

**ANTH 495 – HONOURS ESSAY
EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Research Proposal (graded out of 90 points, 15% of final grade):

1. Clear statement of a research problem/question, indicating the unit of analysis and the outline of an analytical position on the problem/question. (5 points)
2. The anthropological significance of the research project, involving a meaningful problem, an important reflection/analysis on social relations and/or cultural meaning, and likely to attract positive attention as a serious contribution to our understandings of a given problem. (10 points)
3. Literature review: efficient and critical analysis of sources that are pivotal for outlining and understanding a problem, and that are treated in a manner that opens up room for the student's own contribution to knowledge. (20 points)
4. Analytical orientations: Has the student developed a preliminary argument that is logical, consistent and interesting? Does the argument look plausible in light of the student's handling of the extant literature on the topic (or related topics)? Does the argument look like it can be fulfilled given the intended empirical research? (25 points)
5. Methods: Has the student clearly identified and discussed the research methods to be used and justified his/her choice of methods? Does it appear that the student weighed alternatives in coming to a decision on which methods to use? How effective do the research techniques appear to be with respect to the particularities of the research project? Can one surmise that the student has made effective use of assigned readings on research design, methods, and is incorporating what they have learned in the core courses of the Honours program? (15 points)
6. Ethics: Has the student shown a balanced and comprehensive understanding of the likely or possible ethical implications of his/her research (or of the research of others in the case of library-based projects)? (5 points)
7. Bibliography: is the student demonstrating a good understanding of the nature of their problem and their intended approach through a judicious selection of relevant resources? (10 points)

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Thesis (graded out of 150 points, worth 45% of the final grade):

General considerations (in no particular order):

1. From the course syllabus:

“The...challenge is to...produce a final piece of work that rivals anything you have encountered as an assigned reading in a course—in other words, the aim should be a piece of work of publishable quality. Ask yourself: *Why do we need to know about this? What are the important ideas here?*”

2. Is the paper of a quality that would make it a likely candidate for publication in an anthropology journal?

--if the answer to this question is **yes**, the grade is in the “**A**” range (excellent, outstanding, brilliant, advanced work)

--if the answer is **yes but** pending some important revisions and improvements, the grade is in the “**B**” range (very good)

--if the answer is **no**, it would likely be sent back to the writer without a commitment to reconsider the item, the grade is then in the “**C**” range, meaning “satisfactory—for addressing the basics in the setting of an advanced undergraduate course in anthropology”

--if the paper is objectionable on several grounds, the grade is in the “**D**” range (very poor, well below what is expected of a student at this level)

3. What made the problem *a problem*? Is it a significant problem for addressing key issues and questions in anthropology? Does the project consist of simply identifying a niche or actually hitting upon a social and cultural problem whose importance is clearly and convincingly explained by the student?

Specific considerations:

1. Clear statement of a research problem/question, indicating the unit of analysis and the outline of an analytical position on the problem/question. Discussion of what makes the problem *a problem*, with some introductory background analysis of how and why others have identified this as a problem, or a very convincing explanation as to why no others have identified this problem. (10 points)
2. What makes this problem an important one? Why do we need to read this study? Why do we need to know about this? The anthropological significance of the research project, involving a meaningful problem, an important reflection/analysis on social relations and/or cultural meaning, and likely to attract positive attention as a serious contribution to our understandings of a given problem. The ability to identify, delineate, and focus a project. (15 points)
3. Theoretical treatment: efficient and critical analysis of extant theoretical and ethnographic literature; a clear, consistent, logical and compelling argument. (40 points)
4. Ethnographic description: lucid, condensed, and engaging presentation of the vital empirical core of the project, demonstrating advanced writing skills. (40 points)
5. Logical structure, at a minimum following this outline: introduction, description, analysis

(students may choose to switch the order between analysis and description), conclusion (10 points)

6. Conclusion: what has this project shown us? What should we have learned from it? What future research could be done on this topic (i.e., questions and facets that remained unexamined in this project or that had to be downplayed)? (15 points)
7. Sources: items that were referred to in the text of the thesis, demonstrating superior coverage and advanced research fitting of an article published in a contemporary anthropology journal. (20 points)

