

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY & ARCHAEOLOGY
METHODS IN ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH – ANTH 611 – 01

Class schedule: Tuesdays 3:30 - 6:15PM

Location: ES 822

Instructor: Dr. Saulesh Yessenova

Email: sbyessen@ucalgary.ca

The main objective of this seminar is to motivate students to enhance their knowledge of anthropological methodology and develop skills for conducting original ethnographic research. A central premise of this course is that ethnographic research is a social process embedded in particular contexts of power and meaning. As part of this course, we will examine scholastic arguments on ethics, research praxis, knowledge production, positionality, representation, and advocacy. We will work from field accounts, methodology discussions, and academic debates, covering these important themes, which should contribute to students' own research products, such as individual project proposals, ethics applications, as well as dissertations or theses. Readings, written assignments, oral presentations, and class discussions should prepare students for fieldwork sessions conducted outside the classroom.

COURSE READINGS:

Kovach, Margaret. *Indigenous methodologies: Characteristics, conversations, and contexts*. University of Toronto press, 2021.

All other required and additional required readings will be indicated on the outline below.

REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY: includes a computer with a word processor and access to the Internet.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Based on motivated learning throughout the course, students will feel more confident about pursuing their research projects, demonstrate enhanced knowledge of the nature of anthropological research, improve research presentation and writing skills.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

- Attendance and participation in class discussions | **10%**
- Oral presentation of project proposal | **20%**
- Progress in methodology sections of your project proposals | **20%**
- Written contribution to the peer review of proposal drafts | **10%**
- Final paper | **40%**

FINAL PAPER

Since Bronislaw Malinowski's ethnographic account *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, fieldwork has been a hallmark of anthropological research methods. However, what anthropologists really do in the field beyond interviewing, network analysis, and participant observation and after data collection has remained a bit of a mystery. In the 1980s, issues of representation, voice, privilege, authority, and power dynamics latent within the discipline led to a paradigm shift in anthropology, which exposed the contradictory role of researcher in production of knowledge.

This intellectual transformation has challenged the discipline's purpose and methods. Nonetheless, ethnography has remained the cornerstone of anthropological inquiry by being both the method and the final product of our craft. But how do we actually accomplish the task of doing and writing ethnography? James Clifford argued that "ethnography is from beginning to end enmeshed in writing" (1983: 120). "This writing includes," he continues, "minimally, a translation of experience into textual form" (ibid.).

This writing assignment invites you to undertake such translation by relating your personal observations and experiences to contemporary debates in anthropology. This includes, but is not limited to, themes addressed in course readings: representation, self-reflection, subjectivity, partiality of knowledge, the place of difference and power in cultural analysis, and ethics.

You should begin by taking fieldnotes to document your observations and thoughts on a topic of your choice. This could be related to your research project, the ongoing pandemic, or any other subject matter that you are interested in at both personal and academic levels. Keeping a fieldwork notebook as a source of contextualized data and personal reflection is highly encouraged. Michael Taussig provides examples of how small notes may lead to big memories and/or novel ideas that support multi-scalar sociopolitical, historic, and ongoing local-global dynamics. Working from potentially discrepant field accounts or “collections” (Taussig 2011: 5), you will make sense of your raw data by situating it within broader frames of analysis. You should draw upon course’s readings (particularly Taussig’s *I swear I Saw It*) to guide your assignment as well as the stylistic framework of your choice.

There is no one ‘correct’ way of organizing your paper. Your paper should be approximately 20 pages-long, 12-point font Times New Roman, 1.5 spaced, and incorporate meaningful and substantial references to course readings. Overall, your personal voice should come through your paper as you relate your personal narrative to theoretical and analytical trends and insights. The objective of this assignment is to enhance your skills to conduct ethnographic fieldwork and produce written accounts by combining relevant personal and professional experiences and scholarly insights.

