

Department of Anthropology and Sociology (ANSO)

Academic year 2021-2022

Sound and Image: Multimodal Methodologies for the 21st Century

ANSO109 - Autumn - 3 ECTS

[Schedule & Rooms](#)

Course Description

Ethnography is premised on the immediacy of face-to-face in situ approaches, but remains an inherently mediated endeavor. Through both formal and informal practices, mediation shapes every stage of anthropology research, which has been accentuated by access to a variety of digital tools and the ubiquity of the smartphone. Attentive to these emergent conditions as well as earlier precedents for an expanded toolkit, a multimodal turn in anthropology foregrounds a practice-based methodology that engages with sensory epistemologies and recognizes modes of scholarly output at the intersection of scientific methodologies and aesthetic experience. As such, this course will provide a conceptual framework for exploring the potential of such initiatives through critical discussions about interdisciplinarity, art as practice-based research, scholarly validation, embodied epistemologies, etc. As a basis for discussion, students (from any discipline) will experiment with ethnographic drawing, photo compositions, sonic recordings, and more.

> PROFESSOR

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Syllabus

This course demands active student participation. The duration is short but intense. Preparations ahead of class will be necessary. In preparation for each class session, students will be required to deeply engage the assigned readings and write a short literature review. This will provide the basis for robust inquiry and common frameworks for discussion. Class-time will be organized to maximize our time together. In addition to these conceptual debates around the readings and lecture-driven discussions, the course gives equal emphasis to methodological skill-building, which is substantiated by in-class group exercises and individual project-based assignments.

ASSIGNMENTS

Group presentations: Through the course, we will be exploring the online resource *Feral Atlas* (Tsing, et al.) <https://feralatlantlas.org/> Each session one group will present a curated selection. Group members should collaborate to determine the desired selection. The presentation should summarize and give a quick tour of a 1-hour exploration of the resource. Students are advised to navigate to the page entitled, "How to Read Feral Atlas," for inspiration. Try to perform collaborative reading sessions either in person (respecting public health protocols) or online. Together navigate the site for a period of at least one hour, then collectively decide how to present the experience in less than 10 minutes. Students in group 1 (session 1) are requested to address this fundamental question: What is the *Feral Atlas*?

Literature reviews: For each session, students must write a succinct literature review of the assigned readings. In 500 words or less summarize the main claims of each text and how it relates to the other texts. What points of agreement or commonality emerge? What disagreements, debates, or other points of tension can be traced? Based on the sample of readings assigned, what are the major issues of concern?

Multimodal Project: Through the course students will work on an autoethnographic project about their "habitat" using different modal perspectives. This series of embodied exercises is meant to attune students' perceptual praxis on multiple registers. On the last day of class, students will present their investigation combining these different probes into their habitat.

- *Exercise 1:* Following the introductory session, operationalize mapmaking and drawing techniques to document your daily orbit, including significant weekly routines, destinations, e.g., commute between home and university, grocery shopping, gym regime, social life, family visits, etc. The goal is to derive insights about your relation to the spaces you regularly inhabit, while also becoming more attune to the spaces in between these. Use a single A3 or two A4 pieces of paper. Write a short reflection on these questions: How does consciously tracking your behaviour through qualitative means relate to the tracking of our behaviours by devices, algorithms, and artificial intelligence?
- *Exercise 2:* Following the session on sonic recording techniques and sound walks, utilize an audio recorder or your smartphone to make audio recordings of three sounds that structure your regimented world: time, transportation, and labour. Collect several examples of each of these three kinds of sonic events for a total comprising at least 15 minutes of recorded content. Make a diagram demarcating and depicting each example with graphic and notational details. Write a short reflection on these questions: How do we hear time demarcated in our lived sonic environments? How do the sounds of transportation infrastructure shape our spatial experience? How do we relate to the sonic qualities of different forms of labour?
- *Exercise 3:* Priority to the session on using photographic storytelling techniques, make a series of 36 photos that respond to the prompt, "my habitat." Consider the various forms of material culture that characterize your inhabited spaces, from architecture and advertising to memorabilia and mundane ephemera. In what ways can you show your relationship to these objects? How might you use photos to narrate a story or make an argument? Through acts of photo writing imagine possible relationships between each subsequent photo you take. Select 10-12 photographs from this series and make prints to bring to class (preferably 10cm x 15cm).
- *Installation & Presentation:* During the final session, students will revise, edit, and combine their three multimodal investigations into a unified installation as part of a class exhibition. A slide presentation documenting each aspect of the installation must be submitted independently. Details will be discussed in class.

Final essay: Drawing on both the literature review assignments and the multimodal investigations, develop pick an overarching, recurring, or resonating concept from the course and operationalize it in order to think through aspects of your own research interests. Consider a methodological application that would be suitable to give empirical insight about the chosen concept in relation to your research context. Composed essay in text (3-4000 words) and at least one other modality.

