Seminar Description

This seminar draws inspiration from Raymond Williams’s classic book “Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society” and explores two sets of terms: the first are concepts that anthropologists are using to interpret and interact with worlds and emergent forms of life (ontologies, multispecies, becomings, ethics, public ethnography); the second are subjects that anthropologists are studying (punishment, borders, infrastructures, housing, disasters, precarity, care) that speak to a certain state of the world and of the social today. Each keyword will be analyzed at the crossroads of ethnography and critical theory.

Requirements/Grading

The success of the seminar depends on your commitment to complete all required readings for each session, write and post weekly reading/writing responses to help introduce discussions, and participate actively in discussions throughout the semester.

Each week you will be required to write a two-part response. In the first part (ca. 200-300 words) you are encouraged to draw from your research or personal experiences to probe on the limits, possibilities and openings offered by the keyword in question. You may write this section before or after reading and consider how writing first illuminates your reading, and vice-versa. In the second part (ca. 200-300 words), you are expected to identify major arguments and themes connecting the readings, consider other possible keywords that might connect them, and formulate questions to discuss in class. You can organize your responses as a journal where you establish connections between your own work and interests and contemporary anthropological debates, and observe the development of your ideas through the semester.

Students will make brief class presentations on keywords and readings they are particularly interested in.
Grading will be based on:

1. Attendance, participation, and class presentation (20%).
2. Weekly reading reports (40%).
   Reports shall be posted on Blackboard every Sunday by 6:00 pm (starting January 31st).
3. A final research paper or book review essay (40%).
   The 12-15 double-spaced page paper is due May 10, 2016, by 5:00 pm.
   Please email the paper to the instructors.

The following required books will be on reserve at Firestone Library. These books will also be available for purchase at Labyrinth Books (122 Nassau Street). Articles and book chapters can be downloaded from Blackboard’s electronic reserve.

WHY ETHNOGRAPHY MATTERS


Optional Readings:


February 8

**ONTLOGIES**


**Optional Readings:**


February 15

**MULTISPECIES**


Optional Readings:


February 22

**PUNISHMENT**


Optional Readings:

February 29

ETHICS


Optional Readings:


March 7

BECOMINGS


**Optional Readings:**


*** SPRING BREAK ***
March 21

**INFRASTRUCTURES/HOUSING**


**Optional Readings:**


March 28

**BORDERS**


**Optional Readings:**


April 4

**PRECARITY/LIVABILITY**


Optional Readings:


April 11

**VIOLENCE/CARE**


Optional Readings:

April 18

**ACCIDENT/UNCERTAINTY/HORIZONING**


**Optional Readings:**


April 25

**UNFINISHED**

*Discussion of Other Keywords*