All course work will be graded on a 100-point system. At the end of the course the total number of marks will be converted to the official university letter grade system according to the following equivalences:

A+	95 – 100%	B	75 – 79.9%	C-	59 – 62.9%
A	90 – 94.9%	B-	71 – 74.9%	D+	55 – 58.9%
A-	85 – 89.9%	C+	67 – 70.9%	D	50 – 54.9%
B+	80– 84.9%	C	63 – 66.9%	F	< 50%

For grade reappraisal policy, please follow these links: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i-2.html> and <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i-3.html>

SKIPPED ASSESEMENTS:

Students will not be automatically failed if they skip one or more assessments. But a skipped assessment will certainly be reflected on the final grade. Students may be granted extensions for submission of take-home assignments based on their special requests. However, they may be asked to provide supporting documentation. This documentation depends on the reason noted in their personal statement/explanation provided to explain their situation. This could be medical certificate/documentation, references, police reports, invitation letter, or a statutory declaration, etc. The decision to provide supporting documentation that best suits the situation is at the discretion of the student. Students cannot be required to provide specific supporting documentation, such as a medical note.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

My name is Saulesh Yessenova, and I am a settler, living as an uninvited guest on the traditional territory of the people of Treaty 7. This land, belonging to 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), also hosts the University of Calgary. 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 to acknowledge that Canadian universities and scholars have benefited greatly from the dispossession of Indigenous people. Land acknowledgement is about my accountability as an individual, an immigrant, and a professional to ongoing processes of colonialism.

STATEMENT OF INCLUSION:

The topics in this class can sometimes be difficult topics – we talk about race, gender, class, our place in society, and the painful histories and ideas that anthropology and other disciplines in the Euro-American academia have held. These topics are discussed based on a common belief that we as a society or the world can never move forward in a good way without critical review and understanding of the past. This course, just like many other courses in our faculty, is part of liberal arts that has historically encouraged critical and creative thinking as well as tolerance and mutual respect among students and professors.

For weekly schedule of lecture topics, films & required readings see page 5 of this document.

INSTRUCTOR'S OFFICE HOURS: Instructor will not hold regular office hours via zoom. However, zoom sessions maybe individually requested.

EMAILING TO INSTRUCTOR: Students are welcome to forward their questions and comments to the instructor or TA's email indicated at the top of this document.

COMMUNICATION ETIQUETTE VIA EMAIL:

- ✚ Please use your university account.
- ✚ Use a clear subject line that includes the course name and the topic of the email, such as: "ANTH 393. Question about my schedule."
- ✚ Please be respectful (i.e., not too casual) when addressing either myself or your TA in an email.
- ✚ Keep in mind that answers to the questions concerning the matters clearly stated on the course outline will not be provided.
- ✚ Keep question(s) short and to the point. Show that you have made an effort to find the answer first in the text and lecture material (or even an outside source). State what you know in relation to what you are having a difficult time understanding.
- ✚ Include your full name in the signature of your email.
- ✚ Allow 48 hours for a response, excluding weekends and holidays.
- ✚ Please note that we may choose not to respond to emails that do not follow the format outlined above.

WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Writing skills are not exclusive to English courses and, in fact, should cross all disciplines. The University supports the belief that throughout their University careers, students should be taught how to write well so that when they graduate their writing abilities will be far above the minimal standards required at entrance. Consistent with this belief, students are expected to do a substantial amount of writing in their University courses and, where appropriate, instructors can and may use writing and the grading thereof as a factor in the evaluation of student work. The services provided by the Writing Centre in the Effective Writing Office can be utilized by all undergraduate and graduate students who feel they require further assistance.

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

Course materials created by professor(s) (including course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the professor(s). These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the professor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

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

Introduction

In lieu of the first class, students are required to email to the instructor short descriptions of their graduate projects (or the latest drafts of their proposals) and describe specific skills and knowledge they would like to gain in this course. This information was to help the instructor to organize the course outline and tailor it (as much as possible) to individual needs.

Readings:

Watts, Michael "The Holy Grail: in pursuit of the dissertation proposal," *University of California at Berkeley*, 2001, 1-12. Posted on D2L.

