

# Anthropology of Media and Culture

70:368 • Rutgers • Fall 2016 • 3 credits • T-Th 5:35-6:55 • HCK 119

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## COURSE OBJECTIVES:

What do you think of when you hear the word “media”? What do you think should be included in the category? How do you think media works or should work? How might mediation work in places beyond your experience? Some argue that media are contested and significant factors in the exercise of power and identity. Others suggest that media impacts are more diffuse and uncertain. This seminar will explore the development of an

anthropological approach to mass media studies by focusing on a few themes: media and socio-economic development; the socio-political lives of news; relationship ideologies and social media.

We will explore historical and contemporary mediascapes and how anthropologists have theorized their significance and impact. Numerous pundits on all sides have much to say about media: they decry the bias or praise the objectivity of media sources; propound the positive potential effects of media influence for conflict resolution and public relations or lament the negative stereotyping and violence resulting from media impacts; condemn media as another form of authoritarian control, an extension of imperialism, or laud its contributions to globalization and economic development in the Global South. This course will lay the anthropological groundwork for theories approaching these perspectives, and discuss the relationships between media, culture, politics, and religion.

Media anthropology emerged from critical engagements with ethnographic film, visual anthropology, the 1980s crisis of representation, and globalization theory. In this course, we will focus on social mediation of electronic media, as it potentially structures large parts of our interaction with each other, laterally and radially.

## INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

The key goals of this class are:

1. to help students approach local and global mediascapes with new perspectives
2. to acquaint students with media anthropology methods and theories
3. to help students learn how to critically engage theories about media
4. to expand students research, analysis, oral presentation, and multimedia skills

## ANTHROPOLOGY DEPARTMENT GOALS:

This course fills the following department learning goals:

1. Students gain knowledge that will allow them to identify, explain, and historically contextualize the primary objectives, fundamental concepts, modes of analysis, and central questions in their major field and demonstrate proficiency in their use of this knowledge.
2. Students are able to demonstrate proficiency in the use critical thinking skills
5. Students are able to express themselves knowledgably and proficiently in speaking about central issues in their major field.

## ASSIGNMENTS:

- Ethnography Review (20 pts)
- Video Essay (20 pts)
- Ethnographic Film (60 pts)
- Class presentations (40 pts)

Grades will be calculated based on assignment rubrics circulated in advance and by dividing the points earned by the total points possible.

## REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Bishara, Amahl. 2013 Back Stories: US News Production and Palestinian Politics. Stanford CA: Stanford University Press
- Gershon, Ilona. 2010 The Breakup 2.0: Disconnecting Over New Media. Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press.
- Readings on Sakai

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## Classroom Procedures

- Class meetings will be a mix of lecture, discussion, and application activities. My lecture style is interactive and I encourage you to ask questions and speak in class. You are expected to *complete the assigned readings before class, to attend all class meetings, and to come prepared to actively engage with course material by thinking critically and creatively about the assigned texts and the issues they raise. If you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.* In cases where you must miss class for periods longer than one week, you will as per university policy be directed to see a Dean of Students for assistance to help verify these circumstances.
- You should *plan up to three hours of reading and preparation for each class.* You will need to pace yourself so you aren't cramming before class.
- Assessments (blog postings, video essay assignments, in-class activities, interview assignment, presentations, literature review) are designed to evaluate your knowledge and scholarly skills in accomplishing the intended learning outcomes. Please take advantage of all the assessment opportunities you will have in this course by using them to reflect on the depth and value of your learning. You will receive points by emailing me that you have read the syllabus.
- This course will have materials available through Sakai and books reserved in the library. You will need to access some articles via the journals link on the library homepage. If you are unfamiliar with how to do this, you need to contact me as soon as possible. Check Sakai often for assignment updates and course announcements. You will submit some assignments on Sakai, and others in class, so check the announcements page on Sakai often.

Please note also the following policies:

- *Late submission is **not accepted** without prior permission of the instructor.*
- *Online Assignment Submission:* For ease of reference and grading, *include your name in the beginning of your document title when you submit on Sakai.* For example: Smith Literature Review Proposal ANTH 358.doc
- *Incompletes* will not be permitted, except under extraordinary circumstances and with proper documentation.
- *Special arrangements* for students with documented needs or disabilities should be made well in advance of assignment due-dates. Follow the policies outlined here <http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/> and discuss this with me as soon as possible.

