

COURSE OUTLINE

Anthropology 9225A-001 - Special Topics in Anthropology

Topic: Reading and Writing Ethnography

Fall 2018

This course is cross-listed with graduate course Anthropology 9225A.

Lectures: Thursdays 1:30–4:30 pm

Classroom: SSC-3102

Instructor: Dr. Greg Beckett

Office: SSC-3409

Office hours: Please refer to the course site in OWL.

Email: gbeckett@uwo.ca

Credit value: 0.5 credit

Course Description: This course explores ethnography as a mode of knowledge and representation, as a theory and practice, and, above all, as a genre of writing. We will begin with classic debates about ethnographic writing and then turn to in-depth analyses of several contemporary ethnographies.

Prerequisite(s): Instructor permission by application.

Antirequisite(s): None.

Course Syllabus: Cultural anthropologists use the term ethnography to describe both their method of research and the final product of that research, often a narratively driven article or book. In this course, we will explore ethnography as a mode of knowledge and representation, as a theory and practice, and, above all, as a genre of writing. We will begin by considering some classic debates about ethnographic writing and then turn to in-depth analyses of several contemporary ethnographies. Along the way, we will discuss the following issues: narrative form and technique; the relation between the form and content of arguments; the ethics of cultural representation; time, space, scale, and context; and voice, positionality, and subjectivity.

We will conduct this seminar using the Melbourne Method (see the course OWL site for more information). Student participation in the Melbourne Method along with regular participation in class discussion will form a key component of the final grade. Students will also write two analytic papers. These papers will explore the course readings in relation to a chosen theme. They should offer both a deep analysis of the texts and a clear and cogent synthesis that explores those themes in relation to broader questions from the course. Finally, students will write a final paper that builds on the themes from the first two papers and that cumulatively addresses the course material. A full course schedule including a week-by-week breakdown of topics and assigned readings will be available on the course's OWL site before the first day of class.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

Summarize and discuss key debates about ethnography as a method and a style of writing;

Interpret how anthropological knowledge is produced through writing and describe the practical, ethical, and political issues involved in anthropological research and writing;

Identify and explain key aspects of ethnographic texts, including their form and structure, narrative technique, and issues of voice, positionality, and authorship;

Work collaboratively with a group of peers to develop a shared understanding of the course readings and to prepare regular presentations on those themes.

Course Materials:

Required readings are available on the course OWL site. The following books are required and are available at the Western Bookstore:

Lepselter, Susan. 2016. *The Resonance of Unseen Things: Poetics, Power, Captivity, and UFOs in the American Uncanny*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Mattingly, Cheryl. 2014. *Moral Laboratories: Family Peril and the Struggle for a Good Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Stevenson, Lisa. 2014. *Life Beside Itself: Imagining Care in the Canadian Arctic*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Evaluation:

Participation in Class Discussion and Melbourne Method Seminar – 25%

All students are expected to complete the assigned readings before class and to come to class prepared to engage with the material through in-class discussion. Students must also participate in the Melbourne Method seminar groups, which will involve regularly leading discussion and providing questions and responses to the readings. Grades for seminar participation will be based on: three in-class presentations of course material; three written discussion questions; and three written responses to discussion questions. Students will receive regular feedback on their participation in the Melbourne Seminar throughout the course.

If you must miss a class session you are responsible for getting notes from another student. Lecture notes for missed classes will not be provided.

You may use laptops during class for taking notes or for accessing the readings. Other devices, including cell phones, music players, etc. must be turned off.

Analytic Paper – 25%

Students will write an analytic paper on the course material due on Thursday Oct 25th.

Final Essay – 50%

Students will write a final paper that builds on the themes from their analytic paper and that cumulatively addresses the course material. The final essay will be due by 1:00 pm Friday December 7th.

Course Specific Conditions Required to Pass this Course

In order to pass this course students must submit all coursework and successfully contribute to their Melbourne Method seminar group.

Course Specific Statements and Policies:

Statement on Seeking Special Accommodations:

No accommodations will be granted retroactively more than 10 days after an assignment's due date or a missed quiz or test. Please see your academic

counsellor immediately if you will be seeking accommodations based on medical or compassionate grounds.

Statement on Plagiarism:

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing. It is also a scholastic offence to submit the same work for credit in more than one course. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence.

Policy on Laptops and Cellphones in Class:

Laptops are permitted for note-taking in class but if it is observed that students are on social networking sites, they will be asked to close the laptop and will not be permitted to use it for the remainder of the class. Be sure that all cellphones are turned off at the beginning of class.

Policies on Written Work

All written assignments must be submitted electronically. They should be formatted for 8.5x11" paper, have 1" margins on all sides, and be written in a double-spaced, 12-point font. All papers must include your first and last name and a title.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Late Penalties

Unless you receive accommodation for illness through Academic Counselling, late assignments will be penalized at the rate of 5% of the assignment grade per day, including weekends). Late assignments will not be accepted after 5 days.

Institutional Statements and Policies

All students should familiarize themselves with Western's current academic policies regarding accessibility, plagiarism and scholastic offences, and medical accommodation. These policies are outlined, with links to the full policies, at: http://anthropology.uwo.ca/undergraduate/academic_policies.html