World Ethnographies
Anthropology 3212
Fall 2009
MWF, 4 - 4:50pm, Green Library 263

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an introduction to ethnography (ethno- = Greek for “nation”, used to refer to the study of people or cultures; -graphy = “writing,” used to denote scientific descriptions). Ethnography has long been the principle genre of writing in cultural anthropology and is increasingly used in qualitative sociology, geography and some subfields of history. We will study how ethnographic research is done and the process of converting that research into a meaningful book or essay. Then, we will explore some of the many directions that anthropology has taken, including greater attention to history and cultural change. Finally, we will explore some of the ways in which ethnography can be used to help bring about positive social change. Throughout the course, we will read ethnographies of various styles and from various places (Botswana, Morocco, Barbados, Egypt, Peru, and the United States.) These readings illustrate the breadth and depth of ethnographic writing, and will introduce students to different cultures and societies. Additionally, we will watch films in class that correspond to the ethnographies in terms of location, topic, approach and/or theoretical orientation. This course will enable students to compare cultures and societies, and to critically examine the methods, writing styles and formats of ethnographies.

LEARNING OUTCOMES (COURSE OBJECTIVES)

1. In essay format, students will evaluate what does and does not constitute ethnographic fieldwork and methods using Malinowski’s framework as a standard of comparison.
2. Given specific cultural questions on which to focus, students will write a 5-6 page essay comparing and contrasting three different cultures.
3. Students will answer short-answer and multiple-choice questions on the various cultures examined in class with at least 70% accuracy.
4. Students will answer multiple choice questions concerning major turning points in the history of ethnographic method development and data interpretation, with at least 70% accuracy.
5. Using examples studied in class, students will draft a very basic, 3-page research proposal, identifying an anthropological research question and three methods that could be used to address that question.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Five Quizzes (10% each, with lowest grade dropped – totals 40% of your grade)

For each of the five book-length ethnographies, you will take a two-part quiz, which will test your understanding of the main points of the book. The first part will be a take-home quiz, which you should fill out as you are reading the book. I recommend that you note down page numbers as you are filling out the quiz, since most of the questions are intended to help you as you are writing your take-home essays. The second part of the quiz will be taken in class, and questions are geared towards making sure you actually read the book. The second part will also include 1-2 questions from previous class lectures. You must be present on these days to take the second part of the quiz. (You may email me the answers to the first part of the quiz up until the time the class starts if you know that you will be absent.) I will not be offering any make-up quizzes. If you miss the second part of the quiz, you will receive a zero on that part of the quiz. Although you will take all five quizzes, I will only count your four best grades.

Three take-home essay exams (25% each for Exams 1 & 2; 10% for Exam 3 – totals 60% of your grade)

These essays will test your ability to integrate concepts from the readings, ethnographic films, lectures, and class discussions. The first two essays will be 5-6 pages each, double-spaced, in a standard font (Times or Times New Roman), with standard margins, and with proper citations. The third essay will be 2-3 pages long, double-spaced, standard font (Times or Times New Roman), with standard margins, and with proper citations. Though I will not be grading specifically for grammar, poor writing will get in the way of your argument and most likely lower your grade.

Students must submit all essays to the on-line plagiarism analysis program available at www.turnitin.com and turn in the analysis results with their papers (note: the web program often takes a half hour or more to run the results, so students should plan accordingly). This program is designed to identify acts of plagiarism (copying sections of other people’s work without citing that work; purchasing or using papers from the internet) and of “double-dipping,” or using the same paper for multiple classes. The essay exam questions for this class are very specific to the materials we will cover together, so I would expect plagiarism to be minimal, but this program provides an extra level of assurance that all students are being evaluated equally for their own work. If you are unsure about what does or does not constitute plagiarism, please ask during class (general questions) or come to speak to me personally about your specific case.

Class Participation (can add or subtract 5% from your grade)

Your participation grade will be based on regular attendance, in-class participation and occasional short assignments. If you do miss class, the first place to check is the Blackboard site at http://online.fiu.edu. There, I will post lecture materials, in-class exercises, the take-home segment of the quizzes, essay exams and your grades. If you miss a film, there will also be information on how to view the film at the Green Library (5th floor, AudioVisual check-out desk.) After reviewing the missed material, you can meet with me or with our Teaching Assistant to further discuss it.
The class is partially discussion-based and will demand a high degree of participation from students. In turn, students’ knowledge and critical thinking skills will be alternately challenged and reinforced by other students. I expect each of you to participate regularly in class by asking/answering questions, analyzing key issues, constructively debating topics, taking part in class activities, etc. If you are apprehensive about speaking in front of your peers, you may fulfill this part of your grade by e-mailing me some of your thoughts about the readings prior to class. I expect that you will come to class having read and annotated all materials assigned for that class. Questions, confusions and unsure ideas are very welcome, as they show engagement with the material.

