

VISUAL ANTHROPOLOGY

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1. List of Readings, pp. 1-3
2. Weekly Reading Guide, pp. 4-20

Table of Contents

PART ONE: PHOTOGRAPHY

1. Introducing Visual Anthropology & Colonialism and Exhibited Others: Difference as Spectacle and Science

1. Ruby, Jay. 1996. "Visual Anthropology." In *Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology*, David Levinson and Melvin Ember, editors. New York: Henry Holt and Company, vol. 4: 1345-1351.



2. Colonialism and Exhibited Others, cont'd: Difference as Spectacle and Science

2. Ch. 2, "Science and Spectacle: Visualizing the Other at the World's Fair," pp. 46-85 [From: Griffiths, Alison. 2002. *Wondrous Difference: Cinema, Anthropology, and Turn-of-the-Century Visual Culture*. New York : Columbia University Press.]
3. Corbey, Raymond. 1993. "Ethnographic Showcases, 1870-1930." *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 8, No. 3: 338-369.



3. Early Ethnographic Photography: Contexts and Trends

4. Brian Street, "British Popular Anthropology: Exhibiting and Photographing the Other", 122-131 [From: Edwards, Elizabeth, ed. 1992. *Anthropology and Photography, 1860-1920*. New Haven: Yale University Press.]
5. Williams, Carol. 1999. "Photographic Portraiture of Aboriginal Women on Canada's Northwest Coast Circa 1862-1880." <http://cc.joensuu.fi/sights/carol.htm>



4. Ethnographic Photography: Conventions and Methodologies

6. Im Thurn, E. F. 1893. "Anthropological Uses of the Camera." *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 22: 184-203.
7. Damon, Frederick H. 2000. "To Restore the Events?:' On the Ethnography of Malinowski's Photography." *Visual Anthropology Review*, Mar., Vol. 16, No. 1: 71-77.
8. Lakoff, Andrew. 1996. "Freezing Time: Margaret Meads's Diagnostic Photography." *Visual Anthropology Review*, Mar., Vol. 12, No. 1: 1-18.



5. Paradigms and Debates: Photography in Ethnography

9. Margaret Mead, "Visual Anthropology in a Discipline of Words," pp. 3-10 [From: Hockings, Paul, ed. 1995. *Principles of Visual Anthropology*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter.]

10. Mead, Margaret, and Gregory Bateson. 1977. "On the Use of the Camera in Anthropology." *Studies in the Anthropology of Visual Communication*, Dec., Vol. 4, No. 2: 78-80.
11. Ch. 1, "Reading Pictures," pp. 1-12 [From: Banks, Marcus. 2001. *Visual Methods in Social Research*. London: Sage.]



6. Indigenous Uses of Photography

12. Prins, Harald E.L., and Bishop, John. 2001-2002. "Edmund Carpenter: Explorations in Media and Anthropology." *Visual Anthropology Review*, Vol. 17., No. 2: 110-140.
13. MacDougall, David. 1992. " 'Photo wallahs:' An Encounter with Photography." *Visual Anthropology Review*, Sep., Vol. 8, No. 2: 96-100.
14. Sprague, Stephen. 1978. "How I See the Yoruba See Themselves." *Studies in the Anthropology of Visual Communication*, Sep., Vol. 5, No. 1: 9-29.
15. Buckley, Liam. 2000. "Self and Accessory in Gambian Studio Photography." *Visual Anthropology Review*, Sep., Vol. 16, No. 2: 71-91.
16. [WEB] Buckley, Liam. 2000. "Gambian Studio Photography." from VAR 16.2, pp 71-91:
<http://etext.virginia.edu/VAR/gambia/photo.html>



PART TWO: FILM

7. History of Ethnographic Film

17. Griffiths, Alison. 1996. "Knowledge and Visuality in Turn-of-the-century Anthropology: The Early Ethnographic Cinema of Alfred Cort Haddon and Walter Baldwin Spencer." *Visual Anthropology Review*, Sep., Vol. 12, No. 2: 18-43



8. What is Ethnographic Film?

18. Ch. 7, Marcus Banks, "Which films are the ethnographic films?" pp. 116-130 [From: Crawford, Peter Ian, and Turton, David, eds. 1992. *Film as Ethnography*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.]
19. Ruby, Jay. 1975. "Is an Ethnographic Film a Filmic Ethnography?" *Studies in the Anthropology of Visual Communication*, Sep., Vol. 2, No. 2: 104-111.
20. David MacDougall, "Beyond Observational Cinema," pp. 115-132 [From: Hockings, Paul, ed. 1995. *Principles of Visual Anthropology*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter.]
21. Ch. 1, "Innovation in Ethnographic Film, 1955-85," pp. 5-15 [From: Loizos, Peter. 1993. *Innovation in Ethnographic film: From Innocence to Self-Consciousness, 1955-85*. Chicago : University of Chicago Press.]



9. Case Studies in Ethnographic Film: Robert J. Flaherty and *Nanook of the North*

22. Flaherty, Robert J. 1922. "How I Filmed 'Nanook of the North'." *World's Work*, October: 632-640.
23. Ch. 3, "The Innocent Eye: Flaherty, Malinowski and the Romantic Quest," pp. 45-56 [From: Grimshaw, Anna. 2001. *The Ethnographer's Eye: Ways of Seeing in Anthropology*. New York: Cambridge University Press.]
24. Hockings, Paul. 2001-2002. "Asen Balicki Films Nanook." *Visual Anthropology Review*, Vol. 17, No. 2: 71-80.



