nov 9 by 5:00pm
Draft	10%	Mon, Dec 7 by 5:00pm
Peer review	5%	Weds, Dec 9 (in class)
Final	20%	Mon, Dec 14 by 5:00pm

Participation is assessed on the basis of in-class engagement and activities. Most class periods, there will be opportunities for both large- and small-group or pair discussion.

Reading responses are activities designed to help you work through the reading and prepare for class discussion. Most weeks, this will involve reading the assigned texts in the social annotation program Perusall, and engaging according to my instructions. Other weeks, I will ask you to submit a different kind of reading response (i.e. generating questions for a guest speaker, or completing a short written reflection). You will complete a total of 18 reading responses (worth 2 points each) and your lowest three scores will be automatically dropped.

Paper 1 is a comparative analysis that places two assigned texts in conversation around a theme or question of your choice (6-8pp).

Paper 2 offers two options: you may submit either a textual analysis (engaging some question around gender, sex or sexuality across a range of ethnographic texts) *or* a reflection on how gender, sex, and sexuality show up in your own (planned, ongoing, or completed) ethnographic research (10-12pp). This assignment is broken down into several component assignments (proposal, draft, peer review) to be completed over the second half of the term.

Reading: Most readings will be made available via Perusall, or as PDFs on the course website. There are three required texts, available as e-books through both UF Course Reserves and the UF Bookstore.

- Aimee Cox (2015), *Shapeshifters: Black Girls and the Choreography of Citizenship*, Duke University Press.
- Rebecca Hanson and Patricia Richards (2019). *Harassed: Gender, Bodies, and Ethnographic Research*. University of California Press.
- Juno Salazar Parrenas (2018), *Decolonizing Extinction: The Work of Care in Orangutan Rehabilitation*, Duke University Press.

Graduate students should plan to complete “recommended” as well as required readings each week.

Course policies:

Expectations

This course is organized as a discussion seminar, and as such, its success depends on you. I will offer short lectures to introduce context, case studies, and counter-examples, but the majority of our class time will be spent in conversation. Participation, then, requires having read, reflected on, and otherwise prepared yourself to discuss the day's assignments.

Each week, remember to:

- Read the week's assigned texts
- Watch the short recorded lecture on Monday
- Complete the reading response assignment(s) by Monday at 5:00pm
- Attend the live Zoom session Wednesday 12:50-2:45pm

This is a reading-intensive course (you can expect to read 60+ pages each week). Some of the readings in this course will be challenging. I do not expect you to understand everything, but I do expect you to make time for careful reading, and to come to class with any questions you have. Likewise, you are not required to agree with the opinions presented here, but you are expected to engage with them respectfully and in good faith. Discussions with your peers should follow the same principle: disagreement and critique are welcome, but personal attacks will not be tolerated.

Zoom etiquette: Please attend Wednesday class sessions with your video *on* and do what you need to stay focused during class. We will take hourly breaks to combat multi-tasking and Zoom fatigue. Note that Wednesday class sessions will NOT be recorded. If you miss a class, you are encouraged to catch up with a classmate.

A note on content: in this course we will read about and discuss (among other things) intimacy, oppression, and violence. I expect that some of the material covered in this class may cause you discomfort - emotional and intellectual. I hope to create a classroom culture together where we can move through discomfort and learn from it. That said, if you believe you will have particular difficulty with a particular text or assignment, contact me and we will work out alternative arrangements. You are always free to excuse yourself at any time from the (virtual) classroom, *and* you are responsible for the information presented in class at that time.

Assignments

Should be submitted online via the Canvas Assignment portals.

I will grant extensions only in the case of exceptional circumstances, and only if you make arrangements with me in advance (or provide appropriate documentation after the fact). In all other cases, your grade will be reduced by 5% for every day that your assignment is late.

Written assignments should be typed in a 12 point font (Times New Roman or similar), submitted as a .doc file (not a PDF), and should always include an assignment title, the course name, your name, and the date.

If you have questions or concerns about your grade on an assignment, please speak with me during office hours (or make an appointment) *within one week of the day your grade is posted*. No changes will be made to grades after that window, but I am happy to speak with you about your general progress anytime.

Communication

Email should be used for brief or urgent matters only – please bring questions about course content and assignments to class or office hours. I will reply to all emails sent during the week within 48 hours, but will not respond to course email over the weekend. Please plan accordingly if you need a quick reply.