REQUIRED MATERIALS: (any edition of the books is fine)


DUE DATES

UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION TO ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH AND WRITING

Monday, August 24: Introductions and Review of Course Objectives and Expectations

Week 1: Wed, Aug. 26 – Mon. Aug 31):

Readings:


LECTURE TOPICS: What is ethnographic fieldwork and what makes it different from investigative reporting? What sorts of specific methods are used during fieldwork?
IN CLASS FILM: *Off the Verandah* (1990)  Produced and directed by Andre Singer; written and presented by Bruce Dakowski.

Week 2 (Wed, Sept. 2 – Mon. Sept. 7):

**Readings:**
1. *Nisa*, pp. 95-179 (chapters 4-8)

**LECTURE TOPIC:** Update on the !Kung. How to read and evaluate ethnographies

MONDAY: Labor Day – no class

**QUIZ on** *Nisa*, Wed. Sept. 9. It covers all readings and lectures through Sept. 4. Take-home questions on Nisa are also due at the beginning of class.

Week 3 (Wed. Sept. 9 – Mon. Sept. 14)

**Readings:** *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco*, pp. 1-69 (Introduction and chapters 1-3)

**LECTURE TOPICS:** Discussion of Nisa. Setting the stage for *Fieldwork in Morocco*.

IN CLASS FILM: *Daughter from Danang*. Directed by Gail Dolgin and Vicente Franco.

Week 4: (Wed. Sept. 16 – Mon. Sept. 21)

**Readings:** *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco*, pp. 70-149 (chapters 4-8)

**LECTURE TOPICS:** Discussion of *Daughter from Danang*. The process of fieldwork. How does the anthropologist change during fieldwork?


Week 5: (Wed. Sept. 23 – Mon. Sept. 28) (TA Julia out of the country – no office hours)


**LECTURE TOPICS:** Discussion of *Fieldwork in Morocco* and *Designing Women*. Domination vs. hegemony in gender relations.

**EXAM – Take-home Essay Exam 1 due at the beginning of class on Wednesday, Sept. 30.** Turn in a hard copy in class AND turn in an electronic copy to [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) (see instructions on exam assignment sheet).
UNIT 2: DIVERSIFYING METHODS, NEW QUESTIONS

Week 6: (Wed. Sept. 30 – Mon. Oct. 5):

Readings: Veiled Sentiments, Chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 1-77)


Readings: Veiled Sentiments, Chapters 3 and 4 (pp. 78-167)

LECTURE TOPICS: Studying your “own culture” and the reflective turn in anthropology


Readings: Veiled Sentiments, Chapters 5-8 (pp. 171-259).

LECTURE TOPICS: Essentializing the other vs. incorporating history


Readings: Nightwatch: Introduction and Chapters 1-2 (Note: you can skip the section on the Shining Path (pp. 17-19) and the section on Reconceptualizing the Peasantry (pp. 29-33).

LECTURE TOPICS: Discussion of Veiled Sentiments; The Romance of Resistance; Introduction to Nightwatch

Week 10 (Wed. Oct 28 – Mon. Nov. 2)

Readings: Nightwatch: Chapters 3-4 (pp. 105-191)

LECTURE TOPICS: Between Resistance and Revolution; Multi-Sited Ethnography

IN CLASS FILM: Water and Autonomy, produced by Chiapas Media Project

Week 11 (Wed. Nov. 4 – Fri. Nov. 6)

Readings: Nightwatch: Chapter 5 and Epilogue (pp. 192-223 and 261-275)

LECTURE TOPICS: Neoliberalism, Development, and NGOs
Week 12 (Mon. Nov. 9 – Fri. Nov. 13)


Wednesday, Nov. 11: Veteran’s Day – university closed

Friday, Nov. 13:

LECTURE TOPICS: Introduction to With These Hands, farmer organizing in Florida


Week 13 (Mon. Nov. 16 – Fri. Nov. 20)


*With These Hands*, pp. xvii – xxii and 1-90 (Preface and chapters 1-3)


LECTURE TOPICS (Wed & Fri): Discuss *The Angel Returns*, the ethics of combining ethnography and activism

Week 14 (Mon. Nov. 23 –Fri. Nov. 27)

**Readings:** *With These Hands*, pp. 90-180 and 323-326 (chapters 4-6 and “The Space between These Hands”)

LECTURE TOPICS (Monday): Activist and applied research, participatory action research

Wed & Fri – no class (Thanksgiving)

QUIZ on *With These Hands*, Wed. Dec. 2. Covers readings and lectures from Nov. 9 – Nov. 23.

Week 15 (Mon. Nov. 30 – Fri. Dec. 4): Discuss *With These Hands*; Optional Student Presentations, class evaluations and wrap-up

No readings due

Week 16: Final Exam week: **Essay exam #3 due 11:59pm to turnitin.com ONLY**