

070.132
Invitation to Anthropology
Mondays: Levering Arellano
Wednesdays: Bloomberg 168, Hodson 305, Shaffer 303

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Office hours (OH): Mondays 1.45-2.45pm and by appt.

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Overview

This course is an invitation rather than a traditional introduction to the discipline of anthropology. I assume that you have had little or no anthropology and seek to provide you a sense of what kinds of questions interest anthropologists, what concepts they use, how they deploy concepts to understand themselves and others, and how they present their analysis.

I invite you to anthropology by taking us through several general questions that arise from our present very troubled moment in time (state sponsored violence and repression, terrorism, challenged democracies, environmental problems to name just a few): How do we understand this moment through the perspective of those in power (state, military, media)? How might we understand it by taking the perspectives of those who have been made marginal to society (native peoples, animals, the third world)? How do these perspectives help us to understand the workings of power, surveillance, global governance, and very importantly critique? What expressions does critique take?

As you will see, anthropology attempts to make strange what is known and taken for granted as the first step towards understanding how to critique and change it. One of the biggest questions we will ask but to which we may not arrive at an answer is, given the growing scales and magnitudes of problems (e.g. climate change) and our dense entanglement with one another, how do we arrive at a planetary perspective on change? Why is a global perspective not enough?

In addition to reading several books and articles, watching video clips and discussing in class, this course emphasizes the art of writing short but focused and nuanced

response papers that show me not only that you know the mechanics of writing (argument, organization, spelling, grammar) but that you know how to read assigned material very closely and draw out broad implications from your readings.

By the end of this class you will have a feel for what anthropologists do, the genre of anthropological writing called ethnography (vs. a work of fiction or a scientific report), how anthropology may be directly applicable to your lives, and what it is to write response papers. I hope that it will encourage you to explore anthropology as a major or minor or even to take a few courses in our department. Our discipline, which is usually publicity shy because it feels too much exposure may compromise research objectivity, now feels the urgent need for anthropological perspectives in the public to remind of the fact of our shared existence and mutual dependence in a world that has grown unfamiliar.

Course and Assignment Structure

The course meets twice a week, Monday and Wednesday, every week for 13 weeks (except for breaks and holidays). The first day of the course and every Monday after will be in the main classroom and will generally be a lecture followed by a brief discussion. You will be divided into sections of 20. Every Wednesday you will meet in the classroom designated for your section for more in-depth discussion of the assigned reading. You must come having read the assigned material by Monday and with a planned question or comment at hand by Wednesday to ensure you participate in section meetings.

Each of the four written assignments is for 20 points for a total of 80 points. You will be given the prompts for the assignments two and half weeks before they due. The prompts will be open ended, with no predetermined answers, to encourage you to come up with close and creative readings of your own. You are not to do any extra research or draw on external material in writing your response papers. The lengths of the response papers are 4-5 double spaced pages. I will provide more pointers on assignments closer to the deadlines.

The remaining 20 points is determined by attendance and class participation. Attendance is required. More than two absences will result in a fail in the class and each absence up to two will result in a half letter reduction in your final letter grade. So if you were going to get an A your final grade will be A- if you have one absence and B+ if you have two absences. You must sign in with your section head at each class. Exceptions will be made only if there are mitigating circumstances.

This is a computer free course. You are not allowed to use your computer, telephone, tablet or ipad in any way or form in the class. You have to have hard copies of the assigned books and articles in hand. You should take notes by hand although extensive note taking is not expected. As mentioned above, assignments reply upon your individual reading although you may draw upon class lectures and discussions.

Again, exceptions to my policy on computers will be made only if there are mitigating circumstances.

Required Books (available in the Barnes and Noble Bookstore and on reserve at Eisenhower Library Front Desk)

Joseph Masco *The Theater of Operation: National Security Affect from the Cold War to the War on Terror* (Duke University Press 2014)

Jonathan Lear *Radial Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation* (Harvard University Press 2008)

Jakob von Uexkull *A Foray into the World of Animals and Humans* (University of Minnesota Press 1934/2010)

Kregg Hetherington *Guerrilla Auditors: The Politics of Transparency in Neoliberal Paraguay* (Duke University Press 2011)

Required Articles (available via blackboard or the Eisenhower Library's website under e-reserves)

Jodi Dean "The Truth is Out There: Aliens and the Fugitivity of Postmodern Truth" in *Camera Obscura*, 14 (1-2), 1997: 42-74

James Mooney *The Ghost Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890* Fourteenth Annual Review of the Bureau of Ethnology, Part 2 (Introduction, Chapters One and Ten [653-655, 657-661, 777-791])

The book is available online through Eisenhower Library at <http://quod.lib.umich.edu.proxy1.library.jhu.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=acls;idno=heb03668>

but I would still like the excerpts available on e-reserve so that students can print out hard copies to read.

Matei Candea "I fell in love with Carlos the meerkat: Engagement and detachment in human-animal relations" in *American Ethnologist* 37(2), 2010: 241-258

Setrag Manoukian "Where is This Place? Crowds, Audio-Vision and Poetry in Postelection Iran" in *Public Culture* 22(2), 2010: 237-263

Required Videos (also available via YouTube)

Video One: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pORT3Z0xHrs>
7.53 minutes
(Alien Abduction)

Video Two: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UoMW37xfMRw>
39 seconds
(Ghost Dance Original Footage)

Video Three: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0EdRT56WK7Q>
17 minutes
(Ghost Dance, Wounded Knee Documentary Clip)

Video Four: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BF0abpIbvA>
9.54 minutes
(Meerkat Manor, part 1)

Video Five: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pKUZuv6_bus
2.25 minutes
(Where is This Place? Iran 2009)

Schedule

Sept 7	Introduction: What is Anthropology?
Sept 12, 14	Masco (Introduction and Chapter One [1-76])
Sept 19, 21	Masco (Chapters Two and Three [7-144]) and Video One Prompt for First Assignment Handed out
Sept 26 (instructor out), 28	Masco (Chapters Four and Five [145- 210]) and Dean
Oct 3, 5	Lear (Chapter One [1-54])
Oct 6	First Assignment Due
Oct 10, 12	Lear (Chapter Two [55-102]) and Video Two Prompt for Second Assignment Handed Out
Oct 17, 19	Lear (Chapter Three [103-154]), Video Three and Brown
Oct 24, 26	Uexkull (41-70)
Oct 27	Second Assignment Due
Oct 31, Nov 2	Uexkull (70-91) and Video Four

Prompt for Third Assignment Handed Out

Nov 7, 9
(instructor out for the week) Uexkull (92-134) and Candea

Nov 14, 16 Hetherington (Introduction and Chapter One [1-65])

Nov 17 Third Assignment Due

Nov 28, 30 Hetherington (Chapters Two and Three [66-142]) and
Video Five
Prompt for Fourth Assignment Handed Out

Dec 5, 7 Hetherington (Chapters Four and Five and Epilogue
[143-231]) and Manoukian

Dec 8 Fourth Assignment Due