



# Visual Anthropology

## ANTH 313

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### SPRING 2011

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Office Hrs: TBA

Class hours: 1:30-2:45  
Classroom: Saunders 345

### Description

Anthropology is a word-driven discipline. However, “it has tended to ignore the visual-pictorial world perhaps because of distrust of the ability of images to convey abstract ideas” (Ruby, 1996). Visual anthropology is today one of the most rapidly growing sub-field in cultural anthropology.

This course will consider the problems of representation; problems particular to visual media as well as problems of representation per se. Culture is manifested through visible symbols embedded in gestures, ceremonies, ritual performances, and artifacts situated in constructed and natural environments, from cave paintings to museum displays. The use of these visual aspects conveys and shapes anthropological knowledge.

This course focuses on a critical examination of ethnographic films, beginning with early documentaries and extending to more contemporary examples and photography. The ongoing explosion of technology in the area of visual representation – including digital cameras, handy-cams, digital editing programs for computers, the television and the Internet – holds exciting potential for ethnography. Nevertheless, this course is not meant to be a hands-on production course. There are two sides to visual anthropology: *reception* (the study of visual imagery) and *production* (the creation of ethnographic visual imagery). Students will be introduced to the history of visual anthropology and ethnographic film, as well as contemporary developments that have widened the possibilities of visual anthropology beyond its early confines as a tool for illustration.

The main purpose of this course is to develop a critical awareness of the implications of who represents who to whom, and how. This will be accomplished through a combination of readings in visual anthropology, the screening of selected films, and discussions.

⇒ **Attendance Policy** regular attendance is obligatory. After three unexcused absences, each additional absence will lower your final grade. After 15min of delay, you will not be able to sign the attendance sheet and you will be considered absent.

### **Facilitating discussions**

On selected Tuesdays, students will take turns acting as discussion facilitators for each week's readings. They will be required to guide and articulate a reading of the assignment, and craft a list of open-ended discussion questions for the class. They may start by making a few brief comments on the readings, or by citing particular passages they found interesting, before leading a discussion concerning specific questions. As we work through the facilitators' remarks and questions (as well as others that come up in the context of the discussion), we will articulate our own reading(s) of the materials.

### **Written reflections**

Throughout the semester students will be recording their reflections evoked by readings, films and class discussions. Ten in-class written reflections are scheduled on selected Thursday class sessions in which students will discuss those readings and answer few questions.

### **Quizzes**

The quizzes are not multiple-choice formatted. Two quizzes both short answer/essay questions in structure will cover the readings, discussions, and films.

### **Visual project: representing 'the other'**

While this is not a 'production' course, for your final project students are invited to produce a visual project. Find an individual whose social or cultural practices are different than your own. With consent, capture a day-in-the-life of that person. The images should reveal activities as well as capture personality, demonstrating critical understanding of one or more of the major issues addressed in the course. This project may be presented in either PowerPoint, projected photos or video (20 slides, 20 photos or 5min video if you have prior editing experience). There is no written document required of this project; however, you will present your work and the problems you ran into during the last few class sessions.

### **Course requirements and evaluation**

Facilitating Discussions (one time)	(50pts)
Written reflections (10 x 5pts. each)	(50pts.)
Quizzes (2 x 50pts. each)	(100pts.)
Visual project	(100pts.)
	<b>300pts.</b>

⇒ **Make Up Exams:** Make up exams will only be given to students who miss an exam due to extenuating circumstances. Missing an exam due to non medical reasons must be approved for by the Instructor prior to the absence. The Instructor must be contacted regarding makeup exams before the absence in case of non medical reasons or within one week for medical reasons. Documentation of the extenuating circumstances (doctor's excuse, for example) must be provided to the instructor before makeup exam will be given. Exams must be made up within one week of returning to class at a time mutually agreeable to student and Instructor. Failure to comply with these policies will result in a zero for the missed exam.

