

# ANTH 196M: Modernity and Its Others

Professor M. Fernando

Fall 2014

<http://modernityanditsothers.wordpress.com/>



**Course Meetings:** M/W 5-6:45, Social Science 2 Room 363

**Office Hours:** Wednesdays 2-3:15 and by appointment

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## Course Description

This course will examine how the rational, scientific framework that ostensibly defines Western modernity has interpreted various forms of radical difference. Beginning with the conquest of the New World in the fifteenth century, we will consider historical and contemporary examples of how Western thinkers have sought to explain seemingly “irrational” ways of being, thinking, and acting. We will focus especially on the social sciences, analyzing the various “scientific” tropes through which scholars have made sense of radical forms of otherness. Some of the themes we examine are: indigenous life as the state of nature, religion and/as capitalism, witchcraft and/as social order, voodoo, and djinn visitation. Throughout the course we will ask: how do we interpret and analyze beliefs, practices, and life-worlds radically different from our own?

Since this is a writing-intensive senior seminar, students will research a relevant topic that will culminate in a senior research paper of 20 pages. The course is structured to facilitate writing as a collaborative process: students will work in writing groups of 3-4 students and will submit numerous drafts to me and to other students for commentary.

**Required Texts** (Course Reader plus a few books) are available at the Literary Guillotine (204 Locust Street in downtown Santa Cruz). The required books (but not the Course Reader) will also be on reserve at McHenry Library. Please make sure you have all the required texts:

- Max Weber – *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Penguin Classics, 2002)
- Karen McCarthy Brown, *Mama Lola: A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn* (University of California Press, 2011)
- Amira Mittermeier, *Dreams That Matter: Egyptian Landscapes of the Imagination* (University of California Press, 2010)
- Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul: The Encounter of Catholics and Cannibals in 16<sup>th</sup>-Century Brazil* (Prickly Paradigm Press, 2011)
- Amos Tutuola, *The Palm Wine Drinkard & My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* (Grove Press, 1993)

## ASSIGNMENTS

### Assignments/Evaluation

Reading and Participation (includes attendance and response papers): 40%

Drafts of Senior Research Paper, Progress, and Writing Group participation: 20%

Final Senior Research Paper: 40%

### Reading and Participation

It is imperative that all students do the assigned reading before the class period for which it is due. Please also bring the session's assigned reading to class.

**Participation:** Since this is a seminar, the success of the class depends on your active participation. I expect you to come to class having read and thought about *all* of the materials due for that session, including the response posts of your colleagues. This means being ready for discussion every time.

**Response Posts:** At the beginning of the course, you will be assigned to Group 1, 2 or 3 and will be responsible for writing a short (1 or 2 paragraphs) informal response to the reading for a particular session and posting it to our class blog. These posts are intended less as “response papers” and more as short pieces of critical analysis. Do not summarize the text; rather, find a compelling moment in the text, a running theme, a tension, or a connection to something else we have read in class and explore it as carefully as you can in your post. Think of this response post as the beginning of a larger discussion for the class – in fact, you can pose a series of discussion questions for the rest of the class as part of your response post.

**Attendance:** You are required to attend class, but you may miss up to one meeting – excused, or unexcused – without penalty. After this, your overall grade for the course will drop by one sub-grade increment (ex. If you have otherwise earned an A in the course, you will receive an A-, etc.). If you miss class, it is your responsibility to inform yourself of any assignments/handouts/ changes to the syllabus you will have missed by asking your fellow students and getting notes from them.

### Senior Essay

Your Senior Research Paper (20 pages double spaced, excluding bibliography and title page) is the culmination of an entire quarter of original research and thinking. Your research paper (topic to be chosen in conversation with me) will address and analyze a particular historical or contemporary case study pertaining to the themes of the course. For example, you could use a 1993 religious freedom case on animal sacrifice in Florida, or do a close reading of the film *The Serpent and the Rainbow* and reactions to it, to study how Haitian vodou is constructed as an Other to proper religion in the United States.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of the course, you should be able to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the theoretical concepts that we have discussed as a class in our assigned readings. You should also be able to do some original research and gather primary evidentiary material in ethnographic, archival, or textual form. Your research paper will bring together these two forms of learning. In addition to demonstrating a thorough understanding of the theoretical concepts that we have discussed as a class, you must show that you have thought about and engaged these concepts via your research on your unique topic. You will be evaluated on your research, argument, and analysis of a particular historical or contemporary case study.

Disciplinary Communication: The course will also teach you the conventions of writing in the discipline of anthropology, and your Senior Essay should demonstrate your grasp of those conventions. To that end, we will workshop individual drafts as a group and discuss discipline-specific expectations and conventions of data-presentation, argumentation, use of evidence, citation, etc. In order to model these disciplinary conventions, we will also use reading assignments to discuss these issues throughout the course.

### **Writing Group and Drafts**

After you have turned in your topics (due Week 3), I will assign you to a 3-4-person writing group based on your research interests. In addition to turning in the outlines and drafts of your senior research paper to me, you will turn copies in to your writing group as well. You will be responsible for providing thoughtful and constructive criticism on each assignment to each group member *in typed, written form* (either “track changes” on Microsoft Word that can be printed or comments in a separate word document listing page numbers and specific sentences/paragraph of the draft on which you are commenting). At the end of the quarter, you will write an evaluation for each group member discussing on how helpful her/his comments were to you.

Since writing is an dynamic process, when you turn in your senior essay at the end of the quarter, you will also turn in a **portfolio** that includes: all of your drafts and outlines that your group members and I have commented upon, as well as your evaluations of your group members. You will be graded on how well you have incorporated our comments; you will also be graded on the thoughtfulness and helpfulness of your comments on your group members’ work.

**Final note:** I do not consider a syllabus a static document and, depending on the needs of the course as it unfolds, may consider changing or amending the syllabus.

## **READING SCHEDULE**

### **Weeks 1 & 2: The New World as the State of Nature**

#### Monday 10/6

Introductions

Watch parts of *The New World* (Terrence Malick, 2005)

#### Wednesday 10/8 (G1)

Michel de Montaigne, “On the Cannibals” and “On Habit” in *The Essays of Michel de Montaigne* [eCommons]

Watch *The Mission* (Roland Joffé, 1986) [on reserve at McHenry Media Center]

Monday 10/13 (G2)

Denis Diderot, "Supplement to Bougainville's 'Voyage'" in *Diderot: Political Writings* [Reader]

### **Weeks 2 & 3: Spirits and/of Capitalism**

Wednesday 10/15 (G3)

Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Penguin Classics, 2002), pp. 1-36 ("Part I: The Problem")

Monday 10/20 (G1)

Weber, pp. 67-87 ("The Religious Foundations of Innerworldly Asceticism: Calvinism") and pp. 105-122 ("Asceticism and the Capitalist Spirit")

DUE: Research topic (paragraph on general direction of research and questions you are interested in answering)

Wednesday 10/22 (G2)

Michael Taussig, *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America*, Chapters 2 (pp.13-37), 8 (143-154), and Conclusion (229-233) [Reader]

RECEIVE: Feedback from me on research topic

### **Week 4: Witchcraft and "Native" Rationality**

Monday 10/27 (G3)

E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*, pp. 1-2, 6-15, 18-32, 45-55, 120-126 [Reader]

Wednesday 10/29 (G1)

Evans-Pritchard, continued, pp. 134-145, 176-204, 221-225 [Reader]

DUE: Research Topic and Preliminary Bibliography (descriptive paragraph, hypothesis, and 10-15 books and articles, properly cited – no more than 3 web sources)

### **Week 5: Alterity and the Social Sciences**

Monday 11/3 (G2)

Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Translating Life-Worlds into Labor and History" in *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* [Reader]

Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "Anthropology and the Savage Slot" in *Global Transformations* [Reader]

DUE: Annotated bibliography (1 paragraph description of the main arguments for half of the books/articles you are using and how you intend to use them)

Wednesday 11/5 (G3)

Wade Davis, Excerpts from *The Serpent and the Rainbow* [Reader]

RECEIVE: writing groups assignments and feedback on annotated bibliography

**Week 6 & 7: Other Worlds**

Monday 11/10:

NO CLASS

Karen McCarthy Brown, *Mama Lola: A Voodoo Priestess in Brooklyn* (University of California Press, 2011) [Chapters TBA]

Read for your final research paper

Wednesday 11/12 (G1)

Karen McCarthy Brown, *Mama Lola: A Voodoo Priestess in Brooklyn* (University of California Press, 2011) [Chapter TBA]

