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This seminar is formatted as a writing workshop: We will work on and discuss how to tackle a substantial writing project and work collaboratively to create a challenging and supportive intellectual environment for everyone. Each week, you will complete an assignment related to your thesis or essay work—sometimes brainstorming, sometimes researching, sometimes drafting writing. The assignment is due in class: please bring a print out of it – **whether you are presenting or not.**

There will be 4 rounds of presentations. Presentations should be 10-15 minutes long to leave plenty of time for discussion. Use your time wisely when you are presenting: this is an opportunity for you to solicit the most useful feedback from your peers. When you are part of the “audience,” you are expected to thoroughly and generously engage with your classmates’ projects. Attendance at every class meeting is essential, both when you will present on your work and (just as importantly) when your classmates are scheduled to present. I expect everyone to let me know ahead of time if they anticipate having trouble making it to class.

Goals

By the end of the semester you will have had the opportunity to:

1. thoroughly reflect on the material you have gathered and insights you’ve gleaned
 2. expand and deepen your theoretical framework and complete additional reading and research
 3. achieve a sense of the broad arc of your project and how each chapter or section fits in
 4. draft 25-40 pages of writing, which will include a draft of a chapter or section (~20 pages)
 5. other goals you have?
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Check-ins

1. meet with librarian Kendall Hobbs in the first 2-3 weeks of the semester
2. meet with one or two anthropology (or other faculty) to discuss additional research and/or direction for the research project in Oct – Nov at least once and ideally 2-3 times
3. meet with me at least twice

Reading

Nothing assigned, but some excellent research and writing guides are:

Charles Lipson, *How to Write a BA Thesis: A Practical Guide from Your First Ideas to Your Finished Paper*

Joan Bolker, *Writing Your Dissertation in Fifteen Minutes a Day: A Guide to Starting, Revising, and Finishing Your Doctoral Thesis*

Kirin Narayan, *Alive in the Writing: Crafting Ethnography in the Company of Chekhov*

Allaine Cerwonka and Liisa H. Malkki, *Improvising Theory: Process and Temporality in Ethnographic Fieldwork*

Alisse Waterston, *Anthropology off the Shelf: Anthropologists on Writing*

Michael Taussig, *I Swear I Saw This: Drawings in Fieldwork Notebooks, Namely My Own*

Class Schedule

9/6: opening discussion: what I did over my summer vacation

in-class: free write and share: where I was; where I am
setting goals and outlining plans

ROUND ONE: PLOTTING, PLANNING

Goal: *first stab at thinking about the project*

9/13: Project I: what is most important?

due: one or two things I learned from this project (identifying what is important and interesting and central). 2-3 pages. look over your field notes, review what you wrote at the end of last semester (in your proposal). Think about where you **are** and what you want to do. What are your central research question(s)?

presenting: Christine, Kate, Alice

9/20: Literature I: the Library, your best friend

in-class: Kendall Hobbs, library presentation (first hour)

due: preliminary bibliography. Bring to class a list of ~20 sources you have consulted for the project. mark the 5 sources that are most relevant to your research, and for those 5 sources, include annotation (1-2 paragraphs situating your research in relation to that work). if you have a model or key book/article interlocutor, bring that to class.

full class discussion

9/27: Methodology: what did I do / what do I know?

due: 2-3 pages describe your methodology – the who, what, when, where, and why of your research over the summer. What did you set out to discover? What did you end up finding out? Pay attention to places where these do not overlap: to surprises or insights you had in your research. thinking about what you did and what you **now** know, conclude this writing with a single paragraph describing the parameters of your research project. bring in fieldnotes or other details to share as needed.

presenting: Olivia, Sarah, Henry, Jose Luis

ROUND TWO: DRAFTING

Goal: *start to situate the particular phenomena you are studying (the sites, discourses, institutions, individuals, etc.) in relation to the larger questions that currently frame your project. Keeping in mind that anthropological knowledge is always partial, in both senses of the word, attempt to link these issues or challenges with larger methodological, theoretical, or writing decisions you will have to make in the weeks or months to come. Ask yourself how any particular issue or challenge impacts how you do your research, the theoretical direction your project will take, and/or how you will write your final text.*

