

A. Course Description

The study of kinship, arguably one of the disciplines most distinctive innovations, has been at the core of social and cultural anthropological inquiry for decades. Like the broader tradition of anthropology, kinship studies have undergone periodic reinvention and, more recently, revival. Traditionally, kinship referred to the social organization of the “facts of life,” a social arrangement modeled after and attentive to genealogical, biogenetic connection. Contemporary practices of reproductive technologies, expanding property regimes, and global migrations have challenged scholars to rethink how to understand relatedness and belonging. In response, anthropologists have re-outfitted kinship as a theoretical concept and social category for understanding how people make sense of connection more generally. While kinship may make reference to biology, it complicates “natural” connections as well as implicates other kinds of affiliations forged through politics, class, caste, race, sexuality, and religion.

In this course, we revisit the age-old question—What is kinship all about?—by examining concepts of nature, culture, and power that help us to reimagine kinship at the confluence of local and global forces. Together, we will develop new vocabularies and analytic tools to examine kinship in three main Units that: I) review core questions and concepts about kinship, II) explore foundational frameworks within kinship studies and critiques, and III) analyze key issues pertinent to studying kinship in contemporary contexts.

As we become familiar with theories of kinship within the first two Units, we will consider what each thinker means by kinship, the strengths and limitations of their methodologies, and the ways we could put their theoretical reflections to practical use. In the third Unit, we delve into case studies that complicate how kinship is defined, experienced, and studied. Course materials draw primarily from anthropological sources yet include films and other media to complement our exploration. Assignments are designed to foster learning through writing via personal reflection, a field portfolio project, and persuasive argument.

Course Objectives

Students in this course will be challenged to improve their analytic, writing, and communication skills. More specifically, students upon completion of this course will have:

- Acquired a critical vocabulary from a variety of texts and disciplines with which to explore kinship;
- Demonstrated understanding of the critiques of nature, culture, gender, race, and sexuality as they pertain to notions of belonging and relatedness;
- Discerned the role of global issues withing local concerns and responses;
- Developed the capacity to question assumptions and commonsense understandings surrounding kinship in cultural contexts.

B. Required Reading

Three books will be available for purchase at the campus bookstore. Articles will be available for electronic download through eRes.

- 1) Franklin, Sarah. 2007. *Dolly mixtures: the remaking of genealogy*. Durham: Duke University Press.

- 2) Ho, Engseong. 2006. *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- 3) Tallbear, Kimberly. 2013. *Native American DNA: Tribal Belonging and the False Promise of Genetic Science*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

C. Course Expectations

Class Format

This is a seminar-style course focused on reading, writing, and discussion. Students are expected to complete all assigned readings and come to class prepared to engage in in-depth discussion of the readings. In-class discussions will provide space not only for further clarifying the required course materials' meanings, but also for exploring their implications for students' own personal, political, and social contexts. Students and the instructor will collaborate to create an active and participatory learning environment. If you would like to further tailor the assignments to your own educational goals, or if there are specific accommodations you need to participate in the course, please feel free to contact me.

Academic Integrity

Academic Dishonesty is prohibited and may result in failing grades, suspension, or expulsion. Academic Dishonesty includes cheating on exams or quizzes, as well as plagiarism. Plagiarism is the act of presenting another person's ideas, research or writings as your own. Students suspected of academic dishonesty will be notified by the instructor about actions to be taken. Please familiarize yourself with the Student Code of Conduct and visit these websites to familiarize yourself with plagiarism so that you can avoid doing it unwittingly:

<http://www11.georgetown.edu/programs/gervase/hc/plagiarism.html> or <http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/plagiar.html>.

Standard Paper Format

All writing assignments (except for those completed in class) should be typed using standard format: 1x1.25 in margins, 12 pt Times New Roman font, double-spaced, and edited for grammar and spelling mistakes. All writing assignments are due in hand at the beginning of class – late or emailed papers will not be accepted.

D. Course Requirements

Participation – 10%

Each of you is an important part of this class. We all bring into the classroom prior knowledge and areas for growth, and can learn a great deal from each other by showing up as fully prepared as we can. Participation is demonstrated when you come to class on time and prepared, ask pertinent questions, respond thoughtfully to classmates, and contribute to an inclusive learning environment. Class discussions should be collegial, accessible, non-hierarchical, and respectful of diversities of all kinds.

Discussion Leadership – 10%

A discussion sign-up sheet will be circulated for students to select a topic of their choice for leading discussion. Students will be assessed based on completing the discussion preparation guide, facilitating a thoughtful lesson plan showing familiarity with the materials, and contributing positively to the conversational dynamics in the classroom.

Reading Responses – 20%

Students will prepare 1-2 page reading responses to be submitted at the beginning of class for ten weeks of the term. Responses will: summarize the main argument(s) in the reading, raise pertinent questions, and link readings to other ideas from the course. This assignment is designed to help you synthesize the reading material and students are encouraged to use these postings as testing grounds for position paper topics.