**Rutgers Policies: Please make yourself aware of the student code of conduct, especially the academic code of conduct. <http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/university-code-of-student-conduct>**

**Plagiarism:** In preparing assignments a student often needs or is required to employ outside sources of information or opinion. All such sources should be listed in the bibliography. *Citations and footnote references are required for all specific facts that are not common knowledge and about which there is not general agreement.* New discoveries or debatable opinions must be credited to the source, with specific references to edition and page even when the student restates the matter in his or her own words. Word-for-word inclusion of any part of someone else's written or oral sentence, even if only a phrase or sentence, requires citation in quotation marks and use of the appropriate conventions for attribution. Please *follow the American Anthropological Association style guide in the bibliography and in-text referencing.* Paraphrasing or summarizing the contents of another's work is not dishonest if the source or sources are clearly identified (author, title, edition, and page), but such paraphrasing does not constitute independent work and may be rejected by the instructor. Students who have questions about accurate and proper citation methods are expected to consult Rutgers' policies on plagiarism.

**Course Schedule: This is not a fixed schedule, but a good guide—watch Sakai for updates**

DATE Discussion Topic	Activity	Date Discussion Topic	Activity
<b>Sept 6 Mediums and Messages</b>  Eisenlohr, Patrick 2011 Introduction: what is a medium?		<b>Sept 8</b> <b>Thinking Like an Anthropologist</b> <i>Read the following. Watch Lawrence of Arabia before class if you have not</i>	<i>Get CITI certification</i> <a href="https://orra.rutgers.edu/citi">https://orra.rutgers.edu/citi</a>

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<p>Theologies, technologies and aspirations. <i>Social Anthropology</i> 19(1): 1-5</p> <p>McLuhan, Marshal 1964 <i>Understanding Media</i>. MA: MIT Press, sections.</p> <p>Optional: Boyer, Dominic 2007 <i>Understanding Media: A Popular Philosophy</i>. Chicago IL: Prickly Paradigm Press, i-vii (library reserve)</p>		<p><i>seen it previously.</i> Caton, Steven 1999 An Allegory of Anthropology. In <i>Lawrence of Arabia: A Film's Anthropology</i>. Berkeley: University of California Press, 142-171.</p> <p>Optional: Peterson, Mark Allen 2003 <i>Anthropology and Mass Communication: Media and Myth in the New Millennium</i>. New York: Berghahn Books, 1-22.</p>	<p>(it takes about an hour to complete)</p>
<p><b>Sept 13 Media Methods</b> Pink, Sarah. 2015 <i>Doing sensory ethnography</i>. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications, 163-187.</p> <p>Boellstorff, Tom et. al. 2012 <i>Ethnography and Virtual Worlds: A Handbook of Method</i>. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 29-48, 52-63.</p> <p><a href="http://www.anthropology-news.org/index.php/2016/08/18/long-distance-ethnography/">http://www.anthropology-news.org/index.php/2016/08/18/long-distance-ethnography/</a></p>	<p><i>Bring 2-page project proposal to class. Include research question, research methods, number of participants, how you will recruit them, expected final product, risks.</i></p>	<p><b>Sept 15 Media Methods 2</b> Abu-Lughod, Lila 2005 <i>Dramas of Nationhood: The Politics of Television in Egypt</i>. Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 29-53.</p> <p>Bonilla, Yarimar, and Jonathan Rosa 2015 # Ferguson: Digital protest, hashtag ethnography, and the racial politics of social media in the United States. <i>American Ethnologist</i> 42(1): 4-17</p> <p>Cody, Francis 2011 Echoes of the Teashop in a Tamil Newspaper. <i>Language &amp; Communication</i> 31(3): 243-254.</p> <p>Meyer, Birgit 2011 Mediation and Immediacy: Sensational Forms, Semiotic Ideologies, and the Question of the Medium. <i>Social Anthropology</i> 19(1):23-39</p>	<p><i>Read your assigned article and come prepared to present the thesis and key points these authors make about how to study media using anth methods</i></p>
<p><b>Sept 20 Modernism and Development's Magic Bullets</b> Lerner, Daniel 1958 <i>The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East</i>. Glencoe IL: Free Press Read one of the chapters on Turkey, Egypt, or Lebanon</p> <p>Optional: Williams, Raymond. 2003 [1974]. <i>The Technology and Society</i>. Reprinted in <i>The New Media Reader</i>, Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Nick Montfort, eds.</p>	<p><i>Read the selections from Lerner. Working with a classmate, prepare a media profile presentation for a specific community</i></p> <p><i>Submit your IRB Protocol</i></p>	<p><b>Sept 22 Cultural Studies Representational Reactions</b> Said, Edward 1997 <i>Covering Islam</i>. Pantheon Books, 3-32 (pages 154-164 are optional).</p>	<p><i>Read Said's chapter. Bring a news article covering Islam to class to analyze using Said's critique.</i></p>

