

URBAN ANTROPOLOGY: Race, Violence & the Space of Everyday Life

ANG-6930/ANT-4930

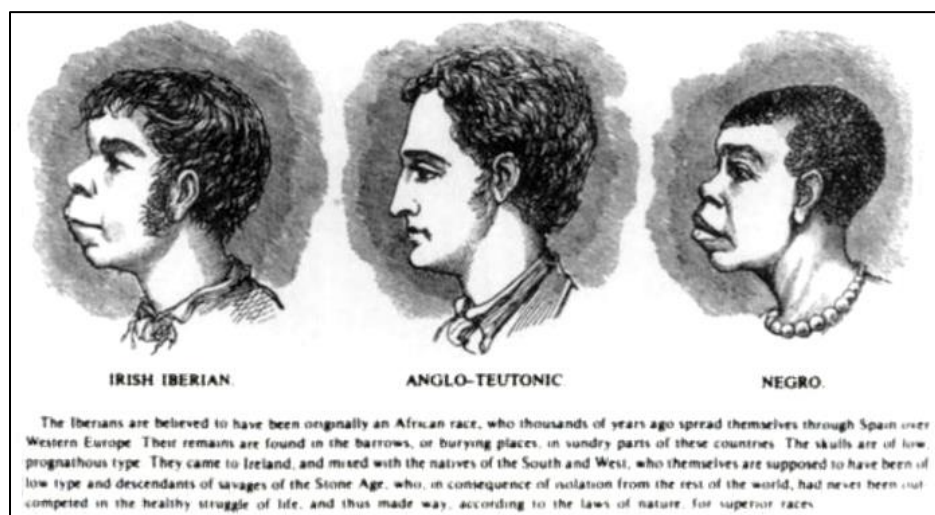
Instructor: Dr. Michael Heckenberger, Anthropology

M | Period 8 - 10 (3:00 PM - 6:00 PM)

Online Office Hours: T: 1:30-3:00; TH: 2:30-4:00, or by appointment; Contact: mheck@ufl.edu

NOTE: Due to Covid-19 precautions adopted by the University of Florida, this class will be taught entirely online and Zoom group facetime during all scheduled class periods is required.

This semester the urban anthropology seminar focuses on urban space and how it relates to race, one of the most pressing yet intractable problems of modern society. Race is first and foremost an urban problem, most prevalent in the streets and in conditions of minority groups in cities, but is also defined by an urban-rural continuum of social values, wherein areas not at the front line of racial and social justice issues and awareness, rural areas, frame the question in terms of traditional versus cosmopolitan values. An anthropological perspective frames the issue of race and racism in the USA today by contextualizing it in historical and socio-cultural terms, comparing the complex relations these terms imbue with other times and places. We will examine cities through the lens of actual people, as they live and interact in diverse urban settings, including peri-urban, suburban and countryside. We consider how people occupy or are excluded from public space in contested sites of social and political engagement. Here we examine gender, crime and violence, structural inequality and systemic discrimination and oppression, as well as the influence of socio-ecological factors and cultural aesthetics, through the lens of detailed ethnographic case materials from across the globe, particularly Brazil.



<https://www.theatlantic.com/personal/archive/2010/06/especially-the-blacks-and-the-irish/57556/>

What is the City? How did it come to be? How has it changed and varied through time and space? Did cities follow similar properties or trajectories, with common root causes, or are there many? These questions will be examined in the urban anthropology seminar. From an anthropological perspective, the course will focus on the actual people who live and die in urban places? It also will focus on how urban societies preserve and reproduce society and structural inequality within it, particularly in spatial terms of human interaction and everyday life in cities? Urban settings are dividing mechanisms, some integrating and some divisive and volatile.

This semester, we take the questions of race and racism as a point of departure to consider how things show similarity or dissimilarity across the world today, in terms of the practices, grouping and values of urban populations, or have varied in the recent urban past. Tackling the problem of racism, begins by knowing it, understanding it for what it is, which has been an intractable problem in the USA. The racial discourse, otherness, perpetuating views, such as shown in the Atlantic Monthly article and graphic linked above, which diminish the achievements, struggles and even lives of non-dominant social groupings and political and economic elite, characterize them as un- or underdeveloped – base or childlike behaviors and instincts – and otherwise de-humanizing subaltern groups.