10. Case Studies in Ethnographic Film: Jean Rouch, Part I

25. Edgar Morin, "Chronicle of a Film," pp. 229-265 [From: Feld, Steven, ed. 2003. *Ciné-ethnography*; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.]



11. Case Studies in Ethnographic Film: Jean Rouch, Part II

26. Jean Rouch, "The Camera and Man," pp. 29-46 [From: Rouch, Jean. 2003. *Ciné-ethnography*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.]
27. Taylor, Lucien. 1991. "A Conversation with Jean Rouch." *Visual Anthropology Review*, Mar., Vol. 7, No. 1: 92-102.



12. Case Studies in Ethnographic Film: Robert Gardner, *Forest of Bliss*, and One Big Ugly Debate

28. Moore, Alexander. 1988. "The Limitations of Imagist Documentary: A Review of Robert Gardner's 'Forest of Bliss'." *Society for Visual Anthropology Newsletter*, Sep., Vol. 4, No. 2: 1-3.
29. Chopra, Radhika. 1989. "Robert Gardner's Forest of Bliss: A Review." *Society for Visual Anthropology Newsletter*, Mar., Vol. 5, No. 1: 2-3.
30. Kirkpatrick, Joanna. 1989. Review of "Forest of Bliss." *American Anthropologist*, Mar., Vol. 91, No. 1: 273-274.
31. Ostor, Akos. 1989. "Is That What Forest of Bliss is All About?: A Response." *Society for Visual Anthropology Newsletter*, Mar., Vol. 5, No. 1: 4-8.
32. MacDougall, David. 2001. "Review Article: Gifts of Circumstance." *Visual Anthropology Review*, Vol. 17, No. 1: 68-85.
33. Chiozzi, Paolo. 1990. "What is Ethnographic Film? Remarks About a Debate." *Society for Visual Anthropology Review*, Mar., Vol. 6, No. 1: 26-28.



WEEKLY READING GUIDE FOR STUDENTS IN VISUAL ANTHROPOLOGY

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Please note: the purpose of this guide is to help you “structure” your reading so that you can focus on certain key questions, concepts and themes. These questions, some or all, will also serve as the basis for class discussions. Please come to class prepared to answer each of these questions. Read the guide before doing the assigned readings, and then after completing a given set of readings.

Session 1

Ruby, Jay. 1996. “Visual Anthropology.” In *Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology*, David Levinson and Melvin Ember, editors. New York: Henry Holt and Company, vol. 4: 1345-1351.

Reading Questions:

1. What is visual anthropology?
2. What is ethnographic photography?
3. What is ethnographic film?
4. How did visual anthropology develop into a subfield of anthropology?
5. What are at least two primary debates concerning the production of visual records by anthropologists?
6. Robert Flaherty, John Marshall, David MacDougall, Jean Rouch, Timothy Asch—what seems to be important about their contributions?

Thematic Outline:

While reading, look for and make a note of material that could fit under the following headings:

- A way of defining visual anthropology
 - Debates about methodology in making visual records—look for the paragraph(s) speaking of “positivist” and “postmodern” approaches
 - The position of visual anthropology within the wider field of anthropology
 - Analyzing photographs: historical contexts
 - The historical development of visual anthropology
 - Ethnographic Film—what the term means and what it encompasses
 - The historical development of ethnographic film
 - Debates about ethnographic FilmMAKING
 - Ethnographic Film from the “native point of view”
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Session 2

Ch. 2, “Science and Spectacle: Visualizing the Other at the World’s Fair,” pp. 46-85. From Griffiths, Alison. 2002. *Wondrous Difference: Cinema, Anthropology, and Turn-of-the-Century Visual Culture*. New York : Columbia University Press.

Reading Questions:

The author makes many references to the emergence of ethnographic film in this article, which is actually the subject of the second half of this course. The reason why it has been assigned at this stage is to allow us a glimpse of the history of ethnographic showcasing that preceded ethnographic film, and that in fact went hand in hand with photography.

1. According to the author, in which ways did world fairs and ethnographic exhibitions contribute to, condition, and prepare for the emergence of ethnographic film?
2. How does the author describe the relationship(s) between anthropology and commerce at world fairs? Diametrically opposed? Mutually reinforcing? Mutually exploiting? Mutually indifferent?
3. How did the growth of anthropology as a discipline benefit (if it did) from showcasing “ethnographic Others” at world fairs?
4. What sorts of ideas about the “modern West” were reinforced, or challenged, by the presence of tribal peoples in reconstructed ethnographic villages? (Hint: a self-flattering view of White supremacy was one of the ideas that was possibly reinforced.)
5. How were the actual *bodies* of the people shown in the ethnographic villages turned into something meaningful for the viewers of the time? Think of the issue and controversy of the nudity of the Filipino villagers at the St. Louis Fair of 1904.
6. From the perspective of anthropologists, how would ethnographic film be an improvement over world fairs?
7. How were photographs, and later even films, integrated *within* the ethnographic showcases at some world fairs?

