

**ANTH 5401: Reading Ethnography
SPRING 2020**

Lecture Time: Monday 6:30 p.m. to 9.15 p.m.

Venue: MMW 715/ZOOM

Lecturer: Dr. Erika Evasdottir (b119324@cuhk.edu.hk)

Consultation Hours: After class and by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Zheng Yushuang

Course Description:

Reading, doing, and writing ethnography is crucial to becoming an anthropologist and understanding our discipline and its role among other disciplines and in society. This course uses a mix of theoretical and ethnographic readings to provide tools to unpack all aspects of ethnography.

Medium of Instruction: Lecture: In English

Course Texts

We will not be using any particular text book in this course as readings will be taken from a number of books and articles which will all be put on reserve at the Central Library.

Assessment:

Participation: 10%

Presentation 1: 10%

Presentation Final: 20%

Short Paper: 25%

Final Paper: 40%

Learning Outcomes:

- Learn how to read (a.k.a. critical reading)
- Learn how to question your viewpoint (a.k.a. empathy)
- Learn how to develop flexible thinking
- Learn how to critique the writing of anthropologists (and your own)
- Understand the connection between anthropology as a discipline and ethnography
- Understand the use of method and theory in ethnography
- Explore methodological and theoretical debates in ethnography

Grade Descriptors

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Criteria for 1) the course and 2) for coursework</i>
A	<p>1) Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes, particularly showing the ability to think with empathy and flexibility.</p> <p>2) The work has creatively synthesized course materials and key ideas in an original way but using the <i>strict formats provided</i>. The argument is logical and cohesive, and grapples squarely with the concepts of form vs function. The discussion organizes and re-organizes within the format provided to make the point clear. Concrete evidence corresponds to statements and claims.</p>
A-	<p>1) Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.</p> <p>2) The work synthesizes course materials and key ideas in an original way, but there are areas for improvement. Writing is usually the downfall here. Often the ideas are understood, but the expression is problematic.</p>
B-range	<p>1) Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.</p> <p>2) The work demonstrates a fairly OK grasp of course materials and key ideas (or some but not others). There are areas for improvement not just with the writing (building a cohesive argument, organizing the discussion, communicating clearly, and/or identifying relevant evidence) but also some ideas have not hit home.</p>
C-range	<p>1) Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with weaknesses.</p> <p>2) The work shows some effort, but course materials have not been sufficiently engaged. The argument and the writing is not clear, and/or there is no evidence for statements and claims made.</p>
D-range	<p>1) Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes.</p> <p>2) The work shows little effort to engage course materials. There are major problems with clarity of argument and writing.</p>
F	<p>1) Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.</p> <p>2) The work has failed respond to the assignment prompt.</p>

Academic Honesty

The Chinese University of Hong Kong places very high importance on academic honesty, and adopts a policy of zero tolerance on cheating in examinations and plagiarism. Any such offence will lead to disciplinary action including possibly termination of studies at the University. Students should know how to properly use source material and how to avoid plagiarism. Students should read the detailed guidelines and examples for the acknowledgement of sources in the University's website at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty>.

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Classes

Week 1:	January 6	Introduction: Learning how to Read
Week 2:	January 13	How to read a "thing"
Week 3:	January 20	Words
*****Jan 27 = HOLIDAY (Happy New Year)*****		
Week 4:	February 17	Stereotypes
*****February 10 PAPER 1 DUE*****		
Week 5:	February 24	No fear: method and theory
Week 6:	March 2	The Ethnographer: Performance
Week 7:	March 9	Presentations
Week 8:	March 16	Your Audience is in Control: Reception & Writing
Week 9:	March 23	Learning to Critique
Week 10:	March 30	Disciplinary Politics
Week 11:	April 6	Instrumental Anthropology
***** Apr 13 is EASTER *****		
Week 12:	April 20	Final Presentations
Week 13:	April 27	Final Presentations
*****Final Papers due: TBA*****		

Readings

Class 1: Introduction & Learning to “Read”

Introduction: Our goals for the class & how we are going to achieve them.

