

CAPILANO UNIVERSITY COURSE OUTLINE			
TERM:	FALL 2015	COURSE NO:	ANTHROPOLOGY 340
INSTRUCTOR:		COURSE NAME:	STUFF: THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF MATERIAL CULTURE
OFFICE:	LOCAL:	SECTION NO(S):	CREDITS: 3
E-MAIL:			
OFFICE HOURS:			

COURSE FORMAT:

Three hours of class time, plus an additional hour delivered through on-line or other activities for a 15 week semester, which includes two weeks for final exams.

COURSE PREREQUISITES:

45 credits of 100-level or higher coursework including 3 credits of 100- or 200-level ANTH.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Stuff, the perfect term to capture humanity's engagement with material culture, and this course addresses this long-term relationship, and its consequences. At the core of the course is an examination of how people make stuff, and stuff makes people, explored in a variety of cultural contexts, using a range of examples, such as bicycles and totem poles. It addresses anthropological approaches to material culture, culminating in an assessment of how our stuff defines us, serves us, and could overwhelm us.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of anthropological thinking on material culture – assessed through short answer exams, article presentations, and references in written papers.
- Demonstrate an objective approach to stuff, and willingness to engage in cooperative learning – assessed through presentations, group work, and class discussions.
- Articulate the thesis and content of assigned readings on material culture – assessed through article presentations, and briefing notes.
- Apply an anthropological approach to examples of stuff – assessed through autobiographical stuff presentation and paper.
- Recall a variety of cultural examples of stuff to illustrate the course concepts – assessed through exams and papers.

COURSE WEBSITE:

There is a Moodle site for this course, accessed through the Capilano University website. The key will be given in class.

REQUIRED READINGS:

Luis A. Vivanco, 2013, *Reconsidering the Bicycle: An Anthropological Perspective on a New (Old) Thing*. Routledge Series for Creative Teaching and Learning in Anthropology. Routledge: New York & London.

Available at Capilano University Bookstore, see Course Content for Reading Schedule.

Assigned article readings – one of which will be presented in class, listed below:

Alexander, Catherine, 2000, The Factory: Fabricating the State. *In Journal of Material Culture* 5(2): 177-195.

Altman, Jon, 2007, Mobility and Modernity in Arnhem Land: The Social Universe of Kuninjku Trucks. *In Journal of Material Culture* 12(2): 181-203.

Blain, Jenny & Robert J. Wallis, 2004, Sacred Sites, Contested Rites/Rights: Contemporary Pagan Engagements with the Past. *In Journal of Material Culture* 9(3): 237-261.

Daniels, Inge, 2009, The ‘Social Death’ of Unused Gifts: Surplus and Value in Contemporary Japan. *In Journal of Material Culture* 14(3): 385-408.

Douncy, Laurence, 2007, The Materiality of Domestic Waste: The Recycled Cosmology of the Dogon of Mali. *In Journal of Material Culture* 12(3): 309-331.

Foster, Robert J., 1999, The Commercial Construction of ‘New Nations’. *In Journal of Material Culture* 4(3): 263-282.

Herrmann, Gretchen M., 1997, Gift or Commodity: What Changes Hands in the US Garage Sale? *In American Ethnologist* 24(9): 910-930.

Layne, Linda L., ‘He was a Real Baby with Baby Things’: A Material Culture Analysis of Personhood and Pregnancy Loss. *In Journal of Material Culture* 5(3): 321-345.

Luvaas, Brent, 2013, Material Interventions: Indonesian DIY Fashion and the Regime of the Global Brand. *In Cultural Anthropology* 28(1): 127-143.

Melhuish, Clare, 2005, Towards a Phenomenology of the Concrete Megastructure: Space and Perception at the Brunswick Centre, London. *In Journal of Material Culture* 10(1): 5-29.

Morton, Christopher, 2007, Remembering the House: Memory and Materiality in Northern Botswana. *In Journal of Material Culture* 12(2): 157-179.

Scheld, Suzanne, 2003, The City in a Shoe: Redefining Urban Africa through Sebago Footwear Consumption. *In City & Society* 15(1): 109-130.

COURSE CONTENT & READING SCHEDULE:

Week	Content & Reading
1	Introduction to the Course. Begin reading Vivanco, <i>Reconsidering the Bicycle</i> , must be finished by mid-term exam. Start reading assigned articles, and especially concentrate upon your presentation article. <u>Anthropological Background Primer</u>
2	Anthropology, Concepts & Methods. The Place of Material Culture: Three Case Studies.

Course content – continued

Week	Content & Reading
3 - 5	<u>Theorizing Stuff: Acquiring Our Toolkit</u> Materialism, Objectification & Marxism. Structuralism & Semiotics. Phenomenology, Materiality, Agency, and Biography.
6	Review, and Mid-Term Exam
7	<u>Talking Stuff: Applying our Theories</u> Presentations Workshop.
8 - 9	Article presentations and seminars.
10	<u>Living with Stuff: Reflections</u> Consumption, Possessions & the Future.
11 - 13	Autobiographical Stuff Presentations. Review and Reflection.
14 & 15	Final Exam will be scheduled by the Registrar's Office.

