Anthropology as a discipline has developed around the question of the “Other.” Originating as the supplier of colonial knowledge to imperial forces in need of understanding the colonized, anthropology retains a popular image of being preoccupied with remote and often exotic societies (as you will find in the recent movie “Avatar” by James Cameron, which we shall examine in this course). What is less known is how at the core of anthropology lies the question of the global circulation of money, goods, knowledge, power, and people across cultural and spatial boundaries, which is the focus of this course. Ethnographic fieldwork—one of the primary methodological tools for anthropologists—is itself an integral part of such circulation, forcing anthropologists in recent years to critically examine the roles they play in observing, representing, and analyzing the “Other.” As a result, much anthropological focus has shifted to understanding the global structures that produce and subjugate the Other, often through violent means. This course introduces you to methodological and analytical tools that anthropologists use to make sense of and engage with violence and injustice in both distant places and within our local communities. In doing so it shows the potential and challenges of anthropology in addressing the suffering of others brought forth by the global political economy. This course thus serves as an introduction to the perspective of the ethnographic eye: in other words, what do you see when you wear anthropological glasses? What actions will you take once you learn to see through the lens of anthropology?

Textbooks & Required Readings:
All the required readings are available on BLACKBOARD.

Course Requirements:

(1) Readings & Discussion Board:
You are required to submit a brief reflection on the assigned reading to your designated section Blackboard Discussion Board (under "Communication") at noon on the day before the class (Sunday at noon for the Monday class, and Wednesday at noon for the Thursday class. Please respect the deadline! The blackboard folder closes after the deadline, and late submission does not receive any credit.).

This brief reflection note should include the following:

a. What you consider as the most important/interesting aspect of the author's argument and why you think is important/interesting.

b. What you consider as important questions arising from reading the text.

(2) Mini-Fieldwork Project:
A two-page (single-space, one-inch margin, Times New Roman 12pt) ethnographic essay based on the mini-fieldwork project assigned in class. You are expected to conduct a mini fieldwork, take field notes, and analyze your observation and findings by using concepts and analytical tools you learn in the reading and classroom discussions.

(4) Fieldwork Training Program Certification (CITI Certificate):

Before starting your mini-fieldwork project, you are expected to complete the online training program. Without submitting the certificate that confirms the successful completion of this program, you will not receive your fieldwork grade.

(4) History Project:

A two-page (single-space, one-inch margin, Times New Roman 12pt) essay based on the history project assigned in class.

(5) Exams:

There will be three exams during the semester and final exams at the end of the semester.

Grading:

Active participation in lecture class and Blackboard discussion: 20%
Mini-fieldwork Essay & CITI Certification: 20%
Mini-fieldwork Presentation: 10%
History project: 20%
Exams 1-3: 15%
Final exam: 15%

*Note that this syllabus may be modified during the semester.

Learning Objectives of the Course:

Approaching this class with a good attitude and fulfilling the requirements in both letter and spirit will give you:

• An introduction to methodological and analytical tools that anthropologists use to make sense of and engage with violence and injustice in both distant places and within our local communities;
• An understanding of the underlying architecture of our modern global system, with a strong focus on the global circulation of money, goods, knowledge, power, and people across cultural and spatial boundaries;
• The ability to intelligently discuss contemporary issues concerning development, global political economy, environment, inequality and justice, structural violence, humanitarian intervention, and wars and their aftermaths.
• Experience conducting original ethnographic research and skills for presenting your findings in front of your peers;
• Practice in writing ethnographic essays through ethnographic field research and history projects;
• *Practice in analytical reading and writing*, which includes synthesizing different perspectives, taking good notes, and developing your own voice;
• A *multi-perspectival view* of global problems drawn from anthropological methodologies;
• *Insights into your own role* as a member of society as you navigate your encounters, choices, and interactions at the local and global scale.

**How to do well in this course:**

1. If you are not going to do the reading, please do not take the class. If you don’t do the reading, you will not do well in the class. The lecture notes are not enough to pass the exams or complete ethnographic projects in a satisfactory manner. Besides, lectures and discussions will make no sense if you don’t do the reading, and that you would end up wasting your time.