### **Required textbook and additional readings**

Jay Ruby, 2000. *Picturing culture: explorations of film & anthropology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. All the rest of the literature listed in the syllabus is posted on Laulima - Resources.

### **Required films**

Screenings are a mandatory part of the course. While often the films listed in the syllabus will be presented in excerpted form to allow for class discussion, students are strongly encouraged to borrow the 'uncut' versions from Wong Audio-Visual Center (Sinclair Library), as well as check on online (Films on Demand) <http://micro189.lib3.hawaii.edu/ezproxy/details.php?dbId=56186>.

## Schedule

1

Jan 11-13

### Introduction: Why look?

Ruby, "Introduction" pp. 1-39

Pink, "Engaging the Visual: An Introduction" pp. 3-20

**Films** *Franz Boas* (VHS-247, 59min)

*Karba's First Years* (VHS 18656, 20min)

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2

Jan 18-20

### Ways of looking

Ruby, "Researching with the Camera: The Anthropologist as a Picture Taker" pp. 41-66.

Mead, "Visual Anthropology in a Discipline of Words" pp. 3-12

**Films** *In the Land of the War Canoes* (VHS 7247, 47min)

*Man With the Movie Camera* (VHS 2004, 68min)

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Written reflections #1

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3

Jan 25-27

### Ethnographic film -Part I: In search of vérité

Ruby, "The Aggie Must Come First: Robert Flaherty's Place in Ethnographic Film History" pp.67-93.

Burton and Thompson, "Nanook and the Kirwinians: Deception, Authenticity, and the Birth of Modern Ethnographic Representation" pp. 74-86

**Films** *Nanook of the North* (VHS 16188, 79min)

*Nanook Revisited* (VHS 896, 55min)

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Written reflections #2

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4

Feb 01-03

### Ethnographic film -Part II: Ciné-ethnography

Rouch, "Our Totemic Ancestors and Crazy Masters" pp. 217-232

Rouch, "The Camera and Man" pp. 29-46

**Films** *Les Maîtres Fous* (VHS 20012, 29min)

*Cinéma Vérité: Defining the Moment* (VHS-18740, 102min)

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Written reflections #3

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5

Feb 08-10

### Ethnographic film -Part III: Anthropological cinema

Ruby, "Robert Gardner and Anthropological Cinema" pp. 95-113.

Barbash, "'Out of Words' The Aesthesodic Cine-Eye of Robert Gardner" pp. 369-413.

Films *Dead Birds* (DVD 3976, 83min)  
*Forest of Bliss* (VHS 12139, 90min)

Written reflections #4

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6  
Feb 15-17      **Ethnographic film -Part IV: Pedagogic research**  
Ruby, "Out of Sync: The Camera of Tim Ash" pp. 115-35.  
Ash, "Film in Ethnographic Research" pp. 335-60.  
Films *The Ax Fight* (VHS 5736, 30min)  
*Dani Sweet Potatoes* (VHS 6392, 19min)

Written reflections #5

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7  
Feb 22-24      **Visual ethics**  
Ruby, "The Ethics of Image Making; or, 'They're Going to Put Me in the Movies. They Are Going to Make a Big Star Out of Me' " pp. 137-49  
Pink, 2006 Interdisciplinary agendas: (re)situating visual anthropology pp. 21-38  
Films *The Drums of Winter* (VHS 6448, 90min)  
*Neighborhood Tokyo* (VHS 17340, 29min)

Written reflections #6

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8  
Mar 01-03      **Just looking**  
Orobitg-Canal "Photography in the Field: Word and Image in Ethnographic Research" pp. 31-46.  
Lutz and Collins "The Color of Sex: Postwar Photographic Histories of Race and Gender" pp. 155-186  
Films *Photo Wallahs: An Encounter with Photograph in Mussoorie, a North Indian Hill Station.* (VHS 13146, 60min)  
Anthropology News 2008 Photo Contest Winners & Finalists and Semifinalists:  
[www.flickr.com/photos/anthropologynews/sets/72157614386093284/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/anthropologynews/sets/72157614386093284/)  
[www.flickr.com/photos/anthropologynews/sets/72157614430025153](http://www.flickr.com/photos/anthropologynews/sets/72157614430025153)