Thematic Outline:

While reading, look for and make a note of material that could fit under the following headings:

- The presence of ideas of “race” and theories of evolution in the design of ethnographic spectacles
- How peoples from different parts of the world were made into ethnographic spectacles
- Relationships between those being viewed and the viewers
- Relationships between ethnographic science and commercial spectacle
- Similarities and differences between reconstructed ethnographic villages at world fairs, traveling shows, and early ethnographic film

Words you might need to know:

- Heteroclit—out of the ordinary, anomalous
- Heterotopic—multiple and diverse conceptual landscapes
- Oneiric—dreamlike quality
- Prurient—salacious, lewd
- Interstitial—the small narrow spaces that might lie in between larger surrounding bodies, for example, in the “interstices” between bricks one finds mortar—in the context of the article, interstitial means “in between,” a place that is neither here nor there, but a bit of both, both science and spectacle, both ethnography and commerce. In the article, the word is sometimes used synonymously with “liminality”

- Peripatetic—moving, traveling

Corbey, Raymond. 1993. "Ethnographic Showcases, 1870-1930." *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 8, No. 3: 338-369.

This article focuses on exhibitions, not photography. Think of the ways in which the ideas, themes, and patterns presented in the article relate to early ethnographic photography and an emergent anthropological profession, beyond the select instances where the author directly mentions photography and anthropology.

Reading Questions:

1. From the outset, the article seems to suggest that imperialist exhibitionary practices might be closely tied to the modern development of anthropology (but he does not actually mention anthropology by name in the opening paragraphs). Using the author's own words, who might one make the case for this connection?
2. What is the cultural and "scientific" significance of staging "indigenous villages" at world fairs?
3. What kinds of emotions did European visitors to "ethnographic fairs" seem to display, according to the author?
4. What linkages can be drawn between cabinets of curiosities, museums, zoos, circuses, studies of anatomy, physical anthropology, natural history, and ethnology in the late 1800s?
5. When you read of the work of anthropological societies in producing and hosting ethnological exhibits, how do you envision this would have some bearing on early ethnographic photography?
6. What does the author think of photography and "the innocent eye"? How does this relate to "realism" and "exoticism"? How does this relate to aggression (see the comment by Susan Sontag)?

Thematic Outline:

While reading, look for and make a note of material that could fit under the following headings:

- Imperialism and exoticism
- Exoticism and science
- Science and commerce
- Exhibitions and evolutionism

Words you might need to know:

- Ecumene—the entire known world, a multicultural universe, organized as a unitary whole
 - Teleology—a conception of purposeful development directed towards an ultimate end; having a definite purpose, goal or design; change determined by a previously existing, overarching plan.
 - Allochronic—in another time
 - Essentialized—frozen, fixed set of defining characteristics or "traits"
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Session 3

Brian Street, “British Popular Anthropology: Exhibiting and Photographing the Other”, 122-131. In Edwards, Elizabeth, ed. 1992. *Anthropology and Photography, 1860-1920*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Reading Questions:

1. Street speaks of “romantic,” “documentary,” and then “realist” ideologies as expressed in photography. Explain what these mean.
2. Why did “bodies” matter to these early photographers and exhibitors of the colonized?

Thematic Outline:

While reading, look for and make a note of material that could fit under the following headings:

- Genres for photographing the colonized Other
- Race
- Evolution
- Hierarchy

Carol Williams. 1999. “Photographic Portraiture of Aboriginal Women on Canada's Northwest Coast Circa 1862-1880.”

Reading Questions:

Much of the historical detail in this article will not be the subject of examination in this course, as vital as it is in framing and contextualizing material in the article that is vital to this course. Having said that, see if you can answer the following questions on your own or in discussion with others:

1. Does the author argue that Aboriginal women were entirely the prisoners of colonial perceptions as expressed through photographs taken of them? Was this case most of the time, some of the time, none of the time? Are there exceptions in the article that suggest Aboriginal women might have had ways of influencing how they were portrayed?
2. How were Aboriginal women generally shown in these photographs?
3. Who were the photographers? No need to memorize their exact names, we are more interested in the roles they played, their positions, and whose interests they served.
4. What were the purposes behind showing Aboriginal women in the different ways discussed in the article?
5. How does the author seem to have built her interpretation of this photographic material? List some of the techniques and methods for doing this research that she either hints at or implies.

Thematic Outline:

While reading, look for and make a note of material that could fit under the following headings:

- Racist and evolutionist depictions of Canadian Aboriginals in photographs
 - Collecting images of the exotic
 - Presumptions of photographs as scientifically neutral
 - The uses of photography in colonial administration and surveillance
 - Examples of the “photography of assimilation”
 - Examples of colonial photographic conventions for showing white settlers and Aboriginals
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Session 4

Im Thurn, E. F. 1893. “Anthropological Uses of the Camera.” *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 22: 184-203

Reading Questions:

1. Im Thurn seems to be taking issue with anthropometric photographs. Why? What is his argument?
2. If Im Thurn is against the science of anthropometry, is he against scientific approaches, on the whole, when it comes to photography?
3. If Im Thurn is against the science of anthropometry, is he also against racism?
4. Im Thurn positions his photos by commenting on them. In which ways is his commentary of an accurate and scientific nature?
5. What is Im Thurn’s position on art and accuracy? Are the two compatible or opposed in his view?
6. How did Im Thurn end up “in the field”?
7. What does Im Thurn have to tell us, in the way of advice, of challenges to be faced when undertaking photography in places such as (then) British Guiana?