This is often difficult in the context of our own lives and societies alone, it is hard to step out of our own cultural and social systems and values, what Franz Boas – the “father” of American anthropology – referred to as the “prisons of culture.” It is critical to consider what happens at home, as our cities explode in the call to “BLM,” however, to consider the problems in our own society or community the anthropologist attempts to place these questions in the context of other times and other places.

The anthropological perspective here considers race and racism in the USA and Brazil, the two multi-cultural mega-states of the American Hemisphere. This focus is particularly marginalized and vulnerable groups, “hard to reach populations,” and the violence and injustice, as well as the dangers, of such groups. It is battleground ethnography, not the ethnography of battlefield in shooting wars, although things have heated up and the slow draw-down of structural violence means there are far more casualties than usual among other groups.

Brazil is claimed to be color blind, it is not. Brazil brought nearly 10 times as many people from Africa in chattel slavery than did the United States. The boundaries are blurred, no massive upheaval like the civil war, or the organized civil rights movement, but followed a common pattern of slavery, segregation, ghettoization and incarceration, or, in other words, despite their differences there is a certain co-finality. While there are great differences in how color and race are conceived, the more black you are the lower your chances and opportunities for growth and liberty, which equally applies to other people of color, notably indigenous peoples, and increase the chances of discrimination, violence and other forms of systemic racism.

The course has three objectives: (1) overview of urban ethnography tied to required *Reader in Urban Ethnography*; (2) ethnographic works on race in Brazil; and (3) through independent student projects that take a US city or cities, divide it/them into parts, social, economic, geo-political or other, and then “zooming” in on race, gender and class-based relations in your smallest unit or sub-division, could be neighborhood, small practical communities, a street corner or a person. The independent studies of USA cities, selected by the student, aim to refract questions raised in urban ethnography in Brazil.

Note on Synchronous Remote Schedule:

Three hours is long for remote learning. Each weekly seminar will be broken into three segments: Part 1: MH lecture: 50 minutes, with possible overflow to Part 2; Part 2: Student led discussion, varying from week to week from 15 to 50 minutes, including comments on readings; Part 3: Project updates and presentations, likewise varying from 15 to 50 minutes. For the final part, which results in the final powerpoint presentation for weeks 13-15, there are assigned activities in weeks 4-9.

The first half of the semester is a general introduction to urban anthropology. A 50-minute slide-based lecture and 50-minute segment weekly Zoom class meeting will draw upon readings from *The Urban Ethnography Reader*, which complement lectures but also provide a parallel structure based on reader organization. Readings are a critical and significant component for successful online delivery seminar each week (4-5 readings a week).

The second segment (weeks 8-13) are devoted to looking at cases of how race, violence and inequity permeate the lives and living spaces of Brazil. We will read selected chapters from two book-length ethnographic works to consider race, gender, violence and every day social and spatial relations. The anthropological point of view promotes the importance of moving beyond the point of view of our living communities and its knowledge systems, which includes diversity in American society. Brazil and others foreign settings provide another critical comparative lens to consider how race, violence and inequality systematically permeate everyday life that provides a counterpoint to our US experience, achieving perspective, some distance, on complex and contentious issues.

Class will meet each week via Zoom. (1) Lectures will be 50 to 75 minutes total; (2) Discussion from readings from required reader: readings should be done by the date they appear in course outline below. (3) Students will occasionally be given a topic related to current online news events relevant to course content and will distribute one or two additional links and lead discussion on the links. Additional longer online video, film and activities will stand in some weeks that require more time. Students are expected to spend a good deal of time each week to their independent projects, specifically tying it to readings and other general materials. One-on-one zoom meetings will be held weekly to discuss these independent projects.

Evaluation: Zoom attendance and participation required, including command of assigned reading materials, based on discussion participation (3 points per week). The remainder of the grade will be determined based on the cumulative activity benchmarks and the final presentation project (60%)

Course Outline:

Week 1/2: Introduction (two part)

Readings: Intro & Finding Communities (Reader[5]: W. E. B. Du Bois; St. Clair Drake & Horace Cayton; Harvey Molotch; Mitchell Dunier; John Jackson)

Lecture Topics:

Introduction: Anthropology, Sociology and Criminology: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly.

