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## ANTH 408: Sensory Ethnography

Professor Lisa Stevenson

Mondays, 2:30-5:30pm



Still from *Leviathan* (2012)

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# Course Outline – ANTH 408: Sensory Ethnography

## General Information

Course #	408
Term	Winter
Year	2021
Course schedule	Mondays, 2:30-5:30pm
Number of credits	3 credits

## Instructor Information

Name and Title	Professor Lisa Stevenson
E-mail	<a href="mailto:lisa.e.stevenson@mcgill.ca">lisa.e.stevenson@mcgill.ca</a>
Virtual office hours	Margaret Lisa Stevenson, Prof. is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Lisa Stevenson, Office Hours  
Time: This is a recurring meeting Meet anytime

Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://mcgill.zoom.us/j/83230911143>

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### Course Overview

Anthropology: Anthropology of the senses through the study of ethnographic film, photography and sound. Topics include: the role of senses and emotion in the production of knowledge, non-word based ways of knowing, and the relation between image and text in anthropology.

Terms: Winter 2021

Instructors: Stevenson, Margaret (Winter)

- Prerequisite: U3 students in Anthropology and permission of instructor

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## 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

***If it were possible to say it with words, the films would be useless.***

**- Artavazd Ashoti Peleshyan**

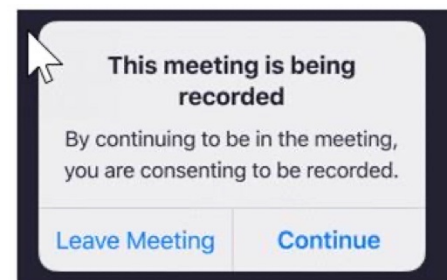
This course will explore ways of knowing made available through ethnographic and experimental film (e.g. *Forest of Bliss*, Robert Gardner; *Wedding Camels*, David and Judith MacDougall, *Reassemblage*, Trinh T. Minh-ha; *Okay Bye-Bye*, Rebecca Baron)—through screenings, class discussions, and projects 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.

## Instructional Method

I have spent some time adapting this course for the online format by making better use of e-resources. Each week there are 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 for instruction, to screen student work and to discuss films and readings.

## Recordings of Sessions

I will be recording 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:



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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

Attendance at as many zoom meetings as possible is expected, as is close reading or viewing of all assigned course material by the class date in question. Absences will result in a lowered attendance/participation grade. The class is conducted as a seminar, rather than a lecture series. As such, regular attendance, your contributions to class discussions, and contributions on peergrade are extremely important and will constitute **25% of your grade**. Due to COVID, accommodations may be made, but must be discussed with professor beforehand.

One class may be missed (with an explanation) without penalty. Further absences will result in a reduction of your participation grade by 5% for each class missed.

In addition to your participation in class, coursework will consist of an audiovisual component (**60%**), and a written component which consists of an artist's statement due on the last day of class, (**10%**) as well as a brief online quiz (**5%**); all of which will be discussed in detail in class.

Late weekly assignments will result in a 2% penalty on your final grade.

Failure to submit one of the weekly assignments will result in a 10% penalty on your final grade.

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

### Peergrade Submissions

To submit an assignment to Peergrade, please follow the guidelines on MyCourses.

You can find them in the "Peergrade" tab under the name "Guidelines: Submitting an Assignment on Peergrade".

### Zoom Meeting

Margaret Lisa Stevenson, Prof. is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: SENSORY ETHNOGRAPHY

Time: This is a recurring meeting Meet anytime

Join Zoom Meeting

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Meeting ID: 876 0402 6313

Find your local number: <https://mcgill.zoom.us/u/kbd9RjnVo8>

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69.174.57.160 (Canada)

207.226.132.110 (Japan)

Meeting ID: 876 0402 6313



**Week 1 – Class Introduction**

January 11th



Still from *Forest of Bliss* (1986)

**Reading**

Barbash and Taylor, "Shots and Moves" in *Cross-Cultural Filmmaking* (1997)

Diana Allan, "What Bodies Remember" (2018)

