To thine own self be true

--Hamlet

OVERVIEW: Is it important to be Authentic? Who is the authentic you? Do you value authenticity? Why? Philosophers, Psychologist, self-help gurus—even students—talk about the importance of authenticity. Arts and Crafts are bought and sold on the basis of their authenticity. Whole cultures and generations of livelihoods are valued in connection with their authenticity. What is authenticity and why is it an important idea in our contemporary world? How consistent does the idea remain as it describes things and people, or crosses borders and social contexts? When are conversations of authenticity important to have and when do people think of themselves or their things through the lens of authenticity? How would an anthropologist go about answering these questions and what does culture have to do with it? Through in-depth and interdisciplinary reading and seminar-style discussion, participant observation, and the writing and research process, we will explore ideas of authenticity across time and space as well as in our own backyard.

PEDAGOGICAL EXPECTATIONS: This course combines seminar-style discussion and dialectic alongside writing as a method of reflection and academic knowledge production. This class is student-centered and as such comes with the expectation that students hold equal responsibility for their learning. You will be expected to do both your reading and outside field research. Importantly, there are few, if any, "right" answers to the questions we ask and thus, in the spirit of inquiry, learning, and sharing, you will be expected to explore these questions as a class using a messy and sometimes contradictory set of readings that will be better at allowing us to ask deeper questions than at providing us with answers. This is not a course that rewards "the right answer" but instead we all benefit from asking messy, sometimes difficult to articulate, sometimes exploratory and only partially formulated questions. Such messiness, discomfort and willingness to sound less than brilliant will help all of us (even, perhaps especially, me!) understand at a deeper level AND IS ENCOURAGED. It will also be part of your participation grade.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Students who have successfully passed this class should be able
to:

- demonstrate reading comprehension for academic texts
- demonstrate the successful collection of ethnographic data and evidence
- identify a scholarly "conversation" and articulate it in disciplinarily appropriate writing style
- articulate an appreciation for ill-structured problems and the partiality of knowledge, especially in collecting cultural data
- take intellectual risks and engage in brave and messy conversations truly meant to understand difficult ideas and that might, occasionally, make you feel less than brilliant
- demonstrate familiarity with how writing is used in anthropological inquiry and how this helps shape the discipline’s reading and writing practices and conventions
- demonstrate the ability to think critically and creatively about writing strategies and how to use writing for both inquiry AND communication

REQUIRED READINGS: The following texts are available at the bookstore. Other readings will be available as PDFs


Recommended:


Ideas of authenticity are highly contextual and we will also be borrowing from numerous other books and articles. These articles are available on Canvas. You are required to bring your readings (books and articles) to class. I expect you to have read, taken notes on, and marked up your text. If I notice that you did not bring your book or article into class on a particular day your participation grade (and quiz grade – this is a hint) may suffer. Please complete the readings on or before the date listed in the syllabus.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION:

- Essay #1 (5-6 pages) .............. 10%
- Essay #2 (5-6 pages) .............. 15%
- Rough Draft of Final (10-12 pages) .............. 10%
- Final Essay (10-12 pages) .............. 25%
- Reading Responses (approx. 200 words) .............. 10%
- Leading in-class discussion .............. 10%
- Class participation: Includes all in-class
work including quizzes and discussion ............... 20%

All writing assignments are subject to the following reading/writing criteria, which can be found online or on Canvas (I suggest you read them):

- Chicago Manual of Style—Author Date: click the "author-date" button to get correct examples. [Link]
- Edwards, Paul N. n/a. "How to Read a Book, v5.0". University of Michigan School of Information. [Link]

WRITTEN WORK AND ASSIGNMENTS: All papers must be turned in on time. Turning in a paper late causes significant problems both for me (in trying to keep track of individual papers and juggling assignments) and also for you, because you will then continue to be behind throughout the class. Perhaps most importantly, turning in late papers is unfair to those who completed their papers on time. It is up to my discretion whether I will accept a late paper. Generally, I will not. However, on those rare occasions when I do, the paper’s grade will fall by 1/3 grade for each day it is late (i.e. a B will become a B- on the first day, a C+ on the second, etc.). Any paper turned in more than 15 minutes after the start of class will be considered a day late. I am not able to accept late final papers under any circumstances. Plan for this. I have to turn grades in by a deadline as well.