- Introduction to Ethnography
- Introduction to Critical Reading and the art of Critique

Class 2: Reading Space, Time & Things

The Interpretation of Things: What is “observation” to an anthropologist?

READING:

- “Why Late Night Hosts Place their Desks on the Right”, *Slate Magazine Article*, at url: <http://www.slate.com/id/2242937/>
- Mary Douglas, 1972 ‘Deciphering a Meal’, *Daedalus*, Journal of American Academy of Arts & Sciences: Winter, Myth, Symbol & Culture
- Clifford Geertz: *Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture*: Chapter 1 and “the wink”

Extra Reading (Voluntary)

- Kopytoff, Igor, “The Cultural Biography of Things,” in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, Arjun Appadurai, ed. 1986: 64-94.
- “From Work place to my place”, *Haaretz.com* [Teacher will provide pdf]

VIDEO: **Mardi Gras** [videorecording] : made in China / The Calley Media collective presents ; a Carnavalesque production ; directed, produced, and edited by David Redmon. HD9736.C63 F89 2004

Class 3: An Introduction to Words

An Introduction to Words and Writing: dictionary definitions; history of use; language in context; antonyms & synonyms: the biography of a word; words and numbers

READING:

- Mary Douglas, Introduction to *How Institutions Think*.
- Edmund Leach, Introduction to *Political Systems of Highland Burma* (on “kachin” and “shan”)
- “Why 9 out of 10 Americans like statistics”, *The Independent*, 10 October 2010 [Teacher will provide PDF]
- “Work” and its meanings [Teacher will provide PDF]

Extra Reading (voluntary):

- J.L. Austin: *How to do Things with Words*

Class 4: An Advanced Course in Words (Stereotypes)

Words are never alone: genre, metaphors, poetics & stories, stereotypes: ways of world-making

READING:

- Chapters 1 through 10 (and beyond if this topic fascinates you) of *Metaphors We Live By*, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. 1980.
- Dawson, Jan, “Moral Tales and Class Identity in the Building Trades”, *Anthropology of Work Review*, Vol. XXII, Number 4.
- Evasdottir, Erika, Chapter 5 “Majority Rule,” in *Obedient Autonomy: Chinese Intellectuals and the Achievement of Orderly Life*. 2004:137-172.
- Miner, Horace, 1956 “Body Ritual among the Nacirema,” *American Anthropologist* 58(3): 503 – 507.

Extra Reading (voluntary):

- Dorothy Holland and Andrew Kipnis, “Metaphors for Embarrassment and Stories of Exposure: The Not-So-Egocentric Self in American Culture,” *Ethos*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Sep., 1994), pp. 316-342. – *example of how to use this kind of approach in ethnography*
- Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking*
- Douglas W. Maynard, Chapter 3: “Conversation Analysis and Ethnography: What Is the Context of an Utterance” from *Bad news, good news: conversational order in everyday talk and clinical settings*
- Charles Briggs: *Learning How to Ask: A Sociolinguistic Appraisal of the Role of the Interview in Social Science Research*

*******PAPER 1:**

Due: Feb 10, 12 midnight HK Time, by email.

Assignment: A descriptive observational paper about a meal you had over New Years. Will be further explained in class.

Class 5: Method and Theory

Method and Theory are your friends: learning to use method and theory (rather than being used by them).

READING:

- *Shane, the lone ethnographer: a beginner's guide to ethnography*, by Sally Campbell Galman. GN345.G35 2007
- “Introduction”, *Hunting and Gathering in the Corporate Tribe*, Wilcock, Keith, 2004, *Agora*. [Teacher will provide PDF]
- Evasdottir, Erika, Table of Contents & Introduction and Chapter 3, “The Rule of Law”, in *Obedient Autonomy: Chinese Intellectuals and the Achievement of Orderly Life*. 2004.
- Malcolm Gladwell, “The Science of Shopping”, *The New Yorker* Nov 4, 1996: 66:75 [Teacher will provide PDF]

Extra Reading (voluntary):

- Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis*
- Wayne Fife, *Doing fieldwork: ethnographic methods for research in developing countries and beyond*.