**Screening**

Verena Paravel and J.P. Sniadecki, *Foreign Parts* (2010) (82min)

**Recommended**

Castaing-Taylor and Paravel, *Leviathan* (2012) (87 min)

**Assignment**

Complete the film terms quiz on MyCourses by Friday January 15th at 4pm



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## Week 2 – Sound

January 18th



Still from *Yumen* (2013)

### Reading

Steven Connor, "Edison's Teeth: Touching Hearing" (2004)

Hildegard Westerkamp, "Soundwalking" (1974)

### Recommended

Feld and Brenneis "Doing Anthropology in Sound" (2004)

Joshua Bonnetta, *Lago* (2016)

### Soundscapes

Steven Feld, "Sardinian Tenores and Sheep Bells" and "Sunday Bells of Venice" (2004)

Christopher Mills, "Charles Spearin - The Happiness Project" (2009) (6 min)

J.P. Sniadecki, excerpt from *Yumen* (2013)

### Screening

David New, *Listen* (2009) (6 min)

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## Assignment

Read the 'Emotional Soundscape' and 'Apartment Soundscape' assignments. Ideally, complete both! If time does not allow, choose and complete only one.

## Week 3 – Drawing/Animation of Reality

January 25th

### Deadline: Sound assignment due



Stills from *Agua Viva* (2018)

## Reading

Kim Tondeur, "Graphic Anthropology Field School" (2016)

Andrea Ford, "Funny, Awkward, Tender, Focused: Drawing Bodies" (2018)

Ryan Montoya, "Comics and the Medical Encounter" (2016)

Andrew Causey, "Can't See?" in *Drawn to See: Drawing as an Ethnographic Method* (2017: 25-48)

John Berger, *Bento's Sketchbook* (2011) (page 1-11)

## Related Resources

John Berger, *The Art of Looking* (Dvorak 2016) (excerpt) (4 min)

## Recommended

John Berger, "Steps Towards a Small Theory of the Visible" (2003)

## Screening

Alexa Lim Haas, *Agua Viva* (2018) (6 min)

Sky Hopinka, *Lore* (2019) (10 min)

## Related Resources

Interview with Alexa Lim Haas: "Agua Viva portrays the immigrant experience of a Chinese manicurist in Miami" (2019)

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Podcast with Alexa Lim Haas: “Alexa Lim Haas on Animating Stories” (2017)

### Assignment

Do 3 of the “Etudes” suggested in Andrew Causey’s chapter “Can’t See?” (2017). Read the assignment guidelines posted on MyCourses.

## Week 4 – Kinds of Shots

February 1st

**Deadline: Drawing assignment due**



Still from *Grey Gardens* (1976)

### Reading

Rachel Strickland, “Spontaneous Cinematography” (1991)

### Screening

Study the “Film Techniques Video Clips”

### Assignment

Complete the “Types of Shots Assignment” and “Moving with the Camera Assignment”. Read the assignment guidelines posted on MyCourses.

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## Week 5 – Continuity Editing vs. Montage

February 8th

**Deadline: ‘Types of Shots’ and ‘Moving with the Camera’ assignments due**



Still from *Les Glaneurs et la Glaneuse* (1992)

### Reading

Sergei Eisenstein, “A Dialectic Approach to Film Form” (1929)

Sergei Eisenstein, “Methods of Montage” (1929)

Walter Murch, *In the Blink of an Eye* (1992) (selections)

### Screening

Dziga Vertov, *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) (80 min) (excerpts)

Agnès Varda, *Les Glaneurs et la Glaneuse* (2000) (82 min) (excerpts)

Albert and David Maysles, *Grey Gardens* (1976) (96 min) (entirety)

### Related Resources

YouTube video: “Eisenstein's Methods of Montage Explained”

### Recommended

Agnès Varda TEDx Talk “Inspiration and Good Mood: That’s Cinema!” (2018) (24 min)



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## Assignment

Complete the “Montage Assignment” and the “Continuity Editing Assignment”. Read the assignment guidelines posted on MyCourses.