Critical Theory and Science: STS, Context and Voice. This class is about people, not numbers (STEM), not the fixed positionality of things that are easily measured using Western science. It aims to identify subjugated forms of knowledge, which do not enter or only obliquely into common scientific knowledge or practice, and to mobilize these in dialogue and create hybrid “democratized” knowledge.

Ethnography, Interpretation and Anthropology as Cultural Critique: Types and Bombs.

Is Critical Theory Emancipatory?

Urban Ethnography: Voices from the Street

Week 3: 19th Century Foundations: Theoretical Genealogy

Readings: Social Worlds, Public Space/Raising a Family (Reader [4]: Elijah Anderson; Carol Stack; Mary Pattillo; Patricia Fernandez-Kelly)

Lecture Topics:

Marx (1848-1859), workers, revolt, utility versus exchange/capital and the damned (and Mikhail Bakunin); Charles Dickens: *Oliver Twist* (1839); *Tale of Two Cities* (1859)

Kierkegaard (1840-50s), the shingle, the grave and existentialism. Light/Dark, Love/Hate, Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (1855) and Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1857), Poe was his “intellectual soulmate.”

Nietzsche, life, perspectives and genealogies, more on light/dark, and the journey (Zen of theory); *Untimely Meditations*, "The Use and Abuse of History" (1874), *Genealogy of Morals* (1887);

Durkheim's sociology, *Suicide* (1897), stats *and* context.

Ebenezer Howard: *Garden Cities of To-morrow* (1902). Sociology and primitive sociology, and participant observation.

Max Weber, *The City* (1921), town/country, history and culture (ideal types)

Week 4: Foundations of Urban Ethnography: 20th Century Conceptual Toolkit

Activity 1: What's your city? In this activity, you will define your target city or cities in the USA, based on internet browsing or personal experience.

First, describe your own urban history. Then select another city or region in the USA (create map and timeline). Begin compiling a list of selected online readings, web resources and newspapers to be consulted (order your personal archive to be shared and summarized later in course).

Readings: Family, Schooling and Control/Getting Paid (Reader [6]: Kathleen Nolan; Victor M. Rios; Nels Anderson; Katherine Newman; Tamara Mose Brown; Randall Contreras)

Lecture Topics:

Robert Parks, *The City* (1925): Mind of the Hobo, ethnography and urban ecology.

Walter Benjamin (*Arcades* 1939): The Flaneur, and Baudelaire's legacy

20th Century: the critical f-word: Frankfurt (the "dialectic of Enlightenment," the best of times, the worst of times, again, and again)

Le Corbusier & Robert Moses (1950s): Science, Technology and the Modernist City (read Holsten: Brasilia)

Jane Jacobs/William Whyte/Erving Goffman (1960s): Cityscape & everyday life

More critical f-words: Fanon, Foucault and Freire

Henri Lefebvre (Right to the City (1968), Urban Revolution (1975) and Architecture of Enjoyment 2014[1972]).

Late 20th Century: Pierre Bourdieu (Distinction)/Edward Said (Orientalism)/Fredric Jameson (Archaeologies of the Futures)

Quick note on the Living: Bruno Latour and Loïc Wacquant.

Week 5: Contextual Methods: Dialogic and Inclusive, and real-world problem focused.

Activity 2: What's your problem? In this activity, you should define a specific problem or set of issues that you intend to consider in relation to your city/s. Is it comparison and of what? Is it STEM and design? Is it resistance and oppression, policing and the state or everyday life, cities as peoples, groups or whole organisms, or bodies? Is it climate change, sustainability, poverty, justice?

Readings: Playing Together (Reader [4]: William Foote Whyte; Loïc Wacquant; Amy Best; Reuban Buford May and Kenneth Chaplin)

Lecture Topics:

The Quick and Dirty: REAP (Setha Low, survey and "snapshot" ethnography) versus "deep dive" ethnography (Scheper-Hughes).

Deep hanging out, and networks (Clifford and Geertz): Social Life of Research.

Watching and the "Science of the Concrete" (Heckenberger 2012): Body as Technique.

The Agora: Context-sensitive (Mode 1 → Mode 2 → Mode 3 → Mode 2 (method)).

STEM Design and Data Overload: back to Bakunin, Parks and Benjamin, why the "doomed matter," urbanites from the ground up (hard to reach, out-of-network populations).

