ANTH 370: Anthropology and the Image

Professor Lisa Stevenson

Tuesdays, 2:35-5:25pm

Still from Pour la suite du monde (1963)
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Course Outline – ANTH 370: Anthropology and the Image

General Information
Course # 370
Term Fall
Year 2020
Course schedule Tuesdays, 2:35-5:25pm
Number of credits 3 credits

Instructor Information
Name and Title Professor Lisa Stevenson
E-mail lisa.e.stevenson@mcgill.ca
Virtual office hours Fridays 2-4

TA Information
Name Cyntia Kraichati
E-mail cyntia.kraichati@mail.mcgill.ca

Course Overview
Anthropology: An introduction to the role of the image in everyday life as it is revealed ethnographically. Topics will include the role of the image in thinking, dreaming, knowing, feeling and acting. An investigation of the way images, of one sort or another, constitute the material out of which much anthropological analysis is built.

Terms: Fall 2020

Instructors: Stevenson, Margaret (Fall)

• Restriction: Not open to students who have taken ANTH 380 when topic was “Anthropology and the Image”
Regarding Remote Delivery

The remote learning context presents new challenges for all involved, and student engagement is of particular concern. My hope for this class is that we can experiment together and find ways to build intellectual community despite our physical distance. Let’s just remember that this is a complicated time for everyone that takes us out of our so-called zones of comfort. Let’s use that as a possibility for shaking things up and finding new ways of being together.

Learning Outcomes

This course will consider the role of the image in thinking, dreaming, knowing, feeling and doing. Michel Foucault, in an early piece on Binswanger’s Dream and Existence, described the image as “a language which expresses without formulating” (1993:36). What is it about the image that can draw us in—as in a photograph that we can’t take our eyes off, (or one we can’t bear to look at but do anyway)? How are images used to galvanize political action? Why also do we say that in a traumatic moment, “Images of my life passed before my eyes?” In this seminar we will consider the way anthropologists use images in their texts and films and we will take very seriously anthropology’s “iconophobia” (Taylor 1996)—giving special attention to the alleged culpability of images in what is understood as the “pornography of violence” (Daniel 1996). In so doing, we will develop a definition of the image that is broad enough to encompass sound-images, thought-images, dream-images and even word-images. We will thus be asking, with Barthes (1997) what it is that is imagistic about the image and filmic about film. This investigation will lead us to notice the way images of one sort or another form the material out of which much anthropology is built.

Instructional Method

I have spent some time adapting this course for the online format by making better use of e-resources. Each week you will have a theoretical text (or two) to read, a film to watch, and an assortment of online resources to watch/listen to. These have been carefully curated, please take the time to go through all resources. We will use our class time to have a brief and focused discussion of the week’s readings/films/podcasts. Each week we will also engage in one activity to sharpen our writing skills. It is highly recommended that you attend these weekly sessions. If you cannot attend for some reason please let me or your TA for the class know and we will make accommodations.

Recordings of Sessions

I may be recording some of our online sessions, although I strongly urge you to attend “in-person”. Students must consent to being recorded if they are attending a lecture or participating in a component of a course that is being recorded. Students will be notified through a ‘pop-up’ box in Zoom if a lecture or portion of a class is being recorded. If they are not comfortable being in a class that is recorded, students may decide to not take part by logging off Zoom. I will make class video recordings available in myCourses so that students who log off will be able to later watch the recording. I may choose to pause the recording
during student discussions so that the recording doesn’t inhibit participation. Here is the statement on recording:

Please read the Guidelines on Remote Teaching and Learning [https://www.mcgill.ca/tls/instructors/class-disruption/strategies/guidelines-remote]. You will be notified through a ‘pop-up’ box in Zoom if a lecture or portion of a class is being recorded. By remaining in sessions that are recorded, you agree to the recording, and you understand that your image, voice, and name may be disclosed to classmates. You also understand that recordings will be made available in myCourses to students registered in the course.

Required Course Materials
All course materials will be available on MyCourses.

Course Requirements
Weekly Reading Responses (2 pages): 10%
Essays: 3 REVISED weekly reading responses (3-4 pages), 90%

Peer Evaluation Component

Assignments

1) Weekly Reading Response
There is a 2 page (double spaced) weekly reading response for every week. These must be submitted to MYCOURSES by 10 am on the day of our class meeting. Late papers will affect your final grade by reducing it by 2% for each day late. Missing papers will reduce your grade by 10% for each paper missing.

