

Department of Anthropology and Archaeology
Anthropology 501
Advanced Topics in Social and Cultural Anthropology
aka
Visual Anthropology

Instructor:
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Class Info: Wednesdays, 15:00 – 17:45, ES720

Office hours: Dr. Perić will be holding virtual office hours every Wednesday of the semester, from 1-2pm. You can also make an appointment to meet outside of those hours by sending an email to: speric@ucalgary.ca

Prerequisite: ANTH 391 or 411

Land Acknowledgement:

Oki, Aba-wath-tech, Tansi, Dadanast'ada, Hello! My name is Sabrina Perić, and I am a settler, living as an uninvited guest in beautiful Treaty 7, where the prairies and the mountains meet. **I want to acknowledge that the University of Calgary** is located on the traditional territory of the people of Treaty 7. This includes the Niitsitapi (including the Siksika, Piikani and Kainai First Nations), the Tsuut'ina First Nation, and the Iyethka Nakoda (which includes the Wesley, Bearspaw and Chiniki First Nations). Calgary is situated on the confluence of the Bow and Elbow rivers, the Niitsitapi name for this place is Mohkinstsis, the Iyethka call it Wicispa Oyade, and the Tsuut'ina call this area Gutsistsi. Calgary is also home to the Metis Nation of Alberta, Region 3. It is important for me to trace out these ties – because without them we would not be here. Universities and scholars have benefited greatly from the dispossession of Indigenous people. Territorial acknowledgement is therefore very important for me – it is not only about my accountability as a settler to ongoing processes of colonialism, but as a member of a large immigrant family. I do not want to simply take for granted where I live and where I work. Nor do I want colonial processes to continue with immigrants as key actors – as they have in the past. So I begin by thanking the people on whose territories I continue to live and work as an uninvited guest in the sincere hope that we can go forward together in new and good ways: Nitsiniyi'taki, Isniyes, Kinanâskomitin, Siyisgaas, and Thank you!

Course Description and Objectives:

Anthropology, since the early 20th century, has been a field deeply reliant on sensory engagement. Not only have anthropologists approached the topic of culture and lifeways through sight, touch, taste, sound and smell, but they have also sought to innovate ethnography by finding new ways of representing sensory engagements beyond textual forms and embracing novel ways of storytelling. As a practice, visual anthropology has moved from an idiom of museum (an 'objective' documentation style aimed at classification

and rooted in 'scientific' studies of humankind) to an expressive form that challenges the iconicity of ethnography, Western visual conventions, cultural authorship and the role of ethnographer as observer. Visual anthropology has come to encompass a series of methods and sensory engagements that range from photography to documentary genres, graphic depictions, experimental media, cultural revitalization efforts, and social justice interventions. In this course, we will seek to understand the contribution of visual and broader sensory methods to anthropological practice, specifically how they can push us to ask new questions and engage with communities in new ways. Through a focus on ethnographic photography, film and sound, we will examine approaches to representation, authorship, intersubjectivity, creation, the politics of voice, creativity and collaboration. This course is not meant as a technical introduction to audiovisual equipment, but rather an advanced seminar allowing students an opportunity to respond to and critique as well as produce visual and sensory ethnography.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students should:

- Be familiar with the use of visual and sensory methods in 20th and 21st anthropology;
- Be able to critique and reflexively analyze visual and sensory forms, both in terms of their production and representation;
- Understand the politics of ethnographic representation and circulation;
- Have new and creating ways of thinking about, collecting and representing ethnographic data;
- Be familiar with the process of designing, executing and completing sensory ethnography projects.

Course Format:

This is an advanced seminar that will be **discussion-based**. Class time will be spent on some lecture, but mostly class discussion, sharing of work and assignments, peer review, and critique. You must therefore come to class prepared. Coming to class prepared means:

- 1) Reading all of the readings for the class;
- 2) Completing any assignments that are due (because we will likely be presenting and critiquing them);
- 3) Coming to class with an open mind, and a willingness to listen to your peers, and to share your thoughts on the subject matter. This seminar is intended to allow you to try visual and sensory methods in a supportive setting.

Learning Technologies and Requirements:

In order to successfully engage in their learning experiences at the University of Calgary, students are required to have reliable access to the following technology.

