

**Advanced Research Methods:  
Ethnographic Writing for Social Change<sup>1</sup>**

ANTH 653-001, Spring 2019  
Tuesdays, 5:30-8:00 p.m., Hamilton 104

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*Office Hours* this semester will be posted at the following link, where you can also schedule an appointment: <https://calendly.com/vine>

Most weeks, I will be in our classroom at least 30 minutes prior to class for office hours. As always during office hours, no appointment is required, but they help to minimize waiting. To make an appointment outside regular hours, please talk to me or email suggested dates/times.

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<sup>1</sup> This course is inspired by and draws on a class taught by Mitchell Duneier at the Graduate Center, City University of New York, entitled, "Seminar in Urban Ethnographic Research," Department of Sociology, Spring 2002.

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## **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

This writing-intensive seminar explores the craft, art, and politics of ethnographic writing through intensive ethnographic research, writing, and reading. Seminar participants will conduct a semester-long ethnographic study and produce frequent writing assignments. To provide models for our writing, we will dissect exemplary ethnographic texts from anthropology and related disciplines, including sociology and other social sciences, narrative/creative nonfiction, investigative journalism, fiction, radio, film, television, and beyond.

I have designed the course with the belief that ethnography, defined broadly, has the radical potential to be a force for social change by sensitively portraying the lived experience and context of human lives, by engaging readers emotionally and intellectually, and by building empathy and understanding and provoking new ways of seeing the world. The course will thus be a writing-intensive seminar aimed at improving the quality and impact of participants’ ethnographic writing and maximizing the potential our writing has to be a tool for social change. The seminar is particularly interested in the relevance of ethnography in the era of “big data.”

### **Engagement and Being Present**

As a participatory, discussion-based seminar, the course assumes energetic, thoughtful, and collaborative engagement from every participant. Careful and thoughtful reading, active participation in class, and high-quality writing are the most important elements of this course. To help prepare for seminar discussions, I recommend using the list of questions in “Suggestions for Academic Reading” below. I expect advance notice for any classes you will miss, just as I will inform you if I must miss any classes.

### **Respect, Inclusivity, and Freedom of Expression and Dissent**

Our classroom will be a space for passionate, engaged discussion. Everyone will be encouraged to express views freely and to dissent with others—especially me—while recognizing the responsibility to respect others’ right to express themselves freely.

In keeping with commitments to social justice and a public anthropology, the Department of Anthropology and I are committed to ensuring inclusion, diversity, and equality of opportunity for all, regardless of race/ethnicity, sex, gender, sexuality, class, age, religion, nationality, (dis)ability, and intellectual or political viewpoint, among others dimensions of difference. If you

have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, please feel free to speak to me, the Department chair, or the Center for Diversity and Inclusion (202-885-3651).<sup>2</sup>

### **Course Feedback**

Beginning with the syllabus and throughout the semester, participants will have opportunities to shape the direction of the class, choose subjects of discussion, and improve the course design. At mid-semester and the semester's end, you will complete self-evaluations. I will ask you to respond to specific questions, but this will be another opportunity to ask any general questions about the class, anthropology, and things that are confusing in the course. The self-evaluations will also be a chance to give me feedback about my teaching, ways I could improve the class, and general frustrations or inspiration.

I always welcome questions raised in class, office hours, and by email—but call with anything truly urgent. Feel free to leave anonymous questions or comments in my mailbox on the ground floor of the Department of Anthropology's Hamilton Building.

## **LOGISTICS**

### **Technology in the Classroom**

Because this course stresses active engagement in class discussions and respect for all course participants, computers, mobile phones, and other personal electronic devices may never be used in the classroom except when there is a reason to make an exception to this rule. There are definitely good reasons to make an exception; if this is the case or if you have questions, please come speak to me. Although I do not encourage the use of e-readers, they may be used in class only if they are used to examine course readings and for no other purposes. If an e-reader is used for other purposes in the classroom, it will no longer be permitted in the classroom. Use of technology in the classroom other than as described will indicate a lack of engagement and negatively affect one's grade. Thanks for your understanding and assistance.

### **Email and Communication**

Throughout the semester, I will send emails (via Blackboard or directly to your email) to supplement and clarify class discussions and occasionally to modify readings or other assignments. I consider these emails to be an important part of the course and required reading. This means that everyone must ensure you will receive such emails and that you read them in a timely manner. Note, however, that I will not change a mandatory reading or assignment with less than 48 hours' notice.

If you send me an email and do not get a response within a few days, I apologize in advance. My delay is likely because of the large amount of email faculty receive every day. If the issue is pressing, please call me on my office phone or talk to me in class. If there is an emergency, please call me on my mobile phone.