   Also, it is important to read the assigned readings *before* the class, so that we can have interesting and productive discussions in class. The course will be a lot more fruitful for all of us if you ask questions that engender discussions among your classmates. So, please be prepared.

   Class participation will be judged by level of preparation, engagement in class and in Blackboard discussion groups, and generosity to other students.

   You might want to ask: "How can I do the reading effectively and prepare for the class?"

   • Take notes as you read. Pay attention to the questions authors pose, why they ask these questions, how they attempt to answer these questions, and what their arguments are. And don’t forget to write down your own response to these points — do you find their arguments convincing? If not, why?
   • Summarize authors’ arguments concisely. Once you have the reading notes outlined above, then sit back and write them up in a concise paragraph.
   • Pose questions. Now is the time to share what you think about what is presented to you by the authors.

2. The keystone of this class is your work researching and writing a short ethnography based on your mini-fieldwork in New York and an ethnographic essay based on your oral history project. These hands-on projects will allow you to look in-depth at the issues we are covering in the course. The point of these assignments is to get you involved in a real-life situation and see how your “school learning” can be of use in the world. Your TA and I can assist you in identifying possible approaches.

   Good writing goes a long way. You are strongly encouraged to use the tutoring service available at the Reading/Writing Center (in Thomas Hunter, Room 416; Phone 212-772-4212) to write and polish your assigned essays before submission. The Center offers tutorial assistance free of charge, so why not use this wonderful service? You can find more information:

   http://rwc.hunter.cuny.edu/reading-writing/student-guide.html

3. Please regularly read *The New York Times* and follow other media to increase your general knowledge about what is happening in the world.

**Classroom Etiquette:** Please do your part to make our class productive. That means:

- Respect your classmates and respect yourself. Being a good listener is the first step to becoming a good speaker, who can ignite and facilitate productive discussion. How you speak is as important as what you speak.
- Please, please, please turn off your phones.

Computers & Electric Devices in Class: Using computers and other electric devices are not allowed in class. If you have special needs to take notes with these devices, please contact the instructor.

Missed Classes: Attendance is mandatory, and more than three missed class will result in grade penalty. As a courtesy, if you have to miss your class, please send a note explaining the reason to the instructor.

Late Submission of Assignments: Late submission of assignments will not receive any credit for the assignment. We all face various time constraints, and learning to manage time is an important part of learning. This policy is a way of being fair to those who submit their assignments on time (which we all should do!).

Cheating and Plagiarism: I expect that you will study with classmates for the course projects and exams – in fact, I encourage it. Nevertheless, your papers and exams should be the product of your own work. It is also important to learn how to use citations. Any ideas that you acquired from other people (including key concepts or phrases coined by other people) should be acknowledged with appropriate citation. Signaling how you have come up with your own idea in this manner is what is expected and valued in academic writing.

In cases where any form of intellectual dishonesty is confirmed, at a minimum, you will fail the class. Cheating and plagiarism carry heavy penalties, and you should learn and follow the rules.

HUNTER COLLEGE POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The Hunter College Senate requires that the following statement be included on all syllabi:

“Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures.”

Notes on Communication:

In principle, you should expect a reply to your e-mail message to the instructor and TA within 48 hours. If you don’t get a reply after 48 hours, you should resend the message with a note in case the original message got lost in the cyberspace. Please use the subject line to indicate clearly and succinctly the purpose of the message to get our attention! Please also make sure to sign your full name at the end of your message so that we know who is writing sending us the message!

Blackboard allows the instructor to email individual students or the entire group, but it only uses Hunter email addresses that students receive automatically when enrolling at the College. It is important that you activate your Hunter email address and check it frequently or that you set it to forward messages to an account that you check frequently.

Please note that the instructor or TAs cannot resolve technical problems with Blackboard. For problems with Blackboard, contact instructional computing at 212-772-4946 or 212-650-3275 or e-mail bb@hunter.cuny.edu.
PART I:
ENCOUNTERS: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF OTHERNESS AND
ETHNOGRAPHIC EYE/I

QUESTIONS: What do you see when you wear anthropological glasses? What is “fieldwork,” and what is “ethnography”?

