Honours Qualitative Methods — Social Anthropology

Module Outline – 2018

Instructor

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Purpose

This module will introduce you to some more advanced questions in ethnographically grounded fieldwork and analysis. We will start out by thinking about ethnographic field relationships, which are often complicated. We will then think about three major concepts in sociocultural analysis: ambivalence, ideology, and antagonism. These three concepts are closely connected. Ambivalence is one place to start thinking about the relationship between culture and subjectivity; ideology is the mechanism by which subjectivities are governed and produced; and antagonisms emerge when ideology isn't entirely successful at covering up the cracks in the social order.

Assignments

- Reading questions: For each class, you are required to submit *one question about each reading*, at least 30 minutes before class starts. (So if there are three readings, ask three questions!) For each day, send all your questions to me in a single email.
- Class attendance and participation, including in-class writing exercises.
- One short paper (1500-2000 words) analyzing a form of ambivalence and its relationship to an ideological discourse. This must be based on at least one successful interview and on field observations of your own (in a site of your choosing).

Reading Schedule

May 7 — Ethnographic Relationships

- Borneman, John. 2011. Daydreaming, intimacy, and the intersubjective third in fieldwork encounters in Syria. American Ethnologist 38 (2):234-248.
- Van Wyk, Ilana. 2013. Beyond ethical imperatives in South African anthropology: morally repugnant and unlikeable subjects. Anthropology Southern Africa 36 (1-2):68-79.
- Young, Donna J. 2005. Writing Against the Native Point of View. In Auto-Ethnographies: The Anthropology of Academic Practices, edited by A. Meneley and D. J. Young. 203-215. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press.

May 10 — Ambivalence

- Freud, Sigmund. 1963. Mourning and Melancholia. In General Psychological Theory: Papers on Metapsychology. 164-79. New York: Collier Books.
- High, Holly. 2011. Melancholia and anthropology. American Ethnologist 38 (2):217-233.

May 14 — Ideologies

- Fanon, Frantz. 2008. The Fact of Blackness. In Black skin, white masks. Translated by C. L. Markmann. 82-108. New York: Grove Press.
- Lorde, Audre. 1984. The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism. In Sister Outsider. 124-133. Trumansburg, N.Y.: Crossing Press.
- Mainardi, Pat. 1970. The Politics of Housework. In Sisterhood is Powerful: An Anthology of Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement. 447-454. New York: Vintage.

See also:

- Eagleton, Terry. 1991. What is Ideology? In Ideology: An Introduction. 1-31. New York: Verso.

May 17 — Antagonisms

- Drexler, Elizabeth F. 2007. The Social Life of Conflict Narratives: Violent Antagonists, Imagined Histories, and Foreclosed Futures in Aceh, Indonesia. Anthropological Quarterly 80 (4):961-995.
- White, Hylton. 2004. Ritual Haunts: The Timing of Estrangement in a Post-Apartheid Countryside. In Producing African Futures: Ritual and Reproduction in a Neoliberal Age, edited by B. Weiss. 141-166. Leiden: Brill.
- White, Hylton. 2010. Outside the Dwelling of Culture: Estrangement and Difference in Postcolonial Zululand. Anthropological Quarterly 83 (3):497-518.