Kinship Portfolio Project– 30%

Students will complete four 2-page assignments that build on one another in order to cultivate methodological and analytical skills of researching, experiencing, documenting, and reflecting. These assignments require applying course concepts to an activity beyond the classroom. Students will submit field notes periodically throughout the course and prepare a portfolio presentation to the class scheduled for the last week of the semester. A fuller description of the portfolio presentation will be passed out at the end of Unit I.

Field assignment 1: How Do I Relate? Identifying Shared Substances and Affinities

Field assignment 2: Relative Maps: Depicting Kin

Field assignment 3: Kinship Narrative: Interview with a Relative

Field assignment 4: Kinship in Context: Film or Book Analysis

Position Papers – 30% (15% each)

Students will write two position papers, which are 5-page essays that develop an interpretation of based on themes and issues from a particular Unit. Like your reading responses, these are not summaries but your own views, analyses, and arguments. Each are due the week following the end of a Unit. Some Units will have question prompts; others will be open ended.

E. Grading Distribution

Your final grade will be determined by the following:

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|--------------------------------|-----|
| Participation | 10% |
| Discussion Leadership | 10% |
| Reading Responses | 20% |
| Kinship Portfolio | 30% |
| Position Papers (2 x 15% each) | 30% |

F. Reading Tips

Keep the following questions in mind as you read and take notes to help you formulate your thoughts for each reading:

- What is the main message or argument the author is trying to convey? Does her/his evidence support it?
- How do the texts relate to each other and to themes we've encountered in class?
- What concepts seem significant, and why?
- What questions are you left with after reading the piece?
- Were there parts of the reading that you found intriguing, troubling, insightful, or informative? Why?
- Do you dis/agree with any points the author made and why?
- Have you had similar experiences to those discussed in the text?

G. Course Schedule

Unit I – Some Questions

Week 1: What is Kinship all about?

Schneider, David

1972 What is Kinship all about? *In Kinship Studies in the Morgan Centennial Year*. P. Reining, ed. Pp. 32-63. Washington: Anthropological Society of Washington.

Carsten, Janet

2000 Introduction: Cultures of Relatedness. *In Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship*. Ed. Janet Carsten. Cambridge University Press. Pgs. 1-36.

Franklin, Sarah, and Susan McKinnon

2001 Introduction. *In Relative values: reconfiguring kinship studies*. Pg. 1-25. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Week 2: Questioning Basic Terms: Nature, Culture, Gender, Power

MacCormack, Carol P.

1980 Nature, culture, and gender: a critique. *In Nature, Culture, and Gender*. C. MacCormack and M. Strathern, eds. Pp. 1-24. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Collier, Jane Fishburne, Sylvia Junko Yanagisako, and Maurice Bloch

1987 Gender and kinship: essays toward a unified analysis. Pp. 1-52. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Yanagisako, Sylvia Junko and Carol Lowery Delaney

1995 Naturalizing Power. *In Naturalizing power: essays in feminist cultural analysis*. New York: Routledge. Pgs. 1-24.

Haraway, Donna Jeanne

1997 Modest Witness@Second Millennium. *FemaleMan Meets OncoMouse: feminism and technoscience*. New York: Routledge. Ch 6.

Week 3: Questioning Origin Stories & the “Facts of Life”

Darwin, Charles

1964 [1859] *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University. Pgs. 411-434.

Leacock, Eleanor Burke

1972 Introduction. *In The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. E.B. Leacock, ed. Pp. 7-67. New York: International Publishers.

McKinnon, Susan

2001 The Economies in Kinship and the Paternity of Culture: Origin Stories in Kinship Theory. *In Relative values: reconfiguring kinship studies*. S. Franklin and S. McKinnon, eds. Pp. 277-301. Durham: Duke University Press.

Rapp, Rayna

1995 Heredity, or: Revising the Facts of Life. *In Naturalizing power: essays in feminist cultural analysis*. New York: Routledge. Pgs. 69-86.

UNIT II – Foundations and Critiques

Week 4: Enterprising Up Euro-American Kinship: Genealogies of Blood

Morgan, Lewis Henry

1997 [1870] *Systems of consanguinity and affinity of the human family*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. Preface, Ch 1, 2

Trautmann, Thomas

2008 Introduction. *In Lewis Henry Morgan and the Invention of Kinship*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Feeley-Harnik, Gillian

1999 "Communities of Blood": The Natural History of Kinship in Nineteenth-Century America. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 41(2):215-262.

Strathern, Marilyn

1992 *After nature: English kinship in the late twentieth century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pgs. 10-46

Film: Savage Memory

Week 5: Shared Substance: "Blood," Genes, & Other Matters

Carsten, Janet

2001 Substantivism, Antisubstantivism, and Anti-antisubstantivism. *In Relative Values: Reconfiguring Kinship Studies*. S. Franklin and S. McKinnon, eds. Pp. 29-53. Durham: Duke University Press.