- A computer with a supported operating system
- A current and updated web browser
- A word processor, preferably Microsoft Word
- A camera (can be a cell phone, digital camera, webcam or other image capturing device)
- A sound recorder (can be a cell phone, voice recorder, laptop or other sound capturing device)

- A video camera (can be a cell phone, laptop or other video capturing device)

If any of this technology is unavailable to you, or you have concerns, please email Dr. Perić as soon as possible.

Course Assessment and Assignments:

Visual anthropology is a sub-field that is new for most students in this class. In order to complete the assignments, you will require considerable time, reflection, lots of editing and re-doing, and also the recognition that you will make mistakes in the process. This course must be approached with commitment, meaningful engagement and time – please recognize that, though there are few assignments, they will take time. These are not assignments that can be done the night before. We will discuss project planning during the first few classes. Students will have access to the resources available through the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology’s Digital Storytelling Lab, and Dr. Perić’s Energy Stories Lab.

Over the course of the semester, students will have to submit the following assignments:

- 1) Sensory Journal: Throughout the class, students are expected to keep a physical or digital notebook where they take notes on visual anthropology pieces they observe or that are screened in class, and in which they will do all of their project planning. This notebook will act as a resource for students for other assignments, and will be your guide for contributions to class discussion.
- 2) Visual Responses: Students are responsible for creating 2 video responses (no more than 4 minutes long) over the course of the semester to the films/videos/sound ethnographies on the course syllabus. You can use our class Flipgrid page to do this.
- 3) Soundscape: Students will create a soundscape (maximum 60 seconds) using collected sounds, and sound editing software. They will upload the soundscape to Soundcloud.
- 4) Photo Essay: Using 4-5 photos they themselves have taken, students will create a photo essay that is intended to tell a story, evoke emotions or express an idea.
- 5) Final Project: Students will design, plan and execute a sensory ethnography project of their own choosing. They will then present a draft of their project in class in order to obtain feedback from classmates and the instructor at the end of the semester. The final assignment will incorporate this feedback. While the draft presentation is required, it is not a graded element of the project.

All assignments are described in detail on our D2L webpage. Assignments comprise the following total of the class grade:

Sensory Journal	15%
2 Visual Responses	10%
Soundscape	20%
Photo Essay	20%
Final Project	35%

The final mark out of 100, will then be converted to a letter grade as follows:

A+	94.9–100	A	89.9–94.8%	A-	84.9–89.8 %
B+	79.9–84.8 %	B	74.9–79.8 %	B-	70.9–74.8 %
C+	66.9–70.8 %	C	62.9–66.8 %	C-	58.9–62.8 %

D+	54.9 %– 58.8%	D	49.9–54.8 %	F	49.8 and below
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It is not necessary to pass individual course components in order to pass the class.

Course Policies:

General Expectations:

- Please make sure to spell-check, proofread and edit your assignments before you hand them in.
- Attend classes and be prepared for both the discussions and class activities.
- Be supportive of other students in the class, and be generous with your feedback. Generosity is the name of the game for improving your ethnographic practice.
- Keep on top of all of the assignments, and the work that needs to go into them.

Reappraisal of Graded Term Work:

- <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i-2.html>

Reappraisal of Final Grade:

- <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i-3.html>

Missed or Late Assessments:

Late assignments will be penalized at 10% of the total assignment points for each day that it is late. If you will be unable to hand in an assignment on time, please notify the instructor. Students may be asked to provide supporting documentation for an exemption/special request. This may include, but is not limited to, a prolonged absence from a course where participation is required, a missed course assessment, a deferred examination, or an appeal. Falsification of any supporting documentation will be taken very seriously and may result in disciplinary action through the Academic Discipline regulations or the Student Non-Academic Misconduct policy.

Required Readings:

January 11 – Why visual anthropology? Sensory approaches as more-than-ethnography

We will read excerpts from the following in class today, don't worry about preparing anything for this class.

