

ANT 321: ACTIVIST ANTHROPOLOGY

Dr. Emily Stovel
 Department of Anthropology
 East Hall (303).
 x8128
stovele@ripon.edu

Fall 2009
 M & W: 2:30 – 4:00
 TW 105

Please make appointments for office hours by email.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course will ask students to think about activism and the use of anthropology to respond to activist questions. We will not delve into the history of the discipline, but rather consider current debates and methods in the field and solutions anthropologists have come up.

This course also asks students to write an analytical paper that looks at a social issue from an anthropological perspective. This paper should give students the opportunity to explore the ways in which they themselves can imagine applying anthropology in an activist way.

Developing this paper will involve a series of presentations. The class will discuss effective oral presentation methods and work together to explore the ethical ramifications of social science research.

Complex anthropological theory will be employed in this class. Please come prepared and with prior experience in the field. If you are new to the discipline and wish to remain in the class, be aware that additional work will be required on your part to ‘catch up’ in terms of basic anthropological ideas. I am available to help you with this as much as you might need.

By the end of class students will be minimally able to:

- Discuss anthropological perspectives on an issue of personal political and social importance.
- Describe specific ways anthropologists have investigated global political problems.
- Detail a clear political perspective on a social issue of personal importance.
- Write a comparative, analytical, scholarly paper.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Besteman Catherine and Hugh Gusterson (Eds.) (2005) *Why America's Top Pundits Are Wrong: Anthropologists Talk Back*. California Series in Public Anthropology, 13
 University of California Press, Berkeley

González, Roberto Jesús (Ed.) (2004) *Anthropologists in the Public Sphere*
 University of Texas Press

Hale, Charles R. (2006) *Activist Research v. Cultural Critique: Indigenous Land Rights and the Contradictions of Politically Engaged Anthropology*. *Cultural Anthropology* 21(1): 96-120.

Hippen, B. E. and J. S. Taylor (2007) *In Defense of Transplantation: A Reply to Nancy Scheper-Hughes*. *American Journal of Transplantation* 7: 1695–1697.

Lassiter, Luke Eric (2005) Collaborative Ethnography and Public Anthropology. *Current Anthropology* 46(1): 83-106.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy (2004) Parts unknown: Undercover ethnography of the organs-trafficking underworld. *Ethnography* 5(1): 29–73

Scheper-Hughes Nancy (2007) The Tyranny of the Gift: Sacrificial Violence in Living Donor Transplants. *American Journal of Transplantation* 7: 507–511

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy (2009) Making anthropology public. *Anthropology Today*, 25(4): 1-3.

Taylor, J. S. (2007) A "Queen of Hearts" trial of organ markets: why Scheper-Hughes's objections to markets in human organs fail. *Journal of Medical Ethics* 33(4): 201-204.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

Quizzes	12 @ 3	36
Bibliography		10
Presentations	#1@8	8
	#2@12	12
1 st Proposal Draft		20
Peer Review		4
2 nd Proposal Draft		10
Total		100

QUIZZES

Students will take a short quiz (1 page) on the readings **every class period that readings are assigned**. Students are allowed to use notes taken from their readings to answer quiz questions. Quizzes will provide the springboard for class discussion. It is the responsibility of each student to hand in a quiz that contains sufficient detail so as to demonstrate their knowledge of the text. We will take more quizzes than reading days, so you may drop the extras or complete them for extra credit.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Students will be asked to complete a short but detailed bibliographic assignment which will ensure they are aware of citation formatting and that they have acquired and explored sufficient and varied resources for their papers. Details of the assignment are found at the end of this syllabus. This assignment is pivotal to writing an effective paper.

PRESENTATIONS, PAPERS, AND PEER REVIEW

Students will give a first presentation on the social issue of their choice. Research material should include web, media, and scholarly sources. Students must provide information and reflect on the different presentation of this information.

Students can choose one of the following topics or a different topic of their choice. Please be as international as you can, but it is not required.