QUIZ 1

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9  
Mar 08-10      **Seeing and being seen**  
Ruby, "Exposing Yourself: Reflexivity, Anthropology and Film" pp. 151-180.  
Lutkehaus, " 'Excuse Me, Everything is Not All Right': on Ethnography, Film and Representation" pp. 422-437  
Films *Cannibal Tours* (VHS1296, 77min)

**Written reflections #7**

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10

Mar 15-17

**Indigenous media -Part I: From poetics to politics**

Ruby, "In the Belly of the Beast: Eric Michaels and Indigenous Media" pp. 221-38

Turner, "Representations, Politics and Cultural Imagination in Indigenous Video: general Points and Kayapo Examples" pp. 75-89

**Films** *Trobriand Cricket: An Indigenous Response to Colonialism* (VHS 2288 53min)

*Surname Viêt, Given Name Nam* (VHS 6649, 108min)

**Written reflections #8**

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11

Mar 22-25

**Spring Recess**

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12

Mar 29-31

**Indigenous media -Part II: Poetics go to Hollywood**

Howard, "Presenting Rotuma to the World: The Making of The Land Has Eyes" pp. 73-95

Gauthier, "'Lest Others Speak for Us': The Neglected Roots and Uncertain Future of Maori Cinema in New Zealand" pp. 58-73

**Films** *The Land Has Eyes* (DVD 3202, 87min)

*Whale Rider* (DVD 12642, 101min)

**Written reflections #9**

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13

Apr 05-07

**Indigenous media -Part III: Poetics go digital**

Christen, "Gone Digital: Aboriginal Remix and the Cultural Commons" pp. 315-345

Ginsburg, "Indigenous Media: Faustian Contract or Global Village? pp. 92-112.

**Films** [www.isuma.tv](http://www.isuma.tv)

*The Sawau Project* (N/A, 60min)

**Written reflections #10**

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14

Apr 12-14

**Applied visual anthropology**

Ruby, "Speaking for, Speaking about, Speaking with, or Speaking Alongside" pp. 195-219

Pink, "Visual engagement as social intervention: applied visual anthropology" pp. 81-102

Films *No Logo: Brands, Globalization, Resistance* (DVD 1926, 42min)  
*What's race got to do with it?* (DVD 5537 49min)

QUIZ 2

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15  
Apr 19-21      **The future of visual anthropology**  
Ruby, "Toward an Anthropological Cinema: Some Conclusions and Possible Future" pp. 239-79.  
Pink, "A visual anthropology for the twenty-first century" pp. 131-144  
Films *Granada Centre for Visual Anthropology Show Reel* (N/A, 240min)

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16  
Apr 26-28      **Student presentations**

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17  
May 03      **Student presentations**

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## Readings References

Ash, Timothy, and Patsy Asch Ash  
1995

[1988] Film in Ethnographic Research. *In* Principles of Visual Anthropology. P. Hockings, ed. Pp. 335-60. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Barbash, Ilisa

2001 'Out of Words' The Aesthesodic Cine-Eye of Robert Gardner: An Exegesis and Interview by Ilisa Barbash. *Visual Anthropology* 14(4):369-413.

Burton, John W. , and Caitlin W. Thompson

2002 Nanook and the Kirwinians: Deception, Authenticity, and the Birth of Modern Ethnographic Representation. *Film History* 14:74-86.

Gauthier, Jennifer

2008 'Lest Others Speak for Us': The Neglected Roots and Uncertain Future of Maori Cinema in New Zealand. *In* Global indigenous media: cultures, poetics, and politics. P. Wilson and M. Stewart, eds. Pp. 58-73. Durham: Duke University Press.