Course Introduction (08/27)

UNIT 1: Political Economy of (Post)colonial Encounters

- 08/31 Discussion of “Avatar,” directed by James Cameron. Please watch the film before coming to the class. [DVD on RESERVE; also available from: iTunes ($2.99); Google Play ($12.99); Amazon Instant Video ($12.99)]
- 09/10 Tsing, Friction, Chapter 2, pp. 55-87. [BLACKBOARD]

UNIT 2: The Ethnographic Eye

QUESTIONS: How do we represent the world as it is? What do ethnographic observations allow us to see what is difficult to see through other means? What are other methods of observing and representing the world as it is?

- 09/21 Discuss the Mini-Fieldwork Project. Please complete the CITI Training online and bring (1) CITI Training Certificate, and (2) IRB Classroom Practica Student Certification Form to class.

START WORKING ON YOUR MINI-FIELDWORK PROJECT.


10/01 EXAM No. 1 (Please bring #2 pencil & eraser)
UNIT 3: Mini-Fieldwork Projects

10/03 MINI-FIELDWORK ASSIGNMENT (DRAFT ETHNOGRAPHY) DUE on Saturday, October 3 at noon (post to Discussion Board):

Post your ethnography (2 pages, single-space, 1 inch margin, Times New Roman 12pt) to the presentation group discussion board.

PLEASE READ YOUR GROUP MATES’ ETHNOGRAPHIES (1) in order to prepare for your group presentation, and (2) in order to improve your own ethnography.

• 10/05 Discussion of Mini-fieldwork and writing ethnography.
• 10/08 In-class preparation of group presentations.
• 10/15 In-class preparation of group presentations.

10/15 THE FINAL VERSION OF MINI-FIELDWORK ASSIGNMENT IS DUE ON OCTOBER 15 AT NOON (post to Discussion Board) and BRING A COPY TO CLASS:

Post your ethnography (2 pages, single-space, 1 inch margin, Times New Roman 12pt) to presentation group discussion board, AND bring a hard copy to class.

• 10/19 Group presentation
• 10/22 Group presentation

10/26 EXAM No. 2 (Please bring #2 pencil & eraser)

PART II:
INTERVENTION: THE MORAL ECONOMY OF SAVING OTHERS

QUESTIONS: So you want to do something about the injustice and violence. Who is being saved, who is doing the saving, and who gets to be saved? What’s being produced in the process of saving others?

UNIT 4: Exploitation, Silencing, and Structural Violence


UNIT 5: The Politics of Saving the Other

• 11/05 In-class Film Screening: “Living in Emergency: Stories of Doctors Without Borders,” directed by Mark N. Hopkins (USA, 2008, 93 min).


• 11/16 Continue discussing The Gift.
11/19 EXAM No. 3 (Please bring #2 pencil & eraser)

PART III:  
VOICE: REPRESENTING THE SUFFERING OF OTHERS

QUESTIONS: How do we understand and represent sufferings of others, who have become “invisible” and whose voices have been silenced? Whose voice tells which story? And what’s at stake in the telling?

UNIT 6: Production of "Victims" and Giving Voice to the Silenced


ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE HISTORY PROJECT.

START PLANNING YOUR HISTORY PROJECT OVER THE THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY! THE ESSAY IS DUE AT NOON ON DECEMBER 7.

- 11/30 In-Class Film Screening: “50 Years of Silence,” directed by Ned Lander, Carol Ruff, and James Bradley (1994 Australia, 57 min.).
- 12/07 In-Class Film Screening: “The Look of Silence” directed by Joshua Oppenheimer (2014 Denmark, Finland, Indonesia, Norway, and US, 103 min). We will discuss this film on 12/10.

12/07 HISTORY PROJECT DUE AT NOON DECEMBER 7 (post to the discussion board) and bring a copy to class.

Post your History Project essay (2 pages, single-space, 1 inch margin, Times New Roman 12pt) to discussion board, AND bring a hard copy to class.

CONCLUSION:  
ETHICS AND RESPONSIBILITY OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

UNIT 7: Social Suffering and Anthropological Knowledge

QUESTIONS: What is the responsibility of anthropologists? What do anthropologists owe their informants?

- 12/10 Discussion of “The Look of Silence” along with Kleinman and Kleinman, “The Appeal of Experience.”

12/14 FINAL EXAM (Please bring a pencil & eraser)