Conference presentation (worth 5% of the final grade):

- effective presentation, showing control of one's material and skill in delivery
- solid summary of one's key empirical base, findings
- well organized, insightful, thought provoking argument
- ability to address questions and comments posed by those in the audience with intelligent and constructive replies

[Please note that failure to participate in the conference, except on serious medical grounds that are legitimately documented, will result not only in the loss of 5% of the final grade but in addition the loss of the total participation grade worth 15%]

**ANTH 495 – HONOURS ESSAY
VIDEO PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA**

1. **Video** (worth 30% of the final grade)
2. **Theoretical treatment of your subject** (worth 7.5% of the final grade, 7-10 pages double-spaced)
3. **Methodological self-analysis:** what were the decisions guiding your choices when editing; why did you choose certain ways of framing the subjects in your video over others; what you intended to convey through video; what your video achieved that a written treatment could not; what you thought were the limitations of your video; your overall self-evaluation of the project and whether you would do this project again knowing what you know by March 2007 (worth 7.5% of the final grade, 7-10 pages double-spaced)
4. Statement of the specific work done by you as an individual for this project: actual duties performed, approximate times spent performing them (required, but no grade is assigned for this, nor is there any specified length, and, the information can be presented in bullet point form)

General considerations (in no particular order):

1. *From the course syllabus:*

“The...challenge is to...produce a final piece of work that rivals anything you have encountered as an assigned reading in a course—in other words, the aim should be a piece of work of publishable quality. Ask yourself: *Why do we need to know about this? What are the important ideas here?*” --
In the case of an ethnographic video: the challenge is to produce a video of a quality that resembles anything of comparable length that one would normally find shown in an anthropology course.

2. **Is the VIDEO of a quality that would make it a likely candidate for use in a university classroom setting?**

--if the answer to this question is **yes**, the grade is in the “**A**” range (excellent, outstanding, brilliant, advanced work)

--if the answer is **yes but** pending some important revisions and improvements, the grade is in the “**B**” range (very good)

--if the answer is **no**, it would be highly unlikely that anyone would order this item or find a place for it in an anthropology class, the grade is then in the “**C**” range, meaning “satisfactory—for taking the first steps toward producing a video of anthropological interest”

--if the video is objectionable on several grounds, the grade is in the “**D**” range (very poor, well below what is expected of a student at this level)

3. What made the problem at the centre of the project *a problem*? Is it a significant problem for addressing key issues and questions in anthropology? Does the project consist of simply identifying a niche or actually hitting upon a social and cultural problem whose importance is clearly explained by the student?

Specific considerations for evaluating the video:

1. Does the video indicate what its subject matter is and why the project was undertaken? This need not be stated bluntly or only in one form.
2. Is the editing effective in preserving the integrity of short sequences of action, or in

- reconstructing longer sequences of action through careful editing?
3. Does the video allow the viewer the opportunity to reflect on what is being shown, or is it instead a rapid and confusing collage of images?
 4. Do the images appear to have been carefully composed, or does one instead get a sense of random, unguided, aimless recording?
 5. Can the viewer experience moments of (illusory) immersion in a situation being shown in the video?
 6. Do we get a sense that this is a project that could meaningfully be handled by video more than by writing?
 7. In the case of “intangibles” that may have no visible surface appearance, how successful was the video in creating at least an illusion that we (the viewers) could somehow sense the presence and import of the intangible(s)?
 8. Do the images aid in conveying meaning or was there an over reliance on narration to fill the gaps which the video recording itself created or left unattended?
 9. Did any one facet of the ethnographic situation receive more attention than other facets, and if so does the choice appear to have been a reasonable one?
 10. Has the editing been undertaken with the view of presenting a perspective, an argument, that can reasonably be ascertained from viewing the video?
 11. Was that perspective effectively conveyed by the video (was it consistent, clear, and convincing)?
 12. Could the video meaningfully fit into a session in an undergraduate anthropology class?
 13. Do we get any sense that anthropologists made this video (apart from being plainly told in the narration), or does it instead reflect the influences more of popular culture than anything else?
 14. Can we see that subjects and/or situations were recorded with “an anthropological eye”?
 15. Overall, was the video presentation done with a certain degree of “professionalism”? Does it avoid sensationalizing its subject? Does it show care and cleverness in its construction?

