

SAMPLE SYLLABUS ONLY!! THIS IS NOT THE
FALL 07 VERSION!!!

516.03
Spring 2003

**Anthropology 516:
Seminar: Ethnography as Narrative**

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Office Hours: MW 12:00 - 2:00; W 6:00 - 7:00 PM and by appointment

I. Objectives

This course examines ethnographic writing as a form of narrative: a literary genre. As a genre, ethnography can be interpreted as more than a factual description of another culture; it can be read as cultural critique; as allegory; as exploration of the interstices in which the encounter with the "Other" takes place; or as an attempt to create a consistent, contained world, much like that in a novel. This course will explore these and related issues through the reading of a number of both historical and contemporary ethnographic texts, exposing students to a broad range of types of ethnographic writing. Students will also read a variety of material critiquing ethnographies.

Students taking this course will learn a number of skills they can apply across the curriculum in their graduate education. These include:

- reading critically
- "skimming" books: yanking their guts out to get at their core contributions
- understanding ethnographies in historical context
- writing a publishable book review essay according to AAA/ AFS format
- mastering different styles of ethnographic writing
- discerning the appropriate uses for different ethnographic writing styles
- oral seminar presentation skills

II. Format

The course is divided into two major units: the first will be taught as a lecture-discussion; the second as a seminar. During the second unit, each week's meeting will be structured around student presentations; the instructor will lecture only occasionally to provide background information. Films and other in-class materials may be shown to provide background on the readings.

Students who are not presenting (that is, *all* students during Part I of the course) will turn in to the instructor a one- to two-page reading reaction to the week's readings. These may be turned in on email before the beginning of class, or in hard copy in class. Reading reactions are worth 10 points each, for a total of 20% of the final grade; the 3 lowest scores will be dropped in calculating the final grade.

Student attendance and participation are crucial to the success of this course. Attendance entails not missing more than 2 class meetings, notifying the instructor in cases of prolonged absence, arriving on time and staying for the duration of the class. Students are expected to come to class prepared, e.g. having read the day's assignment and taken notes on it. Participation means actively contributing to each discussion with questions and comments, and a clear, well-thought-out and well-presented class

presentation. As this is a three-hour class, there will be a 15-minute break about halfway through the class. Students who disappear during the break and do not return will be marked absent for the entire class.

In addition to the reading reactions and class presentation, students will also complete a final paper in which they analyze an ethnography of their choice according to principles learned in class. More information on this assignment will be available separately.

- **This course requires a substantial amount of reading and writing. If you are not able or willing to do the work, you should drop the class.**
- **In consideration of your fellow students, please turn off all cell phones and pagers before class begins.**

III. Requirements

The following books are required reading for the course:

James Clifford, *Writing Culture*
Marjorie Wolf, *A Thrice-Told Tale*
Bronislaw Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*
E.E. Evans Pritchard, *The Nuer*
Colin Turnbull, *The Mountain People*
Margaret Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa*
Marjorie Shostak, *Nisa: the Life and Words of a !Kung Woman*
Lila Abu-Lughod, *Writing Women's Worlds*
Ruth Behar, *Translated Woman: Crossing the Border with Esperanza's Story*
Zora Neal Hurston, *Mules and Men*

A packet of readings, available at ASAP Copies, 9250 Reseda, is also required. All books are available for purchase in the bookstore and on reserve in the Oviatt Library. *Consider buying books used from sources such as Half.com, or reading at least some material on reserve, to keep your costs under control!*

IV. Evaluation

Final Grade Breakdown:	
Attendance and participation.....	10%
Reading reactions.....	20%
Class presentation.....	35%
Final paper.....	35%

V. Week-by-Week Course Syllabus

<u>Class/ week</u>	<u>Topic and Readings</u>
	Part I
12/29	Introduction: Writing Cultures and the Stories Ethnographers Tell (no readings due this week)
2/5	Ethnography as Narrative Read: Clifford, "Partial Truths," and Marcus, "Afterword," in <i>Writing Culture</i> ; Bruner, "Ethnography as Narrative," in reader.
2/12	Ethnographic Styles and Forms, Part 1 Read: Wolf, chapters 1-3 <i>In-class writing exercise</i>
2/19	Ethnographic Styles and Forms, Part 2 Read: Wolf, Chapters 4-5 <i>In-class writing exercise</i>
2/26	Experience, Subjectivity and the Authorial Position Read: Rosaldo, "Grief and a Headhunter's Rage;" Geertz, "Deep Play," in reader
3/5	Reflexivity and Postmodern Ethnography Read: Tyler, "Postmodern Ethnography," in <i>Writing Culture</i> ; Newton, "My Best Informant's Dress" and Lawless, "Reciprocal Ethnography," in reader
	Part II
3/12	Fieldwork: Off the Verandah Read: Malinowski, <i>Argonauts of the Western Pacific</i> Recommended: Pratt, "Fieldwork in Common Places," in <i>Writing Culture</i>
3/19	The "Classic" Ethnography Read: E.E. Evans Pritchard, <i>The Nuer</i> Recommended: Rosaldo, "From the Door of his Tent," in <i>Writing Culture</i>
3/26	Ethnography as Cultural Critique Read: Margaret Mead, <i>Coming of Age in Samoa</i> ; Recommended: Lutkehaus, "Margaret Mead and the 'Rustling of the Wind in the Palm Trees' School of Ethnographic Writing," in reader

- 4/2 Ethnography as Dystopia: the Fieldworker's Ethical Dilemma
Read: Colin Turnbull, *The Mountain People*
- 4/9 Ethnographic Allegory
Read: Shostak, *Nisa*
Recommended: Clifford, "On Ethnographic Allegory," in *Writing Culture*
- 4/16 **No class; Spring Break!**
- 4/23 Writing Against Culture: Feminist Ethnography
Read: Lila Abu-Lughod, *Writing Women's Worlds*
Recommended: Abu-Lughod, "Writing Against Culture," in reader
- 4/30 Writing From/In the Margins
Read: Ruth Behar, *Translated Woman: Crossing the Border with Esperanza's Story*
- 5/7 Ethnographic Fiction
Read: Zora Neal Hurston, *Mules and Men*
Recommended: Narayan, "Participant Observation," in reader
- 5/14 Final discussion and wrap-up; presentation of book reviews
- 5/21 **Last date to turn in final papers!**