**ANT231/ ENT231: BUSINESS ANTHROPOLOGY**

Tuesdays & Thursdays

3:00PM-4:20PM

Instructor: Dr. Christina T. Collins

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Office: 123 Aaron Burr Hall

Office Hours: Thursday 12:30PM- 2:30PM

**Course Description:**

Anthropology provides creative insights and solutions for tackling business problems often overlooked by more data-driven approaches. From the practical (e.g. how to design a user-friendly digital platform) to the ethical (e.g. what are the responsibilities of a corporation to society), this course examines how individual scholars and companies use anthropology to study, critique, and/or meet the needs of the private sector.

Readings will include literature from 1) anthropologists who study companies from within, 2) anthropologists/activists who challenge business practices from afar, and 3) applied-anthropologists solving everyday business problems through ethnographic research.[[1]](#footnote-1) These approaches will not be considered separately but integrated across two six-week blocks of class discussions. The first six weeks (*Part I: Anthropology & the Private Sector)* will introduce students to an anthropological toolkit of theories, methodologies, and practices as they connect to organizational theory, market research, branding, design, activism, and corporate personhood. The second six weeks (*Part II: Industry-Specific Ethnographies*) applies this knowledge to industry-specific ethnographies on finance, management/consulting, user experience research, advertising, manufacturing, and corporate social responsibility programming.

The goal of this course is to provide students with the analytical tools needed to apply anthropological knowledge to their interests in business, whether those interests be theoretical, applied, or activist-oriented.

**Course Requirements and Assignments:**

Participation: Students are expected to contribute to class discussions and activities. Attendance will be taken each class. Students may have *up to* *two unexcused absences*. More than two unexcused absences will result in a lowered participation grade. Please contact the instructor for excused absences (e.g. doctor’s notes, job interviews, extenuating circumstances, etc.) before the missed class.

Assigned Readings: This course requires approximately 100-150 pages of reading per week. Readings will be made available online through Blackboard and at Labyrinth Books (see below for books available for purchase).

Reading Response Papers: Each student is responsible for submitting *4 reading response papers* during the semester. Papers should summarize key topics and themes of assigned readings + connect the readings to a business problem that interests the student. Each paper should be 1-2 pages, double spaced (350-400 words) in Times New Roman font. Submit via email to the instructor before the assigned reading class date (Tuesday or Thursday) by 2:59 PM. Late papers will be penalized. Please note that the first two papers are due before fall recess, while the second two are due before winter break. I advise students to approach these papers strategically and use them as a groundwork for their final assignment.

Quizzes: There will be two short quizzes (15-multiple choice questions + 1 bonus question) administered during the semester. Quizzes address topics discussed during the lecture portion of class (see section on Classroom Structure).

Mid-Term Exam: This in-class written exam will address class lectures and readings from the first six weeks of the course.

Final Paper: Students will apply course materials to a business problem of their interest and/or case study. Final paper topics must be approved by the instructor before winter vacation commences. Final papers should be 6-8 pages, double-spaced in Times New Roman font.

**Classroom Structure**

Generally, classes will be divided into two parts: lecture and activity. At the beginning of each lesson, the instructor will distribute a *worksheet* that outlines the lecture topics for the day. Please keep track of these worksheets as they are the source material for Quiz #1 and #2. Lectures will include discussion of course readings. Class activities will challenge students to apply lecture/discussion topics to real-world business problems.

**Summary of Grading Breakdown**

15% Participation

20% Reading Responses

20% Quizzes

20% Midterm Exam

25% Final Paper

**Exam Dates & Paper Deadlines**

Reading Response Papers 1&2 (submitted before fall recess)

Reading Response Papers 3 &4 (submitted after fall recess/ before winter vacation)

Quiz #1 (10/08)

Midterm Exam (10/24)

Quiz #2 (12/10)

Final Paper Topics (12/12)

Final Paper (01/14)

**Books Available for Purchase @ Labyrinth**

Madsbjerg, Christian and Mikkel B. Rasmussen. 2014. *The Moment of Clarity: Using the Human Sciences to Solve Your Toughest Business Problems*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business Review Press.

Ouroussoff, Alexandra. 2010. *Wall Street at War: The Secret Struggle for the Global Economy*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

**09/12: Why Business Anthropology?**

* Powell, Elisabeth. 2019. “Why Businesses and Consumers Need Us.” *Journal of Business Anthropology* Vol 8, no.1, pp. 126-138.