EVALUATION

- 10% -- Group presentations: Feral Atlas
One group presents each session
- 30% -- Literature reviews (4 total)
Due by 23.59 the day before each session
- 30% -- Multimodal Project:
Exhibition in class on 18 October
Slide presentation due 18 October 23.59
- 30% -- Final essay:
Submit via Moodle before 25 October 23.59)

SCHEDULE OVERVIEW

1. Friday 1 October 12:15-16:00 (Room S7)
2. Monday 4 October 8:15-10:00 (Room S7)
 - Sound walk - to be organized
3. Friday 15 October 12:15-16:00 (Room S7)
4. Monday 18 October 14:15-18:00 (Room S9)

SCHEDULE DETAILED

Session 1: 1 October

JOINT SESSION Master's research methods
(Professors Graziella Moraes Silva and Françoise Grange Omokaro)

Graphic Perception

Summary:

- Introductions
- Group presentation
- Lecture by Dr. Westmoreland
- Readings discussion
- Enskillment exercises (drawing)

Preparations: Be sure to bring something with which to draw (e.g., pencil, pens, colours).

Group presentation:

- Self-curated selection (What is the Feral Atlas?): Tsing, Anna L., Jennifer Deger, Alder Keleman Saxena, and Feifei Zhou, eds. 2020. *Feral Atlas: The More-Than-Human Anthropocene*. Stanford University Press. <https://feralatlas.org/>

Readings:

- Geismar, Haidy. "Drawing It Out." *Visual Anthropology Review* 30, no. 2 (November 1, 2014): 97–113. doi:10.1111/var.12041.
- Causey, Andrew. "Drawing Flies: Artwork in the Field." *Critical Arts* 26, no. 2 (May 2012): 162–74. doi:10.1080/02560046.2012.684437.
- Taussig, Michael. *I Swear I Saw This: Drawings in Fieldwork Notebooks, Namely My Own*. University of Chicago Press, 2011. (Selection: xi-31, 47-53)
- Westmoreland, Mark R. "Graphic Anthropology: A Foundation for Multimodality." In *Audiovisual and Digital Ethnography: A Practical and Theoretical Guide*, edited by Cristina Grasseni, et al. London: Routledge, *in press* (available from author).

Recommended:

- Sousanis, Nick. *Unflattering*. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2015.
- Hamdy, Sherine, and Coleman Nye. *Lissa, A Story about Medical Promise, Friendship, and Revolution*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017.
- Jain, Lochlann. *Things That Art, A Graphic Menagerie of Enchanting Curiosity*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019.

Session 2: 4 October

Audible Worlds

Summary:

- Group presentation
- Readings discussion
- Lecture by Dr. Westmoreland
- Enskillment excursion - sound walk (time will be set at first session)

Preparations: Bring comfortable walking shoes.

Group presentation:

- Self-curated selection: Tsing, Anna L., Jennifer Deger, Alder Keleman Saxena, and Feifei Zhou, eds. 2020. *Feral Atlas: The More-Than-Human Anthropocene*. Stanford University Press. <https://feralatlans.org/>

Readings:

- Feld, Steven. "Dialogic Editing: Interpreting How Kaluli Read Sound and Sentiment." *Cultural Anthropology* 2, no. 2 (May 1, 1987): 190–210. <https://doi.org/10.2307/656355>.
- Samuels, David W., Louise Meintjes, Ana Maria Ochoa, and Thomas Porcello. "Soundscapes: Toward a Sounded Anthropology." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 39 (March 16, 2010): 329–45.
- Helmreich, Stefan. "Gravity's Reverb: Listening to Space-Time, or Articulating the Sounds of Gravitational-Wave Detection." *Cultural Anthropology* 31, no. 4 (2016): 464–492. <https://doi.org/10.14506/ca31.4.02>
<https://culanth.org/articles/849-gravity-s-reverb-listening-to-space-time-or>
- Kapchan, Deborah. "The Splash of Icarus Theorizing Sound Writing/Writing Sound Theory." In *Theorizing Sound Writing*, edited by Deborah Kapchan, 1–22. Middletown CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2017.
- Spray, Stephanie. "Sonic Archive Fever: Ernst Karel and Veronika Kusumaryati's Expedition Content." *Non-Fiction*, no. 001: 46–51, 2020.

Recommended:

- Kunreuther, Laura. "Sounds of Democracy: Performance, Protest, and Political Subjectivity." *Cultural Anthropology* 33, no. 1 (2018): 1–31. <https://doi.org/10.14506/ca33.1.01>
<https://culanth.org/articles/932-sounds-of-democracy-performance-protest-and>
- Matzner, Deborah. "Jai Bhim Comrade and the Politics of Sound in Urban Indian Visual Culture." *Visual Anthropology Review* 30, no. 2 (November 2014): 127–38. <https://doi.org/10.1111/var.12043>.