Theoretical treatment (written as an individual endeavour):

1. Discussion of what makes the problem at the centre of the video *a problem*, with some introductory background analysis of how and why others have identified this as a problem, or a very convincing explanation as to why no others have identified this problem.
2. What makes this problem an important one? Why do we need to see this video? Why do we need to know about this? The anthropological significance of the research project, involving a meaningful problem, an important reflection/analysis on social relations and/or cultural meaning, and likely to attract positive attention as a serious contribution to our understandings of a given problem.
3. Condensed, efficient and critical analysis of extant theoretical and ethnographic literature; a clear, consistent, logical and compelling argument to accompany the video. To a certain degree then, this theoretical treatment allows you the freedom to explore and extend an argument beyond what you were able to do in the video itself. This is written in the vein of, very loosely stated: “If you were wondering what we were getting at, this is it:”

Methodological self-analysis (written as an individual endeavour):

1. Choices made in editing—what was excluded and why?
2. How did the video-makers' perspective on the subject structure the presentation of images and sequences in the video?
3. Reflection on how this work intended to draw upon and/or modify another recognizable

- approach in ethnographic film.
4. Discussion of the role of narration.
 5. Revisiting debates key debates in visual anthropology and positioning one's visual practice within those debates.
 6. Was this worth doing as a video, and would you do it again? What might you do differently?
 7. *In general terms*, this methodological treatment should follow the examples set by Edgar Morin in his "Chronicle of a Film" and the published discussion between Akos Ostor and Robert Gardner on the making of Forest of Bliss.

Sources for both of the written theoretical and methodological components: while not as voluminous as with a written thesis, the expectation is that *very vital* sources of direct theoretical, ethnographic, and methodological relevance were used for the project.

Deadlines:

1. Rough cut of video, to be shown in class on Thursday, March 22 (you will have up to 60 minutes for this version, allowing 15 minutes for discussion—to be safe, have a DVD and VHS copy ready in case one or the other format fails to show in H-539-2)
2. Theoretical, methodological, and individual statements of work performed, to be submitted on Thursday, April. 5. These will be the only drafts to be submitted, so please consult well in advance and especially use the opportunities presented during individual interview appointments and class sessions to present drafts of your theoretical and methodological treatments.
3. In place of presenting the draft of a conference paper, as other students will be doing in the final two sessions of the second semester, please come ready to discuss changes you have made or are about to make to the first version of the video shown on March 22. You will have this opportunity on April 5.
4. Final version of the video to be shown during the conference, on April 11. Please prepare a DVD version for the course director.

Conference video presentation (worth 5% of the final grade—rules of non-attendance apply as with all other students):

[if the conference is to be held in H-1120, consult in advance with Elizabeth Szekely, Secretary to the Chair, on which video format can be shown, and perhaps try out the facilities before the conference—be prepared with a DVD, a video file on CD, and a VHS tape, each with the complete video—if everything is unsatisfactory, inform the course director at least a week in advance so that he can arrange with IITS to make a TV and DVD or VCR player made available in the room for the conference]

- audience reaction will play a critical role in determining how successful this video was within the conference setting
- the ability of the editors to explain the project, its theoretical import, and raise two or three key methodological issues will be an important part of the spoken presentation
- the manner in which the video presenters handle questions from those attending the conference, the depth of their answers, and their demonstration of competence will also be vital for determining the value of the overall presentation
- 20 minutes for the film, 5 minutes for Curell, 5 minutes for Teeple to address the audience, followed by questions (one presenter should focus on the theoretical analysis at the centre of the ethnography, the other should bring to the fore key methodological issues that faced the team in constructing the video).