Anthropology 4495F-001 - Special Topics in Anthropology
Topic: Reading and Writing Ethnography

PROVISIONAL COURSE OUTLINE

Fall 2024

Instructor and course information:
Dr. Greg Beckett
Email: gbeckett@uwo.ca
Thursdays 9:30 am – 12:30 pm
Credit value: 0.5
Prerequisities: Instructor permission by application.
Antirequisites: None.

This course is cross-listed with graduate course Anthropology 9225A and requires an application for registration. See Department website.

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.

Course Details:
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 as a seminar and student participation in the seminar, with regular participation in class discussion, will form a key component of the final grade. Additional assignments will include short writing assignments in
relation to the lectures/topics as well as an in-depth analysis of an ethnography. Students will write a final paper that explores a key theme from the course across several of the course texts.

A full course schedule including a week-by-week breakdown of topics and assigned readings will be available on the course’s Brightspace 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:**
Readings are still TBD, but books MAY include the following:


** Additional readings will be available as PDFs or through course reserves.

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