VIDEO: **The ax fight** [videorecording] / Center for Documentary Anthropology ... [et al.] ; film by Timothy Asch and Napoleon A. Chagnon ; script, Napoleon A. Chagnon
Publisher Watertown, MA : Documentary Educational Resources, [2001?], c1975. (30 mins)

Class 6: The Ethnographer (Performance)

Performance Theory: Beyond Etic/Emic: Who is the Ethnographer and Why does it matter?

READING:

- Views from Inside and Outside: Integrating Emic and Etic Insights about Culture and Justice Judgment;
http://www.columbia.edu/~da358/publications/etic_emic.pdf
- Norah Vincent; Chapter 1 “Getting Started” in *The Self-Made Man* (in Chinese or English)
- Lifestacker, “Know what your Email Address says about you”; from
<http://lifestacker.com/5447335/know-what-your-email-address-says-about-you>
- Introduction to *Sex, sexuality, and the anthropologist*, edited by Fran Markowitz and Michael Ashkenazi
- Michael Moffatt, “Ethnographic Writing about American Culture”, in *Annual Review of Anthropology* Vol. 21 (1992): 205-229. Find it at
<http://www.annualreviews.org/journal/anthro>

VIDEO: **Trekking on tradition** [videorecording] / Center for Visual Anthropology ; produced, written and directed by Jennifer Rodes. Publisher Watertown, Mass. : Documentary Educational Resources, c2004. (42 mins).

Class 7: Presentations: Method & Theory

***** *Prepare for Presentation 1: “dissecting an ethnography”* *****

- CHOICE!
- Read introduction in either of the following:
 - *MediaSpace* [electronic resource]: place, scale and culture in a media age, edited by Nick Couldry and Anna McCarthy.
 - Bettina Gransow’s introduction (pp. 3-18) in *China: New Faces of Ethnography*
- Choose one article to present. Presentation: (1) what method/theory was used; (2) what other method/theory could have been used and why
- YOU HAVE FIVE minutes (!!!) – if you go over, I will deduct marks.

Class 8: Your Audience is in Control

Reception Theory (Part 1): What Audience do you want to speak to, and why does it matter?

Extra Reading (voluntary):

- Erving Goffman, *The presentation of self in everyday life*, 1959 Doubleday.

OR:

What do Anthropologists study and what do they not study: What is the difference between sociology and anthropology? Economics and anthropology? Material science and anthropology?! LAW and anthropology?

OR: Learning to write

Will assign one each from: <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/> **Writing for Specific Fields**

- Anthropology
- Art History
- Communication Studies
- Drama
- History
- Literature (Fiction)
- Music
- Philosophy
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Religious Studies
- Sciences
- Sociology

Class 9: Learning to Critique

Method, Theory, Audience... You can read, you can write ... now, can you critique: [Example: ethnography with (overt) political goals]

READING:

- Mao, Zedong, *Report on the Peasant Movement in Hunan*, found at: <http://www.marx2mao.com/Mao/HP27.html#c8> (or read it in Chinese).
- Laurie Duthrie, "Western Names for Chinese Identities: the Acquisition and use of Western Personal Names among Chinese Business Professionals in Foreign-Invested Corporations", *Asian Anthropology* Volume 6, 2007.
- Huan Hsu, "The Name's Du Xiao Hua, but call me Steve", *Slate Magazine*; <http://www.slate.com/id/2217001>

Extra Reading (voluntary):

- Wolf, Margery, "Chinanotes: Engendering Anthropology," in *Fieldnotes: the Makings of Anthropology*, R. Sanjek, ed. 1990: 343-355.
- Edmund Leach, Conclusion to *Political Systems of Highland Burma*.
- Thomas Reuter, "Running out of tricks: the experience of ethnography and the politics of culturalism," in *Celebrating transgression: method and politics in anthropological studies of culture* edited by Ursula Rao and John Hutnyk.

