

Anthropology 2240 Essay Assignment

Part A: Prospectus Worth 10% Due in Class October 4
Part B: Introductory Paragraph Worth 5% Due in Class, October 27
Part C: Essay Worth 25% Due in Class November 29

Introduction

The purpose of the essay assignment is to allow you to explore a topic of specific interest related to the anthropology of sexuality and gender in greater detail than the course permits. You have a choice of a media review or a comparative review. The media review essay requires the evaluation of four weeks of articles from newspapers (print or electronic) in Canada. The comparative review requires an evaluation of the coverage of sexuality and/or gender in three ethnographies from the same area of the world OR an evaluation of three sources related to one topic in gender and sexuality research.

I consider your essays to be part of the broader intellectual exercise found in academics at the post-secondary level. By this I mean that you are encouraged to evaluate and critique the writings of other academics in a way which is much like a dialogue. You contribute to the dialogue of anthropology by participating in this writing assignment and, in this sense, you make a contribution to the discipline.

I encourage you to spend a week or so considering a topic and then consult with me about your plans. I am happy to discuss topics and sources with you and, later in the term, the details of your analysis.

General Format for the Essay

Your papers must be typewritten in sentences and paragraphs, double spaced, and have one inch margins. You should aim for an essay of about eight pages, or, of 2000-2500 words. Please include a title page and an original title which gives the paper some direction. Your paper must be built around a thesis statement. Evidence supporting your thesis will be presented in the body of the paper. You must acknowledge all quotations and paraphrased material with proper citations and provide a list of references cited for each source used in the text at the end of the paper. If you do not cite your sources sufficiently, your paper will be returned to you with a grade of zero. You may then rewrite the paper correcting the errors if there is time left in the course.

Please note: good writing counts. Sloppy prose or arguments that are hard to follow will result in a lower grade. I would also encourage you to make time to prepare more than one draft of your essay and to have it proof-read by a friend (who knows how to write!).

Essay Submission and Late Essays

Preliminary assignments and final essays are due in class on November 29 and must be submitted in hardcopy. There are penalties for late assignments and they are listed below.

Essay Types

Do one of the following:

1. Current Media Representation of Gender and Sexuality

- a) Collect a current news clipping file of at least four weeks worth of newspaper articles about gender and sexuality (broadly defined) from one or more of the newspapers available in Vancouver or elsewhere in Canada. Your file should include at minimum 12 articles (roughly 3/week) although the more coverage you find, the more robust your analysis will be. The articles must be current, within the time frame of our course.
- b) Write a critical commentary on the quality of news coverage and its consequences for public opinion and understanding about the roles of men and women in Canada. In doing so, introduce your paper with an opening paragraph which identifies the direction and thesis of your essay. Then, summarize the themes found in your articles in subsequent paragraphs, and conclude your paper at the end. I would expect that you will find at least three themes. You should comment on the content of the articles and on their connection to themes in our course and readings. Your write-up should also include specific commentaries on the types of topics covered and omitted in the newspapers and the biases you see in the writing. Note: you need not summarize in detail every article you find. You should, however, quote and cite most articles as you build your list of themes and find support for your impressions of the coverage.
- c) Present a scrap book of some sort of your clippings with your written paper.

Requirements for the Prospectus (Due October 4)

You must submit a 350 word statement about your research plans. This includes, at minimum, a summary of the news sources you are using to conduct this research, a list of two or three themes identified in your newspaper article search, and a general and tentative thesis pertaining to the coverage of gender and sexuality in the news.

The prospectus must be typewritten and presented in sentences and paragraphs. There are no extensions permitted for the prospectus, although if you do not get it in on time, I am still happy to discuss your paper with you.

Late penalties: 1 point out of 10/week starting immediately after class on October 4.

Requirements for the Introductory Paragraph(s) (Due October 27)

Please submit your introductory paragraph or paragraphs on October 27. These paragraphs should include your thesis statement; in other words, set up the direction of your paper for me. In addition, you should tell me something about the major media themes you've encountered in your research.

