

## **ANTH 258: Experimental Cultures**

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Office Hours:

### Course Description:

Experiments have long played important roles in the sciences; from the time of Boyle's experimentations and Bacon's formulation of the scientific method, empiricism and experiments have provided the ontological foundation and epistemological practice of the sciences. In the arts and humanities, experiments are generally seen as expressions of the avant-garde; rather than providing the frame for practice, they purposely test the boundaries of the arts and aesthetics. Within both domains then, in their diverse ways, experiments are about setting new limits for knowledge, constructing new forms for representational practices, and producing new content. What then are the roles of experiments and experimental practice in anthropology, which straddles the arts and sciences?

The publication of Jim Clifford & George Marcus' *Writing Culture* in 1986 brought the concern of the experimental to the fore in anthropological writing; now, 20-some years later, there is a robust body of anthropological writing explicitly experimental in form, but there is also a large body of anthropological literature experimental in content. One way to approach these concerns – following Marcus & Clifford and their contributors – is to query the role of representation in anthropology, which raises concerns of empirical accuracy and truth-telling; instead of doing so, our concern will be the opposite: how do anthropologists defy “science” by writing against representation, against empiricism? How do anthropological experiments proliferate experimentation? To work towards answers to these questions, this course also attempts to participate in the experimental, borrowing from diverse disciplines, conversations, and media to unsettle the roles of form and content in anthropology – not to seek answers, but to raise further questions.

After a historical survey of the roles of experimental practices in the sciences, arts and humanities, we turn towards how the experimental is manifested in documentaries, films, and ethnographies; in so doing, we bring together experimental forms and content to push against disciplinary assumptions in anthropology (and the social sciences more generally) regarding the role of empiricism and its possible alternatives. In addressing these other possible modes for anthropological practice, we consider the ethnographic works of such contemporary writers as Kathleen Stewart, Stuart McLean, Marilyn Ivy, Allen Feldman, and Michael Taussig (among others). Taken as a set, these anthropologists are mobilizing concerns regarding negativity and affect developed by post-structuralist philosophers, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, and we will use the latter's playful and foundational experimental text, *A Thousand Plateaus*, throughout the term to test the limits of anthropological knowledge, the empirical world, and the social roles of experimentation.

Reading List:

Required texts and the course pack are available at the Literary Guillotine (204 Locust St, Santa Cruz). Readings from the course pack are noted in the syllabus with [CP] and are available through ERez; readings noted with [AS] are available through Anthrosource <<http://oca.ucsc.edu/login?url=http://www.anthrosource.net/>>.

Burns, Charles

2008 Black Hole. New York: Pantheon.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari

1987 [1980] A Thousand Plateaus. B. Massumi, transl. Volume 2. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.

Feldman, Allen

1991 Formations of Violence: The Narrative of the Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Fortun, Kim

2001 Advocacy After Bhopal: Environmentalism, Disaster, New Global Orders. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ivy, Marilyn

1995 Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Latour, Bruno

1993 [1991] We Have Never Been Modern. C. Porter, transl. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

McLean, Stuart

2004 The Event and Its Terrors: Ireland, Famine, Modernity. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

Shaviro, Steven

1993 The Cinematic Body. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Siegel, James

2005 Naming the Witch. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

Stewart, Kathleen

2007 Ordinary Affects. Durham: Duke University Press.

Stiegler, Bernard

2008 Technics and Time, 2: Disorientation. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

Taussig, Michael

1997 The Magic of the State. New York: Routledge.

## Grading & Assignments:

Attendance, Participation & Presentation (25%) – Students are expected to attend all classes with the required material having been read. Two absences are allowed; each absence beyond the second will reduce the student's final grade by 5%. Students are required to bring 2 discussion questions to class for each meeting. These discussion questions must be synthetic and bring together concerns between disparate texts. Each week's worth of discussion questions is worth 2% (18% total) and must be posted 24 hours before class to the class's blackboard site. Additionally, students will lead class discussions of the texts (in pairs or trios as determined by enrollment, and with each group leading one week's discussion); this presentation is worth 7% and is treated as pass/fail. These presentations should move beyond summaries and pose discussion questions based on those provided by other students, review critiques and compare the week's material with previous texts considered in class.

