



PROGRAM: Innovative Technologies for Digital Communication (L-20)

TEACHING: Visual Anthropology

MODULE: none

ECTS: 6 cfu

YEAR RUNNING: I

LECTURER: Edoardo Quaretta

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CONSULTATION TIME: student reception is scheduled at end of each lecture. It is also possible to fix an online call by email.

LEARNING AND SKILLS OUTCOMES

1. *Knowledge and understanding.*

Expected outcomes are: to acquire the ability to critically analyse an ethnographic film; to develop knowledge of the semiotic status of images; to acquire a basic knowledge of the history of photography and ethnographic cinema, of the main authors and the most significant productions in the field; to learn the fundamental aspects of the visual culture of Central Africa (DR Congo).

2. *Applied knowledge and understanding*

Expected outcomes are: to get familiar with the basic methods of visual anthropology relevant to cultural anthropology, ethnography and more generally to qualitative research. To acquire knowledge of basic audio-visual tools applicable to field work.

3. *Critical thinking*

Expected outcomes are: to learn and develop the basic analytical tools to analyze and evaluate ethnographic films and anthropological audio-visual materials; to develop awareness of epistemological and ethical implications in the production of audio-visual materials in ethnographic contexts.

SYLLABUS AND TIMELINE

1. Introduction to visual anthropology, its methods and fields of application
2. 19th century ethnographic photography, the birth of visual anthropology and the first ethnological expeditions
3. Robert Flaherty and the invention of documentary filmmaking
4. Ethnographic film and filmmakers
5. The attributes of ethnographic film
6. Presentations of mid-term assignments
7. Jean Rouch's ethnographic films
8. Participatory ethnographic filmmaking
9. Observational and transcultural cinema
10. Contemporary Africa's visual cultures
11. Experimental photography and cinema by Sammi Baloji (DR Congo)
12. Presentations of final assignments

SUGGESTED PRE-REQUISITE QUALIFICATIONS

A basic knowledge in Cultural Anthropology is recommended

METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

Attending students

Final assessment is divided in three steps: 1) presentation of a brief paper for the mid-term assessment (**30% of the final grade**); 2) presentation of an analysis of an ethnographic film for the end-of-course assessment (**30% of the final grade**); oral examination during the term's exam sessions (**40% of the final grade**).

Non-attending students

Final assessment will be based on an oral exam on the topics covered throughout the course, on the program's reading materials and on films watched and analysed in class. Moreover, final evaluation will take into account analytical and communication skills, the ability to create links through bibliographical, visual and cinematographic materials proposed within the course.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Final examination will assess student's acquisition of the ability to critically analyse audio-visual production in the field of visual anthropology as well as the knowledge of fundamental notions and topics covered throughout the course.

With reference to communication skills, final examination will assess the ability to properly use technical terms and to make connections throughout the topics covered.

MARKING CRITERIA

Attending students

Final assessment will be the result of three steps: 1) mid-term evaluation will assess the ability to synthesise, critically analyse and present a short paper (**30% of the final grade**); 2) the end-course evaluation will assess the ability to technical analyse an ethnographic film through the knowledge acquired (**30% of the final grade**); 3) the final evaluation (oral examination) will consist of an oral exam based on the topics covered during lectures, program's reading materials, the audio-visual products and films analysed in class (**40% of the final grade**).

Non-attending students

Final assessment will be the result of an oral exam based on the topics covered throughout the course, on the program's reading materials and on films watched and analyzed in class. Moreover, final evaluation will take into account analytical and communication skills, the ability to create links through bibliographical, visual and cinematographic materials proposed within the course.

READING LIST

Attending students

Students are required to complete their preparation for the final exam with the following **compulsory readings materials**:

- 1) Heider K. G., *Ethnographic Film*, Revised Edition, Austin, University of Texas Press, 2006 [1976];
- 2) An article or chapter selected from the following collection of essays:
 - B. Street, "British Popular Anthropology: Exhibiting and Photographing the Other", in E. Edwards, *Anthropology and Photography 1860-1920*, Yale University Press, 1992, pp. 122-131;
 - J.-P. Olivier de Sardan, "The ethnographic pact and documentary film", *Visual Anthropology*, 12 (1), pp.13-25, 1999;
 - B. Jewsiewicki, "Collective memory and its images: Popular urban painting in Zaire – a source of 'present past'", *History and Anthropology*, 2(2), 389-400, 1986;
 - P. Henley, *The Adventure of the Real*, The University of Chicago Press, 2009, chap. 7 - "Images of Power", pp. 101-134 (*Les maîtres fous*);
 - P. Henley, *The Adventure of the Real*, The University of Chicago Press, 2009, chap. 8 - "Chronical of a Violent Game", pp. 145-175 (*Chroniques d'un été*);
 - M. Hasian, R. Wood, "Critical Museology, (Post)Colonial Communication, and the Gradual Mastering of Traumatic Pasts at the Royal Museum for Central Africa (RMCA)", *Western Journal of Communication*, 74 (2), 2010, pp. 128-149.

Non-attending students

Students are required to complete their preparation for the final exam with the following **compulsory readings materials**:

- 1) Heider K. G., *Ethnographic Film*, Revised Edition, Austin, University of Texas Press,

2006 [1976];

- 2) Non-attending students are required to prepare a presentation of a film alongside a related book to be chosen from the following list of options (in case of problems in finding films or books, please email the teacher):

Option 1

Film: Gardner R., 1986, *Forest of Bliss*, Film Study Center, Harvard University, USA, 91 min;

Book: R. Gardner, A. Östör, 2001, *Making "Forest of Bliss": Intention, Circumstance, and Chance in Nonfiction Film*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

Option 2

Film: H. Harris, G. Breidenbach, 1970, *The Nuer*, DER, 73 min;

Book: E. E. Evans-Pritchards, *The Nuer: A description of the modes of livelihood and political institutions of a Nilotic people*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1940 (more recent editions are also appropriate);

Option 3

Film: Rouch J., Morin E., 1961, *Croniques d'un été*, Argos Film, Francia, 90 min;

Book: P. Henley, *The Adventure of the Real*, The University of Chicago Press, 2009;

Option 4

Film: Rouch J., 1955, *Les Maîtres fous*, Les Films de la Pléiade, Francia, 36 min

Book: P. Stoller, *The Cinematic Griot. The Ethnography of Jean Rouch*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1992.

Option 5

Film: D. MacDougall, *Gandhi's Children*, 2008, David MacDougall, 185 min.

Libro: D. MacDougall, *Transcultural Cinema*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1998.