

## ANT200.01 The Ethnographic Experience

*Stuff to be done by 8/25*

- ☐ finalize Malinowski readings —
  - ☞ make handout, post to ANGEL
  - ☞ request from ILL, begin reading
  
- ☐ finalize other readings, esp. Abu-Lughod: need to read final section of book?
  
- ☐ contact student sites:
  - Rotary
  - Turkish Society
  - ICR
  - synagogue
  - hospital
  
- ☐ request *30 Days* from Netflix — bookmark on computer; test in C0003
  
- ☐ do we have *First Contact?* review, talk to Margay
  
- ☐ finalize syllabus; post syllabus, General Policies, Malinowski to ANGEL
  
- ✓ need short reading handout on ethnography — chapter from a textbook? — for first class meeting
  
- ☐ need final list of Unit/student final report topics/issues — Hey, you can use a selection from Chapter 5 Pub §6 as an example of observing techniques...
  
- ☐ study questions study questions study questions
  
- ☐ need:
  - ☞ T 8/28 Introduction to the course & to each other; “What is ethnography?”
  - ☞ Th 8/30 Lecture: “Culture and identity” [prep Malinowski]
- and:
  - ☞ T 9/4 In-class assignment [preparation for 1<sup>st</sup> site observation]
  - ☞ Th 9/6 1<sup>st</sup> on-campus site visit

## ANT200.01 The Ethnographic Experience

Dr. Carl Davila T-Th 8:00 - 9:30 C003 Cooper

☺office hours: T 3-4:30pm, W 9:30-12:30 or by appointment

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**Ethnography** is the science (some would say art) of studying and writing about culture, whether someone else's or your own. It is the main thing that social-cultural anthropologists do, and the usual way they report about it. So to understand the ethnographic experience is to grasp something of what makes anthropologists tick.

The main goal of this course is to show you what ethnography is. I hope that along the way, you will come to appreciate the *experience* of doing ethnography, both its delights and its challenges. To get there, you will be exposed to skills that are useful not only in ethnography, but in everyday life on Planet Earth. The more willing you are to walk in the ethnographer's shoes (which means stepping back from *who you think you are*), the more success you will have in this course and, I daresay, in your future endeavors.

To accomplish the main goal of this course, you have two basic tasks. You will have to read ethnographies, and you will have to engage in simple (but challenging) cultural observations and write about your experiences.

وَمَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ يَتَّقِي اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ فَمَا يَضَعِ اللَّهُ لَهُ شَيْئًا مِنْ حَسَنَاتِهِ إِلَّا يَجْعَلْ لَهَا رِزْقًا فَسَابِقًا

### Reading:

Three books are required for this course: Lila Abu-Lughod's study of the Awlad Ali Bedouins, *Veiled Sentiments*; Vincent Crapanzano's "decentered" ethnography, *Tuhami: Portrait of a Moroccan*; and *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*, Anne Fadiman's disturbing (but entertaining) study of Hmong tribespeople in California's Central Valley. In addition to these, we will read selections from two works by Bronislaw Malinowski, one of the founders of modern anthropology: *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* and *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term*. The point of these readings is to expose you to some ways that ethnographers have approached their subjects, and to show you some of the potential (and potential problems) inherent in ethnography as an art-science.

## Field Journal, Final Report:

You will have to complete short participant observations for this course. Your project has two major components: you will have to keep a journal of “field notes” and you will have to give me a 7-page narrative that summarizes what you learned by the end of the course.

Your Field Journal will have three sections:

- ☞ in-class assignments (about 10 of these)
- ☞ responses to readings and classwork (about one per unit)
- ☞ notes taken during field observations

**I will collect and review your Field Journal at Midterm.**

**Your Field Journal will be due at the last class meeting on December 6.**

Your Final Report will be just that: a **7-page report** on what you learned about your ethnographic subjects (and about ethnography in general) in the course of the semester. I will ask you to **summarize your findings orally in class at the end of the term**; the **written version is due during Finals Week**.

## Your final grade:

There is a maximum of 100 points available in this course:

Field Journal:		70 pts.
- In-class work	20 pts.	
- Reading & reactions	20 pts.	
- Field notes	30 pts.	
Final Report		30 pts.

Your final grade will be the result of the number of points you accumulate, using the following scale:

93 +	A	77-79	C+
90-92	A-	73-76	C
87-89	B+	70-72	C-
83-86	B	67-69	D+
80-82	B-	63-66	D
		60-62	D-

(If you *really* want a letter-grade for a given task, just calculate the percentage you earned out of the total possible points, and use the scale above. *Don't* ask me to do high school arithmetic for you.)