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Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 291-300.	<i>by 8pm.</i>		
<b>Sept 27 Video Essay Discussion</b> Working with a classmate, prepare a three-minute video essay analyzing the research methods used in media and development (Lerner) or cultural studies (Said) theoretical approaches to media. Then explain how one might explore media using an anthropological approach. See Sakai for more details.	<i>Come to class prepared to give feedback to your classmates on their video essay—attendance important</i>	<b>Sept 29 News Agency</b>  Boyer, Dominic 2011 News Agency and News Mediation in the Digital Era. <i>Social Anthropology</i> 19(1): 6-22	
<b>Oct 4 Communicability Models</b> Briggs, Charles and Daniel Hallin 2016 Making Health Public: How News Coverage is Remaking Media, Medicine and Contemporary Life. NY: Routledge, 23-49		<b>Oct 6 News Generation</b> Bishara, Amahl 2013 Back Stories: US News Production and Palestinian Politics. Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1-28  <i>Optional:</i> Mark Allen Peterson, "Making Global News: 'Freedom of Speech' and 'Muslim Rage' in U.S. Journalism." <i>Contemporary Islam</i> 1(3):247-264	<i>Choose a newsworthy event and find five different reports covering the event to analyze in class</i>
<b>Oct 11 Framing</b> Bishara, Amahl 2013 Back Stories: US News Production and Palestinian Politics. Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 29-67  <i>Optional:</i> Berkowitz, Dan 2005 Telling what-a-story News Through Myth and Ritual: The Middle East as Wild West. In <i>Media Anthropology</i> , Eric Rothenbuhler and Mihai Coman eds. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publishers. 210-219.	<i>Control Room Documentary</i>	<b>Oct 13</b> Bishara, Amahl 2013 Back Stories: US News Production and Palestinian Politics. Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 68-101  <a href="http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/contributors/120009">http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/contributors/120009</a>	
<b>Oct 18</b> Bishara, Amahl 2013 Back Stories: US News Production and Palestinian Politics. Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 102-130		<b>Oct 20</b> Bishara, Amahl 2013 Back Stories: US News Production and Palestinian Politics. Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 131-166  <i>Optional:</i> Hannerz, Ulf 1998 Reporting from Jerusalem. <i>Cultural Anthropology</i> 13(4): 548-74	
<b>Oct 25</b> Bishara, Amahl 2013 Back Stories: US News Production and Palestinian Politics.	<i>War Reporter Documentary</i>	<b>Oct 27</b> Bishara, Amahl 2013 Back Stories: US News Production and Palestinian Politics.	

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Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 197-229		Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, conclusion  Peterson, Mark Allen 2014 Katibs and Computers: Innovation and Ideology in the Urdu Newspaper Revival. Contemporary South Asia 22(2): 130-142.	
Nov 1 Shipley, Jesse Weaver 2015 Selfie Love: Public Lives in an Era of Celebrity Pleasure, Violence, and Social Media. American Anthropologist 117(2): 403-413	<i>Ethnography Review Due</i>  <i>Bring a selfie to class having analyzed it using Shipley's ideas</i>	Nov 3 Gershon, Ilana 2010 The Break-Up 2.0 Disconnecting Over New Media. Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1-49	
Nov 8 Gershon, Ilana 2010 The Break-Up 2.0 Disconnecting Over New Media. Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 50-90		Nov 10 Gershon, Ilana 2010 The Break-Up 2.0 Disconnecting Over New Media. Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 91-121	
Nov 15 Gershon, Ilana 2010 The Break-Up 2.0 Disconnecting Over New Media. Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 122-164		Nov 17  No class—work on video project	
Nov 22 Gershon, Ilana 2010 The Break-Up 2.0 Disconnecting Over New Media. Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 165-202		Thanksgiving Break	
Nov 29 <b>Embodying Protest Publics</b> Juris, Jeffrey 2012 Reflections on #Occupy Everywhere: Social media, public space, and emerging logics of aggregation. <i>American Ethnologist</i> 39(2): 259-279  Kraidy, Marwan 2015 The Naked Blogger of Cairo. 3-34, 52-53, 221-223	<i>Ethnography Review Due</i>  <i>Find a current protest movement and suggest ways to analyze this anthropologic ally</i>	Dec 1 <b>Embodying Protest Publics 2</b> Coleman, Gabriella 2011 Hacker Politics and Publics. Public Culture 23(3): 511-516  Coleman, Gabriella 2013 Anonymous in Context: The Politics and Power Behind the Mask <a href="https://www.cigionline.org/publications/2013/9/anonymous-context-politics-and-power-behind-mask">https://www.cigionline.org/publications/2013/9/anonymous-context-politics-and-power-behind-mask</a>	<i>Find a debate about internet security from the last year. Prepare to share in class the ideologies of bodies at work in this debate</i>
Dec 6 <b>Video Presentation</b> Share your ethnographic video with the class	<i>Come to class prepared to give feedback to your classmates on their video project—attendance</i>	Dec 8 <b>Video Presentation</b> Share your ethnographic video with the class	<i>Come to class prepared to give feedback to your classmates on their video project—attendance</i>

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	<i>important</i>		<i>important</i>
<b>Dec 13 Video Presentation</b> Share your ethnographic video with the class	<i>Come to class prepared to give feedback to your classmates on their video project—attendance important</i>		