

ANTH 300 – Comparing Cultures Through Film

Spring 2008

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Office hours any day but:

please make appointment

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Mondays, 2:30-5:00 (class) and Fridays 3-5 (film screenings) in Hamilton 318

We shall look at how four cultures are presented in films, fiction as well as documentary, and in print.

The main texts will be:

(for India): Wisner, William and Charlotte Wisner

2000 Behind Mud Walls. Seventy-five Years in a North Indian Village. Updated and expanded edition. Berkeley: U of California Press.

(for Japan): Bestor, Theodore C.

1989 Neighborhood Tokyo. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

(for Inuit): Briggs, Jean L.

1998 Inuit Morality Play. The Emotional Education of a Three-Year-Old.

New Haven: Yale University Press.

(for Australian Aborigines): Tonkinson, Robert

2002 The Mardu Aborigines. Living the Dream in Australia's Desert. Belmont, CA: The Wadsworth Group.

also on reserve in the Cooper Library will be Heider (2006) Ethnographic Film, revised edition.

Mid-term exam: one essay type, open book midterm exam.

Final exam: an essay-type open book exam on

Critical film papers: please write a one-page paper on each film we screen, due in class on the Monday after we have seen the film. See attached page for details. Your three lowest grades on these papers will be dropped.

Grading: the final grade will be based on the critical papers (40%), the midterm exam (20%) and the final exam (40%). Constructive discussion participation can count extra.

You must attend both the class meeting and the screening each week. If this is inconvenient, please drop the course now. If you are faced with an emergency and cannot attend a session, please contact me beforehand.

Tentative schedule:

INDIA

Week 1. 14 January: Introduction – a conceptual framework

Week 2. (21 January – MLK Day – no class)

Read: Wisner and Wisner

Week 3. 28 January: discuss

Week 4. 4 February: discuss Forest of Bliss

Week 5. 11 February: Forest of Bliss, cont.

18th Friday: Pather Pancali (113m)

25th Friday: Dadi's Family (58m)

India's Sacred Cow (58)

1 Feb Friday: a Bollywood film

8 Feb Friday: Forest of Bliss

HW 730 . T65 B47

599 . E7 B744 1998

DU 125.M3 T66
2002

Ethnographic Film Attribute Dimension Grid – from Heider, 2006:109, Ethnographic Film

Basic filmic attributes:

1. Appropriateness of sound
2. Narration fit

Basic ethnographic attributes:

3. Ethnographic basis of film
4. Explicit theory
5. Relation to printed materials
6. Voice – point of view
7. Holism – behavior contextualization
8. Physical contextualization – landscape setting
9. Reflexivity – filmmaker's presence
10. Whole acts
11. Narrative stories
12. Whole bodies
13. Whole interactions
14. Whole people
- 15a. Inadvertent distortion of behavior
- 15b. Intentional distortion of behavior
- 15c. Explanation and evaluation of distortions
16. Explicitness of cultural change

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The section on India – first four weeks

Reading Behind Mud Walls, Wiser and Wiser, 2000 edition (Updated and Expanded Edition)

During Week 1: skim entire book; read Chapters 1,2,3,4,9 to use as background for critical essay
On Pather Panchali

During Week 2: use Chapter 5 for essay on India's Sacred Cow
Chapter 6 for essay on Dadi's Family
Skim the rest of the book for the class discussion on 28 January
(think: what changed? What didn't change? What surprised you the most?)

More on the film essays:

Write: the last four numbers of your student number, NOT your name, on the sheet
One page, single spaced on each film

Hand in two copies or email them to me (heiderk@sc.edu) by beginning of class. When I successfully print out your essay, I shall send you an acknowledgement. If you don't receive that, find some other way to get the essay to me in time. I shall try to hand them back at the next meeting. No essays will be accepted after I have returned the graded essays.

Include the following:

1. a VERY BRIEF description of the film – just a couple of sentences - don't spend your entire page on description.
2. A critical analysis of the film – discuss one or more of the most significant film attributes (see the handout or Ethnographic Film (Revised edition) by Heider on reserve in the Cooper Library)
Discuss film vis a vis book. (engage in points raised in the texts)
Where relevant, refer/compare with earlier films we have viewed.
Cite at least one specific shot or sequence from the film, at least one page/passage in the books.
3. Include print citation, e.g., Stoller 1992:204
4. proofread!

Grading will be based on how well you analyze the film (#2, above):

JAPAN

15 Feb Friday: Farm Song (57min)
Neighborhood Tokyo

Week 6. 18 February: read Bestor;

22 Feb Friday Makiko's New World (57m)

Week 7. 25 February: discuss

29 Feb Friday: Friday: Seven Samurai

Week 8. 3 March: MIDTERM EXAM

7 Mar Friday: NO FILM

10 March – Spring Break

INUIT (Eskimo)

Week 9. 17 March: read: Briggs;
screen At The Winter Sea Ice Camp #1 (36m)

21 Mar Friday: At The Winter
Sea Ice Camp #2 (30m)
At The Autumn River Camp #2 (33m)

Week 10. 24 March. Discussion; screen The Alaskan Eskimo (30m) 28 Mar Friday: Nanook (79m)

Week 11. 31 March: Wedding of Palo

4 April Friday: The Long Distance Runner

AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINES

Week 12. 7 April: read Tonkinson;

11 April Fri: Desert People (52m)

Week 13. 14 April: discussion.

18 April Friday: Goodbye Old Man (70)

Week 14. 21 April: discussion

25 April Friday: Rabbit Proof Fence

Week 15. 28 April: summing up and review

FINAL EXAM: