

**Capstone research seminar ANTH 4008  
(labeled as Contemporary Theory)**

Spring, 2014, Thursdays, 5.10-7.00, Duques 251



**INSTRUCTOR**

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This is a capstone research seminar in which students will produce papers around topics that in one way or another investigate comparatively the concept of *evidence* and *rationality* and the different roles they play in different anthropological *arguments*. Through studying these patterns of argumentation, students will learn to develop their own arguments. Students will then flesh out these arguments and write a 20 page capstone paper.. Students may focus their research on any time period and use any methodology that is deemed appropriate, but all students will be expected to engage in primary source research. For example, a student in archaeology might wish to evaluate the role of carbon dating as evidence in a particular body of research, and the ways in which this has figured in archaeological arguments. A student in sociocultural anthropology might compare the role of quantitative versus qualitative data in a particular body of research and evaluate its role in arguments. A linguistic anthropologist might be interested in how storytelling has been used as evidence in a particular cultural tradition. We will focus on individual research and writing, as well as on reading and commenting on each other's work. Students will learn how to produce a proposal, a bibliographic essay, and a final research paper.

1) Introduction – Goals of the course. Jan 16th

2) Writing in Anthropology. January 23rd

Read: 1) “A Sociologist’s Introduction” in Rationality by Bryan Wilson, ed. 2) Clifford Geertz, “Being There: Anthropology and the Scene of Writing” in Works and Lives 3) Engelke “Objects of Evidence” Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute 4) Kuipers “Evidence and Authority in Ethnographic and Linguistic Perspective” Annual Review of Anthropology

3) Components of an Argument: January 30th

Read: 1) Turabian chapters 1, 2, 5. 2) Andriessen “Arguing to Learn” [first 4 pages only]

4) Arguments in Anthropology: February 6th

*Assignment:* Bring in 3 articles on your chosen topic: identify the components of the argument; compare the ways the argument is structured. 3 pages. Post on BB. Be prepared to present in class.

5) Kinds of Evidence. February 13<sup>th</sup>

*Assignment:* Propose a preliminary argument and bring in 3 sources of evidence for your argument, and how they relate to your claim. Include at least one form of primary source material. 2 pages. Post on BB. Be prepared to present in class.

5) pre-proposal. February 20<sup>th</sup>

Prepare a five-minute presentation that outlines your research problem and working hypothesis; be prepared to discuss and share actual primary source material.

6) Research proposal due. February 27<sup>th</sup>

No class.

7) Pre-bibliographic essay reports. March 6th

Prepare a five-minute presentation that articulates the key *contemporary* scholarly debates concerning rationality and evidence with respect to your research topic; explain how your research will intervene in that scholarly debate.

8) Spring break – March 13<sup>th</sup>

9) Bibliographic Essays Due. March 20<sup>th</sup>. No class

10) Preliminary research presentations. March 27<sup>th</sup>

*Assignment:* Half the class will prepare ten minute presentations based on their research projects. Specific attention should be paid to any research problems that have developed and those problems will be discussed. Post 6-8 slide Power Point on BB.

11) Preliminary research presentations. April 3<sup>rd</sup>.

*Assignment:* Half the class will prepare ten minute presentations based on their research projects. Specific attention should be paid to any research problems that have developed and those problems will be discussed. Post 6-8 slide Power Point on BB.

12) Class critiques of rough drafts. April 10<sup>th</sup> . No class.

*Assignment:* 1) Each person in the class will be assigned 5 other rough drafts to examine and critique. 2) Rough drafts must be at least 15 pages long, must be submitted to sent to me, and to the other five assignees in the class via email, by April 10 at 5:00 pm.

13) Presentations of rough drafts and comments. April 17<sup>th</sup>

Each person will prepare a 5 minute presentation on the critiques received of the rough draft and how these suggestions are being addressed.

14) Final papers due. April 24<sup>th</sup>. Post on BB. 20 pages plus bibliography.

### **Readings:**

Common readings during the first weeks of classes will either be posted on Blackboard or available in the electronic journals of Gelman

After the first few weeks of common readings, students will be expected to read additional secondary scholarship to frame their research problems

It is expected that the formatting of papers will conform to the style laid out by Kate Turabian in *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (seventh edition). If you don't own a copy of this book, you may want to buy it. Students are strongly encouraged to use bibliographic software such as refworks or endnote.

### **Grading:**

Proposal	10%
Bibliographic Essay	10%
Research Presentation	10%
Rough Draft	10%

Class Participation	10%
Final Paper	50%

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

I personally support the GW Code of Academic Integrity. It states: “Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.” For the remainder of the code, see: <http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html>

### **SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM**

#### *DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS)*

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Marvin Center, Suite 242, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: <http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/>

#### *UNIVERSITY COUNSELING CENTER (UCC) 202-994-5300*

The University Counseling Center (UCC) offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include:

- crisis and emergency mental health consultations
- confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals

<http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/CounselingServices/AcademicSupportServices>

### **SECURITY**

In the case of an emergency, if at all possible, the class should shelter in place. If the building that the class is in is affected, follow the evacuation procedures for the building. After evacuation, seek shelter at a predetermined rendezvous location.