

## COURSE CONTENT

<b>Course Code</b>	DF2006
<b>Course Title</b>	Ethnographic Film
<b>Pre-requisites</b>	NIL (prior knowledge in Film studies is preferred)
<b>No of AUs</b>	3
<b>Contact Hours</b>	39 hours

### **Course Aims**

This foundation level course aims to introduce you to the historic developments and discussions in relation to ethnographic film and visual anthropology. It will give you a solid understanding of a continuously evolving debates that have significantly changed our understanding of this specific field of filmmaking. The seminar will introduce you to key texts and films that have influenced the discussion. In this way, this module offers to you a solid foundation for further studies in diverse fields like for example film, visual media, ethnography, social studies or anthropology.

### **Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)**

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Describe and show gained knowledge of structural developments in the production and discussion of ethnographic films and visual anthropology.
2. Interpret and differentiate works from the field in a wider historical context and in relation to other documentaries.
3. Apply the gained knowledge to the field of contemporary works and discussions in different institutional frames (galleries, museums, festivals etc).
4. Present, evaluate and reflect the knowledge you gained on ethnographic film and visual anthropology from different fields and sources.
5. Constructively discuss and critique diverse theories as well as the concepts, formats, and techniques employed by filmmakers.

### **Course Content**

In this course you will receive an overview of the key developments in the field of ethnographic film and visual anthropology.

Ethnographic Film is one of the many ways we look at culture. This course surveys its historical development and showcases those filmmakers regarded as its masters. Furthermore, it concentrates on close and careful analysis of ethnographic films.

The topics and questions we will encounter include: narrative constructions based on research and fieldwork; access and control of materials; the authors' and participants' voices; the role of interviews; the conflict between narrative and observational styles; and the basic analysis of shooting, sound and editing.

In our accompanying readings you will be introduced to the principles of Visual Anthropology through the associated critical literature. Therefore, we will give special attention to its central problematics: the notions of "truth" (objectivity) and the filmmakers' subjectivities; the representation of culture, collaboration with the films' peoples; films made for television and personal experimental works; ethical and moral dilemmas; and the issue of ethnocentrism and national hegemony (imperialism).

By analyzing a variety of films and theory texts, you will explore major shifting points in the discussions that changed the understanding of the field. We will gain an understanding of how the field changed from an approach that centred in its beginning around a western-colonial position

and developed into a critical, transcultural, and post-colonial discourse that has defined the films in recent years.

### **What's in an ethnographic film and what is visual anthropology?**

We will start with an investigation of the simple question: what do we define as ethnographic film and visual anthropology? From there we will dig deeper into various theories and approach questions concerning specific narratives (who is the narrator?), the forms (use of camera, editing, sound) and the wider perception (who is the audience & how are works distributed?). These questions then will be discussed against the developments of a global and transcultural discussion in film theory.

### **Between the creation of the “other” and a representation of “self”**

One key aspect throughout the whole semester will be how continuity of the charged distinction between SELF and OTHER has influenced the debate over the decades. You will learn how to critically reflect these patterns that usually create problematic narratives about an unknown culture, and that continuously have created dynamics of alienation and/or closeness.

### **From “traditional” to “new” narratives and formats**

You will receive a basic introduction to newly emerging and evolving story-formats that deviate from traditional forms. This may include installations, exhibitions, interactive storytelling, immersive environments such as dome and VR, and augmented reality. The aim of this section is to gain a basic familiarisation with the terms and the different requirements for conceiving narratives.

### **Class assignments**

You will produce two creative presentations during the semester which will introduce specific questions of a theory and film to your peers. The presentation will demonstrate that you have understood the key concepts of films / theories. It provides a basis for discussions that follow in each session.

### **Assessment (includes both continuous and summative assessment)**

<b>Component</b>	<b>ILO Tested</b>	<b>Program me LO</b>	<b>Weighting</b>	<b>Team/ Individual</b>
<b>Class Assessment</b> 2 presentations of a topic (film and literature) followed by a group discussion. 20% each	1,2,3,4,5	N.A	40	Individual
<b>Final Assessment:</b> Written final paper that analysis either a ethnographic film or a theoretical text Both options will dig deeper into one of the films & theories addressed in the course including a personal critical reflection	1,2,3,4	N.A	40	Individual
<b>Continuous Assessment:</b> Participation which means preparation of readings and watching the films that we actively discuss each session	5	N.A	20	Individual
<b>Total</b>			100%	

## Reading and References

The reading list is provided at the beginning of the semester and will be complemented during the course by the professor.

