

# rivers and their territories



Spring  
2021

ANG 6930 - 3C29/3C30  
(TUR 2350 / online)

ANT 4930 - 3C28/3C29  
(TUR 2350 / online)

W | Period 5 - 7  
(11:45 AM - 2:45 PM)

Instructor:

**Richard  
Kernaghan**

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office hours (via zoom):

Thursdays 3-5:00pm

(or by appointment)

**Summary:** As an exercise in ethnographic inquiry, this seminar asks how rivers become matters of expression, paying heed to the claims they make:

*To their trajectories and material insistence...*

*To the sounds that come in trickles and thunders...*

*To the shimmer of surfaces that reflect but hold no permanent trace...*

This course foregrounds practices of description through careful attention to the words and terms, poetic images and refrains, through which rivers reach impossibly far from their ever moving banks... even as they press ever so close in the rhythms and rhymes that move back and forth, between mark... and lark, leaving debris and sediment in their wake.

Towards that goal we will lend special weight to our own modes of rendering and to the materials from which they arise, giving scrutiny to vocabularies, common and technical, and to their

promises to anchor sense or provide some momentary step up on what happens. By surveying recent ethnographies of riverine settings, we will consider what kinds of questions seem most pertinent to them and what sorts of research they might inspire. We will reflect on works of literary fiction, film and photography, where rivers figure prominent. And we will draw on studies from two fields kindred to anthropology: geography and jurisprudence—taking seriously the relations of each to geometry and to vitalist philosophies of matter and perception.

Our ultimate focus, however, is on the territories rivers create and the specific ways they shape lived terrains with their milieus originary and derivative. That these in turn accumulate legal force will be our guiding principle: for steering ethnographic description towards that which resonates from highs to lows, but also across extended plains... *out* towards removes that become oblivious to where and when rivers were but nascent... *pulling round* now as if to head back again.

**Overview of Requirements:** This class is run as a synchronous online and in-person seminar with active participation in all discussions expected. Each student will be asked to prepare and present a seminar report on one or more of the assigned readings at least once during the semester. There will be a term paper, with a project abstract, and bibliography due by mid-semester.

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**Texts:**

- Arguedas, J.M. *Deep Rivers* (University of Texas Press, 1978)
- Bartram, J. & Bartram, W., *Travels on the St. Johns River* (Univ. Press of Florida, 2017)
- Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2018)
- Kinsky, E. *River* (Transit Books, 2018)
- Martínez, E. *Ríos* (Elefanta Editorial, 2016)
- Serres, M. *Geometry: The Third Book of Foundations* (Bloomsbury, 2017)
- Twain, M. *Life on the Mississippi* (Signet Classic, NAL Penguin, 1980)

The above e-books have been placed on reserve at Library West. All remaining assigned and supplemental readings can be downloaded from the Canvas course page.

**Attendance:** Since the F2F and online sections of this class meet synchronously via zoom, you must log onto the video conference to be counted as present. As a courtesy to all, please arrive punctually and remain until the end of class. If you must miss a session, please inform me ahead of time (or as soon as possible) and provide appropriate documentation. In such cases you are responsible for contacting a classmate to obtain notes on materials and topics covered while away.

Absences for reasons of religious holiday, illness, and official university business are excused; however, proper notification should still be provided.

**Please note:** Since participation as well as assimilation of class materials depend upon attendance, multiple absences (4 & above) will undermine academic performance and may even risk failing. Students, however, with perfect or near perfect attendance will receive bonus credit. [Click here to read the university attendance policies.](#)

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**Evaluations** – Final course grades are calculated according to a combination of three criteria:

**Participation (35%):** A grade for participation will be assessed at the end of the semester based on the degree to which you have played an active, informed role in class discussions, and in so doing contributed to the course's overall success. So please be prepared at each session to share your impressions, questions and interpretations of all assigned materials. I also encourage you to come to office hours (via zoom) two or three times during the semester to talk about progress in the course and your on-going work on the final project.

**Seminar Report/Presentation (25%):** You are responsible for the preparation and presentation of one seminar report (length: 5-6 double spaced pages) on the topic of your assigned week. That report should not merely summarize but offer a well-crafted, spirited interpretation, which situates the required readings within the ideas and concepts of the course. It should outline specific concerns as well as hone questions.

**On your assigned week,** please circulate *via Canvas* a list of discussion points and questions *at least 24 hours* prior to your presentation (in other words: *no later than midday on Tuesday*). The report itself is due at the beginning of class.