2) Random Check
One of these weekly reading responses will be chosen at random to be assigned a grade. This grade will account for 10% of your final grade. These will be graded on the following basis:

- Excellent, rigorous and creative work will receive 8-10 points.
- Good work will receive 7 points.
- Satisfactory work will receive 6 points.
- Unsatisfactory work will receive 5 points and below.

3) Revised Reading Response
You will revise three of the weekly reading responses into short (3-4 page papers). These are due on October 9th, November 6th, and December 7th. Late papers will affect your final grade by reducing it by 2% for each day late. These papers will undergo an anonymous peer review process on peergrade on MyCourses.

Peergrade Submissions
To submit an assignment to peergrade, follow the guidelines listed in this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KQT3KilEuKQ

Zoom Meetings during scheduled class time
Course Content

**Week 1 – Class Introduction**

*September 8th*

Related Resource

Video clip: W. J. T. Mitchell: An Image is not Only Visual (2 min)

**Week 2 – Looking Away: Portraits**

*September 15th*

Still from *Santiago* (2007)

Reading

Theoretical Text


Related Resources

Two video clips from *The Seasons In Quincy: Four Portraits of John Berger* (2016) (7 min total)
One video clip from *The Art of Looking* (2016) (4 min)

Recommended

Video clip from *The Seasons In Quincy: Four Portraits of John Berger* on fathers and silence (2016) (21 min)
Screening

Film

João Moreira Salles, Santiago (2007) (80 min)

Related Resources


Assignment (choose one)

1) Write a descriptive, even literary, portrait that demonstrates the “creative attention” to the singularity of another person that Berger is describing. Reflect on your portrait by relating it to Berger’s text and to the portrait film Santiago.

2) Draw a portrait that demonstrates the “creative attention” to the singularity of another person that Berger is describing. Reflect on your portrait by relating it to Berger’s text and to the portrait film Santiago.

Week 3 – Looking Away: Photographs

September 22nd


Reading

Theoretical Text


Roland Barthes, “Third Meaning” from Image, Music, Text (1977)
Related Resources
Video clip: Michael Taussig on Third Meaning (2 min)

Recommended
Video Clip: Crash Course in Semiotics (9 min)

Screening
Film

Related Resources
Two video clips about 306 Hollywood:
Dress Scene (2 min)
Magical Realism (2 min)

Recommended
Online film: Sophia Nahli Allison, Dreaming Gave us Wings (6 min)
Sophia Nahli Allison’s website
306 Hollywood podcast (16 min)

Assignment
Find a “just” photograph of someone in your family. Describe in words the image you have found and reflect upon the difference between “just an image” and a “just image.” In your opinion did Elan and Jonathan Bogarín manage to find or create a just image of their grandmother? Why or why not?

Week 4 – Looking Away: Listening to Images
September 29th

Still from Handsworth Songs (1986)

Reading
Theoretical Text
Tina Campt “Quiet Soundings: The Grammar of Black Futurity” In Listening to Images (2017)

Related Resources
Two video clips from “Listening to Images: A Salon in Honor of Tina Campt” (15 min total)

Screening
Film
John Akomfrah, Handsworth Songs (1986): watch the full movie (Part 1-4) (61 min)
Related Resources
Two video clips from “John Akomfrah in conversation with Tina Campt and Saidiya Hartman” (11 min total)

Assignment
Find an image that you can “hear.” Describe what you hear in the image you have chosen. In your discussion explain what Tina Campt means when she talks about “listening” to images. Are there images in *Handsworth Songs* in which you can hear some “quiet frequencies of possibility” (Campt 2017: 45)?