1. Hockings, Paul (ed.). *Principles of Visual Anthropology*. Mouton de Gruyter, 2003.
2. MacDougall, David. *Transcultural Cinema*. Princeton University Press, 1998.
3. Rouch, Jean. *Ciné-Ethnography*. University of Minnesota Press, 2003.
4. Collier, Jean and Malcolm Collier. *Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research Method*. University of New Mexico Press, 1986.
5. Heider, Karl G.. *Ethnographic Film* (revised edition). University of Texas Press, 2006.
6. Engelbrecht, Beate (ed.). *Memories of the Origins of Ethnographic Film*. Peter Lang, 2007.
7. Grimshaw, Anna and Amanda Ravetz. *Observational Cinema: Anthropology, Film, and the Exploration of Social Life*. Indiana University Press, 2009.
8. Bateson, Gregory and Margaret Mead. *Balinese Character: A Photographic Analysis*. The New York Academy of Sciences, 1942.
9. Foster, Hal. "The Artist as Ethnographer?" In, Marcus, George E. and Fred R. Myers (eds.) *The Traffic in Culture: Refiguring Art and Anthropology*. University of California Press, 1995. pp.302-309.
10. Bennetta, Jules-Rosette. "Unpacking Ethnographic Film and African Cinema: Imbricated Border Crossings and the Communicative Gap in Spectatorship". In, *Critical Interventions. Journal of African Art History and Visual Culture*. Vol. 9 (2015), Issue 3, pp.159-178.
11. Nichols, Bill. "Dislocating Ethnographic Film: In and Out of Africa and Issues of Cultural Representation". In, *American Anthropologist* (New Series), Vol.99 (1997), No.4, pp.810-824.
12. Said, Edward. "Opponents, Audiences, Constituencies, and Community". In, *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 9 (1982), No.1, pp.1-26.
13. De Groof, Matthias. "Ethnographic Film's Relation to African Cinema: Safi Faye and Jean Rouch". In, *Visual Anthropology*, Vol.31 (2018), Issue 4-5, pp.426-444.
14. Chen, Nancy N.. "'Speaking Nearby:' A Conversation With Trinh T. Minh-Ha". In, *Visual Anthropology Review*, Vol. 8 (1992), No.1, pp.82-91.
15. Basu, Paul. "Reframing Ethnographic Film". In, Austin, Thomas and Wilma de Jong (eds.). *Rethinking Documentary: New Perspectives and Practices*. Open University Press, 2008, pp.94-106.

## Course Policies and Student Responsibilities

### (1) General

You are expected to complete all assigned readings, activities, assignments, attend all classes punctually and complete all scheduled assignments by due dates. You are expected to take responsibility to follow up with assignments and course related announcements. You are expected to participate in all project critiques, class discussions and activities.

### (2) Punctuality

You are expected to be punctual for all classes. If you are more than 30 minutes late, you will be deemed as absent and will not be able to sign on the attendance register.

### (3) Absenteeism

In-class activities make up a significant portion of your course grade. Absence from class without a valid reason will affect your participation grade. Valid reasons include falling sick supported by a medical certificate and participation in NTU's approved activities supported by an excuse letter from the relevant bodies. There will be no make-up opportunities for in-class activities.

### Academic Integrity

Good academic work depends on honesty and ethical behaviour. The quality of your work as a student relies on adhering to the principles of academic integrity and to the NTU Honour Code, a set of values shared by the whole university community. Truth, Trust and Justice are at the core of NTU's shared values.

As a student, it is important that you recognize your responsibilities in understanding and applying the principles of academic integrity in all the work you do at NTU. Not knowing what is involved in maintaining academic integrity does not excuse academic dishonesty. You need to actively equip yourself with strategies to avoid all forms of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, academic fraud, collusion and cheating. If you are uncertain of the definitions of any of these terms, you should go to the [academic integrity website](#) for more information. Consult your instructor(s) if you need any clarification about the requirements of academic integrity in the course.