10/4: Drafting, Analyzing, Writing, Thinking I: key scene

due: bring to class 2-3 pages describing a central moment in your field (or library) research. why is this scene important, and what does it mean? if you were to begin to unpack it, what does it say? does it give you ideas to go forward?

presenting: Christine, Kate

10/11: Drafting, Analyzing, Writing, Thinking II: key conflict or difficulty

due: bring to class 2-3 pages describing an important conflict or challenge in your field (or library) research. why is this scene important, and what does it mean? if you were to begin to unpack it, what does it say? does it give you ideas to go forward?

presenting: Alice, Olivia, Sarah

10/18: Drafting, Analyzing, Writing, Thinking III: key dialog or person

due: bring to class 2-3 pages describing a central person or exchange in your field (or library) research. why is this scene important, and what does it mean? if you were to begin to unpack it, what does it say? does it give you ideas to go forward?

presenting: Henry, Jose Luis

ROUND THREE: ZOOMING OUT

***Goal:** start to explore the dynamic interactions between theoretical ways of knowing and the particular empirical realities you are writing about. Begin to more explicitly discuss the specific theoretical approaches that have shaped your understanding of the phenomena you are studying as well as how you expect your work to contribute to particular theoretical arguments. Begin laying out the larger story you are constructing by reflecting on the interplay between theoretical concepts and cultural practices in the particular context of your project.*

10/25: Organization I: themes and clumps and chapters: how to organize ideas

due: how might you break your thesis or essay into chapters or sections? what are the central topics and ideas you want to be sure to include? what feels most central, and what might be less important? are there 2 or 3 different ways you can imagine organizing the project, and what are the pros and cons of those different approaches? This is a draft outline (or two)

presenting: Christine, Kate, Alice

11/1: Literature II: finding models

due: are there past theses and/or ethnographies (articles or books) that you want to use as a model? what makes those persuasive and interesting? bring to class 1 thesis you want to discuss (online, or hardcopy in the dept. library) and 1 book or article that you find inspiring, along with 1-2 pages discussing how you think your own research relates to these models. Are there specific issues tied to writing and textual form you are thinking about in your own work?

also: visit the Jellybean papers and review the guidelines for theses and essays

full class discussion

11/8: Project II: step back: what's this project about again?

due: what is the core idea of the project? revisit themes and clumps: what is standing out organizationally? draft a 1-2 page introduction, outlining your core research question or topic, a "hook" (or why this might be interesting for the reader), your initial findings and ideas, your method, and the conversation you are having with the core literature. Provide a revised outline.

presenting: Olivia, Sarah, Henry, Jose Luis

11/15: Literature II: redux

due: revisit your preliminary bibliography and add to it all of the new sources you've discovered. break it into sections to help conceptualize the topic and research: broad analytical frameworks, specific area studies, relevant or related ethnographies, material on one aspect of the topic or another. How are you situating your project within the literature that exists? bring to class one essay or book that is most influential or important to your work.

full class discussion

Round Four: Writing!

Goal: write!

11/22: Writing: chapter draft

due: put together ~10-15 pages of writing. This will likely draw on earlier writing, but it does not have to. It should be or come from any of the "body" chapters of your thesis, or a solid section of your essay. You can choose pages that you really like and believe represent what you have set out to do, pages that you know are problematic or show a particular challenge you are facing, or a combination of both. Think about (1) the challenges of using theory in anthropological writing, (2) formal decisions about empirical material (how to render particular stories from the field, interviews, interviewee voices, historical information, archival material, etc.), and (3) any other writing challenge you are facing that is specific to your project.

presenting: Christine, Kate, Alice

11/29: Writing: chapter draft

due: see above

presenting: Olivia, Sarah, Henry, Jose Luis

12/6: last class discussion: where we ended up, where we'll go!