ETHNOGRAPHY AND CARE-FULL DESCRIPTION

Cristiana Giordano  
Anthropology Department  
2:10-5:00 pm  
SOCSCI 273

Traditionally, socio-cultural anthropology as an academic field has relied on ethnographic methods to understand, translate, and explain the customs, practices, and infrastructures of different cultures. These methods include participant observation, structured and semi-structured interviews, “thick” description (detailed and in depth description), and the production of a canonical text that links the experience of fieldwork with theories of social interaction, subjectivity, political and economic systems, and historical narrative. In order to use this methodology, social scientists need to learn how to listen to and observe the complexities and contradictions of social life. Whether it is listening to the words others share with us during interviews and conversations (and to the questions they pose us), or observing the practices people engage in, or participating in rituals, ethnographic methods allow us to gather data that can lead to a careful description.

Through workshops, presentations, and guest lectures we will explore 1) different ethnographic methods, 2) modalities of “being there” while we do fieldwork, and 3) the relation between methods and objects of inquiry. We will also reflect on various texts and forms of representation based on ethnographic material. The aim is to provide students in training in the social sciences with methods and approaches that increase understanding, interpretation, and analysis of different events and cultural contexts.

Please note that this pro-seminar is focused on practicing methods. The readings assigned for this class are aimed at guiding our practices of doing research, and at helping us identifying the appropriate methods for our respective research topics.

The pro-seminar will meet 5 times for 3 hours over the course of the Fall and Winter quarters, 2015-16. Each class is organized around a presentation of concepts, methods, and practices that will help us workshop ethnographic methods.

October 7th  Inventive Methods of “Being There”

Led by Cristiana Giordano


**October 21st - Soundscapes, Sonic Portraits, and Modes of Listening**

**Workshop with Alexandra Lippman**

**Reading & Listening:**


Novak, David 2013 “*Osaka Inside Out: Recording the Keynote Sounds of the City.*” Field recording mix and notes. Sensory Studies, October 2013.

The Sound Ethnography Project > Alexandra Lippman founded this online collaboration in 2010 to experiment with engaging sound to produce novel ethnographic methods and forms. In addition to sound ethnographies, it includes a list of “sound elsewhere” of fantastic sound-based projects. Enjoy perusing the website (headphones recommended).

**Recommended:**

Banning Eyre 2011 “*Egypt 1: Cairo Soundscape*” on Afropop Worldwide.

Jace Clayton 2014 “The Quietest Place” for The Art Assignment


**November 4th – Research Creation**

**Workshop with Fiamma Montezemolo**

**Readings:**

Sansi, Roger. *Art, Anthropology and the Gift*, Bloomsbury, 2015 [chapter 1 and 2]

**Recommended:**

Schneider, Arnd and Christopher Wright (Eds), *Anthropology and Art Practice*, Bloomsbury: London, 2013


**November 18th – The Institutions as Sites**

*Led by Cristiana Giordano*


Other readings TBA

**December 2nd – Embodied Ethnography**

*A workshop with Jiwon Chun*

**Readings:**


Experiments with Boal's People's Theatre In Peru (this is a core, seminal text) by Augusto Boal. [http://www.thefmly.org/img/poetics.pdf](http://www.thefmly.org/img/poetics.pdf)

**Recommended:**

Pedagogy of the Oppressed (this is another core text, probably Chap 1 or 1 & 2). [https://libcom.org/files/FreirePedagogyoftheOppressed.pdf](https://libcom.org/files/FreirePedagogyoftheOppressed.pdf)

Interview with Augusto Boal (Augusto describes his own work) [http://www.democracynow.org/2005/6/3/famed_brazilian_artist_augusto_boal_on](http://www.democracynow.org/2005/6/3/famed_brazilian_artist_augusto_boal_on)
Interview about TO with Angelina Longueras:
https://soundcloud.com/angelinacat/interview-to-jiwon-chung-on

"Theater as a Martial Art": How to deal with violence (metaphorical, symbolic and literal) using theater
(From "Come Closer")

This is short pamphlet on how to do TO (quick and easy manual for "barefoot theater")--from "Acting for Indigenous Rights"

Speakers:

Alexandra Lippman’s primary research explores how globalizing alternative intellectual property practices impact creativity, access to knowledge, digital media, and music in Brazil. Since 2008, she has conducted fieldwork primarily in Rio de Janeiro. Her interest in multisensory ethnography, sound, and methodological innovation and experimentation led to her forming the research collaboration, the Sound Ethnography Project. One of Alexandra’s new research projects includes a study of the relationships between social activism, the cultura livre (free culture) movement, and Open Access publishing in Brazil and Latin America more broadly.

Fiamma Montezemolo is both an artist (MFA, San Francisco Art Institute) and a Cultural Anthropologist (Ph.D, University Orientale of Naples). She is an established scholar in border studies and a faculty member of the Department of Cinema & Digital Media at the University of California, Davis. She is the author of La Mia Storia Non La Tua: La Dinamica Della Costruzione Dell’identita’ Chicana Tra Etero- e Auto-rappresentazioni (Guerini, 2004) and Senza volto: L’etnicità e il genere nel Movimento Zapatista (Liguori, 1999). She is also a co-author of Here is Tijuana (Blackdog Publishing, 2006) and co-editor of Tijuana Dreaming: Life & Art at the Global border (Duke UP, 2012). As an artist she situates her work as a critical extension of the ethnographic turn in contemporary art. She works with various media, mainly installation and video. Her artwork has been widely exhibited both nationally and internationally. She is represented by the Magazzino Dell’Arte Moderna gallery in Rome.

Jiwon Chung, is a professional actor, director, and a key theorist of Theatre of the Oppressed. A pioneer in the integration of somatics, theatre of the oppressed, and socially engaged art, he is on faculty at the Berkeley Rep. School of Theatre and the Starr King School at the Graduate Theological Union. The focus of his work is in the application of theatre as a tool for social and political change, to challenge, resist, structural violence, and to redress large scale historical atrocity and injustice.
Cristiana Giordano is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at UC Davis. She works on foreign migration, mental health, and cultural translation in contemporary Italy. Her research addresses the politics of migration in Europe through the lens of ethno-psychiatry and its radical critique of psychiatric, legal, and moral categories of inclusion/exclusion of foreign others. She is the author of Migrants in Translation. Caring and the Logics of Difference in Contemporary Italy (University of California Press, 2014). Her current research focuses on issues of migrant health in Europe through the lenses of scientific research on the microbial flora of new comers aimed at monitoring selected cohorts of migrants to understand the health challenges they may go through during their integration in the European society. She is also engaged in finding new forms of ethnographic writing through theater device