Readings:

- 1) Loveless, Natalie, 2019. "Polydisciplinamory" in *How to Make Art at the End of the World*. Durham: Duke University Press. (RL)

January 18 - Sound Worlds

Sound ethnographies and soundscapes:

- 1) Feld, Steven. *Hiroshima, the last sound*. 2005. <http://www.stevenfeld.net/hiroshima>
- 2) “Calving Event” and “Iceberg Melting” at <https://exploreice.org/sound-of-ice>
- 3) *The Cave Mouth and the Giant Voice* – An interview with Yogi-San <https://vimeo.com/124139457>

Readings:

- 1) Feld, Steven, and Donald Brenneis. "Doing anthropology in sound." *American Ethnologist* 31, no. 4 (2004): 461-474.
- 2) Cox, Rupert, and Angus Carlyle. "The Cave Mouth: Listening to sound and voice in Okinawan war memory." In *Modern Conflict and the Senses*, pp. 123-141. Routledge, 2017.

January 25 Rethinking Observation: Immersion

Screening:

- 1) Castaing-Taylor, Lucien and Paravel, Verena. *Leviathan*, 2012. Available through UCalgary Library via Kanopy

Reading:

- 1) Westerkamp, Hildegard *Soundwalking*, 1974.
https://ia801604.us.archive.org/10/items/sesion3_201702/Westerkamp%2C%20Hildegard%20-%20Soundwalking.pdf
- 2) McDougall, David. “Beyond Observational Cinema” in *Principles of visual anthropology*. Hockings, Paul, ed. Berlin :de Gruyter, 2009.
- 3) Helmreich, Stefan. "An anthropologist underwater: Immersive soundscapes, submarine cyborgs, and transductive ethnography." *American Ethnologist* 34, no. 4 (2007): 621-641.

February 2: Photography I: Ethnographic Authority: From Objective Fact to Storytelling

Due:

- 1) Soundscape Assignment

Photography:

- 1) Evans-Pritchard, E. E. *The Nuer*. Oxford, 1951. Look through the photos in the ethnography – don’t read the ethnography.
- 2) Mellia, Mike and Paul, Nykhor. *South Sudan: Our Side of the Story*.
- 3) Chol, Bullen. https://www.instagram.com/bullen_chol/?hl=en

Reading:

- 1) MacDougall, David and Castaing-Taylor, Lucien. “Visual Anthropology and Ways of Knowing”. In *Transcultural cinema*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021.
- 2) Morton, Christopher. *The Anthropological Lens: Rethinking EE Evans-Pritchard*. Oxford University Press, USA, 2020. Please read Chapter 5.

February 9: Photography II: From the Vernacular to the Performative

Photography:

- 1) Habib, Samra *Just Allah and Me: A Queer Muslim Project* <https://queermuslimproject.tumblr.com/>
- 2) Spitzer, Kali. *The North*. <https://kalispitzer.photoshelter.com/portfolio/G0000.8LLhvGTMfw>
- 3) Sidibe, Malick. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/gallery/2017/oct/20/mali-twist-the-photography-of-malick-sidibe-in-pictures>
- 4) Sherman, Cindy <https://www.moma.org/artists/5392>

<https://nofilmschool.com/2015/09/9-composition-techniques-make-images-eye-catching-biological-level>

Reading:

- 1) Pink, Sarah. *Doing visual ethnography*. London: Sage, 2007. Please read Chapter 3.
- 2) Wolbert, Barbara. "The anthropologist as photographer: the visual construction of ethnographic authority." *Visual Anthropology* 13, no. 4 (2000): 321-343.
- 3) Barthes, Roland. *Camera lucida: Reflections on photography*. New York: Macmillan, 1981. Excerpts

February 16 : Collaborative Storytelling

Photography:

- 1) Basic Income Calgary. *Show Me. Tell Me*, 2018. <https://basicincomecalgary.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/showmetellme.pdf>
- 2) *Shifting Focus:: Snapshots of Resilience*, 2020. <https://www.shifting-focus.com/>
- 3) Gearheard, S., L. Kielsen Holm, Henry Huntington, J. M. Leavit, Andrew R. Mahoney, Margaret Opie, Toku Oshima, and Joelle Sanguya. "The meaning of ice." *People and Sea Ice in Three Arctic Communities* (2013). **We will look at this in class.**

Reading:

- 1) Pink, Sarah. *Doing visual ethnography*. London: Sage, 2007. Please read Chapter 2.
- 2) Wang, C., & Burris, M.A. (1997). Photovoice: Concept, methodology, and use for participatory needs assessment. *Health Education & Behavior*, 24, 369-387.
- 3) Henry, Robert, and Chelsea Gabel. "'It's Not Just a Picture When Lives are at Stake: Ethical Considerations and Photovoice Methods with Indigenous Peoples Engaged in Street Lifestyles?'" *Journal of Educational Thought/Revue de la Pensée Educative* 52, no. 3 (2019): 229-260.

