

Anthropology and Development

ANG 5702
SECTION M057
SPRING 2026

I. General Information

Class Meetings

- Meeting: Wednesday Period 5-7 (11:45 AM – 2:45 PM)
- Location: MAT 0016

Instructor

- Dr. Marit Tolo Østebø
- **Office location:** Grinter Hall 488
- **Office hours:** Thursday 1:00 – 4:00 pm
- Contact: Marit.ostebo@ufl.edu; (352)328-7591

Course Description

Prerequisites: Consent of professor

In this course we will approach the field of development from anthropological perspectives. We will explore key concepts and arguments in both 'development anthropology' and the 'anthropology of development', and a broad range of issues related to social change and development. We will examine both intended and prescribed development initiatives undertaken by governments, national, transnational actors and NGOs, and the more subtle changes and developments that occur independent of specific intentions. We will do this through close readings of journal articles, multi-media sources and ethnographies. The readings will cover a wide range of topics such as economic development, health, education, gender, religion, health, social corporate responsibility, charity, human rights, different approaches to development, community participation, empowerment, public-private partnerships, etc.

This course has **two overarching aims:** 1) to examine development as a historically situated, cultural construction and an object of anthropological enquiry and 2) to ethnographically investigate specific development initiatives, their genealogies, institutional frameworks, problem assumptions and social effects. Readings will offer insights into the workings of development across diverse geographical and institutional context – both national and transnational – and will draw from multiple sub-fields within anthropology, including (but not limited to) medical, political, organizational and development anthropology.

Students are encouraged to employ critical thinking and to rely on data and verifiable sources to interrogate all assigned readings and subject matter in this course as a way of determining whether they agree with their classmates and/or their instructor. No lesson is intended to espouse, promote, advance, inculcate, or compel a particular feeling, perception, viewpoint, or belief.

General Course Objectives

The following are the general objectives I have for this course:

- Ensure that students master the course subject matter.
- Ensure that students engage in discussions in a respectful way.
- Develop students' ability to use course concepts in thinking and problem solving.
- Prepare students to be life-long learners.
- Develop students' interpersonal and team interaction skills.
- Help students think outside the box and broaden their horizon.
- Have students enjoy the course and make new friends.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes:

- **Content:** Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used in anthropological studies of development
 - Provide an overview of different development theories, and the history of social engineered development
 - Identify, describe, and explain anthropological perspectives and contributions to development studies
 - Summarize and explain anthropological and theoretical discussions associated with concepts relevant to the course
 - Describe key features of anthropological methods and practices particularly relevant to the anthropology of development
 - Employ competing anthropological and social theories to critically discuss the various actors in development (the state, market, transnational actors, civil society organizations, communities and individuals) and the relationship between them
 - Provide an overview of ethical challenges associated with conducting anthropological studies on development
 - Search for and identify literature relevant to specific research questions relevant to the course and to students' own research, using resources available through UF libraries
- **Critical Thinking:** Students carefully and logically analyze information from multiple perspectives and develop reasoned solutions to problems within anthropology of policy.
 - Critically reflect on the interplay between development policy and practice, the interplay between structure and agency in international development
 - Use anthropological and theoretical concepts relevant to the course to analyze the underlying assumptions and theoretical underpinnings of the different approaches to development and social change

- Engage in critical discussions about major debates and controversies associated with development in anthropology
- Use relevant research to explore and test ideas and to support or refute generalization.
- Critically analyze arguments, theories and data presented in course readings.
- Critically adopt and reflect on the use of AI as a tool for learning, writing and research.
- **Communication:** Students communicate knowledge, ideas, and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline(s).
 - Synthesize, and discuss research findings in written and oral forms.
 - Convey anthropological concepts, knowledge, and research findings to others in an everyday language – in both oral and written form – using popular, creative and/or visual formats such as a video, digital storytelling, flash-presentation or a “one-pager”.
 - Identify problem areas, and propose potential policy solutions
- **Connection:** Students connect course content with meaningful critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond.
 - Learn how to work and collaborate with others.
 - Reflect on the relevance of anthropological concepts and knowledge to real-world, everyday problems
 - Be mindful of how you can incorporate perspectives and tools from anthropology in ways that makes the world a better and more inclusive place.
 - Reflect on your own learning processes and on how the course has changed the way you think and engage in and with the world.

Required Books

Ferguson, J. (1994) The Anti-Politics Machine. “Development,” Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho

Gardner, K. & Lewis, D. (2015) Anthropology and Development. Challenges for the twenty-first century

Holston, J. (1989). *The modernist city: An anthropological critique of Brasilia*. University of Chicago Press.

Li, T. M., & Semedi, P. (2021). *Plantation life: Corporate occupation in Indonesia's oil palm zone*. Duke University Press.