Accommodations

UF is committed to achieving full accessibility for people with disabilities, and I am committed to making this classroom accessible to you. I realize that the transition to online learning will raise new questions and concerns, so let's be in conversation about your needs as they arise. If you are a student with a disability and think you may need accommodations, you are encouraged to register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/, or 001 Reid Hall) as soon as possible – but also know that it is never too late. Having your accommodation letter will allow me to make any necessary accommodations as quickly as possible. Whether or not you are registered with the Disability Resource Center, I always welcome feedback about how to make this class more accessible – to you in particular, or overall.

Academic integrity

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code.” I encourage you all to review the Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) in its entirety. *In this course, cheating and plagiarism (representing someone else's work as your own, including through failures of citation) will result in a grade of zero, and may be reported to the Dean of Students.*

UF Resources

Library / Research Support: <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>

E-Learning / Technical Support: learningsupport@ufl.edu / 352-392-4357 (select option 2)

Counseling and Wellness Center: <https://counseling.ufl.edu> / 352-392-1575

U Matter, We Care (Resources for students in distress): umatter@ufl.edu / 352-294-2273

Course schedule:

Week 1: Introductions

[Mon, Aug 31 – First meeting]

[Weds, Sept 2 – Second meeting]

Julie Scott Jones (2010). "Origins and Ancestors: A Brief History of Ethnography" (p. 13-27) in *Ethnography in Social Science Practice*, Julie Scott Jones and Sal Watt, eds. London: Routledge.

Recommended:

James Clifford (1983). "On Ethnographic Authority," *Reflections* 2: 118-146.

Laura Nader (2011). "Ethnography as Theory," *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 1(1): 211-219.

Due (by 12:50):

- **Reading Response – Jones**

Part I: The Text

Week 2 (Meet 9/9): Reading and writing ethnography

Bronislaw Malinowski (1999 [1922]). "Introduction: The Subject, Methods, and Scope of this Enquiry" (p. 1-20) in *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. London: Routledge.

Zora Neale Hurston (1930). "Introduction" (p. 1-4) and "Eulalia" (p. 183-189) in *Mules and Men*. New York: Harper Collins.

Recommended:

Graciela Hernández (1993), "Multiple Mediations in Zora Neale Hurston's *Mules and Men*," *Critique of Anthropology* 13(4): 315-362.

Due (Mon by 5:00):

- **Reading Response – Malinowski**
- **Reading Response – Hurston**

Week 3 (Meet 9/16): Positionality and partial perspectives

James Clifford (1986). "Introduction: Partial Truths" (p. 1-26), in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, James Clifford and George E. Marcus (eds.). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Ruth Behar and Deborah A. Gordon (1995). "Introduction: Out of Exile" (p. 1-29), in *Women Writing Culture*, Ruth Behar and Deborah A. Gordon (eds.). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Recommended:

Lila Abu-Lughod (1991). "Writing Against Culture" (p. 137-162), in *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*, Richard E. Fox (ed.), Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.

Donna Haraway (1988). "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." *Feminist Studies* 14(3): 575-599.

Due (Mon by 5:00):

- **Reading Response – Clifford**
- **Reading Response – Behar and Gordon**

Week 4 (Meet 9/23): Intimacy and authority

Ruth Behar (1996). "The Vulnerable Observer" (p. 1-33) and "Death and Memory" (p. 34-89), in *The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology that Breaks Your Heart*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Recommended:

Patricia Zavella (1996). "Feminist Insider Dilemmas: Constructing Ethnic Identity With 'Chicana' Informants," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 13(3): 53-76.

Kirin Narayan (1993). "How Native is the 'Native' Anthropologist?," *American Anthropologist* 95(3): 671-686.

Due (Mon by 5:00):

- **Reading Response – Behar (Vulnerable Observer)**
- **Reading Response – Behar (Death and Memory)**

Week 5 (Meet 9/30): Writing gender, sex, and sexuality in the making

Aimee Meredith Cox (2015). "Introduction" (p. 3-37), "Chapter One" (p. 38-79) "Chapter Two" (p. 81-121) in *Shapeshifters: Black Girls and the Choreography of Citizenship*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Due (Mon by 5:00):

- **Reading Response – Cox (Intro – Ch 2)**

Week 6 (Meet 10/7): Writing gender, sex, and sexuality in the making (cont.)

Aimee Meredith Cox (2015). "Chapter Three" (p. 122-153), "Chapter Four" (p. 155-185), "Chapter Five" (p. 186-236) and "Epilogue" (p. 237-242) in *Shapeshifters: Black Girls and the Choreography of Citizenship*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Due (Mon by 5:00):

- **Reading Response – Cox (Ch 3 - Epilogue)**

Part II: The Field

Week 7 (Meet 10/14): Interpellation

Susan MacDougall (2015). "Will You Marry My Son? Ethnography, Culture, and the Performance of Gender," *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford: Special issue on Sexual Harassment in the Field* 7(1): 25-38.

