
MEDIA AND ETHNOGRAPHY in Fall 2019 (AN3049)

Course Code	AN3049	Professor(s)	Tanya Elder
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	G-304
Class Schedule	MR: 10:35-11:55 in Q-704	Office Hours	Monday 13:30 – 15:00 or by appointment
Credits	4	Email	telder@aup.edu
Semester	Fall 2019	Office Tel. Ext.	824

Course Description

The course is a cross cultural and ethnographic study of media cross cultures. It will engage the students in an anthropological critique of how mass media has been/is employed in representing and constructing both the West and the non-West. It addresses the role of media in the construction of the “other” and the imagining of culture. It explores how social contexts determine what pictures are taken, what one listens to on the radio and how video production is organized and structured to produce meaning. Students will explore the opportunities and limitations of indigenous media through a historical analysis of representation/self representation. The course raises the issue of how media texts shape attitudes, ideas and social structure and how members of society engage with these texts. The course is structured around 6 different themes.

1. The introduction to the course takes up some of the fundamental texts that have formed media ethnography especially the relationship between technology and mediation. It also introduces students to visual anthropology and how media was initially used within anthropology.
2. The second theme “Representing the other through media” discusses and brings up the topic of the Western gaze and the imperial imagery which have left their mark on our understanding and interpretation of the “Other.” We will view an old classic ethnographic movie and discuss how this and other ways of imagining the other have contributed to the colonial project.
3. The third theme takes up how communities have used and adopted media for self-representation, specifically in order to claim their indigenous rights or advocate for their own media channels.
4. The fourth theme discusses the importance of recognizing the audience as an active participant in the creation and production of meaning. It discusses the role of reception studies and how ethnography have been essential to understanding mediation.

5. In the fifth section media is discussed in relation to the project of nation building and the creation of imagined communities. It is also linked to the transnational circulation of goods and people through the use of media.

6. In the sixth section the course raises the importance of ethnographically studying the sites of media production. Reading case studies from different geographical areas, media is studied as a technology and an artefact that carry the meaning.

Course Learning Outcomes

Students will learn to analyze the meaning that people attribute to mass mediated images and aural media (reception studies).

Students will learn to critically apply the theories from the readings to contemporary issues of representation and self representation

Students will gain an understanding of how historical and contemporary ideologies, national politics and economic interests are embedded in the mediascapes/media representations that surround us.

Students will learn to collect ethnographic data on media practices and critically analyze the material while reflecting on the ethical aspects of conducting research.

Students will be able to provide cross cultural examples of how media is produced and consumed in different parts of the world

Students will learn to tell compelling stories, and produce quality “podcasts” on a theme linked to Media Ethnography.

General Education

This course fulfills one or more General Education requirement:

Yes No

This course fulfills a (–M), Mapping the World: Social Experience and Organization, general education requirement.

Course Outline

Theme I. An introduction to the discipline

Week 1

Sept 2th – Introduction to Media Ethnography

September 5th - Defining the field and classic texts

The medium and technological foundations of ethnographic studies of media

Reading: *The Anthropology of Media, A Reader*, Ch 1 McLuhan «The Medium is the Message» and Ch 2, Williams «The Technology and the Society»

Assignment 1 – The medium is the message

Week 2

September 9th – Early use of photography in Anthropology

Reading: *The Anthropology of Media, A Reader*, Ch 3 Mead and Bateson «On the Use of the Camera in Anthropology» and Ch 4 Berger «The Ambiguity of the Photograph»

September 12th – The use of photographs and film

Visual anthropology emerges as a discipline:

Reading: Bb [Visual Anthropology Is Dead, Long Live Visual Anthropology!](#)

Rethinking Visual Anthropology by Marcus Banks, Howard Morphy

Assignment 2 – Ambiguity of photographs

Theme II - Representing the “Other” through media

Week 3:

September 16th – The gaze of Western Humanism

Reading: Kelly Askew and Richard R. Wilk *The Anthropology of Media, A Reader*, Ch. 6 Faris «The Gaze of Western Humanism» and Ch. 7 Lutz and Collins “The Color of Sex”

