

SM6324: SENSORY ETHNOGRAPHY: CRITICAL AND CREATIVE PRACTICES

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Sensory Ethnography: Critical and Creative Practices

Subject Code

SM - School of Creative Media

Course Number

6324

Academic Unit

School of Creative Media (SM)

College/School

School of Creative Media (SM)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

P5, P6 - Postgraduate Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

The course explores the theories and methods of sensory ethnography through practice-led audio-visual research in relation to various topics of identities and material culture. The course also studies the intellectual history and evolution of ethnographic theory and ethnographic films as a genre. Through practice-led learning mode (the production of sound recording, photographic media, and short ethnographic film), it promotes a reflexive understanding of the critical use of media in conducting and disseminating ethnographic knowledge in a socially and artistically engaging manner.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Give an accessible and theoretical account of sensory and experimental ethnography and the philosophical basis of ethnographic theory		x		
2	Conceive their own research of everyday life based on informed views in ethnographic theory and practice			x	
3	Design, conduct and manage ethnography in the medium of video art or film independently			x	
4	Deploy audio-visual tools effectively in research and be aware of the difference they make to the research process				x
5	Turn the findings of ethnography, the work of collecting, classification and interpretation into a creative artistic project with a short a statement				x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs		Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lecture	- Explain key concepts in ethnographic theory - Overview of the history of ethnographic films - Rethinking conventional ethnographic registers - Screening films or videos of sensory ethnography	1, 2	

2	Fieldwork	Requires students to do fieldwork for their individual or group project	3	
3	Logbook	Requires students to reflect upon the learning resources including both readings and films	1, 2	
4	Group/individual project	Requires students to do a group or individual sensory ethnographic project	2, 3, 4, 5	
5	Presentation	Requires students to present their works and reflect upon their experiences and fieldnotes during the project	1, 2	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

ATs		CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Logbook	1, 2, 3	20	-	No
2	Group or individual creative and ethnographic project producing an audiovisual work	3, 4, 5	50	-	No
3	Final presentation	1	30	-	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Minimum Continuous Assessment Passing Requirement (%)

0

Minimum Examination Passing Requirement (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Creative Project (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Students should demonstrate ability to utilize primary and secondary sources, execute creative ideas and projects. The threshold of 'discovery' lies in a student's proactively turning theory into praxis, to transform course material into self-owned authorship.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-)

- Work has strong affective quality and the articulation of personal styles and signature
- Excellent appreciation, exploration and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium
- Work raises questions and instill insights about the process of conception, creative strategization and production
- Innovative exploration by combining knowledge from different disciplines (e.g. mathematics, psychology, physics, anthropology, etc.) to create an inter- disciplinary project
- Efficient adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available with constructive adjustment

Good

(B+, B, B-)

- Strong appreciation, exploration and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium
- Ability to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration
- Proper adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available and constructive feedback/ suggestions

Fair

(C+, C, C-)

- Basic appreciation and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium
- Limited ability to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration
- Adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available

Marginal

(D)

- Marginal appreciation of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium
- Marginal ability to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration
- Limited adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available

Failure

(F)

- No appreciation of the aesthetics and expressive qualities of the medium
- Fail to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration
- Minimal adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available

Assessment Task

Final Presentation (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

This assessment will grade on content and fluency of presentation. Students should show their co-operation to conduct a well-organised presentation with their own argument and evidence from readings and notes. The threshold of 'discovery' lied in a student's self initiatives to conduct additional research and to personalize theories for her/his personal daily experience.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-)

- Rich, informative content, excellent grasp of the material with in-depth and extensive knowledge of the subject matter
- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, and systematic exposition with a strong sense of narrative
- Superior presentation skills: distinct pronunciation, fluent expression and appropriate diction, exact time- management
- Critical analysis with insightful comments opening up new issues, or suggesting the ability to theorize

Good

(B+, B, B-)

- Adequate content with firm grasp of the material that informs the audience on a subject matter
- Reasonable organization, balanced structure and composition

- Good verbal communication: comprehensible pronunciation, fluent expression and diction, fair time- management

Fair

(C+, C, C-)

- Adequate content with comprehensive grasp of the material demonstrating basic knowledge of the subject matter
- Fair organization, weak structure and composition
- Fair presentation skills: acceptable pronunciation, expression and diction, fair time- management

Marginal

(D)

- Weak content, loose grasp of the general ideas with some knowledge of the subject matter
- Poor organization, structure and composition
- Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, poor time- management

Failure

(F)

- Inadequate content, fail to identify the general ideas with knowledge of the subject matter
- No organization, structure or/and composition
- Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, minimal time- management

Assessment Task

Logbook/ Journal (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

The evidence of 'discovery' lies in the students' demonstrated ability to address and approach problems in multiple perspectives, and to provide illuminating documentation of the research or problem-solving process.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-)

- Organization bears conceptual insight
- Content carries illuminating details and reflects self- directed search beyond required coverage
- Communication of distinct authorship and personality
- Exceptional ability to address in details the conditions and limitations in the journal process
- Self-reflexive about the process and methodology of research and the impact of circumstantial factors
- Evidence of wide-range ideation and brainstorming; notes, drawing, developmental sketches are included