Taussig, Michael. *Fieldwork notebooks*. Hatje Cantz, Germany, 2011.

Next class, we will discuss these two readings. Make sure you are well familiar with both of them. Watt's (2001) paper, which is deceptively short, is a key reading. It addresses to PhD students; however, it is also useful for all students. Please read it before class along with the drafts of your proposal. See into how you can make use of his insights in your work as you are going through it. During the class, we will comb through the text, and will use examples relating to your individual research. Google the terminology that is new to you, prepare comments and questions. The other reading is *Fieldwork Notebooks* by Michael Taussig. This text should help us start discussing the fundamentals of ethnographic fieldwork. Both readings are posted on D2L.

Research design and fieldnotes

We start this class with the review of the course outline. The rest of this class is a dedicated discussion of research design. Watt's (2001) paper, which is deceptively short, is a key reading. It addresses to PhD students; however, it is also useful for all students. Please read it before class along with the drafts of your proposal. See into how you can make use of his insights in your work as you are going through it. During the class, we will comb through the text, and will use examples relating to your individual research. Google the terminology that is new to you, prepare comments and questions.

The other reading is *Fieldwork Notebooks* by Michael Taussig. This text should help us start discussing the fundamentals of ethnographic fieldwork. Both readings are posted on D2L.

Readings

Watts, Michael "The Holy Grail: in pursuit of the dissertation proposal," *University of California at Berkeley*, 2001, 1-12. Posted on D2L.

Taussig, Michael. *Fieldwork notebooks*. Hatje Cantz, Germany, 2011.

Ethnography as a method of inquiry

This class is intended to provoke contemplation about the craft of ethnography as a final product of our labour as well as a method of inquiry. The texts assigned for this class represent milestones in anthropology in terms of how they shaped fieldwork and ethnographic practice. The focus in this class is on how contemporary authors have addressed political and representational practices in anthropology from the rise of interpretive or hermeneutic analysis in which culture is treated as a text (Geertz) to subsequent efforts to abandon grand theories and embrace the idea of subjectivity of ethnographic research (Clifford). Of special relevance in this discussion is the way the desire to reform the discipline impacted ethnographic fieldwork.

Readings:

Malinowski, Bronislaw. 'Introduction: The Subject, Method and Scope of This Enquiry' In: *Argonauts of the Western Pacific: An account of native enterprise and adventure in the archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea* (1922, reprint date 2002). Routledge, open access:

<http://www.bohol.ph/books/Argonauts/Argonauts.html>

* This is a delightful reading (all you need to read is an introduction) that belongs to Malinowski who is credited with the introduction of ethnography as a method (or 'the' method) in anthropology.

Geertz, Clifford. Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture In: *The interpretation of cultures*. Vol. 5019. Basic books, 1973. This chapter is available online through the library and posted on D2L. In addition, the entire volume is posted on D2L for week 13. For general information on Geertz' contribution to anthropology, follow this link: <https://www.ias.edu/clifford-geertz-work-and-legacy>

Clifford, James 'Introduction: Partial Truths' In: Clifford, James, and George E. Marcus, eds. *Writing culture: The poetics and politics of ethnography*. University of California Press, 1986: 1:26.

* *Writing Culture* is a volume that produced a paradigm shift in anthropology, bringing to the fore of critical discussions such issues as representation, writing strategies, the role of power in shaping ethnographic accounts among other things. I posted the scan of the introduction ("Partial Truths") on D2L. But the quality of this scan is not high. If you find it difficult to read or unable to access this important piece otherwise, please read an article by the same author listed below. The arguments and ideas discussed in these two readings will be recurrent in this course, so please take them seriously.

Clifford, James. "On ethnographic authority." *Representations* 2 (1983): 118-146.

Also note another title: Bernard, H. Russell. *Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2017. This volume is not included in this course; however, it is a very useful, almost encyclopedic guide to research methods that most of you would find helpful in writing your proposals. Please consult it as soon as you can. One copy of this book (not sure how relevant this piece of information is now) is available at the grad grotto in the Dept. of Anthropology and Archeology.