Watanabe, C. (2020). *Becoming one: Religion, development, and environmentalism in a Japanese NGO in Myanmar*. University of Hawaii Press.

Østebø, M. T. (2021). *Village gone viral: understanding the spread of policy models in a digital age*. Stanford University Press.

II. CLASS SCHEDULE

Note: The course schedule may change. Please, check CANVAS for each week's readings and assignments.

Week 1: Introduction (January 14)

Course preview and expectations

Week 2: Anthropology and Development Part 1 (January 21)

Gardner, K. & Lewis, D. (2015) Anthropology and Development. Challenges for the Twenty-first century (p. 1-77)

Bolton, R. (2025). Applied Anthropology: A way of life, a call to action. *Human Organization*, 1-12.

Week 3: Anthropology and Development Part 2 (January 28)

Gardner, K. & Lewis, D. (2015) Anthropology and Development. Challenges for the Twenty-first century (p. 78-182)

Week 4: Reading Ethnography # 1 (February 4)

Ferguson, J. (1994) The Anti-Politics Machine. "Development," Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho

Week 5: Reading Ethnography #1 cont. (February 11)

Ferguson, J. (1994) The Anti-Politics Machine. "Development," Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho

Week 6: Reading Ethnography # 2 (February 18)

Holston, J. (1989). *The modernist city: An anthropological critique of Brasilia*. University of Chicago Press.

Week 7: Reading Ethnography # 2 cont. (February 25)

Holston, J. (1989). *The modernist city: An anthropological critique of Brasilia*. University of Chicago Press.

Week 8: Reading Ethnography # 3 (March 4)

Li, T. M., & Semedi, P. (2021). *Plantation life: Corporate occupation in Indonesia's oil palm zone*. Duke University Press.

Week 9 ETHNOGRAPHY # 3 cont. (March 11)

Li, T. M., & Semedi, P. (2021). *Plantation life: Corporate occupation in Indonesia's oil palm zone*. Duke University Press.

SPRINGBREAK

Week 10 ETHNOGRAPHY # 4 (March 25)

Identify and read an ethnography of your choice and present in class.

Week 11 ETHNOGRAPHY # 5 (April 1)

Watanabe, C. (2020). *Becoming one: Religion, development, and environmentalism in a Japanese NGO in Myanmar*. University of Hawaii Press.

Week 12 ETHNOGRAPHY # 5 cont. (April 8)

Watanabe, C. (2020). *Becoming one: Religion, development, and environmentalism in a Japanese NGO in Myanmar*. University of Hawaii Press.

Week 13 ETHNOGRAPHY # 6 (April 15)

Østebø, M. T. (2021). Village gone viral: understanding the spread of policy models in a digital age. Stanford University Press.

Week 14 ETHNOGRAPHY # 6 cont. AND REVIEW (14 April 22)

Østebø, M. T. (2021). Village gone viral: understanding the spread of policy models in a digital age. Stanford University Press.

III. Class Requirements and Assignments

Attendance (100 points)

Since the course only meets once a week, full attendance in all classes is essential. More than one absence may lower your grade. If you have an excusable absence (see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>) let me know in advance and I will consider whether you have to make up for the absence in one or another way.

Participation in Class (100 points)

You are expected to keep up with the readings and to come to class well prepared and engage in small group and larger class discussions. I also expect you to show that you are focused and present while in class; e.g. if I observe you being on your computer or on your phone during class discussions, I will deduct points from your participation grade.

Weekly Reflection / Preparing applications for class discussions (40 points each)

Each week you will, as part of preparation for class, do an individual assignment linked to the readings. Some weeks, your assignment will be to write reflections. Other weeks, you will be asked to prepare applications that we will use in class. More instructions on how to prepare the applications will be given in class. The applications are modeled after the Team-Based-Learning methodology and preparing the applications and doing them in class will give you a pedagogical tool that you can use in your current or future teaching.

Individual Reading and Presentation of a Relevant Ethnography (100 points)

Select and read one of the ethnographies below. Create a flash presentation (more information about these formats will be given in class) that you will present to the class towards the end of the semester.

Antoniello, Patricia (2020) For the Public Good: Women, Health, and Equity in Rural India

Bear, L. (2015) Navigating Austerity. Currents of Debt Along a South Asian River

Besteman, C. (2016). *Making refuge*. Duke University Press.

Escobar, A. (1995). *Encountering Development: The Making and the Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Farmer, Paul (2005) Pathologies of Power. Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor

Fredericks, R. (2018). *Garbage citizenship: Vital infrastructures of labor in Dakar, Senegal*. Duke University Press.