Thematic Outline:

While reading, look for and make a note of material that could fit under the following headings:

- Naturalist methodology in photo ethnography
- “Art” versus “accuracy”
- Fieldwork, rapport, and ethnographic photography
- Salvage, Extinction, Passing Indians, Saving a Record
- Photographs annihilate time and distance
- Native dread of the photograph
- Race in photo interpretations

Damon, Frederick H. 2000. “‘To Restore the Events?:’ On the Ethnography of Malinowski's Photography.” *Visual Anthropology Review*, Mar., Vol. 16, No. 1: 71-77.

Reading Questions:

1. At one point it seems as if Malinowski dismissed the significance of his own photographs. Yet, what evidence is there to suggest otherwise?
2. Malinowski, much like Im Thurn, seems to have a position on photography as art versus photography as the making of accurate records. What evidence is there in the article to demonstrate that position?
3. There seems to be a consistent pattern in Malinowski’s photography? What are the main features of this pattern? What does this pattern tell us of the photographer?
4. What role did photographs perform in relation to text in Malinowski’s work?
5. What evidence does the article provide that may help us to understand Malinowski’s overall perspective on the value and function of photographs?

Thematic Outline:

While reading, look for and make a note of material that could fit under the following headings:

- Influences shaping Malinowski's photographic work
- Art and realism in Malinowski's photography
- Malinowski's theoretical orientations expressed through his photographs
- The function of photographs in Malinowski's ethnographic texts

Lakoff, Andrew. 1996. "Freezing Time: Margaret Meads's Diagnostic Photography." *Visual Anthropology Review*, Mar., Vol. 12, No. 1: 1-18.

Reading Questions:

1. What kinds of theoretical orientations shaped Mead's utilization of photography?
2. Related to the previous question, identify some of the key influences to shape Mead's perspective on the purposes of her work and the role photographs played in that work.
3. Photographs are a record of truths. But which truths? Did theories inform Mead's passion for photography, or, did she first have the passion for photographs and then looked around for a theory that could put them to good use?
4. Describe the utility of photographs as perceived by Mead.

Thematic Outline:

While reading, look for and make a note of material that could fit under the following headings:

- Mead's theoretical orientations
- How Mead's photographs were used to convey her theoretical approach
- National Character Studies
- Photographs as Truth

Words you might need to know:

- Ontogeny: the developmental history of an individual; the growth of an individual organism
 - Phylogeny: the developmental history of a species; the evolution of an entire species
 - "Ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny": the growth of an individual reflects the evolutionary development of a species as a whole
 - Biogenic: having biological origins
 - Etiology: the cause or origin of a disease; the study of the origins of diseases
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Session 5

Mead, Margaret. 1995. "Visual Anthropology in a Discipline of Words." In Paul Hockings, ed. *Principles of Visual Anthropology*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter. Pps. 3-10.

Reading Questions:

Much of what Mead is arguing in this impassioned piece can apply as easily to photography as to film, which is her main concern.

1. In some respects, Mead clearly expresses her Boasian influence when it comes to arguing for the need to gather visual records. Explain.
2. Mead gives a number of reasons for why anthropology became a discipline of words. What are those reasons? Are they convincing? Has she left anything out?
3. What is Mead's way of handling criticisms concerning the selectivity of image recordings?
4. Mead would have us use a camera in a very particular way. Which way? Do you see any problems with her suggestions?
5. Mead appears interested in finding ways to overcome impressions that anthropologists were imposing their views on the image records they made, and that they were appropriating images from other peoples. How does she propose addressing these criticisms?
6. Mead seems to be arguing that photographs and films will be of value, regardless of subsequent changes in theoretical approaches. Why or why aren't you convinced of her argument here?

Thematic Outline:

While reading, look for and make a note of material that could fit under the following headings:

- Visual records to preserve a Disappearing World, provide a basis for later resurgence of indigenous interests in ancestral heritage
- Anthropology as a discipline of words: historical reasons
- Against art
- Collaboration
- Selectivity and objectivity
- Transcendental value of images

Mead, Margaret, and Gregory Bateson. 1977. "On the Use of the Camera in Anthropology." *Studies in the Anthropology of Visual Communication*, Dec., Vol. 4, No. 2: 78-80.

Reading Questions:

Much of this debate has to do specifically with ethnographic film, and thus provides a preview of issues we will discuss more fully in the coming section of the course. However, the debate raises issues of a broader nature that are relevant to methodological debates pertaining to visual anthropology as a whole.

1. Mead appears to be critical of "artistic" film productions? Why?
2. What is Bateson's defense of "art"?
3. What do Mead and Bateson agree on, if anything?
4. An awful lot of energy is expended on the issue of whether or not to mount a camera on a tripod. What is the significance of this debate?
5. What do cameras record, and what is the usefulness of the recording, from Bateson's point of view?

6. Why does Bateson appear to criticize the work he did with Mead in Bali?

Thematic Outline:

While reading, look for and make a note of material that could fit under the following headings:

- Art, adulteration, subjectivity, reality, access
- Techniques of realism and subjectivism
- What images show
- What do cameras record

Banks, Marcus. 2001. *Visual Methods in Social Research*. London: Sage. Ch. 1, "Reading Pictures," pp. 1-12.