Weston, Kath

2001 Kinship, Controversy, and the Sharing of Substance: The Race/Class Politics of Blood Transfusion. *In Relative Values: Reconfiguring Kinship Studies*. S. Franklin and S. McKinnon, eds. Pp. 147-174. Durham: Duke University Press.

Helmreich, Stefan

2001 Kinship in Hypertext: Transubstantiating Fatherhood and Information Flow in Artificial Life. *In Relative Values: Reconfiguring Kinship Studies* S. Franklin and S. McKinnon, eds. Durham: Duke University Press. Pgs. 116-145.

Week 6: The Limits of Analytic Domains: Changing Perspectives about the Nuer

Evans-Pritchard, E.E.

1950 Kinship and the local community among the Nuer. *In African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, eds A.R. Radcliffe-Brown & D. Forde. London: Oxford University Press for the International African Institute. Pgs. 360-391.

Gough, Kathleen

1971 Nuer kinship: A re-examination. *In The Translation of Culture: Essays to E.E. Evans-Pritchard*. Ed. T.O. Beidelman. London: Tavistock. Pgs. 79-121.

McKinnon, Susan

1999 Domestic Exceptions: Evans-Pritchard and the Creation of Nuer Patrilineality and Equality. *Cultural Anthropology* 15:35-83.

Hutchinson, Sharon Elaine

2000 Identity and Substance: The Broadening Base of Relatedness among the Nuer of Southern Sudan. *In Cultures of Relatedness*. Ed. Janet Carsten. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pgs. 55-72.

Week 7: Traffic in Ideas about Gender & Sexuality

Lévi-Strauss, Claude

1969 [1949] The elementary structures of kinship. Boston: Beacon Press. Preface, Ch 1, 29.

Rubin, Gayle

1975 The Traffic in Women: notes toward a political economy of sex. *In* Toward an anthropology of women. R. Reiter, ed. Pp. 157-210. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Weston, Kath

1991 Exiles from Kinship. *In* Families we choose: lesbians, gays, kinship. Pp. 21-41.

Hayden, Cori

1995 Gender, Genetics, and Generation: Reformulating Biology in Lesbian Kinship. *Cultural Anthropology* 10(1):41-63.

Butler, Judith

2002 Is Kinship always Heterosexual? *Differences* 13(1): 14-44
New York: Columbia University Press.

Film: Southern Comfort

UNIT III – Kinship Unmoored: Relatedness & Belonging in a Globalized World

Week 8: Remaking Genealogy

Franklin, Sarah

2007 Dolly mixtures: the remaking of genealogy. Durham: Duke University Press.

Week 9: Assisting Kinship

Strathern, Marilyn

1992 Reproducing the future: essays on anthropology, kinship, and the new reproductive technologies. New York: Routledge. Pgs. 1-63

Konrad, Monica

1998 Ova donation and symbols of substance: some variations on the theme of sex, gender and the partible body. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 4:643-667.

Roberts, Elizabeth F. S.

2007 Extra embryos: The ethics of cryopreservation in Ecuador and elsewhere. *American Ethnologist* 34(1):181-199.

Leinaweaver, Jessaca B.

2007 On moving children: The social implications of Andean child circulation. *American Ethnologist* 34(1):163-180.

Film: Made in India

Week 10: Ancestry & Belonging

Tallbear, Kimberly

2013 Native American DNA: Tribal Belonging and the False Promise of Genetic Science. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

<http://www.kimtallbear.com/mediabiophotos.html>

Week 11: Conceiving Copyright: Paternity to Property in a Few Short Steps

Hayden, Cori

2007 Kinship Theory, Property, and the Politics of Inclusion: From Lesbian Families to Bioprospecting in a Few Short Steps. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 32(2):337-345.

Foucault, Michel

1984 What is an Author? *In* The Foucault Reader. P. Rabinow, ed. Pp. 101-120. New York: Pantheon.

Coombe, Rosemary J.

1994 Challenging Paternity: Histories of Copyright. *Yale Journal of Law and Humanities* 6:397-422.

Week 12: Migration & Memory

Ho, Engseng

2006 The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Film: Geographies of Kinship: The Korean Adoption Story

Week 13: Biopower & Biosociality: New Assemblages?

Rabinow, Paul

1996 Artificiality and Enlightenment: From Sociobiology to Biosociality. *In* Essays in Anthropology of Reason. P. Rabinow, ed. Pp. 91-111. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Helmreich, Stefan

2003 Trees and seas of information: alien kinship and the biopolitics of gene transfer in marine biology and biotechnology. *American Ethnologist* 30(3):340-358.

Rose, Nikolas, and Carlos Novas

2005 Biological Citizenship. *In* Global assemblages : technology, politics, and ethics as anthropological problems. A. Ong and S.J. Collier, eds. Pp. 439-463. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Petryna, Adriana

2002 Life exposed: biological citizens after Chernobyl. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Ch 1, 5

Week 14: Portfolio Presentations & Reflections