Ginsburg, Faye D.

1991 Indigenous Media: Faustian Contract or Global Village? *Cultural Anthropology* 6(1): 92–112.

Howard, Alan

2006 Presenting Rotuma to the World: The Making of The Land Has Eyes. *Visual Anthropology Review* 21(1/2):73-95.

Lutkehaus, Nancy Christine

1989 "'Excuse Me, Everything is Not All Right': on Ethnography, Film and Representation" [An Interview with Filmmaker Dennis O' Rourke]. *Cultural Anthropology* 4(4):422-37.

Lutz, Catherine, and Jane Lou Collins

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Mead, Margaret

1995 Visual Anthropology in a Discipline of Words. *In* Principles of visual anthropology. P. Hockings, ed. Pp. 3-12. Berlin ; New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Orobitg-Canal, Gemma

2004 Photography in the Field: Word and Image in Ethnographic Research. *In* Working Images: Visual Research and Representation in Ethnography. S. Pink et al. ed. Pp. 31-46. London: Routledge

Pink, Sarah

2000 Informants' Who Come 'Home'. *In* Constructing the Field: Ethnographic Fieldwork in the Contemporary World. V. Amit, ed. London: Routledge.

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2006 Engaging the visual: an introduction. *In* The future of visual anthropology: engaging the senses. Pp. 3-20. London ; New York: Routledge.

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2006 Interdisciplinary agendas: (re)situating visual anthropology. *In* The future of visual anthropology: engaging the senses. Pp. 21-38. London ; New York: Routledge.



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Turner, Terence

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## Filmography

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Bateson, Gregory, et al.

1991 Karba's first years a study of Balinese childhood. New York, N.Y.

University Park, PA: Institute for Intercultural Studies ;

Audio-Visual Services, Pennsylvania State University (distributor),.

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1996 Neighborhood Tokyo. Urbana, IL: Asian Educational Media Service, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign,.

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Cheng, Jean, et al.

2006 What's race got to do with it? Berkeley, CA: California Newsreel,.

Curtis, Edward S., et al.

1992 In the land of the war canoes Kwakiutl Indian life of the Northwest Coast. New York, NY: Milestone Film & Video,.

Elder, Sarah, Leonard Kamerling, and University of Alaska Museum.

1988 Uksuum cauyai The drums of winter. [Fairbanks, Alaska]: University of Alaska Museum,.

Flaherty, Robert Joseph

1998 Nanook of the North. New York: Kino on Video,.

Gardner, Robert

1985 Forest of Bliss. New York, N.Y.: Arthur Cantor Films,.

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2004 Dead birds. [Cambridge, MA]: Film Study Center,.

Heider, Karl G., and University of California (System). Extension Media Center.

1974 Dani sweet potatoes: Karl G. Heider. Released by University of California Extension Media Center,.

Ihimaera, Witi Tame, and George Henare

2003 Whale rider. Wellington, [N.Z.]: Replay Radio,.

Klein, Naomi, et al.

2003 No Logo: Brands, Globalization, Resistance. Northampton, Mass.: Media Education Foundation.

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Massot, Claude, IMA Productions., and Films for the Humanities (Firm)

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Direct Cinema Ltd.  
O'Rourke, Dennis, et al.
- 1991 The Good woman of Bangkok. [Lindfield, N.S.W., Australia]: Film Australia,.  
Owen, Rena, et al.
- 2006 Pear ta ma \*on maf The land has eyes. Honolulu: Te Maka Productions,.  
Pigliasco, Guido C., and Felix Colatanavanua
- 2005 *A Ituvatuva Ni Vakadidike E Sawau* (The Sawau Project) 60 min. Suva, Fiji: Institute of  
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- Rouch, Jean, et al.
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Symansky, Adam, et al.
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- 1981 Franz Boas, 1852-1942. *In* Odyssey. P. Video, ed. Washington, D.C.: PBS Video,.  
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various, Authors
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