Reading Questions:

1. Why is there a "tense" relationship between images and words in anthropology?
2. What are three ways of "reading" photographs?
3. Banks seems to prefer emphasizing context in reading a photograph. Why?

Thematic Outline:

While reading, look for and make a note of material that could fit under the following headings:

- Content and context; internal narrative and external narrative
- Images and text
- Realism, Formalism, Expressivism

Session 6

Prins, Harald E.L., and Bishop, John. 2001-2002. "Edmund Carpenter: Explorations in Media and Anthropology." *Visual Anthropology Review*, Vol. 17., No. 2: 110-140.

The main purpose behind assigning this article is to provide some supplementary material, in print, to accompany your viewing of the closely related film by Prins and Bishop on Carpenter's work. You do not need to pay a significant amount of attention to biographic details.

Reading Questions:

1. *Revelation* rather than explanation—very early on in the article, Carpenter indicates his respect for an approach to ethnography and visual production, via his recollections of his mentor (Frank Speck), that has certain particular emphases? What are those emphases?
2. How did McLuhan and Carpenter conceive of the relationship between *form* and *content* of communication?
3. Why does Carpenter place so much emphasis on *literacy* and how does this relate to this session's focus on *visuality*?
4. Note the comment, on page 120 of the article, about filming verbs and not nouns—what does that mean?
5. It has become a cliché now, though many do not seem to understand it—therefore, please explain the meaning of "the medium is the message."
6. What evidence is there to suggest that Carpenter's underlying theoretical assumptions were evolutionist?

7. Using Carpenter's words, what evidence does he present of what he called the “tribal terror of self-awareness”? Is the “native” one who is permanently terrified by technology?
8. Why do you think the Kandangan initiation ritual would be ceased forever simply because a film of the ritual would be shown the villagers?
9. What is Carpenter's perspective on technology? How does this relate to his (and McLuhan's) theoretical treatment of electronic and visual media?

MacDougall, David. 1992. “ ‘Photo Wallahs:’ An Encounter with Photography.” *Visual Anthropology Review*, Sep., Vol. 8, No. 2: 96-100.

Reading Questions:

1. *Photo Wallahs* is a study of local visual cultures in India. In making this film, MacDougall discovered some of the varied ways in which photography has become embedded in India. What are the different ways that photography has been integrated into everyday Indian culture?
2. What does MacDougall surmise is the way that Indians value and understand a photograph? Is it similar or different from what he sees as the “Western” treatment of photographs?
3. Are photographic portraiture styles random, or do they seem to follow set rules? Explain.

Thematic Outline:

While reading, look for and make a note of material that could fit under the following headings:

- Local visual cultures
- Photography as an expression of Indian culture and society
- Purposes and outcomes of making *Photo Wallahs*
- Evolution of ethnographic film

Sprague, Stephen. 1978. “How I See the Yoruba See Themselves.” *Studies in the Anthropology of Visual Communication*, Sep., Vol. 5, No. 1: 9-29.

Reading Questions:

1. Bluntly stated, has Yoruba culture been swallowed up or diminished by Westernization as expressed in the local use of photography, or has it been enriched, enhanced or extended? Explain your answer.
2. The author reveals his style of photography in his paper. How would you describe it, and why does it make sense that he adopted that approach?
3. What do the Yoruba in this study photograph, and how?
4. How do British and Yoruba photo portraits differ? Why do they differ?
5. How are “traditional Yoruba aesthetics” manifested in Yoruba photographs?

Thematic Outline:

While reading, look for and make a note of material that could fit under the following headings:

- Ifarahon
- Jijora
- Odo
- Photography of twins among the Yoruba

Buckley, Liam. 2000. "Self and Accessory in Gambian Studio Photography." *Visual Anthropology Review*, Sep., Vol. 16, No. 2: 71-91.

Reading Questions:

1. How do the people in The Gambia studied by Buckley appear to use photographs to express their selves? What is the guiding principle of what a photograph is seen as doing?
2. How do photographs fit into social structure and reflect local cultural norms?
3. What role do props serve in Gambian studio photographs?
4. What techniques for expressing the self of their clients are used by studio photographers?

Thematic Outline:

While reading, look for and make a note of material that could fit under the following headings:

- Jikko
 - Jamano
 - Photography of twins in The Gambia
 - "Double Impact"
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Session 7

Griffiths, Alison. 1996. "Knowledge and Visuality in Turn-of-the-century Anthropology: The Early Ethnographic Cinema of Alfred Cort Haddon and Walter Baldwin Spencer." *Visual Anthropology Review*, Sep., Vol. 12, No. 2: 18-43.

Reading Questions:

1. By and large, how would you characterize anthropologists' early responses to the advent of cinema and what it might, or might not, promise their profession?
2. What accounts for the different response to cinema as opposed to photography, on the part of early anthropologists?
3. With reference to the difference between how users view films, compared to photographs, the difference between a supposed "imposed reading time" and a "free rewriting time" (first of all, what does this mean?), Griffiths argues that there is no hard and fast distinction between the way the two media could be viewed. How does she advance her argument?
4. Given the availability of photography, and the actual fact that he had a photo camera, why did Haddon make the decision to film anything at all?
5. If film is somehow more advantageous than photography, can an animated visual record do better than a photograph at standing alone as an ethnographic document?
6. In what ways do Spencer's moving pictures of Arunta ceremonies represent ethnographic knowledge differently to his photographs or field notes of the same events? (Griffiths asks this on page 32)

Thematic Outline:

None for this reading, given the coverage of the questions.