**Term project essay (40%):** The final paper should be an original, persuasive and creative engagement with one or more of the class concepts. Of approximately 5500-7000 words in length for graduate students and approximately 4000 words for undergraduates, the term project should contribute directly towards the development of a research proposal, a conference paper, journal article or thesis chapter. *A concise 250-word abstract, outlining the objectives of the project, and a bibliography are due mid-semester.*

The term project essay must be handed in no later than the last day of class.

*All assignments should be submitted via Canvas: typed in a common 12pt font and double-spaced with one-inch margins and pages numbered.*

**Assignment Deadlines:**

- *seminar paper* - TBA
- *term project abstract & bibliography* – March 3
- *term project essay* – April 21

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**Academic Honesty:** UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. [Click here to read the Honor Code](#). Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

**Accommodations for students with disabilities:** Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. [Click here to get started with the Disability Resource Center](#). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

**Grading:** The following scale will be used for grades on all assignments: 94-100=A; 90-93=A-; 87-89=B+; 83-86=B; 79-82=B-; 76-78=C+; 72-75=C; 69-71=C-; 66-68=D+; 62-65=D; 59-61=D-; 58 and below=E (failing). Click [this link to consult current UF policies for grades and grading](#).

**Course feedback:** Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. [Click here for guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner](#). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via

[ufl.bluera.com/ufl/](http://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/). Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students here.

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### Additional UF Resources:

#### Health & Wellness

- *U Matter, We Care*: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- *Counseling and Wellness Center*: [Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- *Student Health Care Center*: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or [visit the Student Health Care Center website](#).
- *University Police Department*: [Visit UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- *UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center*: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; [Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#)

#### Academic

- *E-learning technical support*: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu).
- *Career Connections Center*: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.
- *Library Support*: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- *Teaching Center*: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
- *Writing Studio*: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- *Student Complaints On-Campus*: [Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information.](#)
- *On-Line Students Complaints*: [View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process.](#)
- *Anthropology Library Guide*: <http://guides.uflib.ufl.edu/c.php?g=147739&p=969917>

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**Please note:** I may make minor adjustments to class readings or assignment requirements during the semester. Any and all modifications will be announced ahead of time.

## Course Schedule

### week 1 Tama | tabula rasa

1/13 Thiep, "Run River Run"  
Serres, *Geometry* (excerpt)  
Herodotus, *Histories*, Book II (excerpt)

### week 2 Lea | branching minor

1/20 Kinsky, *River*  
Clifford, "Rivers & Drainage Basins"  
Grespi, "The Technical Object and Somatic Thought"

### week 3 any river | ethnography

1/27 Driessen, "Towards an Ethnography of Rivers"  
Blackmore, "Turbulent River Times"  
Khan, "River and the Corruption of Memory"  
Krauss et al, *Delta Methods*  
Kernaghan, "Through the Hollows"

### week 4 Danube | technics, technology

2/3 Hölderlin, "The Ister"  
Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology & Other Essays* (Part I)  
Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymn The Ister* (Part I)

Stiegler, *Technics & Time*, Vol I (selected chapters)

**film:** The Ister (dir. Barison & Ross)

**week 5**            **writing workshop | interdictions**

2/10                Kernaghan, "Stranger Terrains"  
Robbe-Grillet, "Time & Description"

**week 6**            **Mississippi | turnings mud**

2/17                Morrison, "The Site of Memory"  
Twain, *Life of the Mississippi* (select chapters)  
Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying* (select chapters)  
Fisk, "Alluvial Valley of the Lower Mississippi"

**week 7**            **Usumacinta | opacities, dark... white**

2/24                Rozental, "*Estelas del Río*"  
Eniac Martínez, *Ríos*  
Canter, "Rivers among the Ruins"

**week 8**            **Tiber | prescriptions**

3/3                 Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* (excerpt)  
Serres, *Roma* (excerpt)  
Vitruvius, *De Architectura* (excerpt)

**week 9**

**Mekong | water mark**

3/10

Nguyen, "Endless Field"

Thiep, "The Water Nymph"

Robert, "Spirits of the Streams"

film: The Floating Lives (dir. Phan Quang Binh Nguyen)

**week 10**

**writing workshop | color**

3/17

Cache, "A Plea for Euclid"

**week 11**

**Congo | cliché**

3/24

Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

Achebe, "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness'"

Hunt, "Registers of Violence" (*A Nervous State*, chapter 1)

**week 12**

**Apurimac | braids on abyss**

3/31

Arguedas, "Carnaval en Tambobamba"

Arguedas, *Los ríos profundos* / *Deep Rivers* (select chapters)

**week 13**

**St. Johns | percolations**

4/7

Bartram, John & Bartram, William, *Travels on the St. Johns River*

**week 14**

**Atrato | jurisprudence**

4/14

*materials TBA*



**week 15**      **final presentations**

4/21            projects workshop