### Week 6 – Portraiture

February 15<sup>th</sup>

**Deadline: ‘Montage’ and ‘Continuity Editing’ assignments due**



Still from *L'opéra-mouffe* (1958)

## Reading

Lisa Stevenson, “Looking Away” (2020)

John Berger, “A Young Woman with Hand to Her Chin” (1997)

## Screening

Diana Allan, *So Dear, So Lovely* (2018) (24 min) (\*\*\*)**PASSWORD:** layla)

Lisa Stevenson and Eduardo Kohn, *El Reflejo* (2018) (24 min) (\*\*\*)**PASSWORD:** el reflejo)

Andy Warhol, *Thirteen Most Beautiful... Songs for Andy Warhol's Screen Tests* (1964-66) (selections)

Stefanie Spray and Pacho Velez, *Manakamana* (2013) (selections)

Agnès Varda, *L'opéra-mouffe* (1958) (selections)

J.P. Sniadecki, *The Iron Ministry* (2014) (excerpt)

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### Related Resources

Interview with Agnès Varda: “Agnès Varda from 5 to 7” (1962)

### Recommended

Interview with Agnès Varda: “Agnes Varda excerpt On Directing Documentary” (2019)

### Assignment

Complete the Silent Portrait assignment. Read the assignment guidelines posted on MyCourses.



Still from *Manakamana* (2013)

## Week 7 – Interviews

February 22nd

### Reading

Bengt Bok “Encounter with the Other” (2015) (selections)

### Related Resources

Podcast with Bengt Bok: “Requiem from a Cemetery” (2016) (46 min)

### Screening

Tatiana Huezo, *Tempestad* (2016)

Kevin Jerome Everson, *Shadeena* (2016) (5 min) (\*\*\*)**PASSWORD**: mississippi)

Fairfax Wright and Zouhali-Worrall, *They Will Say We Are Not Here* (2012) (5 min)

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### Assignment

Complete the Interview assignment posted on MyCourses. Read the assignment guidelines posted on MyCourses.

### **Week 8 – March Break (NO CLASS)**

March 1st

### **Week 9 – Conversation**

March 8th

***Deadline: Interview assignment due***



Still from *Tutucut Follies* (1967)

### Reading

David MacDougall, "Visual Anthropology and the Ways of Knowing" (1998)

Robert Bresson, "Sight and Hearing" (1950-1958)

### Recommended

David MacDougall, "Subtitling Ethnographic Films" (1998)

### Screening

Frederick Wiseman, *Tutucut Follies* (1967)

Chick Strand, *Fake Fruit Factory* (1982)



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MacDougall, *To Live with Herds* (1971)

### Assignment

Complete the Conversation Assignment posted on MyCourses.

### Week 10 – Composition and Texture

March 15th

**Deadline: Conversation assignment due**



Still from *Old Believers* (1992)

### Reading

Teju Cole, *Blind Spot* (2017) (selections)

V Renée, “9 Simple Photography Composition Techniques That Captivate The Eye” (2015)

Interview with Artavazd Peleshian: “Going the Distance” (2012)

### Screening

Jana Ševčíková, *Old Believers* (1992) (selections)

Artavazd Peleshian, *Seasons* (1975) (28 min)

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### Assignment

Complete the Landscape assignment posted on MyCourses.

### Week 11 – Opening Shots

March 22nd

***Deadline: Landscape assignment due***



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

### Reading

Genevieve Jacobson, “A Cut in Time: RaMell Ross, Joslyn Barnes and Maya Krinsky Break Down a Scene from *Hale County This Morning, This Evening*” (2018)

### Screening

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

### Related Resources

Video clips from Interviews with RaMell Ross

### Assignment

Complete the Opening Shots assignment posted on MyCourses.

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**Week 12 – Rushes**

March 29th

Guest Lecture: Diana Allan

Reread her article “What Bodies Remember” (2018) and rewatch *So Dear, So Lovely* (2018)

**Week 13 – Easter Monday (NO CLASS)**

April 5th

**Week 14 – Final Projects**

April 12th

**Week 15 – Final Projects**

April 15<sup>th</sup>

Assignment

Artist’s Statement Due: April 15<sup>th</sup> 4pm.

