ANTH 2200
WORLD ETHNOGRAPHY
Spring 2020
(Provisional outline)

Instructor: Andrew KIPNIS; abkipnis@cuhk.edu.hk
Class meeting: Tuesdays 9:30-12:15, NAH213
Tutorial: No tutorial, Discussion and Student Presentations During Class
Instructor Office Hours: by appointment, before or after class
Teaching Assistant: NIE Youping

Course Description: This class takes its title seriously. It is about “Ethnography” and ways of imagining “the World.” To start students will learn about ethnography as both a research method and a type of writing, as well as the relationships among ethnographic research methods, ethnographic writing styles and ethnographic argumentation. Ethnography is a key term for the discipline of anthropology, so it is important for anthropology majors to have a full understanding of all of its connotations and richness. After discussing ethnography, we will spend the rest of the course discussing anthropological ways of imagining “the world.” If anthropology is the study of cultural diversity, then how can we specify the different types of culture that make up the world? Is the world of cultural diversity best conceived by dividing the world into regions (East Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, etc), systems of religious beliefs, levels of economic development or some other way? Various ways of dividing up the world will be introduced and their advantages and disadvantages analysed. Finally, by hearing presentations about ethnographic books depicting many cultures in the world, students will greatly increase their exposure to “world ethnographies.”

Learning Outcomes:
- Learn how to read ethnographies critically
- Understand many of the different ways that anthropologists have theorised “the world” of diverse human cultures
- Increase exposure to the range of world ethnographies
- Learn about the inter-relation of method, theory and writing in ethnography

Language of Instruction: English.

Reading: There is no standard reading assignment for this course. Each student is expected to read three ethnographic books over the course of the semester. Each student will choose the books that she or he reads. The first book is a free choice (as long as it is an ethnography). I would suggest that you pick a book that is related to your Final Year Project so that the reading can “kill two birds with one stone,” but it is up to you. You can even pick an ethnographic book that you have already read as long as you have not yet written a paper about it. The second book will be chosen from the list of world ethnographies at the end of this syllabus. The third book can be another book from the list of world ethnographies, or a book that has won an award from a professional anthropological association. I will also hand out a list of websites that give the names of award winning books. There will be hundreds of books that have won awards, and the range of books here will be much more contemporary than the “classic” books listed on the world ethnographies list. If you choose to read an exceptionally long book (over 400 pages), and write a double-length paper about it, then that book can count as two of your three books, but you should talk to me about this matter if you want to make this choice. Students may also propose books to be added to the list of world ethnographies.
ethnographies. But, again, if you choose to do so you should meet with me to discuss the matter.

For each of the books you read, you need to either write a 1500-word review of the book or make an in-class presentation about the book. Each student will write two reviews and make one presentation. The presentation must be about either the first or second book that you read and will last for 10-15 minutes depending on the number of people in the class. The presentation should be accompanied by a power-point slide show and will include an opportunity for questions and answers. The presentations/reviews should introduce the content of the book, as well as any opinions you have about the contents of the book. I prefer that each student presentation addresses a different book. If two or more students choose the same book, I reserve the right to ask students to change their choice for the presentation. It is perfectly fine if several students write papers about the same book or write a paper about a book that another student has made a presentation about.

**If you are making a presentation on February 18, February 25, March 3 or March 10, your presentation should address the question for Book 1 and you will turn in a paper on your second book on the book two deadline. If your presentation comes after March 10, then you must address question two in your presentation and the question for book 1 in your paper. Your paper will be due on the book one deadline.**

In addition to reviewing the contents of a given book, the presentation/review should address the following questions.

**Book 1:** How does the hold together as a whole? How does the organization of the book, the writing style of the book, the topic the book addresses and/or the research methods that the author used contribute to the coherence of the book?

**Book 2:** In relation to the ways anthropologists have theorised the cultural diversity of the world, where in the world is this book about? Why does it fit into this type of culture? You may answer this question in relation to more than one way of theorising the world.

**Book 3:** What do you think of this book? If it won an award, why did it do so? Would you have given it an award?

**Deadline for Selecting Books:** By week three, students must tell the instructor the title of the first and second book that they chose, and specify which of the books will be used for the presentation. In week three, we will also determine who will present in each week. There is no need to tell me your choice for the third book, unless you want to propose a book that is not on the list of world ethnographies and has not won an award.

**Assessment:**

1. **Class participation:** 20%. I am counting attendance in this class because I really want you to listen to each other’s presentations and ask good questions of each other. The TA will judge who has made an interesting contribution and keep records of these points. Methods for assessing points on ZOOM and in regular classrooms will be slightly different and will be announced through the class list.
2. Class Presentation: 20%. Presentations will be graded on four criteria: your ability to convey the content of the book; the clarity of your language and power point slides and the timing of your presentation; your use of ideas about ethnographies and/or world cultures in your presentation; and your response to questions. The date of your presentation will be determined in week three.