Assignment 3 – NGO images and the single story

September 19st – Movie: Nanook of the North

Week 4

September 23th - Representations and imaginations of the Other

Reading: *The Anthropology of Media, A Reader*, Ch. 8 Shohat and Stam «The Imperial Imaginary» and Ch. 9 MacDougall «Complicities of Style»

Assignment 4 – Moving images

September 26th – Podcast workshop Assignment 1. Requirements and pitching your idea

Theme III - Representing Selves

Week 5

September 30th – Controlling the medium and exploring the potential

Indigenous appropriation of the medium and political opposition

Reading: *The Anthropology of Media, A Reader*, Ch. 11 Sprague «Yoruba Photography» and *Media Worlds*, Ch. 1 Ginsburg «Screen Memories»

October 3th - The Changing Relationship to the Medium

Reading: *The Anthropology of Media, A Reader*, Ch. 12 Miller and Slater «Relationships»

Week 6

October 7th - Indigenous Media

Reading: *The Anthropology of Media, A Reader*, Ch. 13 Ginsburg «Mediating Culture: Indigenous Media, Ethnographic Film and the Production of Identity»

Assignment 5 – Self representation and indigenous media

October 10th - Indigenous Activism and Minority Claims

Reading: *Media Worlds*, Ch. 2, Pina «Visual Media and the Primitive Perplex» and Ch. 3 Turner «Representation; Politics and Cultural Imagination in Indigenous Video»

Theme IV - Active Audiences

Week 7

October 14th – Case study: Radio texture

Reading: *Anthropology of Media, A Reader*, Ch. 14, Tacchi “Radio Textures: Between Self and Others”

Assignment 6 – Listening habits

October 17th – Podcast workshop – Have one interview done

Week 8

October 21st – Case study: Going to the movies

Reading: *Anthropology of Media, A Reader*, Ch. 15, Hahn “The Togan Tradition of Going to the movies”

October 24th – Case study: Television/Movie

Reading: Read one of the following chapters *The Anthropology of Media, A Reader*, Ch. 16 or 18

Assignment 7 – Bollywood/Nollywood

Week 9

Fall Break – October 30th – November 3rd

October 28th - NO Class due to attendance at the Jean Rouch Ethnographic festival

Theme V - The Politics of Nation States and Transnational Communities

Week 10

November 4th - The Modern Subject

Reading : Read one of Lila Abu-Lughod articles either in: *The Anthropology of Media, A Reader*, Ch. 22 or in *Media Worlds*, Ch. 5

International Jean Rouch Film Festival – Musee de l’homme 16-23 November.

Assignment 8 – Ethnographic film

November 7th – Media and National identity

Reading: *Media Worlds*, Ch 6. Mankekar «Epic Contests, Television and Religious Identity in India» and Ch 7. Hamilton « The National Picture: Thai Media and Cultural Identity»

Assignment 9 – National imaginaries and national identities

Week 11

Armistice Break 11-12 November

November 11th – Transnational circuits

Reading: *Media Worlds*, Ch 9. Mei-hui Yang « Mass Media and Transnational Subjectivity in Shanghai»

Assignment podcast 2 – Literature review

November 14th – Transnational circuits

Reading: *Media Worlds*, Ch 10. Mandel “A Marshal Plan of the Mind” and Ch 11. Schein « Mapping Hmong Media in Diasporic Space»

Week 12

November 18th – Movie: Dinka Diaries

Assignment 10 – Transnational circuits

VI - The Social Sites of Production and Social life of Technology

November 21th - The ad world and film industry - abroad

Reading: *Media Worlds*, Ch 13. Davila “ Culture in the Ad World: Producing the Latin Look” and Ch. 14 “And Yet My Heart is Still Indian”

Week 13

November 25th – The materiality of film theatres and radio

Reading: *Media Worlds*, Ch 16. Larkin “The Materiality of Cinema Theaters in Northern Nigeria”and Ch. 17. Spitulnik “ Mobile Machines and Fluid Audiences”

November 28th – Podcast workshop?

Week 14

December 2th – Podcast workshop

December 5th – Presentation of 3 podcast

Final

Date:

Time: 12:00

2 ½ hours, presentation of podcasts

Textbooks

This course doesn't have any textbook.

