

Weaving the World: Exercises in Writing Evocative Ethnography
School of Advanced Research
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The aim of this course is to introduce scholars to the fundamental features and essential practices of ethnography and ethnographic blogging in the contemporary world. In the course students will learn what distinguishes ethnography from other forms of academic and nonfiction representation. The technique of “Weaving the World,” the seamless linkage of ethnographic description to social analysis will be presented. Students will be asked to read examples from the work of ethnographers who have, in various ways, attempted to use this technique to evoke social worlds through the exposition of space/place, character, and dialogue. These are strategies that ethnographic writers can use to ensure that readers come to know a people who live in a particular place. In short the course is a guide to doing public anthropology in our troubled times.

During the workshop students will be asked to write culture evocatively. The instructor will outline ethnographic (and blogging) writing practices—the “tricks of the trade.” He will then ask the students to begin to “Weave the World” by writing (1) short descriptions of space/place, and dialogue

Recommended Texts:

- Behar, Ruth 2008. *An Island Called Home*. Rutgers UP
Ghodsee, Kristen 2016. *From Notes to Narrative: Writing Narratives that Everyone Can Read*. University of Chicago Press.
Goffman, Alice. 2014. *On the Run*. University of Chicago Press.
Jackson, Michael 2011. *Life Within Limits*. Duke UP
McGranahan, Carole. 2020. *Writing Anthropology*. Duke UP.
Shostak, Marjorie 2000. *Nisa: The Life and Words of a! Kung Woman*. Harvard UP
Stoller, Paul 1997. *Sensuous Scholarship* (Prologue, chapter 1 and Epilogue)
Stoller, Paul 2002. *Money Has No Smell*. University of Chicago Press. Prologue, Chap 1 and Epilogue
Stoller, Paul 2013. Anthropological Musings on Blogging Bliss. *Anthropology Now* 5 (3): 92-96
Stoller, Paul 2014. *Yaya's Story: The Quest for Well-Being in the World*. University of Chicago Press.
Vitebsky, Piers, 2005. *The Reindeer People*. New York: Knopf.
Waterston, Alisse and Charlotte Corden 2020. *Light in Dark Times: The human Search for Meaning*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Topics and Assigned Readings

November 1. Introduction: Conventions of Representation and Plain Style
Marcus and M. Fischer 1985. Chapters 1 and 2.

Exercise: Transforming (1st paragraph on p. 482 from Bourdieu's *Distinction*) into Comprehensible Language.

Introduction to the evocation of space and place.

Homework: Read as models some or all of the following

P. Vitebsky (2005) pp. 151-79

P. Stoller (1899 Chapter 1, Looking for Serici pp.1-19

A. Badhen 2018, pp. 1-26.

M D Jackson 2005, pp.1-32

Write a draft essay, several pages that evokes a space/place that is important to you.

November 8. Writer's Feedback Session on Drafts *Space/Place Essays*.

Introduction to the craft of writing character

Homework: Read any dialogue in Walter Mosley 2005 *Cinnamon Kiss* (or any book by Walter Mosley), Elmore Leonard 1995 *Get Shorty* (or any book by Elmore Leonard), Anna Badkhen, *Fisherman's Blues*

Using the writers above as your model, write a draft character from your Experience or imagination

November 15 Presentations of Character—Writer's Session Feedback