Continue reading for your final research paper

NOTE: FRIDAY NOVEMBER 14<sup>th</sup>: Wade Davis Lecture

Monday 11/17 (G2)

Amira Mittermeier, *Dreams That Matter: Egyptian Landscapes of the Imagination* (University of California Press, 2010) [Chapters TBA]

DUE: Outline (including thesis statement, statement of your sub-arguments for each section, list of sources for each section, and approximation of page numbers for each section) to me and writing group

Wednesday 11/19 (G3)

Amira Mittermeier, *Dreams That Matter: Egyptian Landscapes of the Imagination* (University of California Press, 2010) [Chapters TBA]

DUE: Comments to writing group members on their outlines

RECEIVE: My and group members' comments on outlines

**Week 8, 9, 10: Writing Alterity**

Monday 11/24

In-class FILM

Start: Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul: The Encounter of Catholics and Cannibals in 16<sup>th</sup>-Century Brazil* (Prickly Paradigm Press, 2011)

DUE: First draft (4-5 pages, including introduction, forecast paragraph, and theoretical/methodological explication) to me and writing group

Wednesday 11/26: NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)

Monday 12/1

Finish: Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul: The Encounter of Catholics and Cannibals in 16<sup>th</sup>-Century Brazil* (Prickly Paradigm Press, 2011)

DUE: Written comments to writing group members on 4-5 page draft

RECEIVE: Written comments from me and group members on 4-5 page draft

Wednesday 12/3

NO CLASS (AAAs)

Start: Amos Tutuola, *The Palm Wine Drinkard & My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* (Grove Press, 1994)

Monday 12/8

Finish: Amos Tutuola, *The Palm Wine Drinkard & My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* (Grove Press, 1994)

DUE: 10-12 page draft to me and to writing group members

Wednesday 12/10

Last class – Final Thoughts

Group meetings in class

DUE: Written comments due to group members on 10-12 page draft

RECEIVE: Written comments from me and group members on 10-12 page draft

**\*\*Monday 12/15\*\***

**FINAL PAPER DUE (plus Portfolio of drafts and evaluations of writing group members)**

## COURSE POLICIES

**All mobile phones, pagers and other electronic devices must be turned off during class time – no texting during class, please.** Remember to always be respectful of others, to arrive on time, and to not talk when others (including myself) are talking or presenting their work.

**Assignment Deadlines:** Unless you have a valid excuse verified by appropriate *official* documentation, late assignments will be penalized. I will not accept emailed submissions of any assignments unless otherwise specified. Make sure to save your work frequently and in multiple formats to ensure that you do not lose your work.

**Email:** Feel free to email me if you wish to schedule an appointment if you cannot make office hours, or to ask brief questions. Please allow at least 24 hours for me to respond to your message (48 hours on weekends). In order to discuss lengthier questions about drafts of your paper or your presentation, please stop by my office hours or arrange an appointment with me.

**Disabilities:** If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Resource Center, 146 Hahn Student Services, (831) 459-2089, [drc@ucsc.edu](mailto:drc@ucsc.edu). They will determine with you what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. If your physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability requires special consideration, you need to inform me (and provide proper documentation) at the beginning of the course. I am committed to helping you benefit from the lectures and assignments in any way that I can. All information and documentation is confidential. For procedures and information go to the following web site: [http://www2.ucsc.edu/drc/current\\_students/](http://www2.ucsc.edu/drc/current_students/)

**Plagiarism:** The University does not tolerate plagiarism or any form of cheating during in-class exams (see <http://nettrail.ucsc.edu/> - Section XI, Info Ethics). Be aware that plagiarism is academic theft, and I will report you accordingly. When writing papers, students need to document sources properly. Never use an author's words/ideas without giving the author proper credit through citation. You must cite your sources not only for direct quotations, but also for paraphrasing and summarizing another work in your own words, as well as for information or knowledge that is not considered to be common knowledge. Please refer to the University policy on academic honesty for more information.

\*Style guides such as the MLA guide for proper citation methods are available through the UCSC Library's Citation Style Guides:

<http://library.ucsc.edu/science/instruction/CitingSources.pdf>

<http://library.ucsc.edu/science/sciref.html> [http://library.ucsc.edu/ref/howto/mla\\_citations.html](http://library.ucsc.edu/ref/howto/mla_citations.html)

If you have any questions about this issue (and particularly if you are new to UCSC), please come and see me before you hand in a paper.