Issues: globalization, economic inequality, democracy, state structure and/or violence, dictatorships, indigenous activism/rights, nationalism, international economic regulation, poverty, war, employment, race and identity, the list goes on...

During the second presentation students will present their paper results. We will discuss the benefits of effective presentation skills throughout the semester.

This is a **Compare and Contrast** paper that compares how different sources explore different issues. It is thus not a paper that requires raw data collection, although students may choose to look at raw data to help determine how the various perspectives compare. The principle goal of the paper is to give students a feeling for different ways of arguing the same thing, while better understanding an anthropological point of view.

The references used in this paper must be from:

1. popular media (i.e., magazines, newspapers, the radio, television, non-fiction)
2. academic articles and books on the country and issue selected

All drafts must be 10 pages typed in double-spaced, 12-point font, with 1 inch margins, and include: an introduction, a conclusion, and a references-cited sheet, and

Students will also be asked to review each other's papers. A peer review handout will be provided that must be filled out and handed in with the final paper draft.

There are no extensions to the due dates allowed, nor any email submissions accepted. Late papers will be docked one half point per day to a total of 3 points.

Further guidelines concerning this paper will be provided in class. **Please hand in two copies of your first draft and your graded first draft with your final draft.** Lectures on citation, bibliographic research and writing analytical papers will be conducted during the first part of the semester.

Note: your thesis is already implicit in this paper, just not its substance. It involves making qualitative statements about how different sources represent a specific issue with special attention paid to an anthropological perspective.

DISCUSSION AND PARTICIPATION

Every class, all members of the seminar will have an opportunity to speak. You may pass if desired, and speak at the end. We will then move onto general discussion. You must, therefore, come prepared for discussion. The classroom environment is designed to help you with your goals, so take advantage of it.

PLAGIARISM

This involves copying the ideas or writing of other people without recognizing their authorship. Appropriate citation is a difficult skill to acquire. It is the responsibility of each student and

scholar to become proficient in citation styles pertinent to their discipline and employ them rigorously. Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this class and may lead to a student's failing the course and/or worse academic sanctioning. Please ask if you have any doubts about how and when to cite other people's work in your own papers.

MONTH	DAY		TOPIC	READING	
August	Wednesday	26	Introduction to Course		
	Monday	31		G: Introduction	
September	Wednesday	2		G: Chapters 7-8, 14-16	
	Monday	7		G: Chapters 17-21	
	Wednesday	9	Bibliographic Research		
	Monday	14		G: Part III	
	Wednesday	16	Bibliographic Research		
	Monday	21		G: Part IV	
	Wednesday	23	Bibliographic Research		
	Monday	28		G: Part V	
	Wednesday	30	Bibliographies Due		
October	Monday	5		G: Part VI	
	Wednesday	7	Presentation Methods		
	Monday	12	1st Presentations		
	Wednesday	14			
	Monday	19	Fall Break		
	Wednesday	21			
	Monday	26		BG: Chapters 2 & 3	
	Wednesday	28			
November	Monday	2		BG: Chapters 4 & 5	
	Wednesday	4			
	Monday	9		BG: Chapters 6, 7, 8	
	Wednesday	11		BG: Chapters 9	
	Monday	16	1st Paper Draft Due		
	Wednesday	18		BG: Chapters 10, 11	
	Monday	23		Bunzl 2008, reply to Bunzl 2008, reply to reply to Bunzl 2008	
	Wednesday	25		Hale 2006, Sweet 2006	
	Monday	30		Lassiter 2005, ScheperHughes 2009	
December	Wednesday	2		Class cancelled	
	Monday	7	2nd Presentations		
	Wednesday	9			
FINAL EXAM			2nd Drafts Due		

PAPER GRADING CRITERIA

These are the general criteria I use when grading student papers. They are not employed uniformly in every case, as the requirements of a research essay and take-home exam vary slightly. They do, however, reflect my concern for the thinking and preparation needed to write a coherent paper. I am aware that students are practicing all of these issues, so I look for some indication that the writer is trying to move toward these goals.