Hannig, Anita (2017) Beyond Surgery. Injury, Healing and Religion at an Ethiopian Hospital

Karim, L. (2011) Microfinance and Its Discontents

Lea, Tess (2020) Wild Policy: Indigeneity and the Unruly Logics of Intervention

Li, T.M. (2007) The Will to Improve. Governmentality, Development, and the Practice of Politics.

Mains, D. (2013) Hope is Cut

Miller, James Casey (2016) *Dying for Money: The Effects of Global Health Initiatives on NGOs Working with Gay Men and HIV/AIDS in Northwest China*

Mosse, D. (2005) *Cultivating Development. An Ethnography of Aid Policy and Practice*

Munk, N. (2013) *The Idealist. Jeffrey Sachs and the Quest to End Poverty*

Murphy, M. (2017) *The Economization of Life*

Rottenburg, R. (2009) *Far-fetched Facts*

Thomas, D. A. (2019). *Political life in the wake of the plantation: Sovereignty, witnessing, repair.* Duke University Press.

Powers, Ted (2020) *Sustaining Life: AIDS Activism in South Africa*

Peters, Rebecca (2020) *Implementing Inequality: The Invisible Labor of International Development*

Rajak, D. (2011) *In Good Company: An Anatomy of Corporate Social Responsibility*

Final Project (300 points)

It is up to you to decide what you would like to submit for your final project. It should be in a format that is important for your progress and career as a graduate or undergraduate student in anthropology (or other relevant fields). Your final project should incorporate theoretical or methodological perspectives from anthropology of policy. It consists of two parts.

1. A detailed description of your end-of-the course assignment (100 points). It should include the following
 - a. A description of the project. Be specific. For example, if you would like to develop a research proposal for NSF or Wennergren, highlight key components of those templates. If you want your final project to be a journal article, identify a potential journal and highlight key points from the journal's author guidelines, including word limits.
 - b. An AI policy for your final project that shows that you have explored and considered available resources on how to integrate AI in research and teaching (see links below).
 - c. A grading rubric (I will use this rubric when I grade your final project). I have included a sample rubric for one of my courses below. Be aware that this is just a sample and that it is for a 100 points oral assignment. You should develop relevant criteria and a point-breakdown for a 200 point assignment.

2. PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH PROJECT IN CLASS							
Criteria	Ratings						Pts
PRESENTATION The presentation holds the attention and interest of the audience. The presentation has visual elements and is well organized	20 to >19.0 pts Exceptional	19 to >17.0 pts Exceeds expectations	17 to >13.0 pts Meet Expectations	13 to >6.0 pts Needs Improvement	6 to >0 pts Does not meet expectations		20 pts
TECHNICALITIES The presentation is submitted on time and is between 5-8 minutes long.	20 to >19.0 pts Exceptional	19 to >17.0 pts Exceeds expectations	17 to >13.0 pts Meet Expectations	13 to >6.0 pts Needs Improvement	6 to >0 pts Does not meet expectations		20 pts
CREATIVITY The team presents key/major findings in a compelling and creative way. The presentation reflects enthusiasm about topic.	20 to >19.0 pts Exceptional	19 to >17.0 pts Exceeds expectations	17 to >13.0 pts Meet Expectations	13 to >6.0 pts Needs Improvement	6 to >0 pts Does not meet expectations		20 pts
KNOWLEDGE AND CONTENT Demonstrates knowledge of the subject area by answering class questions with explanations and elaboration. The presentation contains narrative elements	20 to >19.0 pts Exceptional	19 to >17.0 pts Exceeds expectations	17 to >13.0 pts Meet Expectations	13 to >6.0 pts Needs Improvement	6 to >0 pts Does not meet expectations		20 pts
DYNAMICS Demonstrates that this has been a collaborative project. Presentation reflects a coordinated effort in bringing the works of individuals together in a coherent presentation. The presentation includes a discussion of research experience	20 to >19.0 pts Exceptional	19 to >17.0 pts Exceeds expectations	17 to >13.0 pts Meet Expectations	13 to >6.0 pts Needs Improvement	6 to >0 pts Does not meet expectations		20 pts

Total Points: 100

3. Your final project (200 points)

- The assignment you proposed earlier in the semester
- A description of how you used AI and a critical reflection about that experience (minimum 400 words)

Below is a list of potential projects/formats:

- Research proposal
- Dissertation chapter
- Journal article
- Literature review related to a specific research topic/question. If you choose this option you must include screenshots of relevant passages you reference in your paper, or annotated version of the sources you are using in your submission.
- Syllabus for an anthropological course that includes a clear focus on policy
- An essay that potentially could be submitted as part of your application to a graduate program in anthropology
- A pod-cast, piece of art, or other creative projects that address a question relevant to the course and reflect anthropological perspectives

Final Reflection (100 points)

For this assignment I ask you to reflect on your own learning processes and on how the course has changed how you think about policy and the way you engage with the world. Your reflection should include references to and discussion of key theoretical and/or methodological concepts from the course. It should be 400 words long.