- Essay papers should be double-spaced, in 12 pt. times or times roman type with one-inch margins. One double spaced page equals approximately 300 words. Topics will be handed out at least 1 week before the essays are due (due dates are specified in the syllabus).
- Essays will need to be turned in to me electronically on Canvas. It is your responsibility to make sure I receive your paper. ALL written material MUST include a full bibliography and in-text citations that include the author’s last name, date of publication and page number. For instance: (Durkheim 1984, 35). Papers turned in without citations and a bibliography will lose 1/3 of a grade automatically. Different disciplines use different citation rules for reasons (not just to drive you crazy!). Anthropologists use in-text citations and Chicago NAME-DATE style because it is so important to understand the time period that an author is writing about—BECAUSE CULTURE CHANGES. Adhering to this style allows the reader to quickly, as they are reading, note how contemporary (or not) the research you are using is.
- Your three papers will be separate parts of a single final paper. We will have writing workshops throughout the semester. You will be given feedback on each paper and expected to think about and integrate that feedback into your final. Your final paper will include both a draft that will
be peer reviewed and a presentation given in the style of a professional conference paper to be reviewed by your peers. Their input, in addition to my comments, will be incorporated into your final draft.

**Paper I:** In paper one you will concentrate on understanding the religious, philosophical and historical context of “authenticity” as an idea. You will be asked to read experts in different fields and discuss and analyze the ways in which disciplines can be compared and contrasted.

**Paper II:** In paper two you will be asked to choose a topic that interests you and is related to class materials, research it within the anthropological literature, and write a literature review of disciplinary materials on your topic.

**Draft and Paper III w/ “conference presentation”:** Your final paper will incorporate ethnographic evidence in the form of interviews and participant observation. You will be asked to analyze this evidence and, using your literature review, explain how your work contributes to the discipline.

**READING RESPONSES:** Careful and analytic reading in this class is critical. To help you to think substantially through your readings before class, and to help you to be prepared to discuss the readings beyond the superficial, you will be required to turn in one-page (~250 word) responses for each reading. You may miss two responses without recourse. However, you will lose corresponding points for each response you miss after two. Grades for responses will work as follows: I will count responses to make sure you have done the prerequisite number of responses (worth two points each). I will also choose 4 of the responses randomly and grade them individually. You may choose two of your best responses, if you like, and ask me to grade those as two of my random selection. It is helpful to use the following questions as you begin to craft your reading responses. You do not have to answer each one, each time, but you do have to give these questions some thought for each reading (you may also want to consult Chapter 2 in the recommended writing guide, *Writing in Anthropology* by Shan-Estelle Brown.)

1. What do I know now (after doing the reading) that I didn’t know before (both factual and theoretical)?
2. How is this reading relevant to or in conversation with other class and disciplinary ideas?
3. How can I think about and transfer knowledge from this reading into my everyday life outside the classroom? In other words, how can I make it pertain to me and my world?

**CLASS PARTICIPATION:** Includes timely completion of reading assignments (by the class in which the material is to be discussed), and regular and thoughtful contribution to class and group discussions. Not having your assignment in class (in hard copy) so that you may refer to them in conversation will significantly affect your class participation grade.

One of the critical aims of this class is to learn about culture – both your own and others’. I consider the classroom to be an important field site and source of data. Thus learning from and LISTENING RESPECTFULLY to your classmates provides both valuable information and an exercise in listening (a very important skill for an anthropologist to master).
Not coming to class is disrespectful to your classmates, and it WILL hurt your grade. Other students’ ideas are just as much part of your learning experience as are the ideas of the instructor and the experts in the field. Learn to listen and use your classmates’ ideas as data. In addition, each of you will be responsible for several class presentations on the readings. Please do not be afraid to ask difficult questions, half articulated questions or just to bring up issues you are struggling with "in your head". Anthropology is about people. People are inherently messy, confusing and difficult to understand. The theories we study are meant to make you question the very tenants that you take for granted. It’s not only okay if our discussions reflect this, it is encouraged.

