

ANTH 230: Gender Across Cultures

UnEssay Project Guidelines

What is an UnEssay?

An “UnEssay” is a research project that foregrounds creative ways of thinking anthropologically about gender. Like a conventional essay, an ‘unessay’ is an argument-driven, evidence-based presentation of information that showcases critical thinking. A key difference is that an ‘unessay’ allows for the presentation of information in a creative format. UnEssay projects will build on independent library research, critical analysis, and engagement with course concepts and materials to present an argument about gender in a *creative* and *compelling* way.

You have a lot of freedom with this project. You can choose your own topic concerning gender – any concept that we have covered in class (readings, lectures, hybrid videos, discussions, etc.). You can present your ideas and arguments in whatever format you want. Of course, there are *some* requirements to keep in mind. Each project must demonstrate ways of thinking anthropologically about gender. This means your project needs to address the social factors contributing to and contextualizing gender. Your treatment of the topic will be evaluated based on how compelling and effective you are in conveying your argument. These criteria are explained in greater depth below, but the gist is that the reviewer of your materials ought to have the impression that you are being accurate, interesting, and thorough in your handling of the subject.

Overview

Submission Timeline

February 23rd – You must submit a minimum 200 word paragraph describing your topic.

March 9th – You must submit your three additional sources you will use to shape your project.

March 30th – You must submit your annotated bibliography and a minimum 100 word paragraph describing your proposed creative project.

April 13th – Your project and reflective paper are due.

Getting Started

Selecting a topic.

There are many topics you might explore at the intersection of gender and culture. Spend time during the first few weeks of class exploring real-world gender issues that you find interesting and important. Being SPECIFIC about what your concept is you are addressing and what evidence supports your main argument will be key to your project’s success.

Identify Outside Sources

Select 3 sources from outside of the class. These sources must be from an anthropological source (like a journal or book) and must be peer reviewed and published. The main database you will use to locate your sources is [Anthrosource](#), the American Anthropological Association’s

major database. Search for keywords in your selected topic and read the abstract of the source to determine if the source fits the requirements and adequately addresses your topic.

Annotated Bibliographies

You will write annotated bibliographies for each of your three sources. Each annotation should be a minimum of 250 words. Resources for completing an annotated bibliography can be found [here](#).

Selecting a format.

I encourage you to consider a format for UnEssay that fits the topic as well as your interests, your argument, and your audience. Please see [this website](#) for some ideas of UnEssay Projects that were done in a different (not anthropology) class. *Please contact your TA and I ahead of time if your project contains a physical medium or other type that cannot be uploaded and submitted via Brightspace. Some ideas:

- Create a work of art (e.g., knitting, quilt, cross-stitch, graffiti, fine art, sculpture, protest signs, etc.)
- Make a mini-documentary
- Compose journal entries of historical figure
- Develop a curated playlist
- Design a music video
- Create an online or in-person game
- Promote a fictional product through an advertising campaign
- Experiment with a recipe
- Design and debut a fashion line
- Write and illustrate a children's book
- Create a brochure for a walking tour
- Design an escape room or scavenger hunt
- Create a lesson plan for selected grade on specific topic
- Develop a digital map
- Curate a visual timeline of a hidden history
- Promote a fictional book launch website for an anthropologist's discovered memoir
- Design a website, infographic, or Tiktok tutorial that helps the public understand subtle features of a problem or issue
- Recreate an ancient or historic technique
- Perform a dance
- Create a Tik Tok tutorial series or comic series
- Screenshot a fictional tweet conversation with real or historical figures
- Create a newspaper collection of articles
- Curate a 2D or 3D collage
- Write an album of song lyrics
- Perform an original play
- Write and illustrate a zine
- Alter a book through erasure techniques
- Compose an imagined letter exchange with someone real or fictional, living or dead
- Collect specific data and present analyses in a unique way
- Make a series of Buzzfeed style listicles (with a clickbaity headline!)
- Create a podcast based on interviews with experts in relevant subject areas or investigating a compelling story
- Video docudrama based on interviews gathering responses to a problem or question

- *A research paper*

There are numerous ways to approach this assignment, so don't feel constrained by this list of ideas. I encourage all students to brainstorm various formats (e.g., media, presentation styles, and modes of critical engagement) you might employ. Your task is to pick one and give it your best effort and attention. If you are feeling daunted by an unconventional format, please know that I celebrate creative effort. Also keep in mind that "thinking anthropologically" is an active, hands-on, and reflective practice. Projects that *show* or *do* rather than solely *tell* or *describe* would capture that active spirit best. You may have noticed in the list above that UnEssay Projects can be presented as conventional essays or research projects. This is very fine! Even within conventional responses to the UnEssay Project, students have creative freedom to determine page length, organization, voice, citational practice, etcetera. There is one exception – NO powerpoints. I see more than enough of them and there is very little way to make them compelling and interesting (I know....the irony).

UnEssay Project Reflective Paper

Each student will compose a 1-2 page Reflective Paper based on their experience developing the UnEssay Project. It will be assessed on its own based on the following criteria but will be referred to as an important accompaniment that helps to explain the significance of your UnEssay Project. Be sure to thoroughly address the following questions to receive full credit:

- 1) What is the specific topic this project addresses?
 - a. Provide relevant context about the gender concept
 - b. Explain justification for anthropological inquiry (why it matters to study, what it draws from and contributes to anthropological concepts and literatures)
 - c. Clearly state argument (what is the main claim of the project)
- 2) What is the format you've chosen for this project? Why is this format appropriate for this project and intended audience?
- 3) What does your project contribute to existing understandings about your chosen gender topic?
- 4) How does this project demonstrate 'thinking anthropologically' about gender? Be specific about the cultural (and other) forces contributing to and contextualizing your gender concept. Strong papers will support your claims about "thinking anthropologically" about gender with evidence from relevant course materials.
- 5) What have you learned about yourself and/or the world from this project?

UnEssay Project Evaluation

All projects, regardless of format, will be evaluated based on the same criteria. The project's success will be evaluated for how effective and compelling you are with respect to the goal of the assignment, which is to think anthropologically about gender through a specific topic in a creative and coherent way. *Effectiveness* is demonstrated when the project is readable/watchable/viewable/listenable in a clear and accessible way. *Compelling* is demonstrated when the topic is thorough, interesting, and honest.

- 1) Conceptual Adherence: Does the UnEssay effectively and compellingly analyze a gender inequality topic by demonstrating how to “think anthropologically” about it?
- 2) Depth of Theoretical Application: Does the UnEssay effectively and compellingly build upon the knowledge learned in this class from our readings, our discussions, and this project’s related research?

Grading Breakdown

Project Idea	15
Sources	15
Annotated Bibliography	30
Reflection Paper	110
UnEssay Project	130
Total	300