PART I: ANTHROPOLOGY & THE PRIVATE SECTOR

**09/17: Navigating the Culture of Doing Business**

* Jordan, Ann. 2013. *Business Anthropology* 2nd edition. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc, pp. 1-7, 43-62, 100-109.
* Kunda, Gideon. 2006. *Engineering Culture: Control and Commitment in a High-Tech Corporation*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, pp. vii-xi, pp. 1-25.
* Kasmir, Sharryn. 2001. “Corporation, Self, and Enterprise at the Saturn Automobile Plant.” *Anthropology of Work Review* 22, no. 4, pp. 8-12.

**09/19: Design and Anthropology—Introduction**

* Gunn, Wendy et al. 2013. “Design Anthropology: A Distinct Style of Knowing.” In *Design Anthropology: Theory and Practice* edited by Wendy Gunn, Ton Otto and Rachel Charlotte Smith. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 1-29.
* Kjaersgaard, Mette Gislev. 2013. “(Trans)forming Knowledge and Design Concepts in the Design Workshop.” In *Design Anthropology: Theory and Practice* edited by Wendy Gunn, Ton Otto and Rachel Charlotte Smith. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 51-65.
* Ingold, Tim. 2012. “Introduction: The Perception of the User-Producer.” In *Design and Anthropology* edited by Wendy Gunn and Jared Donovan, pp. 19-33.

**09/24: Design and Anthropology—Lived Space**

* Schull, Natasha D. *Addiction by Design: Machine Gambling in Las Vegas*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 29-75.
* Garvey, Pauline. 2010. “Consuming Ikea: Inspiration as Material Form.” In *Design Anthropology: Object Culture in the 21st Century* edited by Alison J. Clarke. New York: Springer Wien, pp. 142-154.

**09/26: Design and Anthropology—Digital Space**

* Smith, Rachel Charlotte. 2013. “Designing Heritage for a Digital Culture.” *Design Anthropology: Theory and Practice* edited by Wendy Gunn, Ton Otto, and Rachel Charlotte Smith. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 117-135.
* Wasson, Christina et al. 2018. “Designing for Diverse User Groups: Case Study of a Language Archive.” *Journal of Business Anthropology* 7, no. 2, pp. 235-267.

**10/01: Market Research**

* Jordan, Ann. 2013. *Business Anthropology 2nd edition*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc, pp. 73-87.
* Denny, Rita and Patricia L. Sunderland. *Doing Anthropology in Consumer Research* Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, Inc, pp. 57-78.
* Miller, Daniel. 2012. *Consumption and its Consequences*. Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 39-63.

**10/03: Branding**

* Shankar S. 2015. Advertising Diversity: Ad Agencies and the Creation of Asian American Consumers. Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, pp. 89-146.

**10/08: Ethnography in the Private Sector**

*Quiz #1*

* Ladner, Sam. 2014. *Practical Ethnography: A Guide to Doing Ethnography in the Private Sector*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press Inc, pp. 11-38, 115-137.
* Hasbrouck, Jay. 2018. “Ethnographic Thinking: From Method to Mindset.” New York and London: Routledge, pp. 94-109.

**10/10: Ethics in Research**

* Ladner, Sam. 2014. *Practical Ethnography: A Guide to Doing Ethnography in the Private Sector*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press Inc, pp. 87-99.
* Miller, Christine. 2017. “Owning it: Evolving Ethics in Design and Design Research.” In *Ethics in the Anthropology of Business: Explorations in Theory, Practice, and Pedagogy*, Timothy de Waal Malefyt and Robert J. Morais eds. New York: Routledge, pp. 87-103.
* de Waal, Timothy and Robert J. Morais. 2017. “Advertising Anthropology Ethics*.”*In*Ethics in the Anthropology of Business: Explorations in Theory, Practice, and Pedagogy* edited by Timothy de Waal Malefyt and Robert J. Morais. New York: Routledge, pp. 104-118

**10/15: Speaking Truth to Power I**

* Benson, Peter and Stuart Kirsch. 2010. “Capitalism and the Politics of Resignation.” *Current Anthropology* 51, no. 4, pp. 459-486.
* Kirsch, Stuart. 2014. *Mining Capitalism: The Relationship between Corporations and their Critics*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, pp. 84-158.

