The islands of the southwestern Pacific popularly known as Melanesia are home to one of the most culturally diverse populations on the earth, speaking as many as a third of the world’s languages. Melanesia occupies a place of importance in anthropological studies, both for the ethnographic studies contributed by central figures from Bronislaw Malinowski to Marilyn Strathern and for stirring pivotal debates in the study of economics, sexuality and gender and the nature of kinship. Commonly promoted by tourist offices as a “last frontier” inhabited by peoples just out of the “Stone Age”, the region has been greatly impacted through the imposition of colonial and post-colonial governments, integration into global markets and near universal acceptance of Christianity. All the same, colonialism came relatively late to the region, with some large groups of people seeing their first Europeans only in the early 1960s. This partly accounts for anthropological interest in the region—it was possible until fairly recently to study local cultures in their, more or less, pre-contact forms. With that past rapidly receding, anthropological interest has shifted to the study of social change, the focus for this seminar.

We will explore the dimensions of social change in Melanesia as revealed in ethnographic monographs, articles and films. As well as studying the types and pace of change in different areas, we will consider key theoretical and methodological issues such as nature of evidence used in reconstructing past societies, indigenous versus Western notions of time and change, alternate models of economic development and so forth. Over the term, students will develop projects focusing on specific topics such as: the impact of large-scale extractive industries such as logging, mining and oil drilling; changes in religious sensibilities concerning such things as sorcery, magic and male cults with conversion to Christianity; the impact of the tourist trade on local perceptions of cultural identity; internal and regional migration; the impact of the AIDS crisis; the interplay of introduced and indigenous expectations of political leadership; the civil wars on Bougainville and Guadalcanal; the changing relationship between women and men; the rise of raskol (gang) violence in the urban areas; and so forth.

Required Texts:

Additional readings may be drawn from electronic journals available from [www.library.ubc.ca](http://www.library.ubc.ca) or provided by the instructor. I also recommend that you purchase a popular travel guide to the region such as those published by Lonely Planet. You may be able to find one second hand.
Course Policies (please review carefully)

1. **Attendance.** Regular attendance is required for this course. Students who consistently fail to arrive on time or who leave early because of conflict will be required to withdraw from the course. Please contact the instructor promptly if circumstances (illness, family emergencies, etc.) prevent you from attending. Students who miss more than three classes will be required to withdraw.

2. **Class preparation.** This is an ethnography course, so expect larger reading assignments than in survey classes. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings for the day. If you feel that you will have difficult keeping up, consider switching to another course.

3. **Assignment deadlines and late penalties.** Students must obtain permission for late papers or missed tests and examinations at least 24 hours prior to the due date. A valid reason (sickness, family crisis, etc.) must be provided with documentation. With the exception of the final term paper, assignments are due at the beginning of class on the assigned day. Work that is overdue must be handed into the main office of the Department of Anthropology and Sociology during regular working hours so it can be date-stamped. The final assignment must also be handed in at the main office. Assignments delivered as email attachments, faxes or slipped under the instructor’s door will not be accepted. Late assignments lose 1 point per day (including weekend days) from the final grade (out of 100).

4. **Paper and bibliography format.** Students will be expected to follow standard formats for anthropological bibliographies and academic papers. A style sheet will be provided. We will also be making use of the TurnItIn anti-plagiarism service in this class for the (optional) term paper. Separate instructions will be supplied. The service requires you to submit an electronic version of your work to a website. I will also require a hard copy. Both versions need to be submitted by the specified deadline. If you have an objection to the use of this service, you must let me know within the first month of the course so that we can make alternative arrangements. If you do not, I will assume that you consent to use the service. For more information on the service, see [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com). For a helpful guide on plagiarism and how to avoid it, see [http://www.arts.ubc.ca/Plagiarism_Avoided.373.0.html](http://www.arts.ubc.ca/Plagiarism_Avoided.373.0.html). The Faculty of Arts website also includes a number of very useful guides for academic success that you may want to consult.

5. **Class website and other research resources.** A class website is available. It contains copies of all documents provided in the class, a number of publications by the instructor and links to various Melanesian news and research websites and resources. Because this course requires you to develop an independent research project, including an annotated bibliography, you should also familiarize yourself with the various resources—physical as well as electronic—available through the UBC Library. The orientation workshops regularly provided by the research librarians are strongly recommended.

