

ANT 448-0990 ONLINE
ETHNOGRAPHY THROUGH FILM
Summer 2014
The University of Maine

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First Class: Lisa Neuman (all messages should read "ANT 448" in subject line)

Course Description:

This is an upper level anthropology elective (3 credit hours) that is open to students from all majors. Since it is an upper level course, ANT 102 or permission of the instructor is a prerequisite for enrollment (please email the instructor for permission). ANT 448 satisfies the University of Maine's general education Ethics requirement.

The central focus of the course is the analysis of film from an anthropological perspective. This is not a media course that requires you to make films. Students will be introduced to the history of the use of film in anthropology, and they will consider how professional anthropologists living at different times have used motion pictures to capture aspects of human cultural behavior. Students will also examine how ethnographic films, documentaries, and popular motion pictures (past and present) have been used to represent people in a variety of cultures. We will ask how professional anthropologists may differ from other types of filmmakers in their treatment of the same cultural groups and/or subjects. We will also examine the ethical considerations that must be taken into account when creating, presenting, marketing, or using filmed material that represents the lives, behaviors, and/or cultures of diverse groups of people, and we will examine cases where filmmakers (including anthropologists) have engaged in questionable practices that may be deemed "unethical."

Larger Themes:

Even before motion pictures had sound, anthropologists found them to be invaluable tools for reproducing aspects of human cultural behavior. Moreover, anthropologists were not alone in their fascination with the medium of film. Early filmmakers who were not professional anthropologists (sometimes called "amateur ethnologists") also found that motion pictures gave them the ability to represent what they considered to be "exotic" and "primitive" cultures. Moreover, early anthropologists and their amateur counterparts alike shared an interest in using film to capture and record cultures that they thought were vanishing. Their belief that small-scale societies around the world were dying out led them to use film as a type of "salvage ethnography," and they directed particular attention toward visually capturing the cultures of Native North Americans.

As filmmaking technology advanced with the progression of the twentieth century, the discipline of anthropology found new uses for film as a research tool. Anthropologists began to consider whether motion pictures could provide more accurate depictions of

cultural phenomena than written ethnographic accounts. At almost the same time, anthropologists began to realize the limitations of the camera in getting at the “truth” of human cultural life. A new reflexive type of anthropological filmmaking was born, complete with a new consideration of the role of the filmmaker in shaping cultural images captured by the camera. Moreover, women began to take a more prominent role both behind, and in front of, the camera, as feminist and minority anthropologists used the medium of film to capture the once-silenced voices of the culturally marginalized.

Today, films produced by anthropologists are widely used in American college and high school classrooms to illustrate cross-cultural differences and similarities. At the same time, other types of films—including documentaries as well as both mainstream and independent motion pictures—often present images of cultural differences that construct an opposition between the “Self” of the viewer and the “Otherness” of the people represented on screen.

In this course, we will critically examine how the medium of film has been used both to construct and to deconstruct these prevalent notions of cultural difference. In comparing films produced by professional anthropologists to motion pictures produced by other filmmakers, we will ask what makes a film “ethnographic,” and we will consider whether ethnographic films can be made by people who are not anthropologists.

ANT Learning Outcomes Assessment:

The Department of Anthropology strives to provide students with a well-rounded education about the human experience. This course satisfies Department of Anthropology Learning Outcomes

Criteria 1-4:

- 1) Understand the intricacies and implications of cultural diversity in the past and present;
- 2) Understand the important theoretical and methodological issues of the discipline;
- 3) Have the ability to provide, integrate, analyze, and assess evidence as it applies to a larger theoretical framework (i.e. statistical, historical, ethnographic, archaeological, etc.); and
- 4) Have the ability to think critically and communicate ideas effectively

Specific Course Objectives:

As a student in this course, you will:

- 1) Become acquainted with the history of the use of film in anthropology;
- 2) View a variety of films from different eras that focus on diverse parts of the world;
- 3) Develop a deeper understanding of diverse cultural groups and geopolitical regions;
- 4) Learn how to critically view and analyze different types of films and express your analyses in writing;
- 5) Understand the power of film to create images and representations of *difference*;
- 6) Learn to identify the underlying ethical and political implications of such representations;

- 7) Be able to discuss several cases in the history of film where questionable practices by filmmakers, researchers, or others have led to concerns about violations of ethical standards; and
- 8) Apply anthropological concepts and perspectives to the analysis of several contemporary Hollywood films.

