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Creatively Enhance Teaching through Sustained Study of the Issue of ‘Legibility’ and Why It Matters”

Kathleen Nadeau
California State University, San Bernardino., knadeau@csusb.edu

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Recommended Citation

Anth 301 Anthropological Theory syllabus with a modified Salon Session model adapted for classroom use.

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To: Teri Nelson

Cc. Wes

From: Kathy Nadeau

Re: My Report for Q2S \$1,500 stipend award (report and syllabus incorporating a Lesson Plan)

Title: Creatively Enhance my Teaching Pedagogy in the Classroom around a Sustained Study of the Issue of ‘Legibility’ and Why It Matters”

RE: Q2S Stipend Award, completed requirements for award: attended *Southwestern Anthropology Association Conference* April 19-20, 2019. On April 21, 2019, developed and incorporated the agreed *Lesson Plan* and new revised Anth 301 syllabus, see below, to be piloted Winter 2020 in prepared for semester transition. Also, in preparation for this conference I read two books, dealing with the conference theme of legibility: *Seeing Like a State* by James Scott and “Creative Collaborations: The Making of Lissa (still time): A Graphic Medical Ethnography of Friendship, Loss, and Recovery,” in *Somatosphere* (May 13, 2016).

Below, revised Anth 301 syllabus incorporating new lesson plan to be piloted Winter 2020 in preparation for transition into semester system.

Also, I additionally proposed to pilot test the concept of a *Salon Session* into my current Spring 2019 courses. I currently am incorporating this concept into Anth 345 and Anth 362 this Spring Quarter 2019. A modified model has been adapted for use my class this quarter. Paired student teams are asked in sequential order to kick off the discussion, which is then opened up to engage all students into the participatory process. So far, the idea of running discussions like mini salon sessions (salon sessions kick off an idea, quite briefly, and then are opened up for wider discussion, recognizing that every participant has something to offer). So far, this is working quite well. Every single student in the class has a turn to bring something to the table and all of the students are bubbling into the follow-up conversations. Their homework prompts also have been simplified to help them to better focus on what they are reading, so in addition to being responsible for specific sections, they also have to think about the reading as a whole. The simplified prompts: what did you take away from the reading, what is one question that you have, and what are curious to learn more about.

I also proposed to recruit a few students from my previous Winter 2019 Anth 301 class to attend this conference. Two students, Anneka Fischle and Stephany Muntean, attended.

My Revised Syllabus for Anth 301 follows:

Anth 301, Anthropological Theory

Instructor: Kathleen Nadeau

knadeau@csusb.edu

Cell/Text: 909-501-9180; Office ext. 75503

Description: Examination of major theoretical trends and debates that shaped the discipline of anthropology past and present. (4 units, one of the required courses for the B.A. in anthropology)

Required Textbook: *Engaging Anthropological Theory, A Social and Political History* by Mark Moberg (Routledge, 2019).

Overview: This reading, writing, and discussion seminar synthesizes and examines the history of the development of anthropological theories and debates that continue into the present period, to transform the discipline.

How do we make anthropology theories, past and present, 'legible' (easier to understand) through in-class collaboration and discussions of homework readings and related films? How do we better understand what it means to make something decipherable be it new multi-species ethnographies, past and present economic systems in different and specific political/ and historical and national contexts and in relation to the global world, past and present; or, man-made and climate change related disasters versus natural disasters and the differential impact of such disasters on poor communities versus the better off. How can the instructor better engage every single student in the classroom to learn how to individually and collaboratively decipher, with clarity, social and cultural anthropology theories and concepts that change and evolve in the contexts of the histories in which they emerged? How can she better help students to learn to apply the legibility tool to the pivotal historical moment in which we are living now, where traditional power structures are being challenged? This course is focused on learning how to make complex and difficult to understand concepts legible, decipherable, and easy to understand.