Session 3: 15 October

Image/Text/Design/Sequence

Summary:

- Group presentation
- Readings discussion
- Lecture by Dr. Westmoreland
- Enskillment exercises (bring your photo prints)
- Open discussion

Group presentation:

- Self-curated selection: Tsing, Anna L., Jennifer Deger, Alder Keleman Saxena, and Feifei Zhou, eds. 2020. *Feral Atlas: The More-Than-Human Anthropocene*. Stanford University Press. <https://feralatlas.org/>

Readings:

- Hoffman, Daniel. "Corpus: Mining the Border." *Writing with Light, Cultural Anthropology website*, January 31, 2014. https://culanth.org/photo_essays/1-corpus-mining-the-border
 - Read accompanying peer reviews by Zeynep Gürsel and Alan Klima.
- Pauwels, L. (2015). The 'visual essay' as a scholarly format: Art meets (social) science? In *Reframing Visual Social Science: Towards a More Visual Sociology and Anthropology* (pp. 139-166). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9781139017633.007
- Sutherland, Patrick. "The Photo Essay." *Visual Anthropology Review* 32, no. 2 (November 1, 2016): 115–21. <https://doi.org/10.1111/var.12103>.
- Sutherland, Patrick. "Extending the Frame: some notes on learning documentary photography and constructing photo essays from groups of photographs." *VAR SUPPLEMENTS* (November 1, 2016). <http://societyforvisualanthropology.org/2016/11/var-supplements-patrick-sutherland-learning-documentary-photography-constructing-photo-essays-groups-photographs/>
- Vium, Christian. 2018. "Temporal Dialogues: Collaborative Photographic Re-Enactments as a Form of Cultural Critique." *Visual Anthropology* 31 (4–5): 355–75. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08949468.2018.1497331>.

Recommended:

- Bateson, Gregory, and Margaret Mead. *Balinese Character, a Photographic Analysis*. New York: The New York Academy of Sciences, 1942.
- Jacknis, Ira. "Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson in Bali: Their Use of Photography and Film." *Cultural Anthropology* 3, no. 2 (May 1, 1988): 160–77. <https://doi.org/10.1525/can.1988.3.2.02a00030>.
- Berger, John, and Jean Mohr. *Another Way of Telling*. New York: Vintage International, 1995.
- Bourgois, Philippe, and Jeffrey Schonberg. 2009. *Righteous Dopefiend*. 1st ed. University of California Press.
- De Boeck, Filip, and Sammy Baloji. 2016. *Suturing the City: Living Together in Congo's Urban Worlds*. Autograph ABP.
- O'Neill, Kevin Lewis, and Benjamin Fogarty-Valenzuela. 2020. *Art of Captivity / Arte del Cautiverio*. University of Toronto Press.

Session 4: 18 October

Multimodality

Summary:

- Install and view Multimodal Project Exhibition
- Open discussion
- Lecture by Dr. Westmoreland
- Group presentation
- Readings discussion

Group presentation:

- Self-curated selection: Tsing, Anna L., Jennifer Deger, Alder Keleman Saxena, and Feifei Zhou, eds. 2020. *Feral Atlas: The More-Than-Human Anthropocene*. Stanford University Press. <https://feralatlantlas.org/>

Readings:

- Cox, Rupert, Andrew Irving, and Christopher Wright. "Introduction: The Sense of the Senses." In *Beyond Text?: Critical Practices and Sensory Anthropology*. 1-20. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016.
- Collins, Samuel Gerald, Matthew Durlington, and Harjant Gill (2017) Multimodality: An Invitation. *American Anthropologist* 119, no. 1: 142–46. doi:10.1111/aman.12826
- Dattatreyan, Ehiraj Gabriel, and Isaac Marrero-Guillamón. 2019. "Introduction, Multimodal Anthropology and the Politics of Invention." *American Anthropologist* 121 (1): 220–28.
- Sanchez-Criado, Tomas, and Adolfo Estalella. "Introduction: Experimental Collaborations." In *Experimental Collaborations: Ethnography through Fieldwork Devices*, edited by Tomas Sanchez-Criado and Adolfo Estalella, 1–30. New York: Berghahn Books, 2018.
- Westmoreland, Mark R., Annet Pauwelussen, and Silke van Diemen. "Kaleidoscopic Vision: Immersive Experiments in Maritime Worlds." *Entanglements*, in press (available from author).
- Mattern, Shannon. 2016. "Cloud and Field." *Places Journal*, August. <https://doi.org/10.22269/160802>.

Recommended:

- Collins, Samuel Gerald, and Matthew Slover Durlington. *Networked Anthropology: A Primer for Ethnographers*. London ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2014.
- Weizman, Eyal. 2017. *Forensic Architecture: Violence at the Threshold of Detectability*. Brooklyn, NY: Zone Books.
- Miyarrka Media. 2019. *Phone & Spear: A Yuta Anthropology*. London: Goldsmiths Press.