3. Papers: 30% each for a total of 60%: The papers should be submitted through the plagiarism detection engine VERIGUIDE and use the standard department style for citations. If the office is open, a hard copy should be turned into the department office. If not, I may require you to submit the paper on blackboard as well. The papers should be approximately 1500 words long. At the start of the paper, students should give a full citation of the book they are reviewing, including its page length. Papers will be graded on four criteria: the clarity with which they summarize the contents of the book; the richness with which they answer the questions (specified above) for each paper; the organization of the writing and the coherence of the paper as a whole; and the technical aspects of writing (spelling, grammar, formatting, etc.). Extra consideration will be given to students who tackle difficult or relatively long books. The formatting should be double-spaced throughout, 12-point font or larger, with standard one-inch margins.

If you are doing a paper for the first ethnography, it is due on 3 March, before 5pm.

If you are doing a paper for the second ethnography, it is due on 7 April, before 5pm.

The paper for the third ethnography is due on 7 May, before 5pm.

GRADE DESCRIPTORS:

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Criteria for 1) the course and 2) for coursework</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1) Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2) The work has creatively synthesized course materials and key ideas in an original way. The argument is logical and cohesive, the discussion is well-organized, and the writing is clear. Concrete evidence corresponds to statements and claims.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>1) Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2) The work synthesizes course materials and key ideas in an original way, but there are areas for improvement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-range</td>
<td>1) Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.</td>
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| C-range | 1) Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.  
2) The work shows some effort, but course materials have not been sufficiently engaged. The argument and the writing is not clear, and/or there is no evidence for statements and claims made. |
| D-range | 1) Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes.  
2) The work shows little effort to engage course materials. There are major problems with clarity of argument and writing. |
| F | 1) Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.  
2) The work has failed respond to the assignment prompt. |

### Course Schedule:

**Week One: 07/01 Introduction**  
- Course Introduction  
- What is Ethnography

**Week Two: 14/01 Ethnography**  
- Ethnography as mode of writing  
- Ethnography as a form of research  
- Holism in many forms

**Week Three: 21/01 Alternative Forms of Ethnographic Research and Writing**  
- Multi-sited Ethnography  
- Actor-network Theory  
- Selection of Books and Assignment of Presentations

**Week Four: 28/01 NO CLASS: CHINESE NEW YEAR HOLIDAY**

**Week Five: 18/02 Imagining Worlds of Cultural Diversity**  
- Bands, Tribes, Chiefdoms and States  
- Hunting and Gathering, Nomadism, Agriculture, Industry  
- 6 Student presentations

**Week Six: 25/02 Kinship as a Way of Classifying Cultures**  
- Patrilineal versus Matrilineal  
- Terms of Address  
- 6 Student Presentations
Week Seven: 03/03 Philippe Descola’s Four Types of Culture
- Introduction to Descola’s scheme
- Naturalism and Analogism
- 6 student presentations

Week Eight: 10/03 Descola continued
- Animism
- Totemism
- 6 student presentations

Week Nine: 17/03 Colonial Areas
- Colonialism and Modernity
- Latin America and North America
- 6 student presentations

Week Ten: 24/03 Settler Colonialism
- Issues of settler colonialism
- Australia and New Zealand
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- 6 student presentations

Week Eleven: 31/03 NO CLASS: READING WEEK

Week Twelve: 07/04 Asian Cultural Areas
- North Africa/Arabic speaking world
- South Asia
- East Asia
- Southeast Asia
- 6 student presentations

Week Thirteen: 14/04, Europe and Globalized Cultures
- Europe
- Communism
- Youth/Class/Laboratory/Intellectual Cultures
- 6 student presentations

Week Fourteen: 21/04, Alternative Frameworks
- First-Fourth Worlds
- Global North and Global South
- Other Ideas???
- remaining student presentations

Week Fifteen: 28/04, Optional Movie Week
- See Movie “In a Savage Land”
- For extra credit join class discussion
- Possible extra credit paper to be described later
List of Classic Ethnographies for World Ethnographies

Note: ## means somebody thought it easily readable for undergraduates.

** means someone thought it a classic.

Books on Melanesia


Books on Aboriginal Australia


### Poirier, Sylvie (2005) *A world of relationships. Itineraries, dreams, and events in the Australian Western Desert*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.


**Books on Africa**


**Other Books on Pacific Islands**


Mead, Margaret. 1928. *Coming of Age in Samoa.* William Morrow and Company. **
Malinowsky, Bronislaw. 1922. Argonauts of the Western Pacific (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul)

Malinowsky, Bronislaw. 1929. The Sexual Life of Savages.


**Books on Native Americas**


Jackson, Jean E. 1983. The Fish People. Cambridge University Press.


**Others**

Barth, Frederik. *Nomads of South-Persia; the Basseri tribe of the Khamseh Confederacy*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1962.