March 2: Fake News Fake Anthropology: Visual Ethnography and the Care of Reality

Due:

- 1) Photo Essay

Screening:

- 1) Allan, Diana. Nakba Archive excerpt: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dhy1N-aSGJY>
- 2) Obomsawin, Alanis. Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance, 1993. https://www.nfb.ca/film/kanehsatake_270_years_of_resistance/

Readings:

- 1) Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." *Illuminations*. Hannah Arendt Trans. New York: Random House, 1986.
- 2) Balson, Erika "The reality-based community." E-flux Journal #83 <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/83/142332/the-reality-based-community/>
- 3) Allan, Diana, "What bodies remember: sensory experience as historical counterpoint in the Nakba Archive." In Abdo, Doctor Nahla, and Nur Masalha, eds. *An oral history of the Palestinian Nakba*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018.
- 4) Minh-Ha, Trinh T. "Documentary is/not a name." *October* 52 (1990): 77-98.

March 9: Cinema Vérité and Ciné-fiction :

Screening:

- 1) Rouch, Jean. *Jaguar*, 1967. <https://vimeo.com/370311754>

Readings:

- 1) Barbash and Taylor "Shots and Moves" in *Cross Cultural Filmmaking*
- 2) Grimshaw, Anna. *The Ethnographer's Eye: Ways of Seeing in Modern Anthropology*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Please read Chapter 6.

March 16: Critiques of Ethnographic Film

Screening:

- 1) Minh-ha, Trinh. *Reassemblage*. 1982. <https://vimeo.com/463151251>

Readings:

- 1) Chen, Nancy. "Speaking Nearby": *A Conversation with Trinh T. Minh-Ha*. <https://docfilmhist.files.wordpress.com/2008/09/chen.pdf>
- 2) Collins, S., M. Durrington and H. Gill. 2017 "Multimodality: An Invitation," *American Anthropologist*, 119 (1): 142-146
- 3) Takargawa, et al. 2019. "Bad Habitus: Anthropology in the Age of the Multimodal," *American Anthropologist* 121 (2): 517-524

March 23: Re-making

Screening:

- 1) Everson, Kevin Jerome. *Tonsler Park*, 2017.
- 2) Arnaquq-Baril, Alatheia. *The Angry Inuk*, 2016.
- 3) Flaherty, Robert. *Nanook of the North*, 1922. Excerpts.

Readings:

- 1) TBA – *Visual Anthropology Review* Sharing Exercise

March 30: Draft Final Project Presentations and Screenings

April 6: Draft Final Project Presentations and Screenings

Final Project is due Monday, April 25th, 2022.

University Policies and Supplemental Information

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit <https://live-ucalgary.ucalgary.ca/student-services/access>. Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor or the Department Head. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/accommodation-students-disabilities-procedure>.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

“Academic Misconduct” includes such things as cheating, falsification, plagiarism, unauthorized assistance, and failure to comply with exam regulations or an Instructor’s expectations regarding conduct required of Students completing academic assessments. Students who participate in, or encourage the commission of, Academic Misconduct will be subject to disciplinary action which could include Probation, Suspension, or Expulsion from the University. For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the University of Calgary Calendar at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-3.html>

Further support on academic integrity is available at: <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/learning/academic-integrity>

INSTRUCTOR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

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FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT

Student information will be collected in accordance with typical (or usual) classroom practice. Students' assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty. Private information related to the individual student is treated with the utmost regard by the faculty at the University of Calgary.

COPYRIGHT LEGISLATION

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (<https://ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-material-protected-copyright-policy>) and requirements of the copyright act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks, etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

SUPPORT AND RESOURCES:

Please visit the Registrar's website at: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for additional important information on the following:

- Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points
- Wellness and Mental Health Resources
- Student Success Centre
- Student Ombuds Office
- Student Union (SU) Information
- Safewalk