6. Please feel free to consult with me about any matters concerning this course. I am always available for office hours and usually right after the class as well as via email.
Assignments

1. **Comment Cards** (10%). Each week, you need to prepare a comment and a question on one of the assigned readings. These will be used to encourage discussions in class. You must hand in a card each week, including for classes you may have missed. Make sure that you keep a copy of your comment as this will be useful for your annotated bibliography (see below). The remaining grade will be based on the quality of comments and questions.

2. **Mid-Term Quiz** (25%). This in-class quiz will test your geographical knowledge of Melanesia and grasp of the main readings to date. It will be made up mainly of short answer questions.

3. **Paper Proposal** (5%). At the third meeting, the class will be divided into 8 interest groups for the purpose of small-group discussions and the development of a group presentation during the last two weeks of class. Members of each of the groups will prepare their own research papers on topics such as those listed on the front of this syllabus. The first stage will be a paper proposal of 2 to 3 double-spaced pages. The proposal must present a statement of the subject you wish to pursue, what you hope to learn and a list of at least 5 relevant scholarly publications (i.e., published in academic journals or by an academic press).

4. **Annotated Bibliography** (20%). Each member of the group will prepare an annotated bibliography on their project. The bibliography must include a short introductory essay on the topic, of no more than 2 double-spaced pages, followed short notes (a paragraph each) on a minimum of 12 articles or books published in academic journals or by academic presses. Publications from popular presses or from Internet sites may also be included as long as the minimum of 12 published scholarly works is met.

5. **Term Paper** (40%). The research paper will sum up your findings concerning your project. It must include a thesis and a clear line of argument, drawing primarily from anthropological sources. The paper should be 10 pages, double-spaced, inclusive of bibliography. The paper is due no later than December 6th.

6. **Optional Take Home Examination** (40%). Students not wishing to write the term paper may opt for a take home examination. Students will choose from a list of short essay questions that draw upon their knowledge of Melanesian ethnography based on the class readings and their own independent research. A page limitation will be applied to each question. The examination will be handed out the last day of class. It is due back a week later, on December 6th.
SCHEDULE of LECTURES, READINGS and FILMS

PART I: AN INTRODUCTION TO MELANESIA

Sept 6  An Introduction to the Course. The Peopling of Melanesia
  Film:  First Contact

Sept 13  Pre-Contact Society
  •  Sillitoe:  Chapter 1
  •  Knauft:  Prelude & Chapter 1
  Further Reading:
  Film:  The Red Bowman

Sept 20  Colonial History and (Partial) Independence
  •  Sillitoe:  Chapters 2 & 3
  •  Knauft:  Chapters 2 & 3
  Further Reading:
  Film:  Colonists for a Day

PART II: TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Sept 27  From Gift to Commodities:  Economic Development
  •  Sillitoe:  Chapter 4
  •  Knauft:  Chapters 4 & 5
  Further Reading:
  Film:  Joe Leahy's Neighbours

Oct 4  The Land
  •  Sillitoe:  Chapter 5
  •  Knauft:  Chapters 6 & 7
  Further Reading:

**Film:** *Arrows against the Wind*

**Oct 11** Big Men, *Work Meris* and *Bisnis*
- Sillitoe: Chapter 6
- Knauff: Chapters 8, 9 & Afterword

**Further Reading:**

**Film:** *Man without Pigs*

**PART III: DISPLACEMENTS**

**Oct 18** Migration and Urbanization
- Sillitoe: Chapter 10

**Further Reading:**

**Film:** *People of Pogera*

**Nov 1** Strangers in an Ancestral Land—The Emergence of Elites
- Sillitoe: Chapter 7
- Smith: Chapter 6 to the end of Chapter 8

**Further Reading:**

**Film:** *My Father, My Country*
PART IV: CONTINUITIES IN CHANGE

Nov 8  Road belong Cargo
- Sillitoe: Chapter 11
- Smith: Chapter 9 through 11

Further Reading:

Film: *Gogodala: A Cultural Revival?*

Nov 15 Melanesian Christianity
- Sillitoe: Chapter 12
- Smith: Remainder of book

Further Reading:

Film: *Cannibal Tours*

Nov 22 Neo-tradition and the Politics of Kastom
- Sillitoe: Chapters 13 & 14

Further Reading:

Film: *Trobriand Cricket*

Nov 29 A Long Past, An Uncertain Future

Melanesia party + popular film set in Melanesia: Either *Bruce Li in New Guinea* or *In a Savage Land*