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## Evaluation

Please see the assignment directions and follow them carefully for information on weekly assignments.

### Guidelines for Submission of Written Work:

This class requires electronic submission (My Courses) of all written work.

Double-space, using 1-inch margins

Number your pages.

At the top of the first page include your name, date, and essay title.

Proofread and spell-check before turning in papers.

### Absences and Lateness:

If you have to miss class it is your responsibility to get materials, assignments, and class notes from other students.

## Peer Evaluation Component Peergrade

We will be experimenting with Peergrade in this class to give and receive feedback from peers on the weekly assignments. 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](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLNu8YHd_hUdG1qGX8u5JLWNkzJU0hy61i)

All students will peer-evaluate **three** of their classmate's submissions on each of the weekly video submissions. 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.

Name of Assignment	Due Date	% of final grade	Submission Location
Film terms quiz	Jan 8	5%	Assignments on MyCourses
Upload your Emotional soundscape or Apartment soundscape (or both if you completed the two assignments) to Peergrade for feedback	Jan 22	Penalty of -10% for missing assignment	Peergrade on MyCourses
Provide peer feedback for <b>three</b> of your classmate's soundscapes on Peergrade	Jan 24	Penalty of -10% for missing feedback	Peergrade on MyCourses

Name of Assignment	Due Date	% of final grade	Submission Location
Upload your drawing assignment to Peergrade for feedback	Jan 29	Penalty of -10% for missing assignment	Peergrade on MyCourses
Provide peer feedback for <b>three</b> of your classmates' drawing assignments	Jan 31	Penalty of -10% for missing feedback	Peergrade on MyCourses
Upload your 'Types of Shots' and 'Moving with the Camera' assignments to Peergrade for feedback	Feb 5	Penalty of -10% for missing assignment	Peergrade on MyCourses
Provide peer feedback for <b>three</b> of your classmates' 'Types of Shots' and 'Moving with the Camera' assignments	Feb 7	Penalty of -10% for missing feedback	Peergrade on MyCourses
Upload your 'Continuity Editing' and 'Montage' assignments to Peergrade for feedback	Feb 12	Penalty of -10% for missing assignment	Peergrade on MyCourses
Provide peer feedback for <b>three</b> of your classmates' 'Continuity Editing' and 'Montage' assignments	Feb 14	Penalty of -10% for missing feedback	Peergrade on MyCourses
Upload your Silent Portrait assignment to Peergrade for feedback	Feb 19	Penalty of -10% for missing assignment	Peergrade on MyCourses
Provide peer feedback for <b>three</b> of your classmates' Silent Portrait assignments	Feb 21	Penalty of -10% for missing feedback	Peergrade on MyCourses
Upload your Interview assignment to Peergrade for feedback	March 5	Penalty of -10% for missing assignment	Peergrade on MyCourses
Provide peer feedback for <b>three</b> of your classmates' Interview assignments	March 7	Penalty of -10% for missing feedback	Peergrade on MyCourses
Upload your Conversation assignment to Peergrade for feedback	March 12	Penalty of	Peergrade on MyCourses

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Name of Assignment	Due Date	% of final grade	Submission Location
		-10% for missing assignment	
Provide peer feedback for <b>three</b> of your classmates' Conversation assignments	March 14	Penalty of -10% for missing feedback	Peergrade on MyCourses
Upload your Landscape assignment to Peergrade for feedback	March 19	Penalty of -10% for missing assignment	Peergrade on MyCourses
Provide peer feedback for <b>three</b> of your classmates' Landscape assignments	March 21	Penalty of -10% for missing feedback	Peergrade on MyCourses
Upload your Opening Shots assignment to Peergrade for feedback	March 26	Penalty of -10% for missing assignment	Peergrade on MyCourses
Provide peer feedback for <b>three</b> of your classmates' Opening Shots assignments	March 28	Penalty of -10% for missing feedback	Peergrade on MyCourses

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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](#).)



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- “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.”