Sneha Krishnan (2015). "Dispatches From a 'Rogue' Ethnographer: Exploring Homophobia and Queer Visibility," *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford: Special issue on Sexual Harassment in the Field* 7(1): 25-38.

Recommended:

Lila Abu-Lughod (1988). "Fieldwork of a Dutiful Daughter" (p. 139-162) in *Arab Women in the Field: Studying Your Own Society*, Soraya Altorki and Camillia Fawzi El-Solh, eds. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.

Due (Mon by 5:00):

- **Paper 1**

Week 8 (Meet 10/21): Entanglement and accountability

Esther Newton (1993). "My Best Informant's Dress: The Erotic Equation in Fieldwork," *Cultural Anthropology* 8(1): 3-23.

Savannah Shange (2018). "Play Aunties and Dyke Bitches: Gender, Generation, and the Ethics of Black Queer Kinship," *The Black Scholar* 49(1): 40-54.

Recommended:

Kamala Visweswaran (1997). "Histories of Feminist Ethnography," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 26: 591-621.

Dána-Ain Davis (2014). "What Is a Feminist Activist Ethnographer to Do?" *American Anthropologist* 116(2): 413-415.

Due (Mon by 5:00):

- **Reading Response – Newton**
- **Reading Response – Shange**

Week 9 (Meet 10/28): Fieldwork trauma and violence

Megan Steffen (2017). "Doing Fieldwork After Henrietta Schmerler: On Sexual Violence and Blame in Anthropology," *American Ethnologist* online, November 13.

Maya Berry, Claudia Chavez Argüelles, Shanya Cordis, Sarah Ihmoud, and Elizabeth Velásquez Estrada (2017). "Toward a Fugitive Anthropology: Gender, Race, and Violence in the Field," *Cultural Anthropology* 32(4): 537-565.

Recommended:

Mingwei Huang, Vivian Lu, Susan MacDougall, and Megan Steffen (2018). "Disciplinary Violence," *Anthropology News* 59(3): 79-82.

Due (Mon by 5:00):

- **Reading Response – Steffen**
- **Reading Response – Berry et. al.**

Week 10 (Meet 11/4): Instituting risk, institutionalizing safety

Rebecca Hanson and Patricia Richards (2019). "Ethnographic Fixations" (p. 25-52), "Sexual Harassment in the Field" (p. 92-125), and "Moving Forward" (p. 175-190) in *Harassed: Gender, Bodies, and Ethnographic Research*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Guest speaker: Rebecca Hanson

Recommended:

Mingwei Huang (2016). "Vulnerable Observers: Notes on Fieldwork and Rape," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 12.

Due (Mon by 5:00):

- **Reading Response – Hanson**

Week 11: (Start Paper II)

Due (Mon by 5:00):

- **Paper 2 proposal**

[NO CLASS WEDS 11/11]

Week 12 (Meet 11/18): Vulnerability, commitment, and care

Juno Salazar Parreñas (2018). "Introduction" (p. 1-31) and "Part I: Relations" (p. 33-81) in *Decolonizing Extinction: The Work of Care in Orangutan Rehabilitation*. Duke University Press.

Due (Mon by 5:00):

- **Reading Response – Parreñas (Intro – Part I)**

Week 13: Vulnerability, commitment, and care

Juno Salazar Parreñas (2018). "Part II: Enclosures" (p. 83-129) in *Decolonizing Extinction: The Work of Care in Orangutan Rehabilitation*. Duke University Press.

Due (Mon by 5:00):

- **Reading Response – Parreñas (Part II)**

[NO CLASS WEDS 11/25]

Week 14 (Meet 12/2): Vulnerability, commitment, and care (cont.)

Juno Salazar Parreñas (2018). "Part III: Futures" (p. 131-175) and "Conclusion" (p. 189-221) in *Decolonizing Extinction: The Work of Care in Orangutan Rehabilitation*. Duke University Press.

Due (Mon by 5:00):

- **Reading Response – Parreñas (Part III)**

Week 15 (Meet 12/9): Closing questions and future directions

Gökçe Günel, Saiba Varma, and Chika Watanabe, "A Manifesto for Patchwork Ethnography," *Society for Cultural Anthropology* Online.

Due:

- **Paper 2 draft (Mon 12/7 by 5:00pm)**
- **Paper 2 peer review (Weds 12/9 by 5:00)**
- **Paper 2 final (Mon 12/14 by 5:00pm)**