Electronic Learning:

Course Infrastructure and Access: This is an online course that uses a **Blackboard course site (www.courses.maine.edu)** and email correspondence via FirstClass. This course does **not** utilize WebCT or FirstClass folders. **Use your Mainstreet ID and Password (the one associated with your maine.edu account, not FirstClass) to login to Blackboard.** You will receive important announcements, assignments, and notes through the Blackboard website. You are responsible for checking the site regularly for updates. I recommend checking the site daily.

Answers to questions frequently asked by students can be found at:

https://www.courses.maine.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab_group_id=181.

- 1. The film journal and the final film paper are submitted on Blackboard by the dates specified.**
- 2. You'll also post short comments or questions about each film to Blackboard. The instructor and other students will be able to read and respond to your comments.**
3. Computer Literacy Requirements: Access to a computer with broadband, ability to download programs, e.g. send email, read email, and access the web.
4. Please make sure you have a **valid email account and that you check it daily.** You will be given a FirstClass email account as a student in this class (even if you are not enrolled at the Orono campus).
5. Bandwidth Requirements: Broadband or high speed Internet connection. Video streaming on Blackboard may require a high-speed connection. Satellite does not always work with streaming.
6. **Technical Help:** You can contact the I.T. Help Center at help.center@umit.maine.edu or **207 581-2506** for computer-related (including network connection) questions. You can also **contact** cedtechhelp@umit.maine.edu, **207 581-4591** or **1-877-947-4357**. Broadband connection is available at computer labs at UC Centers throughout Maine. For help locating a UC Center nearest you, please dial UC Tele-service at 1-800-868-7000.
7. Lectures and required videos are on the Course Content page. If the image darkens when you are watching a video, just tap your keypad and it will usually reappear.

Required Readings:

Please be prepared to take notes during the online films. Some students may wish to download the Microsoft Silverlight viewer or Quicktime. You will be prompted to do so (with link) if your computer needs the viewers when you click on a film. Film names are listed at the end of the syllabus.

Digital Film Journals:

Each student will be expected to keep an active film journal, which is really an integrated series of short papers. I will collect journals twice online, via Blackboard's SafeAssign, by 11:59 p.m. on the dates due. You will receive a grade on each section of your journal. I will sometimes give you a question to address in your journal, but at times you will be expected to write your own critical reaction to a theme or issue presented in a particular film. You should write in your film journal soon after seeing each new film. Your individual entries will vary in length, but aim for one page per film. Journal entries that incorporate elements of lecture and/or your readings will receive strong marks. Those that simply offer an unsupported opinion of the merits of a particular film will not.

Hollywood Films

In conjunction with one of our books, we will be viewing five Hollywood films. Students will be expected to discuss these films in their film journal entries. Chances are, you have probably seen one or more of these films already: *the Godfather*, *Field of Dreams*, *the Big Lebowski*, *the Village*, and *Jaws*. Please be sure to review these films again for the week they are due, even if you have already seen them.

Missing Journal Entries

Incomplete journals missing one or more film entries will be graded based on available content. However, the content portion of the grade will be lowered one full letter grade for each missing entry.

Film Paper:

Each student will select and view one film outside of class (you must select a film that we have not used in class) and write a paper (around 5 pages in length) analyzing how the film portrays the relationship between a "Self" and an "Other," broadly conceived. You'll need to incorporate a reference list and citations into your film paper, and you will be doing some Internet research to support your arguments.

Late Journal/Paper Policy

To be fair to all students, late journal submissions will be accepted within a reasonable time frame but the grade will be lowered according to a formula that will be consistently applied to all late written work. The final paper must be submitted on or before June 21.

