VISUAL ANTHROPOLOGY
Department of Anthropology
New York University
V14.0122

Professor Noelle Stout
Office Hrs: Weds 3:30-5 pm
Class Location: TBD
Office: Rm. 604 Rufus Hall, 25 Waverly Pl.
Time: Tues. & Thurs. 3:00 – 4:45 pm
Email: noellestout@nyu.edu
TA: TBD
Class Blog: http://visualanthroNYU.blogspot.com/

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course considers the history, development, and theory of ethnographic and transcultural media production within anthropology. Students will explore the history and development of anthropology’s relationship to visual practices, focusing on, but not limited to, photography and film, both as a mode for representing culture and as a site of cultural practice. We examine the emergence of, as well as the contestations around, the genre known as ethnographic film and its relationship to wider debates about documentary and nonfictional film practice. Through film screenings, lectures, readings, and discussions, students will explore the relationship between representation, power, and knowledge as manifest in cross-cultural representation.

PREQUISITES
Students are required to have taken at least one cultural anthropology course in order to enroll in the class. If you have not taken an anthropology course, my permission is required.

GRADE EVALUATION:

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ASSIGNMENTS:
Grading criteria and guidelines for the exams will be distributed and discussed in class. Grading decisions are final and no post-grading negotiation will be permitted. No incompletedes will be granted for the course except in cases of personal emergencies, subject to the discretion of the professor.

Participation:
The goal of this course is to develop your writing and discussion skills, thus your spirited and informed participation in class discussions is mandatory. Attendance of in-class screenings and discussions is vital, and more than three unexcused absences over the course of the semester will affect your grade. Come to class prepared, with your materials and books in hand and contribute thoughtful comments to class discussions. Please bring printed copies of the readings for the week to the class meeting. In order to encourage your full participation, laptops are not allowed.
Film Response Papers:
A total of 10 response papers, 1-2 pgs. each. The papers will be due during the class session after the screening. You are required to post the paper on the course Blackboard site and bring a hard copy to class. In the paper, you will analyze one aspect of the film in great detail. The papers should detail your reactions, thoughts, and insights about the screening. For instance, you can explore the meaning of a particular scene or examine the general content of the film in relation to course readings and discussions.

Take Home Exams:
Two take home exams will consist of 5-7 page essays based on the material covered in each half of the class. Students will chose two out of three questions and use course texts to compose your answers. Questions will be posted on the website and handed out in class one week prior to the due date. No extensions will be granted.

Research Paper:
Students will complete a research paper on a topic of their choosing related to themes of cross-cultural representation and power. Topics and outlines will be approved during the first half of the semester. Students will present their findings in a short presentation during the last week of class.

Blog Post [http://visualanthroNYU.blogspot.com/]:
Students will attend an event, lecture, or film screening related to course topics. They will chose from a wide variety of pre-approved events, then post a blog entry about their experience. Posts should detail the activity, provide relevant background information, and suggest how the activity relates to class discussions.

REQUIRED TEXTS
Required texts are available at the bookstore. All other readings are available on the course Blackboard site.

David MacDougall Transcultural Cinema, (Princeton, 1999)

CONDUCT:

Plagiarism:
All information borrowed from print sources or the internet must be identified. Plagiarists fail the course and have their offense recorded. Violations of academic honesty can affect a student’s graduation, financial aid, and eligibility for honors. [Note: submitting the same work for more than one class without notifying the instructor is considered plagiarism.]

NOTE:

Information for Students with Disabilities:
Any student who feels that he or she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss his or her specific needs. Also contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at (212) 998-4980 as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.
COURSE OUTLINE

Tues. 1/25  Introduction & Overview
           • Post Photo & Introduction on Class Blog

REPRESENTING THE “OTHER”: SCIENCE OR STORY?

Thurs. 1/27  Screen: Cannibal Tours Dennis O’Rourke, 1987, 70 min.
             Reading:
             Nancy Lutkehaus “‘Excuse Me, Everything Is Not All Right’: On Ethnography, Film, and Representation.” pp. 422-437
             Stuart Hall, “The Spectacle of the ‘Other,’” pp. 239-269

Tues. 2/1  Screen: Nanook of the North, 1922 Robert Flaherty, 64 mins.
           Reading:
           Robert Flaherty, "Filming Real People" pp. 97-99
           William Rothman "Nanook of the North" pp. 1-11
           Fatimah Tobing Rony, "Taxidermy and Romantic Ethnography" pp. 99-126

Thurs. 2/3  Screen: Nanook Revisited, 1990, 54 mins.
           Reading:
           Bill Nichols, "How Can We Write Effectively About Documentary?" pp. 168-177

Tues. 2/8  Screen: Bathing Babies in Three Cultures, 1952, Mead & Bateson, 9 min.
           Childhood Rivalry in Bali and New Guinea, 1952, Mead & Bateson, 17 min.
           Trance and Dance in Bali, 1952, Mead & Bateson, 22 min.
           Reading:
           Ira Jacknis, “Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson in Bali: Their Use of Photography and Film.” Cultural Anthropology 3(2): 160-177
           Margaret Mead, “Visual Anthropology in a Discipline of Words” in Principles of Visual Anthropology, pp. 3-9

**RETHINKING CROSS-CULTURAL REPRESENTATION**

**Thurs. 2/10**
- **Screen:** *Rivers of Sand*, 1975, Robert Gardner, 84 mins.
- **Reading:**
  - Robert Gardner, "Rivers of Sand" p. 43
  - Octavio Paz, "The feather and the grindstone" pp. 44-52
  - Ivo Strecker, "Filming among the Hamar" pp. 369-378