Attendance Policy

Attendance and Absence Policy: Students at the American University of Paris are expected to attend all sessions. Certain absences may, however be excused. Excused absences fall into two categories: sickness or unforeseen emergency, and university –sponsored activities such as study trips. When a student misses class, he or she must present an excuse to the teacher. If three consecutive classes are missed, however the student must go to the Student Affairs Office to present third-party verification in order for the absence to be excused. In all cases the responsibility for making up missed work rests solely with the student. However, the instructor may recommend administrative withdrawal of a student whose absences, excused or not, have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an “F” for the course. Attendance at all exams is mandatory. Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and especially during the drop/add and exam periods.

Assignments. Students are expected to complete course assignments on time. Failure to do so may lead to deduction of a grade point for each day the project or essay is late. (For example an A- will result in a B+ if handed in 24 hours late) **Do not send work by e-mail.** Work is to be handed in personally or left in my mail box, preferably with a time/date stamp from the building receptionist. If you are unable to hand in your assignment in time please see me before hand so that I can discuss the issue with you.

Plagiarism. All forms of copying are strictly forbidden and may lead to a failing grade for the course. Students are expected to express their thoughts and ideas in their own words. They are also expected to use appropriate methods of quotation, with full references, when others’ ideas, words or data are used.

English Language Proficiency Statement: As an Anglophone university, The American University of Paris is strongly committed to effective English language mastery at the undergraduate level. Most courses require scholarly research and formal written and oral presentations in English, and AUP students are expected to strive to achieve excellence in these domains as part of their course work. To that end, professors include English proficiency among the criteria in student evaluation, often referring students to the university Writing Lab where they may obtain help on specific academic assignments. Proficiency in English is monitored at various points throughout the student's academic career, most notably during the admissions and advising processes, while the student is completing general education requirements, and during the accomplishment of degree program courses and senior theses.

Grading Policy

Assignments and grading policy:

Participation, class attendance and in class assignments **10%**

Active participation and class attendance is required for this class. Students are expected to have completed the assigned reading and contribute to class discussions. Each reading is designated in the syllabus and students are encouraged to raise questions and issues based on the literature covered. Students are also expected to attend two workshops on storytelling and the production of podcasts.

Podcast project (8 - 12 pages) + oral presentation **40%**

Through participatory observation and interviews you are expected to gather information on a topic which you will develop into a podcast. Each student has to keep an ethnographic notebook within which they are expected to record their observations and transcribe their interviews. There should be at least 6 entries in the notebook and the students are expected to refer to the literature/course when writing up their result. This ethnographic research project will be converted into a podcast that will be uploaded onto the AUP Civic Media lab webpage and should include both the results of their research (final podcast) as well as reflections on the research process. This project can be done individually/or in groups of 2.

10 short reflective Assignments **50%**

Throughout the semester the students will be asked to complete 10 assignments (viewing movies, reflecting on a text, conducting interviews etc). Each assignment is related to the reading covered in class and needs to be completed in time for class thus making attendance and participation important. Each assignment should be a minimum of 150 words and a maximum of 300 words. The assignments will be uploaded onto Blackboard and handed in at the end of the semester in the form of a portfolio.

10 reflective assignments handed in on time and demonstrate an ability to	A
8 reflective assignments handed in on time	B
6 reflective assignments handed on time	C
4 reflective assignments handed in on time	D
Less than 4 assignments handed in on time	F

Grading Scale:

100 = A+	74 – 76 = C
94 – 99 = A	70 – 73 = C-
90 – 93 = A-	67 – 69 = D+

87 – 89 = B+

64 – 68 = D

84 – 86 = B

60 – 63 = D-

80 – 83 = B-

59 and below = F

77 – 79 = C+

“A” papers will generally demonstrate **excellent comprehension** of key concepts and

application of these concepts to an insightful discussion of the data, **clear written organization** (i.e. clear main idea, logical progression of ideas, good use of transitions, a clear introduction, main body and conclusion) and a **clean written style** (spell- and grammar checked, sentences that are syntactically clear to the professor, name and page numbers at the top of each page). “B” papers will be lacking in one of these 3 areas. “C” papers will be lacking in two of these 3 areas. “D” or “F” papers will be lacking in all three.

Other