Teaching and learning strategy to be used: each week, albeit subject to change in accordance with instructor's discretion and class pace, we will engage in seminar style discussions, e.g., of the required homework readings, using a modified salon session approach, adapted for our class use. A salon session for our class means that someone will briefly introduce something (e.g., a theory read about in the required homework reading) and then open it up for every student to participate in the discussion. The instructor, like Socrates, is there to help guide discussions and tease out difficult to understand materials, while engaging student participants to contribute more on the topic. Students will be paired into groups of three or four students, each paired set will be responsible for kicking off a part of the reading: meaning pulling out dense and difficult to understand phrases and paragraphs for us to decipher and talk about in the class, to make it easier for everyone to understand. Each small set/group of students, after briefly kicking off their part of the discussion, will open it up for wider analysis and discussion, inviting every student to participate. The instructor, employing a familiar Socrates model, will facilitate and chime in to bring a deeper understanding of the focal topic. Sets of students kicking off discussions will move sequentially, with a brief kick off followed

by a relay of discussion. In this way, every single student will be heard and no one will dominate the discussion, giving everyone a turn and opportunity to make our difficult reading material their own, something that they can talk about outside of school. Also, having a firm footing in the history of anthropology enhances students' opportunities to be successful in life: be it applied anthropology, e.g., using what you learn to get a job and adapt to a job market that is marked by non-permanent job opportunities, by being flexible to change and knowledgeable about the world and how it works, so that you can secure jobs, including by thinking outside of the box. Or, for those inclined to secure teaching positions or to pursue anthropology specific careers, by mastering the material covered in this course to be better prepared for the rigors of graduate school.

Outcomes: Upon completion of this course, the instructor expects her students to be able to read and analyze anthropological texts.

Successful students upon completion of this course, will be able to:

Identify and describe the particular guiding theoretical theme of any given anthropology reading and, then, comment in a sufficiently satisfying manner on its strengths and shortcomings.

Justify and explain their own theoretical positions when analyzing a particular reading, by explaining why and using examples.

Write well-organized, concise, and analytical review essays from a critical literacy and anthropological perspective.

Understand that nations and regions other than their own have histories, customs, and values that may differ from their own and that seeking to understand these differences is central to acting as a global citizen

Understand that global interdependence entails power relations and ideological struggles as well as cooperation.

Describe their obligations as global citizens. Ideally to be critically informed, engaged, and responsible to use their roles as global citizens to promote the human rights of themselves and others.

Grading Criteria: based on a 100-point scale.

1. **Critical Literacy exercise:** Pfau Library has a [Critical Information Literacy Laboratory](#) with helpful information for aspiring scholars. The video tutorials (Beginners, Intermediate and Advanced) are a particularly helpful resource for students and there are many other resources available on the site. Your assignment is to (1) complete all three of the video tutorials, beginners,

intermediate, and advanced) [print out the completion certificates when done] and apply what you learned by way of reading a scholarly social and cultural anthropology article in a major anthropology journal such as *Critical Anthropology* or the *American Anthropology* journal, among others, and writing a critical article review essay to be submitted to the instructor in hard copy in the classroom and turned in through Turn-it-in on blackboard. If you have a question or are unsure if your selected journal is appropriate, ask for the instructor's verification and approval. You may turn in your paper when done up to and no later than the last week of classes. Length: 4 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font, normal margins. 25 pts.

2. **Mid-Term:** take home essay exam question. 25 points
3. **Final:** take home essay exam question. 25 points
4. **Film Essay:** write a critical reflection essay on only one of the films of your own choosing that we have viewed in class. 3-4 pages in length. 10 points.
5. **Attendance and Participation:** each week we will document on blackboard who 'kicked off' class discussions. Also, each of you, individually, will be required to turn in a log of the films you viewed in the classroom, simply write down the title of film followed by a single descriptor sentence. 15 points

TOTAL: 100 points

Support for Students with Disabilities: If you are in need of an accommodation for a disability in order to participate in this class, please contact Services to Students with Disabilities at UH-183, (909)537-5238. If you require assistance in the event of an emergency, you are advised to establish a buddy system with a buddy and an alternate buddy in the class. Individuals with disabilities should prepare for an emergency ahead of time by instructing a classmate and the instructor.

University Policies: Please refer to the "General Regulations and Procedures" in the CSUSB *Bulletin of Courses* for the university's policies on course withdrawal, cheating, and plagiarism.

Weekly Schedule: see, blackboard.