**10/17: Speaking Truth to Power II**

* Salverda, Tijo. 2019. “Conflicting Interpretations: On Analyzing an Agribusiness’ Concerns about Critique.” *Journal of Business Anthropology* 8 no. 1, pp. 4-24.
* Appel, Hannah. 2019. “To Critique or not to Critique?” That is (perhaps not) the Question…”. *Journal of Business Anthropology* 8, no. 1, pp. 29-34. (Response to Salverda)
* Beeman, Bill. 2019. “Business Anthropology Fieldwork Problems in the 21st Century.” *Journal of Business Anthropology* 8, no. 1, pp. 25-28. (Response to Salverda)
* Salverda, Tijo. 2019. “Response to Beeman & Appel: Between Access and Critique.” *Journal of Business Anthropology*. Vol 8, no. 1, pp. 35-40.

**10/22: What is a Corporation Anyways?**

* Kirsch, Stuart. 2014. “Imagining Corporate Personhood.” *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 37, no. 2, pp. 207-217.
* Gershon, Ilana. 2014. “Selling Your Self in the United States.” *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 37, no. 2, pp. 281-295.
* Bashkow, Ira. 2014. “Afterword: What Kind of a Person is the Corporation.” *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 37, no. 2, pp. 296-307.

**10/24: Midterm Exam**

**10/26-11/03: Fall Recess**

PART II: INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC ETHNOGRAPHIES

**11/05: Finance I**

* Ho, Karen. 2009. *Liquidation: An Ethnography of Wall* Street. Durham: Duke University, pp. 39-72, 213-248.

**11/07: Finance II**

* Ho, Karen. 2009. *Liquidation: An Ethnography of Wall* Street. Durham: Duke University, pp. 73-121.

**11/12: Finance III**

* Ouroussoff, Alexandra. 2010. *Wall Street at War: The Secret Struggle for the Global Economy*. Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 1-70.

**11/14: Finance IV**

* Ouroussoff, Alexandra. 2010. *Wall Street at War: The Secret Struggle for the Global Economy*. Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 71-125.

**11/19: Consulting I**

* Madsbjerg, Christian and Mikkel B. Rasmussen. 2014. *The Moment of Clarity: Using the Human Sciences to Solve Your Toughest Business Problems*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business Review Press. (chapters 1-3)

**11/21: Consulting II**

* Madsbjerg, Christian and Mikkel B. Rasmussen. 2014. *The Moment of Clarity: Using the Human Sciences to Solve Your Toughest Business Problems*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business Review Press. (chapters 5-7)

**11/26: UX Research**

* Bezaitis and Rick E. Robinson. “Valuable to Values: How ‘User Research’ Out to Change. In *Design Anthropology: Object Culture in the 21st Century* edited by Alison J. Clarke. New York: Springer Wien, pp. 184-201.
* Hanson, Natalie. 2014. “Recognizing Agile*.” Handbook of Anthropology in Business* edited by Rita Denny and Patricia Sunderland. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, Inc, pp. 540-555.
* Portigal, Steven. 2016. *Doorbells, Danger, and Dead Batteries: User Research War Stories*. Brooklyn, NY: Rosenfeld Media, pp. 123-145.

**11/27-12/01: Thanksgiving Recess**

**12/03: Advertising I**

* Mazzarella, William. 2003. *Shoveling Smoke: Advertising and Globalization in Contemporary India*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 3-36, 215-249.
* De Waal Malefyt, Timothy. 2013. “Anthropologists at Work in Advertising and Marketing.” In *A Handbook of Practicing Anthropology* edited by Riall W. Nolan. Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, pp. 247-257. (optional reading)

**12/05: Advertising II**

* Moeran, Brian. 2006. *Ethnography at Work*. Oxford and New York: Berg, pp. 59-113.

**12/10: Manufacturing**

*Quiz #2*

* Kim, Jaesok. 2013. *Chinese Labor in a Korean Factory: Class, Ethnicity, and Productivity on the Shop Floor in Globalizing China*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, pp. 67-130.

**12/12: Corporate Social Responsibility**

* Dolan, Catherine and Mary Johnstone-Louis. 2016. “Re-Siting Corporate Responsibility: The Making of South Africa’s Avon Entrepreneurs*.” The Anthropology of Corporate Social Responsibility* edited by Catherine Dolan and Dinah Rajak. New York: Berghan Books, pp. 67-85.
* Partridge, Damani James. 2011. “Activist Capitalism and Supply-Chain Citizenship: Producing Ethical Regimes and Ready-to-Wear Clothes.” *Current Anthropology* 52, no. s3, pp. s97-111.

1. Urban, Greg and Kyung-Nan Koh. 2013. “Ethnographic Research on Modern Business Corporations.” Annual Review of Anthropology 42, pp. 139-58. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)