

FILM ANALYSIS GUIDE

When viewing the ethnographic films in this course, especially the final four, it will be useful for you to consult this guide and try to answer the questions that follow.

Tips:

- (1) Keep the list of questions that follow at hand for when you watch films, as a reminder of the kinds of issues you will need to ponder. On the final exam, you will need to make reference to the actual content shown in the films.
- (2) In addition, check the online reading guide, for questions specific to the assigned readings for each film, which may help you to develop your essays.

[Please answer the following questions in the order in which they appear, to the extent that they are applicable to a given film.]

(1) Objectives:

- a. What, if any, are the purposes of this film? Does the film seem designed to answer a particular question, or questions?
- b. Could you discern the objectives of the film from within the film itself? If so, how?
- c. Do you detect the presence of a theory in structuring the narration, the presentation of images, and/or the subject matter of the film? What might that theory be?

(2) Structure: there are at least two narrative structures to a film, a spoken one, in the form of narration (if there is one), and certainly a visual narrative.

- a. How would you describe the way the film has been pieced together, and what do you think the purpose was of piecing it together in that fashion?
- b. If the readings commented on either the spoken or visual narrative, what do you think of their assessments?

(3) Evidence of authorship and subject response:

- a. Aside from the obvious fact that the filmmaker is standing behind the camera, what evidence is there from the film of a response to the presence of the filmmaker on the part of those filmed?
- b. In addition, you may also discuss issues of “native feedback,” “shared anthropology,” or co-production under this heading.

(4) Critiques:

- a. Having read related literature on the film, what would you add or take away from the critiques of the films? In other words, tell me if you agree or disagree with the published critiques, and give reasons why.
- b. In light of what we have learned about the *history of ethnographic film*, and *competing visions of what constitutes ethnographic film*, how do you assess this film?