## Organization of the course

The course is divided into six major topics, each covering about two weeks. These topics are important issues that you must address in your project and Final Report. For each of these topics there will be time devoted to lecture, and in some cases you will have short readings or other assignments on the topic, as well. You will also receive a set of study questions that you must respond to in your Journal, and there will be a few in-class assignments also to be included in your Journal.

The assigned books are good models of what ethnography is, but they also show you what ethnography can *do*. I will introduce each author and book in lecture; you will be responsible for keeping up the reading. When we finish each book, we'll discuss what the author is doing in the book and what this says about ethnography as an art-science.

Your observation project will be assembled from four parts. To get the feel for the process, we will collectively visit two sites on campus and practice observing "culture in action." Field notes from these two sites will be part of your Journal. In addition you will have to visit one off-campus site twice, practicing the skills introduced in the on-campus visits and taking notes that will be included in your Journal.

Don't worry: all this will be explained in class.

# Class Calendar

## Unit 1 “A Stranger in a Strange Land”

### Week 1

T 8/28 Introduction to the course.

Th 8/30 Lecture: “Ethnography, culture, identity”

Reading:

from Bronislaw Malinowski: *Argonauts of the Pacific*, Introduction

G.N. Appell: “Fact, Fiction, Fads and Follies...”

Akbar S. Ahmed: “Defining Islamic Anthropology” and “Al-Beruni”

### Week 2

T 9/4 In-class work

Th 9/6 1<sup>st</sup> on-campus site visit

Reading:

Selection 1 from Malinowski: *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* — Chapters II, III, and IV sections I and III-V

## Unit 2 “Rapport”

### Week 3

T 9/11 Lecture: “What is rapport? How does it matter?”

Th 9/13 In-class work, and discussion of Malinowski’s *Argonauts*

Reading:

Selection 2 from Malinowski: *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* — Chapters VII, X and XXII

Selection 1 from Malinowski: *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term* — Preface and Introductions

### Week 4

T 9/18 2<sup>nd</sup> on-campus site visit

Th 9/20 Discussion of Malinowski’s *Diary*

Reading:

Selection 2 from Malinowski: *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term*

## Unit 3 “Language and Name-Games”

### Week 5

T 9/25 Lecture: “You can say whatever you want, but you *must* say it this way...”

Th 9/27 Discussion: Language and ethnography

Reading:

Lila Abu-Lughod: *Veiled Sentiments*, Chapters 1 & 2

## **Week 6**

T 10/2 In-class work

Th 10/4 Discussion: Language, rapport and the Other

Reading:

Lila Abu-Lughod: *Veiled Sentiments*, Chapters 3 & 4

## **Unit 4 “Ethnography and Ethics”**

### **Week 7 Midterm**

T 10/9 Lecture: IRB — Please bring your Field Journal to class

Th 10/11 Discussion of *Veiled Sentiments*

Reading:

Lila Abu-Lughod: *Veiled Sentiments*, Chapters 5 - 8

## **Unit 5 “Exchange and the Economy of Power”**

### **Week 8**

T 10/16 — Midterm Break: no class

Th 10/18 Lecture/Discussion: “What does Monsieur l’Ethnographer want...?”

Reading:

Crapanzano: *Tuhami*, Intro & Parts 1 & 2

### **Week 9**

T 10/23 In-class work

Th 10/25 Discussion of *Tuhami*

Reading:

Crapanzano: *Tuhami*, Intro & Parts 3 - 5 & Epilogue

### **Week 10**

T 10/30 Lecture: “Power, exchange and ethics in student projects”

Th 11/1 In-class work

Reading:

Fadiman: *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*, Chapters 1-6

## **Unit 6 “Traditional and Non-Traditional Ethnography”**

### **Week 11**

T 11/6 Lecture: “Ethnography as an intellectual tradition”

Th 11/8 Lecture-discussion: “Deconstructing men’s and women’s lives.”

Reading:

Fadiman: *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*, Chapters 7-10

**Week 12**

T 11/13 In-class work

Th 11/15 Discussion: activist ethnography and student projects

Reading:

Fadiman: *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*, Chapters 11-14

**Week 13 — Thanksgiving Break**

**Week 14**

T 11/27 In-class work: student project prep/discussion time

Th 11/29 Discussion of Fadiman, ethnography's relevance to contemporary society

Reading:

Fadiman: *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*, Chapters 15-19

**Course Wrap-Up**

**Week 15**

T 12/4 Oral reports on projects

Th 12/6 Further reports on projects; reflections and concluding thoughts.

**Field Journals Due**

**Finals Week**

**Final Project Reports Due, 4pm Thursday, 12/13.**