Late penalties: 1 point out of 10/week starting immediately after class on October 27.

Evaluation of Essay

Marks are based on:

- Producing a scrapbook of articles, relevant in number and topic;
- Summaries of articles and overall themes;

- Connection to themes in the class and to anthropology;
- Insight into the anthropology of sexuality and gender;
- Written in proper essay format, including paragraphs, sentences, and using proper bibliographic citations (see below)

Late penalties: 1.5 points out of 10/week starting immediately after class on November 29. No essays accepted after our last class on December 7.

An essay grading sheet is attached.

2. *Comparative Review*

Several steps are required for producing an essay of high quality. They include:

- a) Choose an ethnographic area or region of the world as your research area.

OR

Choose a topic that interests you within the subject of gender and sexuality.

- b) Using library research, select three sources related to your chosen part of the world OR to your topic. To find ethnographies for a particular place, you might consult the list of ethnographies posted on the A2240 page of my website. Note: most ethnographies deal with gender and sexuality in passing or as a subsection of the broader text. You will need to read some of the general material in the ethnography to get a sense of the cultural context, but your focus will be on the text's presentation of information about gender and sexuality.
- c) Finding appropriate documents: the documents you choose must be anthropological in nature and taken from scholarly publications only; if you are unsure about a source, please ask me. Class readings are not acceptable.
- d) Writing an essay: Your essay will either discuss the coverage of gender and sexuality in the culture or part of the world you are researching OR evaluate the sources of your chosen topic. You must:
 - a. Introduce the paper: Here, you should identify the theme of the essay and your thesis.
 - b. Provide a general and short introduction to the culture or topic in question.
 - c. Summarize the discussion (or not) of gender and sexuality in the three sources. This might include descriptions and comparison.
 - d. Identify the value of the three sources to the study of gender and sexuality. You might ask whether or not the sources are actually useful for studying this topic. If you find that your source materials are weak or not overly useful, let me know in the paper.
 - e. Apply what you have learned in the course lectures and readings: You should demonstrate the relevance of the sources to the anthropology of gender and sexuality. This is the context for your summaries.
 - f. Draw a conclusion: This usually happens at the end of the paper and often includes a restatement of your thesis and a general review of the summarized material.

You might consider breaking your essay up into sections based on the suggestions above.

The goal is to demonstrate your insights into anthropological research about gender and sexuality. The essay requires that you both summarize your articles and critique them based on the materials in the course. And, while I expect to see each of the above components in your essay, the actual structure of your text might vary. Some of you might write summaries and then the critiques; others might integrate those two components.

Requirements for the Prospectus (Due on October 4)

You must submit a 350 word statement about your research plans. I expect that you will tell me what part of the world you are writing about OR what topic you have chosen. Be sure to provide me with the full citations to the three articles or books you have chosen to use. I also expect a general or tentative thesis related to the topic and a brief discussion of the relationship of the articles to that thesis. Please also provide a working title for your essay.

The prospectus must be typewritten and presented in sentences and paragraphs. There are no extensions permitted for the prospectus, although if you do not get it in on time, I am still happy to discuss your paper with you.

Late penalties: 1 point out of 10/week starting immediately after class on October 4.

Requirements for the Introductory Paragraph(s) (Due October 27)

Please submit your introductory paragraph or paragraphs on November 5. These paragraphs should an overview of the part of the world you are discussing or topic you have chosen. They should include your thesis statement; in other words, set up the direction of your paper for me.

Late penalties: 1 point out of 10/week starting immediately after class on October 27.

Evaluation of the Essays

- Succinct and effective summaries of the three articles;
- Evaluation of the source material;
- Connection of the article topics to the themes of the course;
- Insight into the anthropology of sexuality and gender;
- Written in proper essay format, including paragraphs, sentences, and using proper bibliographic citations (see below).

