

# Illicit Worlds



Spring 2020

ANG 6930 • Sec 2A91

ANT 4930 • Sec 2A92

Tuesdays | Period 3 - 4 ( 9:35 AM – 11:25 AM)  
Turlington Hall 1208H

Thursdays | Period 4 (10:40 AM – 11:25 AM)  
Rinker Hall 0230

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office hours: Tues 1-3pm /Thurs 1-3pm  
(or by appt.)

This course asks how prohibition-infused social types and things (but also events, terrains and times) can be approached ethnographically. It asks how an ethnographer's need for extended durations of proximity to what she or he studies can be made adequate to social worlds that depend upon secrecy and aggressively defend the perceived boundaries of their activities from unwelcome revelation. If such worlds are never localized in one place but circulate across different kinds of landscapes, how then can ethnographers do justice to the manners in which they unfold, expand, retract or express resilience?

The class has three basic aims. We will learn to recognize and describe anthropological approaches to illicit phenomena. We will ascertain the relevance of classic social theories of negative reciprocity, debt, witchcraft and the uncanny for analyzing criminalized economies. We will also weigh the implications, potential and limits of ethnography—as research method and representational practice—for the ethical study of illicit worlds. Our ultimate goal, however, is to attune ourselves to *the empirical* and to the specific ways in which prohibitions and their trespass so frequently establish the tone of what might be said about it.

### Objectives:

1. to describe anthropological approaches to the study of illicit worlds
2. to demonstrate the relevance of classic social theories of negative reciprocity, debt, witchcraft and the uncanny for analyzing criminalized economies
3. to weigh the implications, potential and limits of ethnography—as research method and representational practice—for the ethical study of illicit worlds
4. to hone skills of textual analysis and interpretation
5. to become better writers

**Overview of Requirements:** This class is run as a 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.

### *Required Texts:*

Canetti, E. *Crowds and Power* (Farrar Straus Giroux, 1984)

Evans-Pritchard, E.E. *Witchcraft, Oracles & Magic among the Azande* (Oxford University Press, 1976)

Ferry, E. & Ferry, S. *La Batea* (Red Hook Editions, 2017)

Kluckhohn, C. *Navaho Witchcraft* (Beacon Press, 1962)

Serres, M., *The Parasite* (University of Minnesota Press, 2007)

Siegel, J. *Naming the Witch* (Stanford University Press, 2006)

Taussig, M. *Beauty & the Beast* (University of Chicago Press, 2012)

Uexküll, J. *A Foray in the Worlds of Animals and Humans* (University of Minnesota Press, 2010)

*The above titles (some of them as e-books) have been placed on reserve at Library West. All remaining assigned, recommended, or supplementary readings may be downloaded from the Canvas course page.*

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**Attendance:** Please arrive punctually and remain until the end of class. An attendance sign-up sheet will be circulated each session. If you must miss class, please inform me ahead of time (or as soon as possible) and provide appropriate documentation. Don't forget to contact a classmate and obtain notes on materials covered while away.

Absences for reasons of religious holiday, illness, and official university business are excused; however, notification must still be provided. **Please note:** Multiple unexcused absences will undermine performance in the course.

For official UF Policy on attendance and absences please consult:  
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

**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 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 Monday mid-morning*). 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 must be submitted via Canvas.* Papers should be typed in a common 12pt font and double-spaced with one-inch margins and pages numbered.

**Assignment Deadlines:**

- *seminar paper* - TBA
- *final project abstract & bibliography* - February 27
- *term project essay* - April 21

**Late policy:** Assignments are due at the beginning of class of the calendar deadline. Seminar reports handed in late but still within one week of the original due date will be docked the equivalent of a full letter grade. After that they will no longer be accepted. No extensions will be granted for the term project essay.

**Academic Honesty:** Plagiarism and cheating are serious academic offenses. All work submitted for a grade must be free from unauthorized assistance or deliberate misrepresentations of one's own efforts. The penalty for plagiarism or cheating is a grade of zero points on the assignment in question. In such cases an incident form will also be sent to the Office of the Dean of Students.

If you have questions about what constitutes academic misconduct, please consult the UF Honor Code as well as the UF Policies on Academic Honesty, Student Rights and Responsibilities. See:

<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

also <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/quick-links/academic-integrity/>

**ADA Statement:** "Students with disabilities, who need reasonable modifications to complete assignments successfully and otherwise satisfy course criteria, are encouraged to meet with the instructor as early in the course as possible to identify and plan specific accommodations. Students will be asked to supply a letter from the [Disability Resource Center](#) to assist in planning accommodations."

**Grading:** The following scale will be used for grades on all assignments and exams: 94-100=A; 90-93=A-; 87-89=B+; 84-86=B; 80-83=B-; 77-79=C+; 74-76=C; 70-73=C-; 67-69=D+; 64-66=D; 60-63=D-; 59 and below=E (failing).

You may consult current UF policy on how grade point averages are calculated at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx#calculating>.