WEEK 4

1 February

Ethnographic fieldnotes and the world

One of the biggest challenges that we face in conducting ethnographic research in specific locations and on very specific issues is to articulate the significance of our findings beyond the parameters of our research questions and sites and figure out how local situations are informed by broader developments. This class is dedicated to learning from others about their efforts to situate their work, their observations of local life within global/national milieus and the questions that their operations pose.

Readings:

Taussig, Michael. *I swear I saw this: Drawings in fieldwork notebooks, namely my own*. University of Chicago Press, 2011. Available online through the library.

Abu- Lughod, Lila. "The cross- publics of ethnography: The case of "the Muslimwoman"." *American Ethnologist* 43.4 (2016): 595-608.

Edwards, David B. "Afghanistan, ethnography, and the new world order." *Cultural Anthropology* 9.3 (1994): 345-360.

“Do not harm:” ethics of anthropological research

Anthropology’s history is not without controversies, ranging from ethical dilemmas to direct abuse of power in the name of creation of scientific knowledge. One of the most infamous case involves the Yanomamo people whose well-being was compromised by anthropologists (and their friends). There is a short article by Homiak, John. "Secrets of the Tribe." *American Anthropologist* 114.1 (2012): 150-152 that you can use to familiarize yourself with the examples of such gross abuse. These historical cases in anthropology and medicine prompted the development of strict codes of ethical conduct. In preparation for this class, you should familiarize yourselves with the core documents, outlining the code of research ethics involving human subjects and principles of professional behaviour. It is important to note that in Canada, we follow the code developed by the American Anthropological Association (AAA).

Code of ethics:

<http://s3.amazonaws.com/rdcms-aaa/files/production/public/FileDownloads/pdfs/issues/policy-advocacy/upload/AAA-Ethics-Code-2009.pdf>

Statement on the principles of professional behavior: <http://ethics.americananthro.org/category/statement/>

In this class, we will make sure that all students are familiar with these documents. In addition, it is important for everyone be informed about specific procedures instituted by IRISS office at our university.

https://research.ualgary.ca/conduct-research/additional-resources/iriss?utm_source=iriss&utm_medium=redirect&utm_campaign=redirect

Feel free to register your study with IRISS, which would require your supervisor’s approval. I want to make sure you are aware that prior to be able to submit your application for ethics clearance, you are required to take an online workshop. It is important that we use this class time to ensure that you know what to expect and how to meet the requirements setup by IRISS. Do not leave ethics application till the last moment!

As part of the procedure to obtain ethics clearance, you will be required to produce an informed consent form (the standard version of which is posted on D2L). You should make sense of it and bring to this class a draft of your own informed consent form with the goal of workshopping it.

Among other issues that you are to address in this form, is an issue of anonymity as a way of protecting individual privacy and confidentiality (note that privacy and confidentiality are treated as separate fields in the ethics application). The question remains, however, how well the guarantee of anonymity helps to protect people’s privacy. There is a short article discussing this issue: May, Shannon. "Rethinking anonymity in anthropology: A question of ethics." *Anthropology News* 51.4 (2010): 10-13.

In the remaining time of this class, we will concentrate on gray areas of what constitutes ethical research based on personal experiences documented by a distinguished medical anthropologist, Dr. Nancy Scheper-Hughes. What is harm? What responsibilities do we carry as anthropologists in the field and how it changes upon our return ‘home’?

Readings:

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy “Culture, Scarcity, and Maternal Thinking: Maternal Detachment and Infant Survival in a Brazilian Shantytown” *Ethos* 1985, 13/4: 291 – 317.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. "Ire in Ireland." *Ethnography* 1.1 (2000): 117-140.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. "Parts unknown: Undercover ethnography of the organs-trafficking underworld." *Ethnography* 5.1 (2004): 29-73.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. "The primacy of the ethical: Propositions for a militant anthropology." *Current anthropology* 36.3 (1995): 409-440.