Good

(B+, B, B-)

- Reasonable organization; Informative content with details
- Identifies the subject, strong ability to address the conditions and limitations related
- Include adequate notes and possible ideas of research done to formulate solutions
- Evidence of ideation and brainstorming; Notes, drawing, developmental sketches are included
- Account of how the solution is built, demonstrate ability to analysis and critique

Fair

(C+, C, C-)

- Reasonable organization; Adequate content
- Adequate coverage
- Some evidence of ideation and brainstorming
- Sufficient documentation of research process and/or presentation of solution

Marginal

(D)

- Less than 50% of required coverage

- Inadequate organization and content
- Include little notes of research done to formulate solutions or documentation
- Inadequate evidence of ideation and brainstorming
- Inadequate presentation of the solution

Failure

(F)

- No submission; OR
 - Minimal coverage of what is required
 - Marginal ability in documentation
 - No evidence of ideation and brainstorming
-

Assessment Task

Creative Project (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Students should demonstrate ability to utilize primary and secondary sources, execute creative ideas and projects. The threshold of 'discovery' lies in a student's proactively turning theory into praxis, to transform course material into self-owned authorship.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-)

- Work has strong affective quality and the articulation of personal styles and signature
- Excellent appreciation, exploration and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium
- Work raises questions and instill insights about the process of conception, creative strategisation and production
- Innovative exploration by combining knowledge from different disciplines (e.g. mathematics, psychology, physics, anthropology, etc.) to create an inter- disciplinary project
- Efficient adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available with constructive adjustment

Good

(B+, B)

- Strong appreciation, exploration and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium
- Ability to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration
- Proper adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available and constructive feedback/ suggestions

Marginal

(B-, C+, C)

- Marginal appreciation of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium
- Marginal ability to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration
- Limited adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available

Failure

(F)

- No appreciation of the aesthetics and expressive qualities of the medium
 - Fail to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration
 - Minimal adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available
-

Assessment Task

Final Presentation (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

This assessment will grade on content and fluency of presentation. Students should show their co-operation to conduct a well-organised presentation with their own argument and evidence from readings and notes. The threshold of 'discovery' lied in a student's self initiatives to conduct additional research and to personalize theories for her/his personal daily experience.

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Good

(B+, B)

- Adequate content with firm grasp of the material that informs the audience on a subject matter
- Reasonable organization, balanced structure and composition
- Good verbal communication: comprehensible pronunciation, fluent expression and diction, fair time- management

Marginal

(B-, C+, C)

- Weak content, loose grasp of the general ideas with some knowledge of the subject matter
- Poor organization, structure and composition
- Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, poor time- management

Failure

(F)

- Inadequate content, fail to identify the general ideas with knowledge of the subject matter
- No organization, structure or/and composition
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Assessment Task

Logbook/ Journal (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

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- Evidence of wide- range ideation and brainstorming; notes, drawing, developmental sketches are included

Good

(B+, B)

- Reasonable organization; Informative content with details
- Identifies the subject, strong ability to address the conditions and limitations related
- Include adequate notes and possible ideas of research done to formulate solutions
- Evidence of ideation and brainstorming; Notes, drawing, developmental sketches are included
- Account of how the solution is built, demonstrate ability to analysis and critique

Marginal

(B-, C+, C)

- Less than 50% of required coverage
- Inadequate organization and content
- Include little notes of research done to formulate solutions or documentation
- Inadequate evidence of ideation and brainstorming
- Inadequate presentation of the solution

Failure

(F)

- Poor grasp of materials
- Inadequate content, without primary and secondary levels
- Fail to design and conduct research which is appropriate for the research objective
- Fail to make reasonable judgments about existing research
- Fail to approach a text or a theme using a variety of theories and analytical tools

Part III Other Information**Keyword Syllabus**

Social and cultural anthropology; visual anthropology; cultural studies; sensory ethnography; visual ethnography; experimental ethnography; anthropological theory; ethnographic theory; anthropology and art; ethno-methodologies; the open-ended quality of research, ethnography and history, visual ethnography and art-making, archive, collecting; Direct Cinema; visual ethnography and avant-garde cinema; performativity; affect studies; autoethnography.

