

WORLD ETHNOGRAPHY

ANTH 2200

Spring 2006

Instructor: Leilah VEVAINA

Class meeting: Wednesdays 1:30-4:15,

Classroom: TC Cheng, C3/ NAH 11/ NAH 401

Tutorial: No tutorial, Discussion and Student Presentations During Class

Instructor Office Hours: by appointment, Leilah.vevaina@cuhk.edu.hk

Teaching Assistant: CAO Chunkai, chunkaicao@link.cuhk.edu.hk

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 its connotations and richness, and its contemporary diversity.

As readings practices have diminished due to many factors, one focus of this course will be to further exercise and hone students’ reading like a muscle. We will do several ethnographic reading and writing exercises in class to improve students’ focus, concentration, and stamina by moving toward longer and denser texts as the term moves along. To encourage reading and avoid inevitable distractions from technology, this course will insist on several time blocks to be device-free. Students will also hand-write during these blocks in provided notebooks and will submit course reflections of these activities.

To further develop reading and in-depth understanding of ethnographic writing, we will approach reading first all together as a class, then in smaller groups, and then independently. One text will be chosen from a subfield of Anthropology and read together in a small group. Students in that group will then give an oral presentation in the style of a Socratic seminar to explore and present that text while other students will be evaluators. The last book will be independently chosen, examined, and read. More senior students working on their final-year-projects will be encouraged to pick their last text in line with their project themes.

Learning Outcomes:

- Develop reading practices
- 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.

Assessment:

1. **Weekly Class participation:** 20%. This includes regular attendance and engaged participation in class activities. These include reading sessions, group activities, and writing sessions.
2. **Reading Notebook:** 20% You will be provided with a notebook to work on weekly class activities. Your notebook will be collected and your submissions graded at various points in the course.
3. **Socratic Seminar** based on subfield book: 30% A Socratic Seminar is based on a close reading of a text where students in a group pose questions about it and discuss it. It is not a debate format but rather a format to deeply understand certain elements of a text. Students will work on seminar prep, and the hold the seminar in their book groups during class.
4. **Book Review** based on self-chosen ethnography: 30% As students work through reading their chosen book, class activities will begin to draft their report. The full report should be 1400-1500 words and due on April 30.

Course Schedule

Week One: 7/Jan Introduction

- Course Introduction
- What is Ethnography?
- Reading/Digital Survey
- Blow Up Exercise with *Argonauts*

Week Two: 14/Jan Ethnography

- Ethnography as mode of writing
- Ethnography as a form of research
- Holism in many forms
- In Class- Reading: Bohannan – “Shakespeare in the Bush”

Week Three: 21/Jan From Notes to Narrative

- Introducing Subfields and Book Choices
- Read at Home: McGranahan, “Anthropology as Theoretical Storytelling”

January 12, 2025, Subject to Change

Week Four: 28/Jan

- Group Reading of Book 1 – Part 1
- Activity: Point of View Exercise

Week Five: 4/Feb

- Group Reading of Book 1 – Part II
- Activity: Structure and Format – Reverse Outline

Week Six: 11/Feb

- Group Reading of Book 1 – Part III
- Activity: Why do you think this Book won an award/ New Title

Lunar New Year Break

Week Seven: 25/Feb

- Finish Group Reading
- Activity: Prep Socratic Seminar
- Book 2 choice

March 4, No Class, Reading Week

Week Eight: 11/March

- Socratic Seminars on Subfield Book
- Reading Book 2

Week Nine: 18/March

- Socratic Seminars on Subfield Book
- Reading Book 2/ *Forecasts*

Week Ten: 25/March Guest Lecture, Carly Shuster (ANU)

- Schuster, Caroline E. *Forecasts: a story of weather and finance at the edge of disaster*. University of Toronto Press, 2023.
- Ethnography as graphic Novel

Week Eleven: 1/April Guest Lecture: Cao Chunkai

- Reading Book 2 – Outline of Book Review
- Activity: Mapping

January 12, 2025, Subject to Change

Week Twelve: 8/April

- Reading Book 2 – Draft of Book Review
- Activity: Bridges Exercise/Diagram This

Week Thirteen: 15/April

- Finish Book 2 – Draft of Book Review
- Canonization and Critique
- What is Ethnography? Return of Notecards
- Activity: Future Ethnography

Book Review Due – April 30

Grade	Criteria for 1) the course and 2) for coursework
A	<p>1) Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.</p> <p>2) The work has creatively synthesized course materials and key ideas in an original and sophisticated way. The argument is logical and cohesive, the discussion is well-organized, and the writing is clear. Concrete evidence corresponds to statements and claims.</p>
A-	<p>1) Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.</p> <p>2) The work synthesizes course materials and key ideas in an original way, but there are areas for improvement.</p>
B-range	<p>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.</p> <p>2) The work demonstrates a solid grasp of course materials and key ideas. There are areas for improvement with respect to building a cohesive argument, organizing the discussion, communicating clearly, and/or identifying relevant evidence.</p>
C-range	<p>1) Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.</p> <p>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. Citations are not consistent or are absent.</p>
D-range	<p>1) Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes.</p> <p>2) The work shows little effort to engage course materials. There are major problems with clarity of argument and writing. Citations are not consistent or are absent.</p> <p>3) Evidence of generative AI use (see note on plagiarism)</p>
F	<p>1) Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.</p> <p>2) The work has failed to respond to the assignment prompt.</p>