It is possible that the exact timing of these topics may deviate slightly from this schedule.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

The written assignments for this course are designed, in part, to give you the opportunity to apply an anthropological perspective to the world around you, and come to an anthropological understanding of your own culture's stuff, and the stuff of others. Both of the assignments correspond to your weekly fourth hour activities, in that they require you to spend time finding and photographing stuff.

Article Presentation and Briefing Notes:

You will be assigned an article, from the list above, which you, and 1-2 others, will present to the class. The presentation will provide a synopsis of the article, an assessment of the theoretical approach used by the author(s), a summation of the evidence, and the conclusions. It will also draw upon an illustrative piece of material culture – not found in the article, but discovered through independent research, that can provide a talking point for the rest of the class. This will be different stuff from your autobiographical paper. Each presenter must contribute equally, but will be marked individually. Each presentation group will write a briefing note, presented on one double-sided sheet of paper, outlining the article's key points, approach, evidence, and conclusions. This will be submitted to the instructor directly after the presentation, and once marked, and corrected, will be posted to the course moodle site for all students to access. This will receive a presentation group mark. See Course Handout for more details.

Autobiographical Stuff Presentation & Paper:

This will be a short presentation, that can be as personal as you feel comfortable. You will choose one or more pieces of stuff that can illustrate the role of material culture in - making us, such as presenting our identity, sense of personhood, gender, age, citizenship, etc. and in - shaping our relationship with the social and

Course assignments - continued

physical world. You will provide a visual – photographic ethnography as the backdrop to your talk, and you will use course terms and concepts to briefly assess the significance of this stuff, and your understanding of material culture. The presentation will be 5 minutes in length. The paper will be your major opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of the course material – concepts, terms, and theories, and how they apply to your material culture. It will be no less than 7 pages and no more than 10 pages, excluding the attached photographs and references, line-spacing will be 1.5, with 12-point font, margins no bigger than 2 cms, you may double-side your paper, and all consulted sources must be cited and referenced. The paper must be stapled, and not in any form of binder.

Participation

Assessed through attendance of classes, regular, thoughtful, contributions to class discussions, group and solo presentations, and active engagement with theoretical traditions through group work on “text bites”.

Mid Term

& Final Exams:

These exams will be short answer, based upon lectures, assigned readings, videos, class exercises, and discussions. The mid-term exam will be in class **Week 6:** Date of final exam to be announced, and it will be cumulative.

EVALUATION PROFILE:

Article Presentation	10%
Article Briefing Note	10%
Mid-Term Exam	20%
Autobiographical Stuff Presentation	10%
Autobiographical Stuff Paper	20%
Final Exam	15%
Participation	<u>15%</u>
	100%

GRADE PROFILE:

A+ = 90 - 100%	B+ = 77 - 79%	C+ = 67 - 69%	D = 50 - 59%
A = 85 - 89	B = 73 - 76	C = 63 - 66	F = 0 - 49
A- = 80 - 84	B- = 70 - 72	C- = 60 - 62	

OPERATIONAL DETAILS:

Capilano University has policies on Academic Appeals (including appeal of final grade), Student Conduct, Cheating and Plagiarism, Academic Probation and other educational issues. These and other policies are available on the University website.

Attendance:

Students are expected to attend all classes. If you are absent you are responsible for all announcements and material covered in class. I do not loan my notes to anyone. If you do frequently miss classes you will be at a disadvantage.

Operational details – continued

- Assignments: Assignments are to be submitted directly to the instructor, at the beginning of class, on the due date; after that, they are late. No assignments will be accepted by e-mail. All late assignments will be penalized 25%. No late assignments will be accepted after exactly one week has passed since the original due date and time, nor shall any late assignments be accepted without the instructor's prior approval.
- English Usage: It is the responsibility of students to proof-read all written work for any grammatical, spelling and stylistic errors. Marks will be deducted for incorrect grammar and spelling in written assignments.
- Classroom Decorum: Classroom learning requires a cooperative effort. To facilitate this please avoid the following:
- entering or leaving the classroom while class is in progress
 - off-topic or otherwise distracting discussion during class time
 - reading material not related to the course during class time
 - inappropriate language
 - ensuring all cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off and put away
 - leaving no garbage in the classroom
- Laptop Use You may use your laptop to take notes during class, but if you are using it for any other purposes I will ask you to switch it off, and you will need permission to use it again.
- Missed Exams: Make-up tests are given at the discretion of the instructor. They are generally given only in medical emergencies or severe personal crisis. Students should be prepared to provide proof of inability to write the test on the scheduled date (e.g. letter from doctor).
- Incomplete Grades: Given at the discretion of the instructor, and generally given only in medical emergencies or severe personal crises.
- Electronic Devices: No personal electronic devices (cell phones, pagers, calculators, electronic dictionaries, etc...) may be used during an examination without prior approval from the instructor. During an exam, turn off all cell phones and pagers and remove them from the desk.
- Emergency Procedures Please familiarise yourself with the emergency procedures posted on the wall of your classroom.