I give points for:

1. Obvious pre-organization. Frequently papers forget what their topic is, loose track of the questions they are answering, never state a thesis or an interpretation (linked to a previously stated problem), and do not consciously provide proof or a logical sequence of arguments to prove their position. The central point of a piece of writing often develops as one writes, so several versions need to be attempted before clarity occurs.
2. Some evidence of critical thought. This implies attempting an observation beyond whether the writer likes or does not like an idea. It hopefully leads to a comment on the nature of an idea or a connection between issues. This approach demands personal investment in the part of the student in the paper. The writer has to have determined an issue that asks for resolution, and then thought about how and why to resolve it. I do not require all of this, but an attempt at something close to this.
3. Attention to detail. A good writer has already attempted to clear up any confusion and spelling errors independent of the spell check on the computer itself.

I take points away for:

1. Bad spelling and a colloquial voice. An essay is a formal piece of writing designed to help us think systematically about complex issues. As such, the voice and vocabulary employed in academic writing should be formal and clear. This is difficult to develop so students should begin practicing as early as possible, beginning with an awareness of what constitutes colloquial grammar.
2. Unimaginative papers. A lack of personal engagement in student papers is shocking. Beginning writers rarely take risks or suggests strange or difficult theories. Many papers use absolute or clichéd turns of phrase. I give higher grades to those papers that show a basic sense of emotional attachment to the paper topic and that use writing as a tool for thinking.

I understand that people have individual blind spots. I myself cannot spell 'because' and need to change it EVERY time (including this time). The idea is to get to know yourself as a writer and monitor your own errors in response to the comments you receive on your papers. If not – you leave the evaluation, the grading, and the self-improvement to the professors. You may have noticed that I do not emphasize (or even mention) actually completing the assignment. This is because:

- a) It is only the first step in getting a good grade. Actually complying with the requirements is never the sole responsibility of any student or professor. Sometimes, however, it is all one can manage due to other obligations.
- b) Assignments are rare as you move up in College. Fewer steps are outlined and students guide their own writing more and more. Professors assume students are aware of the basic structure and requirements of a paper and they expect papers to reflect students' clearly developed and argued ideas. The assignments of today

are designed to help you garner the tools to practice writing better papers in the future **on your own**.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES

Researching is an active process – you cannot be a passive researcher. The new technological world gives the appearance of laying a huge breadth of information at your feet. This breadth, however, is not all useful. More and more partisan material is available to us in less obvious forms. This development is not a disaster, but it means a researcher must be all the more aware of (i.e., look for) divergent points of view and the difference between opinion pieces and peer-reviewed research.

Your paper for this course involves comparing a wide range of sources on a single topic. As such, you must familiarize yourself with research databases and the different forms of academic information such that when you are researching your paper topic you are able to manage the resources available to you with greater authority.

The key to research is recovering the maximum number of **the most useful** resources available so you can begin picking and choosing those references you will use in your paper. This process is the first step toward developing a thesis by grasping the full range of positions within a specific discipline.

- A. For this assignment, hand in a bibliography of **at least** 10 books and 20 academic journal articles. Include more if available. Also include 20 magazine and newspaper articles and 10 relevant websites. **Remember, you do not have to read these sources – you just have to cite them.**
- B. Once you have assembled all of the texts you found that were interesting and important, classify this bibliography into the various source types.
- C. Hand in this classified bibliography with a 2-page description of the sub-topic you would like to eventually write your paper on and why after having consulted the bibliography. Refer to specific groups of references in this portion. Be sure to mention those texts you think will be the most useful to your work and why.

Do not restrict yourself to the resources found in Lane Library.

Use appropriate and consistent citation formatting please. (See - http://www.aaanet.org/pubs/style_guide.htm) This will save you lots of time later on. Maintain an unclassified, alphabetically ordered bibliography on your computer for later use.

The assignment should have the following attributes:

- 2 typed, double-spaced pages, 12-point font, with 1 inch margins.
- An introduction and a conclusion in the written portion.

Please consult with me at any point for help.