Exceptions: In the event of illness, an emergency, or an unforeseen event over which you have no control, email me as soon as possible and we will discuss your alternatives, including how to provide documentation of your situation and how to arrange for you to make up missed work.

A Note About Failing Grades on Papers and Journals versus Exams

While a student who fails an exam can often earn partial credit for some correct work on the exam (35 points, 55 points, etc.), a student who fails a written paper earns no points, rather than some other form of partial credit. I am quite generous when drawing the line between a paper earning a "D" grade and one earning an "F." However, there are times when a paper has very little merit or does not truly represent a student's own work (see section on plagiarism below) and cannot receive a passing grade.

Plagiarism will earn a student a failing grade on a written assignment or paper (as would cheating on an exam), and hence that assignment or paper will be scored as a "0." Plagiarism and cheating can have other academic consequences, as well, so I encourage you to read the section on pp. 8-9.

Students with Disabilities

If you have (or suspect) a documented disability that affects your academic work, your ability to attend classes, or the quality of your experience viewing and/or listening to our films, you must contact **Ann Smith**, Director of Disability Services, at her new location in **121 East Annex**, 581-2319, as early as possible in the term. Ann can arrange for special accommodations, but she needs advance notice.

Anthropology Reference Librarian:

Our reference librarian with special interest and expertise in anthropology is Jennifer Bonnet. She can be reached at Fogler Library and on FirstClass.

Academic Code of Conduct

Each student is expected to complete his or her own work, including journal submissions and the final paper. Students may not collaborate on journal submissions and the final paper. When an outside source is utilized in your writing, that source must be acknowledged or the student has committed plagiarism (we will discuss this in class). Students should feel free to work together on group projects and group assignments when directed by the instructor.

When an outside source is utilized in writing a paper, project summary, or report that source must be acknowledged or the student has committed **plagiarism**. The following is taken directly from the U Maine Undergraduate Student Handbook:

*"Academic honesty is very important. It is dishonest to cheat on exams, to copy term papers or to submit papers written by another person, to "fake" experimental results, or to copy parts of books or articles [or web sites] into your own papers without putting the copied material in quotation marks and clearly indicating its source. **Students committing or aiding any of these violations may be given failing grades for an assignment or for an entire course, at the discretion of the instructor.** In addition to any academic action taken by an instructor, these violations are also subject to action under the University of Maine Student Conduct Code. The maximum possible sanction under the student conduct code is dismissal from the University. Details concerning these policies and the avenues of appeal open to students are published in the online University of Maine Student Handbook.*

I have a strict anti-plagiarism policy in this course. I am an expert at detecting it. Don't do it!

Regarding the use and citing of online sources: With more and more students using the Internet, it is tempting to search for material online. If you search the Internet often, you may even notice that some web sites copy material from others, often without acknowledging it (hence, they are committing plagiarism!). Importantly, this does not mean that such material is in the public domain, nor does it mean that you, as a student, are permitted to use such material in your papers, projects, and reports without properly attributing it to the Internet source that you utilized. Also remember that all such material, unless paraphrased, must contain quotation marks.

Additional warning: It is not a good idea to be looking at an online source (particularly an online study guide) or another person's paper or written work while attempting to write your own. This type of writing strategy often leads to lazy language use, copying, and plagiarism.

Ultimately, I recommend that at all times you strive to develop your own ways of expressing ideas and cite other people's ideas and words sparingly.

List of Required Films:

(Note: ANT stands for Anthropology Office, 106 S. Stevens, and FOG stands for Fogler Library, both on the Orono campus. All films are ONLINE, but these are alternate viewing options in rare cases of technical difficulty. Note that some of Fogler's films are only available in streaming format).