Grading Scale

For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

A	94 – 100%		C	74 – 76%
A-	90 – 93%		C-	70 – 73%
B+	87 – 89%		D+	67 – 69%
B	84 – 86%		D	64 – 66%
B-	80 – 83%		D-	60 – 63%
C+	77 – 79%		E	<60

V. Course Policies

This course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see [this link](#)." (The direct link is <https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>.)

Religious observances

Students seeking modification of due dates for class participation, assignments, and exams for religious reasons should contact me well in advance to request this modification, which will then be granted.

Procedure for conflict resolution

Any issues, disagreements or grade disputes should be discussed first with me. If the problem cannot be resolved, please contact Prof. John Krigbaum (krigbaum@ufl.edu, [\(352\) 294-7540](tel:352-294-7540)), Chair of Anthropology. Be prepared to provide documentation of the problem, as well as all graded materials for the semester. Issues that cannot be resolved departmentally will be referred to the University Ombuds Office (<http://www.ombuds.ufl.edu>[Links to an external site.](#); [\(352-392-1308\)](tel:352-392-1308)) or the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu>[Links to an external site.](#); [\(352-392-1261\)](tel:352-392-1261)).

Specific late policies and assignment extension policies for the course

- Late assignments without an excuse will be reduced 5% per day late.

- All unexcused late work will not be accepted a week after the due date without agreement with the instructor.

Communication practices for the course

- You are responsible for materials posted on E-Learning (Canvas) at <https://elearning.ufl.edu/>, including required readings, announcements, details on assignments, and other supplementary material. Canvas technical support is available at <https://elearning.ufl.edu/student-help-faqs/>.
- I will use email to make general class announcements or to contact you directly about your work. You are responsible for checking your official UF email regularly to be aware of communication from me. There are no allowances for students who fail to read their email announcements or whose inboxes are full at the time an announcement is sent.
- Canvas Notifications: In your Canvas “Account,” click on “Notifications.” Set the notification for “Submission Comment” to either “Notify Immediately” or “Daily Summary.” I will communicate with you regarding your assignments through Submission Comments more so than e-mail. I expect every student to read their submission comments within 24 hours. Some of them may require immediate action on your part.

Library Resources

- **Library Resources (General Courses):** The [UF Libraries](#) provide access to numerous resources and services that will help you succeed in this course. Access thousands of [online databases, books, and articles](#) or visit one of the [branch locations](#) for additional [resources, services, and study spaces](#). Can't find what you are looking for? You can [Ask A Librarian](#) for help by email, chat, text, or phone.
- **Library Resources (Courses with Researching/Writing Component, Grad Courses):** The [UF Libraries](#) provide access to numerous resources and services that will help you succeed in this course. Access thousands of [online databases, books, and articles](#) or visit one of the [branch locations](#) for additional [resources, services, and study spaces](#). Further, as this class requires students to complete a bibliography, research paper, or project, both the [Anthropology Library Guide](#) and the [Anthropology Assignment Guide](#) may be of assistance. You can also contact the [Anthropology Librarian](#) directly for help with developing your research topic/question, searching for sources, and evaluating information. And you can also [Ask A Librarian](#) for help by email, chat, text, or phone.
- **Ginessa Mahar** (Anthropology Librarian): gjmahar@ufl.edu, office: Library West Room 500

Useful Health and Wellness Resources:

- [Health and Wellness](#)
- *U Matter, We Care:* If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit U Matter, We Care website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress. <http://www.umatter.ufl.edu/>

- *Counseling and Wellness Center*: Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
<https://counseling.ufl.edu>
- *Student Health Care Center*: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the Student Health Care Center website.
- *University Police Department*: Visit UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- *UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center*: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website.
- *GatorWell Health Promotion Services*: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the GatorWell website or call 352-273-4450.

About Plagiarism and ChatGPT (AI) Use

Rather than reacting in fearful ways to new advances in artificial intelligence, I believe students and educators should critically think about innovative and ethical ways to use AI to support learning, research and writing. While AI tools have certain limitations, they also have potential benefits, such as providing new perspectives on a problem and generating content that can be analyzed or critiqued. In this course we will explore and critically discuss how to integrate and use AI as a pedagogical and research tool.

Below are some resources:

- <https://teach.ufl.edu/resource-library/chatbots-and-artificial-intelligence-in-education/>
- <https://teach.ufl.edu/resource-library/academic-integrity-in-the-age-of-ai/#/>
- <https://teach.ufl.edu/resource-library/ai-in-the-classroom/>
- <https://ai.ufl.edu/teaching-with-ai/>

Best practices for students: <https://ai.ufl.edu/for-our-students/guidance-for-students/>