**Week 5 – Blind Spots**
October 6th

Still from *Hale County, This Morning, This Evening* (2018)

Reading
Theoretical Text

Related Resources
Three audio clips from the *On Being* podcast with Teju Cole and Krista Tippett (11 min total)

Screening
Film
RaMell Ross, *Hale County, This Morning, This Evening* (2018) (76 min)

Related Resources
Article by RaMell Ross: *Renew the Encounter* (2019)

Recommended
Interview with RaMell Ross: “How Do I Suspend The Meaning Of Blackness?”
Video clip: “How The Qatsi Trilogy Gave RaMell Ross a New Way of Seeing” (9 min)

Assignment
In “A True Picture of Black Skin,” Teju Cole writes that there are images of the civil rights movement that are “forceful but less illustrative” than the iconic images that quickly come to mind. In “Treasure Beach” he writes that in his own photography, “nothing that remains solely within its genre succeeds as poetry. When I make a work, no matter how small, no matter how doomed to be forgotten, only its poetic possibility interests me, those moments in which it escapes into some new being.” In “Renew the Encounter” RaMell Ross says, “For the over-relied-upon sake of genre and theme, industrial cinema requires the spaying and neutering of images within the body-film.” Find an image of recent events in the Black Lives Matter movement, and/or in the film *Hale County, This Morning, This Evening* that is poetic in Teju Cole’s sense of escaping the “genre” of photos we expect. Describe the photo as carefully as you can in words and then use the week’s readings to reflect on the force of the image you have chosen.

**Week 6 – The Work of Images: Dreaming**
October 13th

Still from *Roja* (2016)

Reading
Theoretical Text
Sigmund Freud, *On Dreams* (1901)

**Related Resources**
- Website: The Museum of Dreams
- Collaborative album: The Veterans' Dream Project (3 min)
- Article: “Freud's Dream of Amerika”
- Video: The Fichu Dream (5 min)

**Recommended**
- Charlotte Beradt, “Chapter 1,” *The Third Reich of Dreams* (1968)

**Screening**
- **Film**
  - Shirin Neshat, *Roja* (2016) (17 min)

**Related Resources**
- Two video clips of Shirin Neshat speaking about her *Dreamers Trilogy* (9 min)

**Assignment**
- Record one of your dreams, or the dream of a friend or family member. Where do you see examples condensation, displacement, “representability” and dream work? How would you use Freud’s understandings of dreams to reflect on the film *Roja*? What is dreamlike about the film? In what sense does film editing work like Freud's dream work?

**Week 7 – The Work of Images: Expressing What Cannot Be Said**
  October 20th

**Reading**
- **Theoretical Text**
  - Sharon Sliwinski, “Introduction” and “Chapter 1” from *Dreaming in Dark Times* (2017)

**Related Resources**
- Website: The Museum of Dreams
- Three short articles:
  - Toward Truth and Reconciliation
  - The Third Reich of Dreams
  - The Prisoner's Nightmare

- Audio clips: Mandela’s Speeches (19 min total)
Screening

Film
Magnus Wennman, *Fatima’s Drawings* (2016) (6 min)

Related Resources
Article: Aparna Mishra Tarc, “A Child is Dreaming”

Assignment
Find an example of a dream that expresses Freud’s “the right of freedom of thought—in my dream life if nowhere else.” Describe the dream and reflect on it by relating it to Sliwinski’s insights about Mandela. Also consider in what sense *Fatima’s Drawings* allow us to understand what is difficult for a child to put into words.

Week 8 – The Work of Images: Remembering
October 27th

Reading
Theoretical Text
Walter Benjamin, *Berlin Childhood Around 1900* [1950] (selections)
“Intro and Loggias” (37-41)
“Butterfly Hunt’” (50-52)
“Tardy Arrival, Boys Books” (57-60)
“The Fever” (71-78)
“The Mummerehlen” (97-99)
“Hiding Places” (99-100)

Related Resources
Video clip: Michael Taussig on Walter Benjamin (12 min)

Screening
Film
Pierre Perrault and Michel Brault, Pour la suite du monde (1963) (105 min)

Related Resources
Two video clips:
Michel Brault on Cinéma Vérité (5 min)
Pierre Perrault on Capturing Reality (5 min)

Assignment
Write an entry for: [your place of childhood] Childhood around [years of your growing up]. Mimic the form of Benjamin’s entries that we read. Your thought-image should strive to be a “precipitate of experience”, in Benjamin’s sense. In your discussion, reflect on how the images in Pour la suite du monde could also be said to be “precipitates of experience.”