Session 8

Ch. 7, Marcus Banks, “Which films are the ethnographic films?” pp. 116-130. In Crawford, Peter Ian, and Turton, David, eds. 1992. *Film as Ethnography*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Reading Questions:

1. In trying to define “ethnographic film,” Banks outlines a framework for evaluating films. What is that framework?
2. How is intentionality important in appraising whether a film is ethnographic or not? What sorts of questions would we ask ourselves, or others, in figuring out the intention of the filmmaker?
3. What are the differences between “film as an object” and “film as a concept”?
4. Why does Banks criticize the positions of Karl Heider and Peter Fuchs? (What are their positions, on what?)
5. List some of the problems to be encountered when we look at the filmed “event” as a basis for determining whether or not a film is ethnographic.
6. The “ethnographicity” of a film can be located, in part, in the reactions to the film. Do you agree or disagree with that view? Why?
7. After completing the reading, what are you able to discern as being Bank’s main point, his central argument?
8. Following Banks’ approach, would the coverage of last week’s lecture on the “History of Ethnographic Film” look different?

Things to Look For:

In the course of reading the article, you will notice that the author makes reference to the following items, offering a few words of reflection on them. Take note of the following:

- Robert Gardner
- Chronique d’un été
- Cinéma vérité
- Disappearing World series

Ruby, Jay. 1975. “Is an Ethnographic Film a Filmic Ethnography?” *Studies in the Anthropology of Visual Communication*, Sep., Vol. 2, No. 2: 104-111.

Reading Questions:

1. From Ruby’s perspective, are all films ethnographic? What is his approach to the *ethnographic* in film?
2. What is at the bottom of Ruby’s disagreement with Heider over the problem of defining ethnographic film?
3. Ruby outlines *four* major elements of a working definition of ethnographic film. What are they and what are the main points he makes for each element?
4. Ruby argues that the majority of films we call ethnographic are not really anthropological? What does he mean by that and how does he defend that conclusion?
5. Ethnographic films need to be *scientific*, not just “pretty pictures,” Ruby argues. What makes a film scientific, in his view, and why does he seem to think that this is an important issue?

Things to Look For:

In the course of reading the article, you will notice that the author makes reference to the following items, offering a few words of reflection on them. Take note of the following:

- The Hunters
- Dead Birds
- The Winter Sea Ice Camp
- The Feast
- Chronicle of a Summer (Chronique d'un été)

David MacDougall, "Beyond Observational Cinema," pp. 116-132. In Hockings, Paul, ed. 1995. *Principles of Visual Anthropology*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Reading Questions:

1. What are the main features of an "observational" film?
2. How could fiction films be deemed to be more "observational in attitude" than documentary films, from MacDougall's perspective?
3. MacDougall seems to argue at one point that the presence of the filmmaker in a community need not be as intrusive and disruptive of local behaviour as many have assumed or argued. How does he develop this argument, that is, what are its main elements?
4. MacDougall has many criticisms to make concerning "observational film". What are those criticisms?
5. Instead of observational cinema, MacDougall says we need to a new form of cinema, one that he calls "participatory cinema." What does this mode of filmic engagement entail?
6. Does MacDougall contradict his own criticisms of observational cinema, to any significant extent, in his own "Postscript" to the chapter?

Things to Look For:

In the course of reading the article, you will notice that the author makes reference to the following items, offering a few words of reflection on them. Take note of the following:

- Nanook of the North
- Robert Flaherty
- The Hunters
- Robert Gardner
- Tim Asch
- To Live with Herds
- Chronique d'un été
- Jean Rouch, Edgar Morin

Ch. 1, "Innovation in Ethnographic Film, 1955-85," pp. 5-15. In Loizos, Peter. 1993. *Innovation in Ethnographic film: From Innocence to Self-Consciousness, 1955-85*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

The second part of this chapter (pages 10-15), focusing on the range of technical, empirical and theoretical innovations in ethnographic film, serves as a useful supplement to last week's focus on the history of ethnographic film. However, for the purposes of this week, we are focusing on the first part of the chapter, on issues of definition.

Reading Questions:

1. Trace the connections made in the chapter between ethnography, documentary film, and realism.

2. At various points, Loizos presents arguments that seem to blur the boundary between documentary and fiction films. Are any substantial differences between the two presented in the chapter?

Things to Look For:

In the course of reading the article, you will notice that the author makes reference to the following items, offering a few words of reflection on them. Take note of the following:

- Chronique d'un été
 - Jean Rouch, Edgar Morin
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Session 9

Flaherty, Robert J. 1922. "How I Filmed 'Nanook of the North'." *World's Work*, October: 632-640.

Reading Questions:

1. We have been told that Flaherty's work with *Nanook* involved reconstructing pre-contact indigenous culture. To what extent does that come through in this memoir?
2. We have also been told that Flaherty's work was not a simple act of filming what occurred "naturally" in front of the camera, but that the events were staged. Do you see examples of this staging being offered in the memoir? If you find any examples, what then is the significance of this staging? Who does the staging, and according to whose criteria?
3. Flaherty makes clear reference to involving his host community in the shared effort of producing and reviewing the footage. Make a note of those statements.
4. Think of the context, the means, and the support that Flaherty received for making this film. What do those details concerning the conditions of his production tell you about his social position as a filmmaker? If he was not a professional anthropologist, then where do we place Flaherty?