**POP QUIZZES:** I give occasional “pop” quizzes. Quizzes are designed to encourage timely reading. They will be short, generally one-word answers about the reading due for that day. You are responsible for knowing the author and date of the reading, having read the epigrams, titles and subtitles, and for having made any connections between authors and other readings. As part of your “participation” grade these assignments cannot be made up. If you are late to class and miss a quiz, it cannot be made up.

**ATTENDANCE & BEING ON TIME:** One of the major premises of this class is that we are here to help one another learn. If you’re not in class you cannot participate in this critical experience. You get two free absences, no questions asked. But, if you miss more than two classes, you should be aware that your FINAL grade will suffer BY 1/3 OF A GRADE FOR EACH CLASS THAT YOU MISS AFTER YOUR SECOND ABSENCE. Absences are only excused if ALL absences (including the first two) are excused. If you are late to class more than three times it will be counted as an absence. Much of this class is focused on in-class discussion and activities that you will not be able to make up. This will affect your grade. If you miss class, everyone suffers.

**COMPUTERS, CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES:** Note taking in this class is critical, but you should not need to rely on a computer. My experience with computers in the classroom is that they provide more of a distraction than assistance, and I ask that they remain put away during class time unless they are being used for presentation or group work purposes. Cell phones should be turned OFF (not on vibrate or silent) in the classroom and kept in your backpack (NOT on the top of your desk). Leaving in the middle of class to have a phone conversation is not only obvious, but I (and the majority of your classmates) also consider it rude and unacceptable. The same goes for texting underneath the table during class. Other electronic devices should be turned off and put away unless they are being shared with the class in a presentation/demonstration context.

**THE SMALL (but important) PRINT:**

*Student Honor Code:* As a student of Oxford College you are bound by the Student Honor Code and are responsible “for maintaining standards of unimpeachable honesty in all academic work...” [http://oxford.emory.edu/catalog/regulations/honor-code.html](http://oxford.emory.edu/catalog/regulations/honor-code.html).

*Student work submitted as part of this course may be reviewed by Oxford College and Emory College faculty and staff for the purposes of improving instruction and enhancing Emory education.*

One of the key benefits of a liberal arts education is the instructor’s ability to react to students’ needs, interests and abilities. In the spirit of providing you with an education that remains responsive to particular contexts, this syllabus and schedule are subject to change.

*Disabilities:* The Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) works with students who have disabilities to provide reasonable accommodations. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, please contact the OAS and complete the registration process. Faculty may not legally provide you
with accommodations until an accommodation letter has been processed and discussed with them; accommodations do not start until this point and are not retroactive. Students registered with OAS who receive a letter outlining specific academic accommodations are thus strongly encouraged to immediately coordinate a meeting with their professors to discuss a protocol to implement accommodations that will (or may) be needed over the course of the semester. This meeting should occur as early in the term as possible. For more information call (770) 784-4690 or email oas.oxford@emory.edu. NOTE: I make every effort to accommodate all students. However, it is not possible, in this course, to accommodate absences beyond that listed in the syllabus.

**Religious Holidays:** If you must miss class for a religious holiday, please notify me, in writing, one week before class in order to be excused (assignments due on a particular day must still be turned in on or before the day specified).

**Inclusivity:** Oxford College of Emory University’s ideals of inclusivity require that we foster an environment where people of diverse backgrounds, identities, abilities, and ideologies are affirmed, respected and seen as a source of strength; where we strive to learn together, and ultimately thrive communally. If we at all fail to support these ideals, then we encourage discussion towards improvement, and we hope that this statement affirms your right to seek those discussions via dialogue with faculty, staff, your peers and the use of the “Speak Up!” system when needed.

We believe the manner in which we interact with each other is critical to cultivating and maintaining a meaningful and effective intellectual environment. We encourage a climate of respect and inclusiveness that welcomes and embraces community members with diverse backgrounds and life experiences. We deliberately seek multiple perspectives and support the free and open exchange of ideas and civil discourse. We affirm the inherent dignity in all of us and we strive to maintain a climate of justice marked by respect for each other. Our community can only continue to thrive when we approach each conversation with an open mind and when each member can contribute fully.