**Course feedback:** Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

#### 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 [umatter.ufl.edu/](http://umatter.ufl.edu/) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- *Counseling and Wellness Center:* Visit [counseling.ufl.edu/](http://counseling.ufl.edu/) 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 [shcc.ufl.edu/](http://shcc.ufl.edu/).
- *University Police Department:* Visit [police.ufl.edu/](http://police.ufl.edu/) 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; [ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center](http://ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center).

#### Academic

- *E-learning technical support*: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](http://uf.computing.helpdesk) 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 [career.ufl.edu/](http://career.ufl.edu/).
- *Library Support*: [cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask](http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask) 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. [teachingcenter.ufl.edu/](http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/)
- *Writing Studio*: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. [writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/](http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/)
- *Student Complaints On-Campus*: [sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/](http://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/)

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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 one

#### the question of the whole

1/7

introductions

Canetti, "Judgment and Condemnation" (*Crowds and Power*, 296-297)

film: *The Curious Life of Piter Eustaquio Rengifo Uculmana* (dir. Annichini)

1/9

Garcia, "The Blue Years"

### week two

#### on the secrecy of relations

1/14

Carter, "Carceral Kinship"

Alarcón, "City of Clowns" (short story)

Simmel, "Secrecy" & "The Secret Society"

Canetti, "Question & Answer"; "Secrecy" (*Crowds and Power*, 284-296)

1/16

Newell, "Ethnography in a Shell Game"

Serres, "Noises" (*The Parasite*, 121-128)

### week three

#### myth and fairytale

1/21

Lafontaine, "The Wolf and the Lamb"

Silko, "Estoy-eh-muut and the Kunideeyahs"

Benjamin, "The Storyteller"

Hoffmann, "The Sandman"

film: Daughter of the Nile (dir. Hsiao Hsien)

1/23

Canetti, "Flight Transformations" (*Crowds and Power*, 342-348)

Jensch, "On the Psychology of the Uncanny"

Kernaghan, "Lucky Black Sack"

**week four**

**witchery**

1/28

Lyons, "Can there be peace with poison?"

Silko, "Long time ago"

Kluckhohn, *Navaho Witchcraft* (select chapters)

1/30

Freud, "The Uncanny"

**week five**

**animals and their terrains**

2/4

Lafontaine, "The Countryman and the Serpent"

Deleuze, "Instincts and Institutions"

Uexküll, *A Foray in the World of Animals and Humans*

film: Birds of Passage (dir. Gallego & Guerra)

2/6

Canguilhem, "The Living and its Milieu"

**week six**

**reciprocal topographies**

2/11

Caillois, "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia"

Caillois, *Mask of Medusa*, 29-52

Alarcón, "Life among the Pirates"

2/13

Caillois, *Mask of Medusa*, 55-111

**week seven**

**magical captures, illicit protections**

2/18

Kleist, "The Beggarwoman of Locarno"

Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morality*, Essay II (sections 3-6, especially)

Sahlins, "On the Sociology of Primitive Exchange"

Kristensen, "La Santa Muerte in Mexico City"

Roush, "Santa Muerte, Protection and *Desamparo*"

supplementary:

Leach, "Debt, Redemption, Power"

Lomnitz, "Sobre reciprocidad negativa"

Graeber, "Cruelty and Redemption"

2/20

Kristensen, "Moving In and Moving Out"

Lomnitz, "Interpreting la Santa Muerte"

**week eight**

**"abuse appears before use..."**

2/25

La Fontaine, "The City Rat and the Country Rat"

Serres, *The Parasite*, 3-99



film: The Absent Stone (dir. Rozental & Lerner)

2/27 Ferry & Ferry, *La Batea*

SPRING BREAK READING:

Alarcón y Alvarado, *City of Clowns* (graphic novel)

Serres, *The Parasite* (select sections)

week nine **research workshop: how does a story want to be told?**

3/10 working group sessions

website: Forensic Architecture – “Ayotzinapa: A Cartography of Violence”

3/12 working group sessions

week ten **“...nothing goes beyond utility, except beauty”**

3/17 Taussig, *Beauty and the Beast*

3/19 Taussig, “Transgression”

week eleven **“at the mercy of encounters...”**

3/24 Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles & Magic among the Azande* (select chapters)

3/26 Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles & Magic among the Azande* (select chapters)

**week twelve**

**and the uncanny returns**

3/31

Siegel, *Naming the Witch*, Introduction & Part I

4/2

Lévi-Strauss, "The Sorcerer and his Magic"

**week thirteen**

**ethnographic projects**

4/7

individual project presentations

film: Long Day's Journey into Night (dir. Bi Gan)

4/9

individual project presentations

**week fourteen**

**noise**

4/14

Siegel, *Naming the Witch*, Part II

4/16

Serres, "Full Length Portrait of the Parasite," *The Parasite*, 103-135

**week fifteen**

**the turn of the question**

4/21

individual project presentations