Week 9 – The Work of Images: Healing
November 3rd

Reading
Theoretical Text
Kerstin Schankweiler & Philipp Wüschner, Pathosformel (2019)

Related Resources
Two video clips:
Pandolfo discusses Knot of the Soul (9 min)
Warburg on pathosformel and nachleben (5 min)

Screening
Film
Beatrix Santiago Muñoz, La Cabeza Mató a Todos (2014) (8 min)

Related Resources
Two video clips:
Muñoz discusses La Cabeza Mató a Todos (3 min)
Muñoz on filmmaking, ethnography, and trance (2 min)

Assignment
Find an image that has healing power. Describe the image and it’s power in words. In your discussion section discuss how the texts of Pandolfo and Warburg help you to understand the image you have chosen. How might the concept of pathosformel help you understand the power of your image and the film by Beatriz Santiago Munoz, La Cabeza Mató a Todos?

Week 10 – Witnessing: The Possibility of Spirits
November 10th

Reading
Theoretical Text
Mattijs van de Port, “Mysteries are Invisible” (2011)

Screening
Film
Mattijs van de Port, The Possibility of Spirits (2016) (71 min)

Related Resources
Video clip: Mattijs van de Port: Filmmaking and Messiness (5 min)

Recommended
Mattijs van de Port, “In Love with My Footage” 2018

Film: Mattijs van de Port, Knots and Holes (2018) (73 min)
**Password to film: knotsandholes

Still from The Possibility of Spirits (2016)

Assignment (choose one)
1) Describe a possible encounter with a spirit. Reflect on that encounter by putting it in conversation with this week’s reading and film by Van de Port.
2) Reflect upon a photograph you couldn’t throw away. Reflect on that encounter by putting it in conversation with this week’s reading and film by Van de Port.

Week 11 – Witnessing: I Swear I Saw It
November 17th

Reading
Theoretical Text

Related Resources
Video clip: Michael Taussig on Chance, Images and Spirits (23 min)
Screening

Film

Kevin Jerome Everson, *Ears, Nose and Throat* (2016) (10 min)
Kevin Jerome Everson, *Shadeena* (2016) (5 min)

**Password to both films: mississippi**

Related Resources

Two video clips:

Kevin Jerome Everson on Observational Fiction (3 min)
Kevin Jerome Everson on *Ears, Nose, and Throat* (4 min)

Assignment

Draw something that you “swear” you saw. Reflect in one to two paragraphs on what you learned and how it relates to Taussig’s text. What is a “seeing that doubts itself?” How are doubt and certainty present in *Ear, Nose and Throat*. How have images functioned as a kind of witnessing in the racial justice protests that have swept North America recently?

Still from *Ears, Nose, and Throat* (2016)

**Week 12 – Witnessing: Images in Spite of All**

November 24th

Reading

Theoretical Text

**Related Resources**
- Two video clips from *Critical Thinkers – Georges Didi-Huberman*
- Art and Psychoanalysis (7 min)
- Seeing and Looking (3 min)

**Screening**

**Film**
- Patricio Guzmán, *Nostalgia for the Light* (2011) (90 min)

**Related Resources**
- Two video clips:
  - Guzmán on making the script (5 min)
  - Guzmán discusses “dramatic particles” (4 min)

**Recommended**
- Guzmán on filming the texture of the desert (4 min)

![Still from Nostalgia for the Light (2011)](image)

**Assignment**

Summarize and reflect on the thesis of *Images In Spite of All*. Do you agree? What are the dangers of being too skeptical or of being too trusting of images? How could you think through the “Architect’s” drawings of the floor plan of the concentration camp in the Atacama desert using Didi-Huberman’s text? What about the images the astronomers are searching for?

**Week 13 – Listening**

December 1st
Reading

Theoretical Text


Related Resources

Video clip: Italo Calvino discusses speech, writing, and looking at waves (5 min)

Screening (in class)

Eduardo Kohn and Manari Ushigua, *Soundscape*

Assignment (choose one)

1) Write a vignette (from life, from imagination) that describes the power of the voice. Reflect on it vis-à-vis Calvino’s text.

2) Create a soundscape that records the crackle buzz, hum of the world. Reflect on it vis-à-vis Calvino’s text.
Evaluation

Please see the assignment directions and follow them carefully for information on how the weekly response and revised weekly response will be evaluated.