Late penalties: 1.5 points out of 10/week starting immediately after class on November 29. No essays accepted after our last class on December 7.

Other Notes

- Think about writing your essay for a friend who is going to conduct research on your topic next semester. Your goal is to tell your friend about the sources you read and to describe their value to his or her upcoming research project.
- In both cases, I would recommend you talk with me about your topic. I can help you refine the specific details of your study and direct you towards appropriate sources.
- The review essay is not simply a general research paper where you are permitted to cite only three sources. This is a specific kind of essay in which you summarize your source material and attend to the value of the sources to the topic at hand. You will do poorly if you try and write a general research paper for this assignment.
- You do not need to cite me or our lectures unless the material comes directly from our text or the readings. In those cases, cite the specific pages and then add the sources to your 'references cited' page. (Remember, these citations would be in addition to your three main sources.)
- If it makes it easier for you to organize your thoughts, you are welcome to break up your paper into subsections with section headings.
- Websites are not acceptable sources unless they are cleared with me in advance.
- Citing your source material, acknowledging quotations properly, and identifying paraphrased material is part of a proper and fair intellectual process. Please give credit where credit is due. You will receive a grade of zero if you are caught plagiarizing the work of others and you may be reported to the college dean. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, ask me or pick up the Douglas College guide to plagiarism. (Note: I have identified examples of plagiarized work several times in the past two years.)
- You may cite your material using the MLA, APA or anthropological citation systems. I have added a short guide to citing materials in anthropology and would encourage any of you planning to continue in anthropology to use this method. It is relatively straightforward and will be required for essays in anthropology at SFU or UBC.
- Your references cited page must have complete citations including both the name of the book or journal and the chapter title or article title.

A Short Guide to Citations and Bibliographies in Anthropology

Anthropologists use a system of 'internal footnoting' in their writing. The sources of all direct quotations must be cited in this way, as should any information paraphrased by you. Then, only the sources actually cited in the paper are listed on the 'References Cited' page at the end of your essay. The general style is illustrated with the following example from a research paper.

Sample Text

First, Ellen and Harris note that the representation of traditional ecological knowledge results in its presentation *outside* of culture, despite a regular call to stop separating this knowledge from the people and situations in which it is generated, reproduced and transformed (Ellen and Harris 2000:25-26). In my mind, the sum of the data points on topographical maps is not equal to the entire social context despite the fact that the data is often used that way. Second, it is assumed that the value of TEK is derived from an origin in lived experience (Kuhn and Duerden 1996:74). Nadasdy comments:

... there are those who do not subscribe to this rigid distinction between humans and the environment [and] ... in the absence of a strict separation between humans and the environment, the very idea of separating 'ecological' from 'non-ecological' knowledge becomes nonsensical (Nadasdy 1999:4).

To use a Western definition of the physical environment denies native peoples the opportunity to teach me about their knowledge and conception of the world.

Explanations

Citations are offered after quoted and paraphrased material. Direct quotations shorter than three sentences are typed directly into the essay text and offset with quotation marks. Direct quotations longer than three lines are set off from the rest of the text using single spacing and indentations.

References Cited

Ellen, Roy F. and Holly Harris 2000 Introduction. In *Indigenous Environmental Knowledge and its Transformations: Critical Anthropological Perspectives*, Roy F. Ellen, Peter Parkes, and Alan Bisker, eds. Toronto: Harwood Academic Publishers, pp 1-35.

Kuhn, Richard G. and Frank Duerden 1996 A Review of Traditional Environmental Knowledge: An Interdisciplinary Canadian Perspective. *Culture* 16(1):71-84.

Maffi, Luisa 2001 *On Biocultural Diversity: Linking Language, Knowledge, and the Environment*. Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Nadasdy, Paul. 1999. The Politics of TEK: Power and the 'Integration' of Knowledge. *Arctic Anthropology*. 36(1-2):1-18.