In the Land of the War Canoes (In the Land of the Head Hunters: A Drama of Primitive Life on the Shores of the North Pacific). 1972 [1914]. Directed by Edward Sheriff Curtis. 47 min. Harrington Park, NJ: Milestone Film and Video. DVD. (ANT)

Franz Boas, 1858-1942. [1980]. Directed by T.W. Timreck. 60 min. Watertown, MA: Documentary Educational Resources. DVD (FOG)

Nanook of the North. 1922. Directed by Robert J. Flaherty. 79 min. France: Les Freres Revillon. Videocassette. (ANT)

Nanook Revisited. 1990. Directed by Claude Massot. 55 min. Princeton, N.J.: Films for the Humanities & Sciences. Videocassette. (ANT)

Dead Birds. 1964. Directed by Robert Gardner. 28 min. Watertown, MA: Documentary Educational Resources. Videocassette. (ANT)

The Ax Fight. 1975. Directed by Timothy Asch and Napoleon Chagnon. 30 min. Watertown, MA: Documentary Educational Resources. Videocassette, DVD, and/or e-reserve link. (FOG and e-reserves)

The Gods Must Be Crazy. 1980. Directed by Jamie Uys. 109 min. C.A.T. Films/Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment. DVD. (FOG)

N!ai: The Story of a !Kung Woman. 1980. Directed by John Marshall and Adrienne Miesmer. 59 min. Watertown, MA: Documentary Educational Resources. Videocassette. (FOG)

Walkabout. 1971. Directed by Nicolas Roeg. 100 min. Max L. Raab-Si Litvinoff Films/The Criterion Collection. DVD. (FOG)

Whale Rider. 2002. Directed by Niki Caro. 101 min. Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment. DVD. (FOG)

First Contact. 1983. Directed by Bob Connolly and Robin Anderson. 54 min. New York: Filmmakers [sic] Library. DVD. (FOG)

Cannibal Tours. 1987. Directed by Dennis O'Rourke. 67 min. Santa Monica, CA: Direct Cinema Limited. Videocassette. (ANT)

Death in Gaza. 2004. Directed by James Miller. 80 min. HBO Films. Videocassette. (FOG)

Hollywood Films (required):

The Godfather. 1972. Directed by Francis Ford Coppola. 175 min. Paramount. DVD (FOG).

Field of Dreams. 1989. Directed by Phil Alden Robinson. 107 min. Universal Home Entertainment. DVD (FOG).

The Big Lebowski. 1998. Directed by Joel Coen. 117 min. Focus Features. DVD (FOG).

The Village. 2004. Directed by M. Night Shyamalan. 108 min. Touchstone Home Entertainment. DVD (FOG).

Jaws. 1975. Directed by Steven Spielberg. 124 min. Universal Home Entertainment. DVD (FOG).

Required Fogler E-Reserve Readings:

- Asch, Timothy. 1988. "Collaboration in Ethnographic Filmmaking: A Personal View." In Jack R. Rollwagen, ed., *Anthropological Filmmaking*. Australia and The Netherlands: Harwood Academic Publishers. Pp. 1-29.
- Flaherty, Robert J. 1922. "How I Filmed 'Nanook of the North'." In *World's Work* (October 1922). Pp. 632-640.
- Griffiths, Alison. 2002. "'The World within Your Reach': Popular Cinema and Ethnographic Representation." In *Wondrous Difference: Cinema, Anthropology, and Turn-of-the Century Visual Culture*. New York: Columbia University Press. Pp. 171-254.
- Griffiths, Alison. 2002. "Finding a Home for Cinema in Anthropology: The First Generation of Anthropologist-Filmmakers in America." In *Wondrous Difference: Cinema, Anthropology, and Turn-of-the Century Visual Culture*. New York: Columbia University Press. Pp. 283-311.
- Reuveny, Rafael. 2003. "Fundamentalist Colonialism: the Geopolitics of Israeli-Palestinian Conflict." *Political Geography* 22(4). Pp. 347-380.
- Rollwagen, Jack R. 1988. "The Role of Anthropological Theory in 'Ethnographic' Filmmaking." In Jack R. Rollwagen, ed., *Anthropological Filmmaking*. Australia and The Netherlands: Harwood Academic Publishers. Pp. 287-315.
- Rony, Fatimah T. 1996. "Taxidermy and Romantic Ethnography." In *The Third Eye: Race, Cinema, and Ethnographic Spectacle*. Durham and London: Duke University Press. Pp. 99-126.
- Roscoe, Paul. 2004. "Crime and 'Tribal' Warfare in Papua New Guinea." In Victoria Lockwood, ed., *Globalization and Culture Change in the Pacific Islands*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall. Pp. 59-71.
- Russell, Catherine. 1999. "Playing Primitive." In *Experimental Ethnography: The Work of Film in the Age of Video*. Durham and London: Duke University Press. Pp. 98-115.
- Shohat, Ella and Robert Stam. 2000. "From Eurocentrism to Polycentrism." In *Unthinking Ethnocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media*. London and New York: Routledge. Pp. 13-54.
- Shohat, Ella and Robert Stam. 2000. "Stereotype, Realism, and the Struggle Over Representation." In *Unthinking Ethnocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media*. London and New York: Routledge. Pp. 178-219.
- Silverman, Eric. 2004. "Cannibalizing, Commodifying, or Creating Culture?: Power and Art in Sepik River Tourism." In Victoria Lockwood, ed., *Globalization and Culture Change in the Pacific Islands*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall. Pp. 339-357.