Peer Evaluation Component Peergrade

We will be experimenting with Peergrade in this class to give and receive feedback from peers on the Revised Weekly Submission. All submissions and feedback will be anonymous.

This is the YouTube playlist on how to use Peergrade. It should be very straightforward: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLNu8YHd_hUdG1qGX8u5JLWNkzJU0hy61i

All students will peer-evaluate three of their classmate’s submissions on each of the Revised Weekly Assignments. Failure to do so will result in 10% reduction of final grade. Late peer reviews will incur a 2% reduction of final grade per day late.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>% of final grade</th>
<th>Submission Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Reading Responses</td>
<td>Each week</td>
<td>Penalty of -10% for missing assignment</td>
<td>Assignments on MyCourses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upload one of your weekly responses to Peergrade (your choice of which weekly response you want to revise)</td>
<td>Sept 25th</td>
<td>Penalty of -10% for missing assignment</td>
<td>Peergrade on MyCourses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide peer feedback for three of your classmate’s weekly responses on Peergrade</td>
<td>Sept 25th to Oct 2nd</td>
<td>Penalty of -10% for missing feedback</td>
<td>Peergrade on MyCourses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upload first Revised Weekly Response to MyCourses</td>
<td>October 9th</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Assignments on MyCourses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upload the second weekly response you have chosen for revision to Peergrade</td>
<td>Oct 23rd</td>
<td>Penalty of -10% for missing assignment</td>
<td>Peergrade on MyCourses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide peer feedback for three of your classmates’ weekly responses</td>
<td>October 23-30th</td>
<td>Penalty of -10% for missing feedback</td>
<td>Peergrade on MyCourses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name of Assignment</td>
<td>Due Date</td>
<td>% of final grade</td>
<td>Submission Location</td>
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<tr>
<td>Upload second Revised Weekly Response to MyCourses</td>
<td>November 6th</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Assignments on MyCourses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upload the third weekly response you have chosen to Peergrade for feedback</td>
<td>November 27th</td>
<td>Penalty of -10%</td>
<td>Peergrade on MyCourses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide peer feedback for three of your classmates’ weekly responses</td>
<td>November 27th - December 4th</td>
<td>Penalty of -10% for missing feedback</td>
<td>Peergrade on MyCourses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Upload Third Revised Weekly Response to MyCourses</td>
<td>December 7th</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>Assignments on MyCourses</td>
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<td>Random Check of Weekly Responses submitted to MyCourses</td>
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<td>10%</td>
<td>Assignments on MyCourses</td>
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McGill Policy Statements

Language of Submission

“In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. This does not apply to courses in which acquiring proficiency in a language is one of the objectives.” (Approved by Senate on 21 January 2009 - see also the section in this document on Assignments and Evaluation.)

Note: In courses in which acquiring proficiency in a language is one of the objectives, the assessments shall be in the language of the course.

Academic Integrity

“McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures” (see McGill’s guide to academic honesty for more information). (Approved by Senate on 29 January 2003)

Additional Statements (Please Read Carefully!)

• “The University Student Assessment Policy exists to ensure fair and equitable academic assessment for all students and to protect students from excessive workloads. All students and instructors are encouraged to review this Policy, which addresses multiple aspects and methods of student assessment, e.g. the timing of evaluation due dates and weighting of final examinations.”

• “Note that to support academic integrity, your assignments may be submitted to text-matching or other appropriate software (e.g., formula-, equation-, and graph-matching).”

• “© Instructor-generated course materials (e.g., handouts, notes, summaries, exam questions, podcasts) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of copyright can be subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.”

• “As the instructor of this course I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the Office for Students with Disabilities, 514-398-6009.”

• Content warning: Please be aware that some of the course content may be disturbing for some students. It has been included in the course because it directly relates to the learning outcomes. Please contact the instructor if you have specific concerns about this.”

• In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.”

• Additional policies governing academic issues which affect students can be found in the McGill Charter of Students’ Rights (see document).

• McGill has policies on sustainability, paper use and other initiatives to promote a culture of sustainability at McGill. (See the Office of Sustainability.)
• “McGill University is on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. We acknowledge and thank the diverse Indigenous people whose footsteps have marked this territory on which peoples of the world now gather.”