Response Paper (25%) – Students will prepare a 5-7 page typed response paper to the first section's readings. The response papers should identify major themes and trends in the readings and offer a brief argument as to the veracity of these concepts. In other words, your response papers should take the form of a brief, *theoretically-informed* critique of the reading materials; your papers must have a thesis which you defend.

Final Paper (50% total, detailed in class schedule) – Students have three options for their final paper in this course, as outlined below.

Original Research Paper, Archival or Ethnographic: Drawing on research conducted over the course of the semester, based on archival (primary) sources or ethnographic & interview data, students are expected to turn in a 25-30 page (excluding bibliography) final paper. The paper must relate to the content of the course; its focus is left to the student's determination, but must be approved by the professor. Additionally, the paper must have a theoretically-informed argument which is defended by the paper's contents.

Annotated Bibliography: Based on a topic of the student's determination – and approved by the professor – an annotated bibliography of 35-50 items with a 12-16 page introduction may be prepared. Each item entry must be 300-500 words in length, and items may include books, chapters in edited volumes, journal articles, films & documentaries, and other primary and secondary sources (with the exclusion of encyclopedia entries, websites, and other synthetic resources). The introduction must identify dominant and minor elements in the literature, and is expected to serve as a theoretically-informed literature review.

Revised Research Paper: If the student has previously prepared a paper for another class (not coextensive with this semester), she or he may revise that paper as a final paper for this class. The paper must relate to the contents of this course, and the original version of the paper (with comments from the previously reviewing instructor) must be turned in when final paper abstracts are due. The page count for the revised version of the paper is +15-20 pages (excluding bibliography), with a ceiling of 40 pages (e.g. if the paper was previously 15 pages, its final version for this class must be 30-35 pages in length).

Policies:

**No late work will be accepted for credit. All assignments must be turned in to receive a passing grade in the course.**

Watching the Films: A weekly communal viewing time will be established at the first meeting; films will also be placed on reserve at McHenry Library for students to consult on their own time. It is expected that students will have recently watched the required film for each week.

Academic Integrity – Plagiarism of any sort will not be tolerated. Evidence of plagiarism will result in an immediate failing grade in the course and actions as dictated by university policy regarding academic integrity on graduate students. Please see <http://library.ucsc.edu/science/instruction/CitingSources.pdf> if you have any questions about what qualifies as plagiarism and strategies for avoiding such. For a description of the plagiarism review process, see [http://www.ucsc.edu/academics/academic\\_integrity/graduate\\_students/](http://www.ucsc.edu/academics/academic_integrity/graduate_students/).

Style Matters: All submitted work should follow the guidelines set forth in the American Anthropological Association's style guide (available at [aaanet.org](http://aaanet.org)). All papers should be double-spaced, 12 point font, in Times New Roman, with 1 inch margins on all sides, and page numbers. Failure to meet these standards will result in a reduced grade.

Contacting Me: I **only** check my email between 8-11 AM on weekday mornings and during my office hours. I will always respond to emails within 24 hours, except for emails received on Fridays (which will be responded to on the following Monday). If you plan to stop by my office hours, please contact me ahead of time, either by email ([mwolfmey@ucsc.edu](mailto:mwolfmey@ucsc.edu)) or at my office telephone number (458-2365).

Class Schedule:

*Week One: Course Introduction*

Discussion of Syllabus

Clifford, James, and George Marcus, eds.

