ANTH 408 - SENSORY ETHNOGRAPHY

Professor Philippe Leonard
FALL 2017
Thursday 2:30-5:30PM
Peel 3475 Room 101
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This course will explore ways of knowing made available through ethnographic and experimental film. Through screenings, class discussions, and projects we will ask what and how such films communicate. Does ethnographic film generate different forms of knowledge than the ethnographic text? Or better, how do such films convey (in ways that complement and challenge written anthropological texts) the embodiment of the human subject and thus take seriously forms of sensory experience often missed in textual accounts? And what is it about film as an iconic and indexical mode of representation that allows a particular kind of access to that embodied experience? The fact that the primacy of language and text is subverted in many of the films we will study lead us to question the role of the senses and emotions in knowledge production more generally. Attending to potentially non-word based, non-propositional forms of knowing poses some risks to received epistemologies and we will ask why, in the end, the visual causes so much anxiety within the discipline of anthropology. Students will be required to produce audio-visual ethnographic work in the context of that course.