Reading List**Compulsory Readings**

Title	
1	Abu-Lughod, L. (1991). Writing against Culture. In R. G. Fox (Ed.), <i>Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present</i> (pp. 50–59).
2	Boellstorff, T., Nardi, B., Pearce, C., & Taylor, T. L. (2012). <i>Ethnography of Virtual Worlds: A Handbook of Method</i> . Princeton University Press.
3	Clifford, J. (1998). <i>The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art</i> . Harvard University Press.
4	Crawford, P., & Turton, D. (1992). <i>Film as ethnography</i> . Manchester University Press.
5	Estalella, A., & Sánchez Criado, T. (2018). <i>Experimental Collaborations: Ethnography through Fieldwork Devices</i> . Berghahn Books.
6	Fabian, J. (2008). <i>Ethnography as Commentary: Writing from the Virtual Archive</i> . Duke University Press.
7	Fabian, J. (2014). Ethnography and intersubjectivity Loose ends. <i>Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory</i> 4(1), 199–209. https://doi.org/10.14318/hau4.1.008
8	Falzon, M.-A. (2009). <i>Multi-Sited Ethnography Theory, Praxis and Locality in Contemporary Research</i> . Routledge.
9	Fischer, M. M. J. (2018). <i>Anthropology in the Meantime: Experimental Ethnography, Theory, and Method for the Twenty-First Century</i> . Duke University Press.
10	Gannon, S. (2006). The (im)possibilities of writing the self-writing: French poststructural theory and autoethnography. <i>Cultural Studies - Critical Methodologies</i> 6(4), 474–495. https://doi.org/10.1177/1532708605285734
11	Goffman, E. (1989). On Fieldwork. <i>Journal of Contemporary Ethnography</i> 18(2), 123–132. https://doi.org/10.1177/089124189018002001
12	Grimshaw, Anna., & Ravetz, Amanda. (2005). <i>Visualizing Anthropology: Experimenting with Image-Based Ethnography</i> . Intellect.

13	Günel, G., Varma, S., & Watanabe, C. (2020). A Manifesto for Patchwork Ethnography. <i>Fieldsights</i> . https://culanth.org/fieldsights/a-manifesto-for-patchwork-ethnography
14	Hepburn, S. J. (2016). Ethnography and Harvard's Sensory Ethnography Laboratory. <i>The Senses and Society</i> 11(2), 232–236. https://doi.org/10.1080/17458927.2016.1195080

Additional Readings

	Title
1	Hine, C. (2015). <i>Ethnography for the Internet: Embedded, Embodied and Everyday</i> . Bloomsbury.
2	Hjorth, L., & Sharp, K. (2014). The art of ethnography: The aesthetics or ethics of participation? <i>Visual Studies</i> 29(2), 128–135. https://doi.org/10.1080/1472586X.2014.887261
3	Hsu, W. F. (2017). A Performative Digital Ethnography: Data, Design, and Speculation. In L. Hjorth, H. Horst, A. Galloway, & G. Bell (Eds.), <i>A Performative Digital Ethnography</i> (pp. 40–50). Routledge.
4	Kazubowski-Houston, M., & Auslander, M. (2021). In Search of Lost Futures: Anthropological Explorations in Multimodality, Deep Interdisciplinarity, and Autoethnography. Palgrave Macmillan.
5	Lee, S. Y. (2021). Now as a Liminal Space, Writing as a Patchwork: Autoethnographic Reflections on the Self in the Middle of the Pandemic. <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i> 27(7), 773–777. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800420960181
6	Messeri, L. (2016). <i>Placing Outer Space: An Earthly Ethnography of Other World</i> . Duke University Press.
7	Nardi, B. A. (2015). When Fieldnotes Seem to Write Themseves: Ethnography Online. In R. Sanjek & S. W. Tratner (Eds.), <i>eFieldnotes: The Makings of Anthropology in the Digital World</i> (pp. 192–209). University of Pennsylvania Press.
8	Navaro-Yashin, Y. (2009). Affective spaces, melancholic objects: Ruination and the production of anthropological knowledge. <i>Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute</i> 15(1), 1–18.
9	Pandian, A. (2019). <i>A Possible Anthropology: Methods for Uneasy Times</i> . Duke University Press.
10	Pink, S. (2001). <i>Doing Visual Ethnography</i> . Sage Publications.
11	Pink, S. (2009). <i>Doing Sensory Ethnography</i> . Sage.
12	Pink, S., Horst, H., John, P., Hjorth, L., Lewis, T., & Tacchi, J. (2016). <i>Digital Ethnography: Principles and Practice</i> . Sage Publications.
13	Pink, S., & Howes, D. (2010). Debate section. <i>Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale</i> 18(3), 331–340. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-8676.2010.00119.x
14	Pink, S., & Morgan, J. (2013). Short-term ethnography: Intense routes to knowing. <i>Symbolic Interaction</i> 36(3), 351–361. https://doi.org/10.1002/symb.66
15	Rinehart, R. E. (2012). Antipodean performativity: Contemporary ethnography across the disciplines. <i>Cultural Studies - Critical Methodologies</i> 12(1), 3–7. https://doi.org/10.1177/1532708611430478
16	Russell, C. (1999). <i>Experimental Ethnography: The Work of Film in the Age of Video</i> . Duke University Press.
17	Scheffer, T. (2007). Event and Process: An Exercise in Analytical Ethnography. <i>Human Studies</i> 30(3), 167–197.
18	Schneider, J. (2002). Reflexive/Diffractive Ethnography. <i>Cultural Studies H Cntical Methodologies</i> 2(4), 460–482.
19	Skoggard, I., & Waterston, A. (2015). Introduction: Toward an Anthropology of Affect and Evocative Ethnography. <i>Anthropology of Consciousness</i> 26(2), 109–120. https://doi.org/10.1111/anoc.12041