Grimshaw, Anna. 2001. *The Ethnographer's Eye: Ways of Seeing in Anthropology*. New York: Cambridge University Press. [Ch. 3, "The Innocent Eye: Flaherty, Malinowski and the Romantic Quest," pp. 45-56]

Reading Questions:

1. Grimshaw explains that what unites the work of Flaherty and Malinowski is their romanticism and "the innocent eye." Elaborate on what she means by this, and outline the main elements of her argument.
2. What was novel and relatively unique about Flaherty's films?
3. In which ways are Flaherty's films *revelatory*?

Hockings, Paul. 2001-2002. "Asen Balicki Films Nanook." *Visual Anthropology Review*, Vol. 17, No. 2: 71-80.

Reading Questions:

1. What is Balicki's formula for the construction and presentation of an ethnographic teaching film? You should prepare a comprehensive list of items for your answer, and don't expect all of the answers to be on just one page in the article.
2. How did Balicki's work mirror that of Flaherty? How did Balicki's work differ?

3. In which ways does Balicki's work differ from that of other noted ethnographic filmmakers?
 4. Within the history of anthropology as a discipline, where would you locate Balicki's methodology of filming the Inuit? What appear to be his main theoretical influences?
 5. What were some of the early criticisms of Balicki's work? Do you think the criticisms were reasonable? In the process of addressing these questions, describe Balicki's stand on the issues of narration and the specific focus of his filming.
 6. How would you classify Balicki's film work, as described in the article?
 7. Please outline the nationalist and political agendas that have been at work in shaping ethnographic film in contemporary times, focusing on the case of Balicki.
 8. What were the pedagogical aims of Balicki's films and how might these compare with the aims of Flaherty's *Nanook*?
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Session 10

Edgar Morin, "Chronicle of a Film," pp. 229-265. In Rouch, Jean. 2003. *Ciné-ethnography*; edited and translated by Steven Feld. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Reading Questions:

1. What is Morin's position on the dividing line between fiction and truth in cinema? Are fictional films "untruthful"?
 2. Trace the evolution of "cinema-truth" as Morin outlines it, indicating its main features, and the role played by Rouch in its development.
 3. How is cinema-truth linked to "cinema of brotherhood"? (*cinéma vérité* and *cinéma fraternité*)
 4. How does Morin characterize *Chronicle of a Summer*? As an ethnographic film? A fictional film? A documentary?
 5. Morin puts forth a few more concepts in analyzing *Chronicle*, including *interrogation* and *commensality*. Make a note of these and be prepared to explain them.
 6. Morin has a great deal to say about editing. Try to list the main points of his critical reflections on the nature and impact of editing.
 7. Why did Morin and Rouch feel the need (if they did) to appear before the camera? What's the point?
 8. How does Morin characterize the achievements of *Chronicle*? Do you agree, having seen the film yourself?
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Session 11

Rouch, Jean. 2003. "The Camera and Man," pp. 29-46. In *Ciné-ethnography*; edited and translated by Steven Feld. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Reading Questions:

1. In drawing on Flaherty and Vertov, Rouch puts forth an array of concepts. Please be prepared to explain the following, in the ways that Rouch uses these terms:
 - a. "participant observation"
 - b. "feedback"
 - c. "participatory camera"
 - d. "ciné-eye"
 - e. "cinema-vérité"

- f. “ciné-trance”
 - g. “shared ciné-anthropology”
 - h. “audio-visual reciprocity”
2. At two different points in the article (in at least two), Rouch speaks of the broader ambitions and aims of ethnographic film, of its potential contributions to humanity. What does he say?
 3. How can ethnographic film make a real difference to anthropology, according to Rouch?
 4. Rouch identifies a great many problems and raises several questions regarding the ways that ethnographic films are made, and how they *should* be made. List what he has to say on these topics:
 - a. the use of filming and sound recording crews
 - b. handheld filming
 - c. the use of zoom lenses
 - d. the nature, role, and conduct of editing
 - e. narration
 - f. sub-titling
 - g. music

Taylor, Lucien. 1991. “A Conversation with Jean Rouch.” *Visual Anthropology Review*, Mar., Vol. 7, No. 1: 92-102.

Reading Questions:

The main purpose in assigning this reading was to provide some of the personal background for Jean Rouch, general outlines of his way of seeing, to complement the chapter written by him above. As a result, I have very few specific questions to pose here, apart from the following.

1. What is Rouch’s political philosophy and how did it affect his choices in filming?
2. What were the artistic influences on Rouch, and did these shape his filmmaking? If so, how?
3. What is Rouch’s view on science versus art, and on science generally?
4. How does Rouch compare or contrast himself with Flaherty?

Session 12

Moore, Alexander. 1988. “The Limitations of Imagist Documentary: A Review of Robert Gardner's ‘Forest of Bliss’.” *Society for Visual Anthropology Newsletter*, Sep., Vol. 4, No. 2: 1-2.

Reading Question:

Moore seems intent on evaluating *Forest of Bliss* as a “documentary,” because it has been labeled “ethnographic.” His conclusion is damning: the film is irresponsible and self-indulgent. Take a critical look at the assumptions built into Moore’s review—drawing from the course material we have already encountered, what are these assumptions and what are the facets that they ignore?