1986 *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press. [CP]

Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari

1987 [1980] *A Thousand Plateaus*. B. Massumi, transl. Volume 2. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. **Chapter 1**

Watch: Jean Rouch's *Jaguar*

Part I: Setting up the Experiment

*Week Two: Experimental Modernity*

Daston, Lorraine, and Peter Galison

2007 *Objectivity*. New York: Zone Books. [CP]

Latour, Bruno

1993 [1991] *We Have Never Been Modern*. C. Porter, transl. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Shapin, Stephen, and Simon Schaffer

1989 *Leviathan and the Air-Pump*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. [CP]

White, Hayden

1987 *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press. [CP]

Watch: Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*

*Week Three: Experimentality as Practice*

**Final Paper Abstract Due (5% of Final Paper Grade)**

Pickering, Andrew

1995 *The Mangle of Practice: Time, Agency, & Science*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [CP]

Rheinberger, Hans-Jorg

1997 *Toward a History of Epistemic Things: Synthesizing Proteins in the Test Tube*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. [CP]

Stiegler, Bernard

2008 *Technics and Time, 2: Disorientation*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

Watch: Frederick Wiseman's *Deaf*

*Week Four: Experiments Abroad*

**Final Paper Bibliography Due (5% of Final Paper Grade)**

Anderson, Warwick

2006 Colonial Pathologies: American Tropical Medicine, Race, and Hygiene in the Philippines. Durham: Duke University Press. [CP]

Fortun, Kim

2001 Advocacy After Bhopal: Environmentalism, Disaster, New Global Orders. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Petryna, Adriana

2007 Experimentality: On the Global Mobility and Regulation of Human Subjects Research. PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review 30(2):288-304. [AS]

Prakash, Gyan

1999 Another Reason: Science and the Imagination of Modern India. Princeton: Princeton University Press. [CP]

Vaughn, Megan

1991 Curing Their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness. Stanford: Stanford University Press. [CP]

Watch: Jean-Marie Teno's *Africa, I will Fleece you*

*Week Five: Experimentality and Novelty*

**Final Paper Outline Due (5% of Final Paper Grade)**

Benjamin, Walter

1999 The Arcades Project. H. Eiland and K. McLaughlin, transl. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. [CP]

Moore, Rachel

1999 Savage Theory: Cinema as Modern Magic. Durham: Duke University Press. [CP]

Shaviro, Steven

1993 The Cinematic Body. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Watch: David Cronenberg's *Videodrome*

Part II: Rending the Experimental

*Week Six: Affect and Becoming*

Burns, Charles

2008 Black Hole. New York: Pantheon.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari

1987 [1980] A Thousand Plateaus. B. Massumi, transl. Volume 2. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. **Chapters 6 & 10**

Stewart, Kathleen

2007 Ordinary Affects. Durham: Duke University Press.

Watch: Michael Apted's *7 Up & 21 Up*

*Week Seven: Capturing Violence*

**Response Paper Due**

Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari

1987 [1980] *A Thousand Plateaus*. B. Massumi, transl. Volume 2. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. **Chapter 13**

Feldman, Allen

1991 *Formations of Violence: The Narrative of the Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Watch: Werner Herzog's *Lessons of Darkness*

*Week Eight: War and the State*

Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari

1987 [1980] *A Thousand Plateaus*. B. Massumi, transl. Volume 2. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. **Chapter 12**

Taussig, Michael

1997 *The Magic of the State*. New York: Routledge.

Watch: Errol Morris' *Fog of War*

*Week Nine: Signifying Circulations*

**Rough Draft of Final Paper Due**

Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari

1987 [1980] *A Thousand Plateaus*. B. Massumi, transl. Volume 2. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. **Chapters 4 & 5**

Favret-Saada, Jeanne

1981 *Deadly Words: Witchcraft in the Bocage*. New York: Cambridge University Press. [CP]

Siegel, James

2005 *Naming the Witch*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

Watch: Todd Haynes' *Safe*

*Week Ten: Modernity's Refrains*

**Peer Reviews Due (10% of Final Paper Grade)**

Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari

1987 [1980] *A Thousand Plateaus*. B. Massumi, transl. Volume 2. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. **Chapter 11**

Ivy, Marilyn

1995 *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

McLean, Stuart

2004 *The Event and Its Terrors: Ireland, Famine, Modernity*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

Watch: David Lynch's *Lost Highway*

*Final Exam Week*

**Final Paper Due (25% of Final Paper Grade) by Midnight of Final Exam Day**