Week 6: Alternative Urbanisms (MH 1: Amazonia):

Activity 3: Where and When? In this activity you will create a map of your target city or cities, situating it in time or following it through time. What is the brief history, what is the organization and size and, particularly, how is it divided internally into places, such as monuments, parks and building, neighborhoods, meeting place or labor groups, and governmentality.

Readings: Ethnography and Social Policy (Reader [4]: Herbert Gans; Terry Williams; Phillip Kasinitz and Jan Rosenberg; Alice Goffman)

Lecture Topics:

Alternative Urbanisms: Amazon Garden Cities, São Paulo

Remaking Design from the Ethnographies (folding in materials from ethnographies, concepts or methods):

Week 7: Subjects and Objects: Defining Scale and Context

Activity 4: Who? Now begin populating your selected city with people you know, meet on the internet and through consideration of topics now covered in readings up to this point.

Readings: Ethnographers and their Subjects (Reader [4]: Phillipe Bourgois: Hakim Hassan; Sudhir Venkatesh; Annette Lareau).

Lecture Topics: From this point forward all lectures will pertain to Brazilian materials that we read each week.

Week 8: Crossing Gender: What are the parameters, units, validity of categories and quant

Activity 5: How? Where/When/Who Questions that you've excavated from your city/s and problem/s (presentation of outline of your presentation and summary of current events).

Readings:

Vita: Life in a Zone of Social Abandonment, J. Biehl (2005, co-autoethno with Catarina)

Black Women Against the Land Grab: The Fight for Racial Justice in Brazil. Keihsa Kahn Perry, 2013.

Travesti: Sex, Gender and Culture among Transgendered Prostitutes, D. Kulick (1998)

After Life: An Ethnographic Novel (T. Hecht,; 2006, co/autoethno with Bruna Verissimo)

Week 9: Race and Violence in Rio Favelas

Activity 6: Why? What is the importance of your project and to whom?

Readings:

Dreaming Equality: Color, Race and Racism in Urban Brazil, R. Sheriff (2001)

Living with Insecurity in a Brazilian Favela: Urban Violence and Daily Life, R. Ben Penglase (2014)

Race and the Brazilian Body: Blackness, Whiteness and Everyday Language in Rio de Janeiro. Jennifer, Roth-Gordon, 2016.

Week 10: São Paulo

Readings:

Anti-Black City: Police Terror and Black Urban Life in Brazil, Jaime Amparo Alves (auto-ethno; 2018)

The Entangled City: Crime as Urban Fabric in São Paulo, Gabriel Feltran (2020)

City of Walls: Crime, Segregation and Citizenship in São Paulo T. Caldeira (2000)

Week 11: MH São Paulo

Getting into the nooks and crannies: Sub-Human/Silent Wars: “Republica,” and “Luz”)

Week 12: Comparisons: NYC/USA at Street Level

Sidewalk (Duneier 1999)

In Search of Respect (Bourgois 2003)

Week 13: Can we build equitable cities, and how does anthropology help?

How does a “deep dive,” in terms of contextualization and ethnographic method inform us of often intractable problems, poverty, racism, violence, particularly through the eyes of Hard to Reach, the nooks and crannies (“Advanced Marginals”)

Week 14-15: The USA through student eyes: presentations.

Final Grades and other materials:

Overall Grades assigned as (total of 100 points and potential 1-5 points extra-credit):

A	95-100%	C	73-76.9%
A-	90-94.9%	C-	70-72.9%
B+	87-89.9%	D+	67-69.9%

B	83-86.9%	D	63-66.9%
B-	80-82.9%	D-	60-62.9%
C+	77-79.9%	E	0-59.9%

Please note that there are new policies for calculating grade point averages. See <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html> for details. Also note that a grade of C- does not count for credit in major, minor, Gen Ed, Gordon Rule, or college basic distribution credit (for further information regarding minus grades go to: <http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>).

Academic Honesty, Student Responsibilities, Student Conduct Code: Students are required to do their own work on exams. The penalty for cheating is to receive no points for that exam and the incident will be reported to the Student Honor Court. The student is responsible to review the UF Student Responsibilities Guidelines, available online.

Students with Disabilities: Students requesting accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who then must provide this documentation to the instructor.