Intercultural Encounters:
Through an Anthropological Lens
Dr. Anat Hecht

Course Number: 702.2967  Office Hours: Wed. 12:00 - 13:00 [By App.]
Class Time: Mondays, 12:00 - 15:00  Office Phone: +972-4-824-9693
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Course Description

In an increasingly mobile and cosmopolitan world, intercultural encounters play a significant role. Israel in general, and Haifa in particular offer a unique opportunity to explore and experience such encounters at first hand. The course introduces students to the field of intercultural encounters from an Anthropological perspective. The sessions address a verity of theoretical and methodological issues, such as: cultural diversity, identity and belonging, interculturality, self and other, sameness and difference, tolerance, conflict and dialogue; accompanied by the art and craft of qualitative research, from ethnography, material culture and narrative analysis to in-depth interviewing.

Special emphasis is consequently placed upon the qualitative study of intercultural encounters and identities within an overall ethnographic framework, which merges both narrative analysis and material culture exploration. The weekly sessions will be accompanied by several selected readings, movie-clips, photos and other means of enhancing class presentations and discussions. However, the main emphasis will be on the “hands-on” experience and practice of doing qualitative research, rather than merely reading about it on a theoretical level. Students will therefore be expected to complete a series of practical, ethnographic exercises and small-scale research assignments, as well as share their experiences in class.

Course Requirements (Overview)

- Weekly Reading & Written Response Notes.
- Research Assignments & Ethnographic Exercises.
- Active Class Participation & Critical Reading / Viewing.
- Mid-Term Paper & Classroom Oral Presentation (Power-Point).
- Final Term Paper (Individual, In-Depth Interviewing & Analysis).

Final Grade Distribution (Overview)

- Written Response Notes 10%
- Research Assignments & Ethnographic Exercises 20%
- Mid-Term Paper & Classroom Power-Point Presentation 30%
- Final Term Paper (Individual, In-Depth Interviewing & Analysis) 40%
Course Requirements & Assignments

The course is designed as an interactive, “hands-on” seminar and therefore requires students’ participation in assignments and class discussions. This entails responding to the course readings, lectures, presentations, movie-clips and other viewed materials, as well as sharing experiences of ethnographic exercises and research assignments with their fellow classmates.

Consequently, students are required to submit weekly response notes for each text we review. This includes choosing and transcribing three sentences, or paragraphs (in their entirety) that you consider particularly significant to understanding the issues being discussed that week in class. After each quote, write a short response, stating what is important about the passage you choose, and in what way was it meaningful for you, both academically and personally, in terms of the critical thoughts and intellectual / cultural / emotional responses it evoked.

In addition, students are required to submit written accounts of their ethnographic exercises and small-scale research assignments, as well as share these experiences in class.

The response notes and research assignments will not be corrected for grammar, spelling, etc., nor will they be graded. However, students will receive constructive comments on notes and, in particular, on the ethnographic exercises they present in class. All response notes, research assignments and ethnographic exercises must be submitted (via email) the day before we discuss these specific texts or assignments in class. These jointly constitute 30% of the overall grade. Points will be deducted for notes, exercises and assignments that are handed in late, or not at all.

Students are further required to submit a written mid-term paper (either individually or in pairs), which will summarize and demonstrate the theoretical readings, as well as the practical aspects discussed and experienced thus far. The written paper will be submitted (via email) and presented in class, as a power-point presentation. This constitutes an additional 30% of the overall grade.

The most crucial component is the final, individual term paper, which constitutes 40% of the overall grade. The paper will be based on conducting, transcribing, and analyzing five in-depth, life-story interviews, reflecting informants’ intercultural encounters, experiences and identity. The final paper must be submitted (via email) by the last day of term.

All of the obligatory reading materials (as well as some of the recommended reading) will be scanned for your use and available online, as part of the course’s website on Moodle. Copies of books and articles will also be available at the University’s library. An extensive syllabus, incorporating a week-by-week session summary, weekly required and recommend reading and detailed, ethnographic exercises and research assignments, will also be available on the course’s website, prior to the beginning of the Spring Term.
Reading Materials, By Theme

Identity, Diversity & Intercultural Encounters

Required Reading


Additional, Recommend Reading


The Anthropological Lens
Discourse, Practice & Experience

Required Reading

   Chapter Four: Observing, Participating.

   Chapter Three: Ethnography as A Way of Looking.
   Chapter Four: Ethnography as A Way of Seeing.

Additional, Recommend Reading

   In Particular: Chapter Five: Ethnography.


   In Particular: “Thick Description” and “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight”.

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**Doing Ethnography / Qualitative Research**  
Process, Stages & Tools

**Required Reading**

   Chapter Two: Designing Qualitative Research.  
   Chapter Twelve: Writing Research Papers: Sorting the Noodles From the Soup

   Chapter Two: Selecting Topics and Methods.

**Further, Recommend Reading**


**Merging Material Culture Analysis**  
With Narrative Analysis

**Required Reading**

   Introduction: What Is Narrative Research?

   Chapter Seven: Material Culture and Identity.  
   Chapter Eight: Material Culture, Narratives and Social Performance.

Further, Recommend Reading

On Material Culture


   In Particular: Chapter One: The Material as Culture.
   Chapter Six: Objects and Distinction.

Further, Recommend Reading

On Narrative Culture


   In Particular: Chapter Five: Interviewing.

The Art of Interviewing

Required Reading

   Chapter Five: In Depth Interviewing.
   Chapter Six: The Life Story Interview.
   Chapter Forty-One: Their Story / My Story / Our Story.

   Chapter Ten: Transcribing Interviews
   Chapter Twelve: Interview Analysis: Focusing on Meaning.
   Chapter Thirteen: Interview Analysis: Focusing on Language.

Further, Recommend Reading


* There may be minor changes to the core, required reading.
   Please ensure you check the full syllabus, online –
   Prior to the beginning of term.

   Many thanks,
   Anat