**Tues. 2/15**
- **Screen:** *The Women Who Smile*, 1990, Joanna Head and Jean Lydall, 50 mins.
- **Reading:**
  - Jean Lydall, "Filming The Women Who Smile" pp. 141-157
  - Chandra Mohanty “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses” pp. 333-354

**Thurs. 2/17**
- **Screen:** *The Hunters*, John Marshall, 1957, 80 min.
- **Reading:**
  - Keyan Tomaselli, “Myths, Racism, and Opportunism: Film and TV Representations of the San.” In *Film as Ethnography*, pp. 205-21

**Tues. 2/22**
- **Screen:** *A Kalahari Family Part 5: Death by Myth*, John Marshall, 2002, 88 min.
- **Reading:**
  - John Homiak, “A Kalahari Family: Some Thoughts on Reflexivity, Voice and Social Location”

**CINEMA VERITE**

**Thurs. 2/24**  
Screen: *Les Maîtres Fous*  
Jean Rouch, 1953-4, 33 mins.

Reading:  


**Tues. 3/1**  
Screen: *Chronicle of a Summer*  
Jean Rouch. 1960, 85 min.

Reading:  
Edgar Morin, “Chronicle of a Film” in *Studies in Visual Communication* pp. 5-29


William Rothman, “Chronicle of a Summer” in *Documentary Film Classics* Chp. 4 pp. 1-20

**Thurs. 3/3**  
Screen: *Divine Horsemen*  
Maya Deren, 1947-1951 (1977), 60 mins.

Reading:  
Ruby Rich, "Voodoo Vérité,” in *Chick Flicks* pp. 52-56


Moira Sullivan "Maya Deren's Ethnographic Representation of Ritual and Myth in Haiti," in *Maya Deren and the American Avant-Garde* pp. 207-233

**DIRECT/ OBSERVATIONAL CINEMA**

**Tues. 3/8**  
Screen: *To Live with Herds* (1968/1972)  
David & Judith MacDougall, 70 mins.
Reading:
Lucien Taylor, “Introduction” (TC) pp. 3-21

David MacDougall, "Beyond Observational Cinema" (TC) pp. 125-140

Thurs. 3/10  MIDTERM EXAM DUE


Reading:
David MacDougall, "Unprivileged Camera Style" (TC) pp. 199-209

David MacDougall, “When Less is Less” (TC) 209-224

Lucien Taylor and Ilisa Barbash, “Radically Empirical Documentary: An Interview with David and Judith MacDougall” Film Quarterly pp. 2-14

3/15 & 3/17  SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS


Reading:
Timothy Ash, "The ethics of ethnographic film-making" in Film as Ethnography pp. 196-204


Tomas Atkins, "Frederick Wiseman's America." In The Documentary Tradition. Edited by Lewis Jacobs. pp. 536-550

REFLEXIVE/EXPERIMENTAL

Surname Viet Given Name Nam 1989, 108 mins. (Selections)

Reading:
Trinh T. Minh-ha, "Reassemblage"

Henrietta Moore, "Trinh Observed: Anthropology & Others"

Nancy N. Chen & Trinh T. Minh-ha, "Speaking Nearby"
Tues. 3/29 Screen: Bontoc Eulogy, Marlon Fuentes, 1995 56 min.

Reading:
Peter Feng, “The Camera as Microscope: Cinema and Ethnographic Discourse” in Identities in Motion Asian American Film and Video

              Night Cries, Tracey Moffatt, 1990, 19 mins

Reading:
Isaac Julien with Mark Nash, "Only Angels Have Wings"

Catherine Russell, "Night Cries: Another Colonial Horror Story"

Peter Loizos, "Nice Colored Girls"

Tues. 4/5 Screen: Tongues Untied, Marlon Riggs, 1990, 55 min.
              Black Is, Black Ain’t, Marlon Riggs (Selections)

Reading:
Ruby Rich, “New Queer Cinema”

Michelle Wallace “A Fierce Flame: Marlon Riggs” pp. 379-382

Kobena Mercer “Dark and Lovely Too: Black Gay Men in Independent Film” pp. 325-338

INDIGENOUS CINEMA

Thurs. 4/7 Screen: Spirit of the Navajo, 1966, 20 min.

Reading:
Sol Worth and John Adair, “Through Navajo Eyes” Introduction, Chp. 1-3, 10

Tues. 4/12 Screen: Smoke Signals, Chris Eyre, 1999, 89 min.

Reading:
Sherman Alexie, “Tonto and the Lone Ranger Fist Fight in Heaven” TBD

              Samson and Delilah, Warwick Thorton, 2009, 101 min.

Readings:
Faye Ginsburg, “The Parallax Effect: The Impact of Aboriginal Media on Ethnographic Film”

Faye Ginsburg, “Station Identification: The Aboriginal Programs Unit of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation” *Visual Anthropology Review*

**Tues. 4/19**


Faye Ginsburg, “Aboriginal Media and the Australian Imaginary” *Public Culture*

**Thurs. 4/21**

Screen: *Atanarjuat (Fast Runner)* Zarch Kunuk, 2001, 161 min.

Readings:
Katherine Fleming & Stephen Hendrick, “Zacharias Kunuk: Video Maker and Inuit Historian”

Sally Berger, “Move Over Nanook”

Katherine Fleming, “Igloolik Video: An Organic Response from a Culturally Sound Community”

**Tues. 4/26**

Screen: *Atanarjuat (Fast Runner)* Zarch Kunuk, 2001, 161 min.

**Thurs. 4/28**

**FINAL EXAM DUE**

Discuss *Atanarjuat*

5/3 & 5/5

Presentations of Final Papers