Class Schedule

Day 1. 6/2	Topic	Films	Readings	Important Dates
Day 2. 6/3	Professional Anthropology and the Use of Visual Images	In the Land of the War Canoes 1914 (47m)	Griffiths "The World Within Your Reach" Russell "Playing Primitive"; Griffiths "Finding a Home for Cinema in Ethnography" <i>Sutton and Wogan (S&W) CHs 1-2</i>	
Day 3. 6/4	Capturing Native Cultures	Nanook of the North 1922 (79 m)	Ruby Introduction and CH 1; Flaherty "How I Filmed Nanook of the North"	
Day 4. 6/5	Rethinking the Native	Nanook Revisited 1990 (60 m)	Ruby CH 2; Rony "Taxidermy and Romantic Ethnography"; S&W CH 3	
Day 5. 6/6	Ethnographic Film in Research	Dead Birds 1964	Ruby CHs 3-4; Asch "Collaboration in Ethnographic Filmmaking"	Journal #1 (8 entries) Due 6/7 by 11:59 PM (Blackboard)
Day 6. 6/9	The "Pop" !Kung	The Gods Must Be Crazy The Big Lebowski	Shohat and Stam "Stereotype, Realism, and the Struggle Over Representation"; S&W CH 4	

Day 7. 6/10	New Biographical Sensibility	N!ai 1980 (59 m)	TBA	
Day 8. 6/11	"Civilization" and Its Discontents	Walkabout 1971 (100 m)	Ruby CH 5	
Day 9. 6/12	"Tradition" and Its Discontents	Whale Rider 2002 (101 m)	S&W CH 5	
Day 10. 6/13	Encountering the Other	The Village First Contact 1983 (54 m)	Ruby CH 6	
Day 11. 6/16	The Tourist as Cannibal	Cannibal Tours 1987 (77 m)	Roscoe "Crime and 'Tribal' Warfare"; Silverman "Cannibalizing, Commodifying, or Creating Culture?" Rollwagen "The role of Anthropological Theory in 'Ethnographic Filmmaking'"	
Day 12. 6/17	The Power of the Camera	Death in Gaza 2004 (80 m)	Reuveny "Fundamentalist Colonialism"	
Day 13. 6/18	Who is the Shark?: Polycentrism in Film	Jaws	Shohat and Stam "From Eurocentrism to Polycentrism"; Ruby CHs 7-8	Journal #2 (10 entries) Due 6/18 by 11:59 PM

Day 14. 6/19	New Trends in Anthropological Film: Ethics and Voice		Ruby CHs 9-10	
Day 15. 6/20	Wrap Up			Final Film Paper Due 6/21 by 11:59 PM