### Planned Weekly Schedule\*

\*Subject to adjustment by instructor according to the teaching situation, students' progress, public holidays and unforeseeable circumstances. A revised schedule will be issued to students at the start of the semester.

Week	Topic	Course LO	Readings/ Activities
1	<b>What is Ethnographic Film?</b> <b>What is Visual Anthropology?</b> Overview of the key discussions in the field .	1,5	<b>Introductory Lecture &amp; Discussion</b>
2	<b>Colonial Beginnings</b> An investigation into the early years of ethnographic film production. "Scientific analysis"  Films: Regnault, Haddon, Poech,	1,2,5	<b>Communal reading and discussion of texts and films</b> Critique on reading/analysing and feedback.
3	<b>Educational Ethnographic Films</b> A critical revision of the shift towards the idea of an instructional film  Films: Harvard-Pathe, Svensk Filmindustri, Hurley, Schoedsack/Cooper, Johnson	1,2,3,4, 5	<b>Communal reading and discussion of texts and films</b> Critique on reading/analysing and feedback.

4	<p><b>Ethnographic Fiction</b> Analyzing the shift of ethnographic films towards feature film forms in the films of</p> <p>Films: Curtis, Flaherty, Fejos, Eisenstein, Wright</p>	1,2,3,4,5	<p><b>Assigned Presentation</b> Critique, feedback, discussion</p>
5	<p><b>Balinese Character</b> Reflecting the new approach towards film and photography by Bateson/Mead</p> <p>Films: Bateson, Mead</p>	1,2,3,4,5	<p><b>Assigned Presentation</b> Critique, feedback, discussion</p>
6	<p><b>Post WWII New Landmarks</b></p> <p>Looking deeper into the post-war developments and new attitudes towards the filmic medium in the anthropological/ethnographic field.</p> <p>Films: Marshall, Deren, Gardener (Ethnographic film archives &amp; programmes)</p>	1,2,3,4,5	<p><b>Assigned Presentation</b> Critique, feedback, discussion</p>
7	<p><b>Cinéma Vérité and beyond</b> New technologies, formats, and attitudes. Looking into the increasing debate of who is filming.</p> <p>Films: Rouch, Faye</p>	1,2,3,4,5	<p><b>Assigned Presentation</b> Critique, feedback, discussion</p>
8	<p><b>Revision of the first half of the seminar</b> Gathering outcomes and discussing the developments in the field that have been addressed so far.</p>	1,2,5	<p>Students discuss and analyse the outcome of the first half of the semester</p>
9	<p><b>Other Voices</b> Analysis of the shift away from the dominating perspective of western filmmakers.</p> <p>Films: Asch/Chagnon, Worth/Adair</p>	1,2,3,4,5	<p><b>Assigned Presentation</b> Critique, feedback, discussion</p>
10	<p><b>Speaking Nearby</b> Looking into the strategies and questions concerning representation by film makers like Trinh T. Minh-ha, Nguyen Trinh Ti, Van Mai Thu or Nick Deocampo.</p>	1,2,3,4,5	<p><b>Assigned Presentation</b> Critique, feedback, discussion</p>

	Film: Trinh, Nguyen, Van, Deocampo		
11	<p><b>Ideas About the Other and Misconceptions of The Self</b></p> <p>Investigation into the ethnographic field taking into consideration dynamics of globalization. Collectives as strategy.</p> <p>Films: Cache Collective, Inuit Collective</p>	1,2,3,4,5	<p><b>Assigned Presentation</b></p> <p>Critique, feedback, discussion</p>
12	<p><b>The Future of Ethnographic Film and Visual Anthropology</b></p> <p>Discussion of the possible developments taking in consideration the critical reviews of the field and latest trends in film.</p>	1,2,5	<p><b>Lecture on Collaborative and Multi-Sensorial Strategies</b></p> <p>Guest: Assist. Prof. Kiven Strohm (NUS)</p> <p><b>Communal reading and discussion of texts and films</b></p> <p>Critique on reading/analysing and feedback</p>
13	<b>Final Discussion</b>	5	<p><b>Discussion</b> of the whole seminar and feedback concerning questions on the final assignment</p>