Additional readings:

Here you can find additional resources discussing what constitutes ethnical behavior that you might want to review: <http://www.americananthro.org/ParticipateAndAdvocate/Content.aspx?ItemNumber=1895&RDtoken=9542&userID=6944>

WEEK 6

15 February

On collaboration as a method

“Collaboration” and “partnership” are popular ways of thinking about the relationship with individuals and communities among which we learn. Yet, what practices and ideas stand behind these words are less understood, especially outside anthropology. In this class, we will discuss various ways of defining and establishing partnerships and collaborations with people as well as with other disciplines, including arts, sciences and education.

Readings:

Lassiter, Luke Eric. "Collaborative ethnography and public anthropology." *Current Anthropology* 46.1 (2005): 83-106.

Rappaport, Joanne. "Beyond participant observation: Collaborative ethnography as theoretical innovation." *Collaborative anthropologies* 1.1 (2008): 1-31.

Reddy, Deepa. "Caught! The predicaments of ethnography in collaboration." *Fieldwork is not what it used to be: Learning anthropology's method in a time of transition* (2009): 89-112. Available online through the library.

WEEK 7

NO CLASS, TERM BREAK

22 February

WEEK 8

1 March

Indigenous methodologies (part 1)

During these two classes, we will discuss colonialism as well as the promise and the practice of decolonization in ethnographic research. Key issues would include epistemology as knowledge and the means of knowledge creation and the possibilities of embracing and juxtaposing different epistemological traditions for academic and political purposes of liberation.

Readings:

Kovach, Margaret. *Indigenous methodologies: Characteristics, conversations, and contexts*. University of Toronto press, 2021. Prologue, introduction, Part 1 and 2 (pp. 1 – 154).

Please note that this second edition of the book that differs from the earlier one is unavailable at the library. Consider purchasing this important volume.

WEEK 9

8 March

Indigenous methodologies (part 2)

Readings:

Kovach, Margaret. *Indigenous methodologies: Characteristics, conversations, and contexts*. University of Toronto press, 2021. Part 3 and 4 (pp. 155 – 279).

Additional non-required readings:

Ray, Lana. "Deciphering the "Indigenous" in Indigenous methodologies." *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples* 8.1 (2012): 85-98. Posted on D2L.

Archibald, J. (2008). An Indigenous storywork methodology. In J.G. Knowles & A.L. Cole (Eds.) *Handbook of the arts in qualitative research: Perspectives, methodologies, examples, and issues* (pp. 371-384). Sage. Posted on D2L.

Bartlett, Cheryl, Marshall, Murdena, Marshall, Albert (2012). Two-eyed seeing and other lessons learned within a co-learning journey of bringing together indigenous and mainstream knowledges and ways of knowing. *Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences*, 2, 331–340. Posted on D2L.

WEEK 10**15 March**

Documents and archives**Readings:**

Stoler, Ann Laura. *Along the archival grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*. Princeton University Press, 2010. Chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 1-54).

Riles, Annelise, ed. *Documents: artifacts of modern knowledge*. University of Michigan Press, 2006. Introduction (pp. 1-40).

WEEK 11**22 March**

Participant observation and other methods

Participant observation is a key strategy of collecting data and developing insight in ethnographic research. What it is that we observe and in what we participate and to what ends are the key questions to be addressed in this class along with the situations involving challenges of establishing rapport with the individuals and groups of people in whose social worlds we are interested as researchers. In addition, we will consider other methods of data collection, including interviewing and focus groups. Finally, we will address research methodologies, seeking to analytically unbound societies and their cultures by determining complex links between different kinds of social phenomena that problematize the conventional definition of ethnographic research site.

Readings:

Musante, Kathleen, and Billie R. DeWalt. *Participant observation: A guide for fieldworkers*. Rowman Altamira, 2010. Available online through the library.

Kanna, Ahmed. *Dubai, the city as corporation*. U of Minnesota Press, 2011. Available online through the library.

WEEK 12**29 March**

Student presentations

WEEK 13**5 April**

Student presentations

Week 14**12 April**

Student presentations