Here is the conclusion to Moore’s piece:

“All told, then, a beautiful visual exercise is just that, an exploration of imagery, not an anthropological document which can be said to illuminate the universal human condition, or to enlighten its audience. This is an irresponsible, self-indulgent film. There is no excuse for a 1920s movie in 1986. Image is no longer the only vehicle for the message. We have gone far beyond that in the state of the art, in the craft of film

communication, for there to be any justification for this mannered throwback. In the days before synchronous sound, such films were legitimate masterpieces. No longer. Technology has left pure imagery far behind, and anthropologists ought to do so too. It is a pity that the magnificent cinematography here was not complimented with audio material of equal richness.”

Chopra, Radhika. 1989. “Robert Gardner's Forest of Bliss: A Review.” *Society for Visual Anthropology Newsletter*, Mar., Vol. 5, No. 1: 2-3.

Reading Question:

Chopra is perhaps best positioned to understand the ethnographic detail in the film because she herself is Indian, and in India. Or, it may be that she understood that the film uses “visual words” and needed to be sensed visually. In fact, she makes statements such as: “Even to the untutored eye it is apparent that...,” the “film is a textual analysis...,” and “film provides us the visual words to give voice to the silent structure.” Indeed, the film seems to make perfect sense to her and she judges it a success. If you had not read Chopra’s assessment before seeing the film, would you have come to a reading closer to hers or to Moore’s? Can you “read” *Forest of Bliss* visually and symbolically the way Chopra does without being an insider?

Kirkpatrick, Joanna. 1989. Review of “Forest of Bliss.” *American Anthropologist*, Mar., Vol. 91, No. 1: 273-274.

Reading Questions/Comment:

In some ways Kirkpatrick is repeating the criticisms made by Moore, and she echoes the perspective offered by Jarvie. She characterizes *Forest of Bliss*, purportedly using Gardner’s words, as a “personal film,” not a “documentary,” and not an “ethnographic film.” Instead, she says, it is “an art film.” Are we heading back to square one here, with the science versus art dichotomy? Moreover,

- (a) How can a personal film *not* be a documentary?
- (b) What *is* a “personal film”?
- (c) What is an “art” film?
- (d) Can an ethnographic film even be possible without some artistry and without a personal vision? If it is possible, then *what* is the maker of the film, and how is it made?
- (e) What are Kirkpatrick’s two main complaints against the film?
- (f) If, as she says, it is not a documentary, not an ethnographic film, but an art film... then why should it have subtitling, narration and a written guide, the promise of the latter being such a relief to her? Is it that Kirkpatrick was not prepared to accept this film even as an “art” film?

Ostor, Akos. 1989. “Is That What Forest of Bliss is All About?: A Response.” *Society for Visual Anthropology Newsletter*, Mar., Vol. 5, No. 1: 4-8.

Reading Questions:

1. What are the main points of contention, raised by Ostor, in his critique of Moore (specifically, since we did not read Parry)? Briefly list these.

2. Focusing specifically on the issue of *narration*, what points does Ostor offer for disputing the need for narration in this film?
3. How should film be understood, from Ostor's point of view?

MacDougall, David. 2001. "Review Article: Gifts of Circumstance." *Visual Anthropology Review*, Vol. 17, No. 1: 68-85.

This article is essentially a review of a book which is now part of our library collection. Needless to say, you can safely ignore the details of the book presented in this review; instead, please concentrate on MacDougall's wider commentary on the state of ethnographic film and its interpretation.

Reading Questions:

1. Is there a lack of critical self-reflection on the part of ethnographic filmmakers? If *not*, then what is lacking from the film-showing/ film-viewing format itself?
2. What is MacDougall's perspective on the issue of taking the stuff of other people's lives and transforming it into film? Where do you stand on this central issue of anthropological research and representation?
3. How does MacDougall frame the importance of *Forest of Bliss*? What makes it a prototype, a valuable experiment?
4. MacDougall seems to locate Gardner's work in a genealogy that also encompasses Flaherty and Rouch. Be prepared to explain the levels on which these connections can be made.
5. Why do both Gardner and MacDougall not view speech and narration as either useful or essential in such a film?
6. Does the fact that the filmmakers published their discussions about the film--how it was constructed, edited, shaped at each step of the way--defeat the purpose of producing a film without narration? Are they not adding in the narration now, after the fact?
7. If a film needs to be unpacked by the filmmaker for the viewer, laying bare the choices made for forging certain metaphorical associations, would this not negate the need for the film in the first place?
8. What qualities of *Forest of Bliss* would render it a *humanistic*, rather than a *scientific*, ethnographic film?

Chiozzi, Paolo. 1990. "What is Ethnographic Film? Remarks About a Debate." *Society for Visual Anthropology Review*, Mar., Vol. 6, No. 1: 26-28.

Reading Questions:

1. Chiozzi writes: "the controversy with regard to Gardner's films offers a number of useful indications in formulating a response to the question 'what is ethnographic film?' He says that he is not providing a response to this question, but what kind of approach, which literature and which authors does he seem to lean on most heavily?"
 2. *Can there be an anthropological art?* Judging from the reading, what do you think Chiozzi's response would be?
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