VIDEO: *Keep her under control* [videorecording] : law's patriarchy in India / produced by Erin Moore. Publisher Berkeley, CA : Berkeley Media LLC, c1998. (52 mins)

Class 10: The Politics of Academic Anthropology

Reception Theory, (part 2): Being the Right Kind of Anthropologist

READING:

- M. Kirsch, "Universities and the Generation of Knowledge: Knowledge for Whom?", UNESCO Forum, presentation at the Second International Colloquium on Research and Higher Education Policy, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, 29 November to 1 December 2006
- Obbo, Christine, "Adventures with Fieldnotes," in *Fieldnotes: the Makings of Anthropology*, R. Sanjek, ed. 1990: 290-302.
- Evasdottir, Erika, "Ethnographic Performance in the Disciplinary Context," unpublished paper.

Extra Reading (Voluntary)

- Kato, Etsuko, "The Sad Marriage of Anthropology, Neo-Colonialism and Feminism: or Why Japanese Sexual Behavior is Always Intriguing", in *Asian Anthropology* Volume 6, 2007.

- James E. Cote, “The Mead-Freeman Controversy in Review” in *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, Vol. 29, No. 5, 2000 and “The Mead/Freeman Controversy Is Over: A Retrospect” by Hiram Caton (from the same volume).
 - *Guide to reading:* Why is Mr. Freeman famous?

VIDEO: *Margaret Mead and Samoa* [videorecording] / Wombat Film & Video, ; produced, directed & written by Frank Heimans. c1988. (51 mins)

Class 11: Instrumental Anthropology and Ethnography

An instrumental approach to ethnography. How anthropologists can use their skills outside anthropology.

READING:

- Ann T. Jordan, Chapter 5, “Marketing and Consumer Behavior”; Chapter 6 “Design Anthropology” and Chapter 7 “Organizational Anthropology” in *Business Anthropology*. Waveland Press 2003: 84-93
- Michael C. Reed, “Nine Contemporary Anthropological Work Roles”, in National Association for the Practice of Anthropology Bulletin Jan 1997, Vol. 17, pp 11-27.
- “U.S. Army Recruits Anthropologists,” by Kambiz Fattahi, BBC News, August 24, 2008.
- Stein, Howard, Chapter 4, “Ordinary Brutality at Work,” in *Nothing Personal, Just Business: A Guided Journey into Organizational Darkness*.
- Stein, Howard, Chapter 5, “How Long Can We Circle the Wagons?” A Study in the Sense of Doom at Work”, in *Nothing Personal, Just Business: A Guided Journey into Organizational Darkness*.

Extra Reading (voluntary)

- Smith-Lovin, Lynn and Miller McPherson. 1993. “You Are Who You Know: A Network Approach to Gender.” Pp. 223-251 in *Theory on Gender, Feminism on Theory*, Paula England, editor. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

VIDEO: **Ready for work** [videorecording] : qualities that count with employers / produced for Human Relations Media by Maverick Media ; writer, director, & producer, Donna Boundy. Publisher Pleasantville, NY : Human Relations Media, c1995. 27 mins. HF5382.7 .R439 1995

******Prepare for Final Presentation: Topic to be discussed*

- *Presentations in genre of your “choice” of your proposed Final Paper*

Class 12: Final Presentations

Class 13: Final Presentations

*******FINAL PAPER:**

Due: TBA, by email.

Assignment: This is the real thing. Your first paper gets entirely rewritten. 10-15 pages, proper title, full citations, linking paragraphs, excellent deployment of words, with method, theory, understanding of positionality, evaluation of audience, and critique of some other theorist/ethnographer...