Introduction to Expressive Culture
Anthropology 305 – 30574 - Spring 2015

Tues. & Thurs.  9:30am – 11:00am
Location: UTC 3.124
Website: www.metafactory.ca/ANT305
Canvas: canvas.utexas.edu

Instructor:

Craig Campbell [craig.campbell@utexas.edu]
Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:30 - 2:30pm (SAC 4.122)

Teaching Assistants:

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Office Hours: TBA

Course Description

This course will focus on forms of expressive culture in everyday life in a variety of locations and historical periods. Expressive culture isn’t a clearly defined area of study. It isn’t a well-bounded cultural event or set of practices. A conventional approach suggests that ‘expressive culture’ might be understood as an intentional and creative act. Expressive culture gives us a broadly applicable term that allows for a loose and flexible mode of inquiry.

The purpose of this class is to focus on creative acts, events, and encounters. It is to develop tools for analyzing them. What is a Mexican border Corrido? What is the importance of mountains and rivers to Tuvan Xoomei singers? Why is the Victory Lounge located in East Austin? Who is Giveup, Fail, or Banksy? What is Christene’s album “Waist up, kneeze down” all about? We’re asking questions of this world we live in; in this class we’re gathering, developing, and honing tools and tool kits for observation and description.

While we will study individual artists and creators as well as audiences we will also look at larger questions of tradition, continuity, change and expression. Central to this is an inquiry into the historicization of cultural assumptions. By pursuing this line of inquiry we will be developing a tool kit for thinking critically about the world around ourselves. Locating this in broader anthropological conversations, ‘Expressive Culture’ connects to critical world-shaping processes like representation, colonialism and imperial power, race and ethnicity, gender identity, pleasure, politics, and the everyday.
Structure.

Tuesday and Thursday classes will be a mix of lectures, in-class assignments and activities, quizzes, and media screenings.

Readings.

Most readings will be available as .pdf files on the Canvas site for the course or through the University Library. There is one required book that can be purchased at the Co-op bookstore (see below). All listed reading is required unless otherwise indicated.


Assignments and evaluation:

All assignments must be handed in on time and in hard copy. We do not accept emailed assignments. Late assignments will lose 10% per day they are late.

Attendance

You are required to be here on time and with readings and assignments completed on the day they are to be discussed or handed in. You are also expected to come to class punctually and remain throughout class. Consistent tardiness, early departures and frequent absences will lower your grade. Regular disruptions (tardiness or talking or using electronic devices in class) can result in reduction of your grade by a grade point (ie. from an A to an A-).

- Book test. 15%
- Pop quizzes. 25%
- Short writing assignments. 40%
- Final paper. 20%

Book test.

You will be tested on the Highmore book. This test is worth 15% of your final grade. The test will be comprised of short answer questions.

Pop quizzes 25%
There will be five unannounced pop quizzes. They will be based on the readings for that week. The quizzes are meant to test you on your general understanding. If you do not have a prior excuse for missing class there will be no re-test.

**Short writing assignments 40%**

There will be five writing assignments and they are worth ten points each, we will choose the best four of five grades which will count for a total of 40% of your final grade.

**Final paper 20%**

Due May 9th.
A 1500 word essay (roughly four pages). See handout for additional details.

**Conduct**

There is some room for discussion in this class and just as comments are encouraged so too is respect and attention. We strive to make this class a safe space for all students. Many of the ideas we will encounter will be difficult and controversial. Thoughtful and respectful disagreement during discussion is encouraged; malicious attacks, interrupting classmates, or other outbursts will not be tolerated. Any student displaying disrespect in any way will be asked to leave. Remember though, disagreement is not the same thing as disrespect; you should feel welcome to voice dissent in this space.

The professor and teaching assistants pledge to make this class a welcoming and safe place for all people regardless of race, gender, class, and sexual orientation.

**Policy on laptops, cell phones, and other electronic devices**

Use of laptops, tablets, and cell phones in class is prohibited.

After years of teaching I have found that laptops and other electronic devices have a generally negative effect on learning. Firstly, there is credible evidence to suggest that taking notes on a laptop is less effective for comprehension than longhand note taking.¹

The present research suggests that even when laptops are used solely to take notes, they may still be impairing learning because their use results in shallower processing. In three studies, we found that students who took notes on laptops performed worse on conceptual questions than students who took notes longhand. We show that whereas taking more notes can be beneficial, laptop note takers' tendency to transcribe lectures verbatim rather than processing information and reframing it in their own words is detrimental to learning.²

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Thus it is in your best interest to take handwritten notes. More importantly, though, electronic devices and screens in class are distracting to myself and others, even when they’re used legitimately. When they are used for other purposes (emails, other school work, social networking, shopping, etc.) they are disrespectful and they contribute to a distracted and demoralizing learning environment. Finally, the ability to pay attention and take written notes for just over an hour is a basic skill that you need to develop while you’re at the University. It is also one of the critical skills needed by ethnographers who undertake anthropological field work. The capacity to observe and take notes however is not an obvious and intuitive skill, it is something that you can and must learn to do. It is a practice you should cultivate while you are a student.

For this reason laptops, cell phones, tablets, and other electronic devices are not welcome in the class room. We expect you to mute your phones. If it is absolutely imperative for you to take or make a call during class, please get up and leave class in a way that does not disturb your classmates. If you need to leave your cell phone on in “Silent” mode because of an ongoing emergency situation that you may need to respond to or have some other extraordinary situation, please speak to me at the start of class to let me know.

Other resources

This course may be used to fulfill the social and behavioral sciences component of the university core curriculum and addresses the following four core objectives established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board: communication skills, critical thinking skills, empirical and quantitative skills, and social responsibility.

Documented Disability Statement

- Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone) or http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd.

Notice regarding academic dishonesty

- Honor Code or statement of ethics.
  - University of Texas Honor Code: The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.
  - Explanation or example of what constitutes plagiarism
- Web site for more information: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/learningmodules/plagiarism
Religious Holy Days
• By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)
• If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual’s behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal

Resources for Learning & Life at UT Austin
• The University of Texas has numerous resources for students to provide assistance and support for your learning.
  o Sanger Learning and Career Center: http://lifelearning.utexas.edu/
  o Undergraduate Writing Center: http://uwc.utexas.edu/
  o Counseling & Mental Health Center: http://cmhc.utexas.edu/
  o Career Exploration Center: http://www.utexas.edu/student/careercenter/
  o Student Emergency Services: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/