Note, also, that I try to check email only once per day, and I do not check email on my phone. I also recommend *not* using email if you have a lengthy question or item to discuss. Talking in

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<sup>2</sup> With thanks to Leena Jayaswal, American University, "Statement of Inclusivity," 2016.

person will be much more efficient and effective, so I recommend talking to me (and other faculty) in office hours in such cases. A general guideline: If you have more than three questions, or if your email is more than eight lines long, or if your email would likely require more than eight lines of response, please come to office hours or speak to me after class.

## ASSIGNMENTS

### **Ethnographic Research and Writing**

This course holds that the writing and “doing” of ethnography are inseparable. Course participants will pursue both through a semester-long ethnographic project of your choosing. Beginning no later than the first week after Spring Break, you will need to conduct ethnographic research in a research site for *about five hours per week*. The site(s) of your research should be somewhere where you will have regular access (perhaps near your home or work). The project can continue prior research and may be usefully seen as an exploratory project leading toward future thesis, dissertation, or other research. *Other than in exceptional circumstances, research may not be conducted with people under 18 years of age or any other vulnerable populations.*

Throughout the conduct of your project, you will be responsible for protecting the safety of all research participants and abiding by all other ethical standards of anthropology (see the American Anthropological Association’s Code of Ethics: [http://www.aaanet.org/coe/Code\\_of\\_Ethics.pdf](http://www.aaanet.org/coe/Code_of_Ethics.pdf) ). Participants interested in writing about ethnographic research that they have recently conducted may make special arrangements to use that research as the basis for their writing.

During the semester, we will write four short papers focused on different ethnographic writing skills. Each of the papers should be a *maximum* of two double-spaced pages. The assigned books and other assigned readings will serve as models for these exercises.

*On days when a two-page paper is due, please bring enough copies for everyone in class (including for you and me). I am happy to make copies, but please put the paper under my office door by 4:30 p.m. on the day of class or make other arrangements with me.*

The four papers and a project proposal will culminate in a final paper of ten double-spaced pages (minimum). Students writing about previously conducted research will need to submit approximately 20-30 pages of writing.

You will not be able to paste together the previous assignments to complete the final paper, but you may be able to draw upon and incorporate some of your earlier writing in the ten-page paper. I encourage you to pursue publication of the final work (ten pages is about the length of an average popular magazine feature article: 3,000 words) and/or to incorporate it into future research and writing (e.g., an academic article, thesis, dissertation, book). This will likely mean that as you design your project, you should think about your longer-term plans, future publishing venues for your work, and developing a writing style that accords with your plans.

### **Ethnography Oral Presentation**

You will present a detailed critical analysis of an ethnography of your choosing in a presentation of no more than eight minutes. The review should 1) briefly summarize the book; 2) discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the textual strategies employed by the author; and 3) discuss the relative effectiveness of the book as a tool for social change, including how the writing may have influenced the book's impact. Your presentation should share at least one exemplary passage from the book.

### **Preparation for Seminar**

For each book we read, please identify at least one exemplary passage to share with the class that you believe offers a model for effective ethnographic writing. Be prepared to explain why the passage is effective and the specific writing techniques from which we can learn.

In addition to considering each work's content, please consider the following as you read:

What textual strategies make this work effective? Why? What strategies are ineffective? Why?  
How can the work be a model for our writing? What strategies should we avoid? Why?  
What methodological strategies make this work effective? Why? Which do not?  
What textual strategies make this work potentially effective as a tool for social change? Why?  
What textual strategies limit the work's potential to effect change? Why?

See also my general "Suggestions for Academic Reading" after the schedule below.

### **MAJOR SEMINAR OBJECTIVES**

My objective for the semester is that each of us will be able to:

- Work cooperatively and constructively with other seminar participants, building a rich, thoughtful, and supportive learning environment;
- Improve one's ethnographic writing and one's writing more broadly;
- Become a better critical reader and analyst of ethnography and ethnographically-inclined writing;
- Think critically about the political and artistic complexities of ethnographic representation;
- Think critically about how ethnography and other writing can contribute to progressive social change;
- Improve one's ability to use key ethnographic methods, including participant observation and interviewing;
- Improve one's public speaking skills and ability to communicate original ideas to others.

### **MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **Student Academic Integrity**

By registering for this class and at the university, you have acknowledged your awareness of the Academic Integrity Code (<http://www.american.edu/academics/integrity/code.cfm>) or see the

“Student Handbook and Planner”). You are responsible for familiarizing yourself and complying with all its standards of academic conduct, including those related to plagiarism. I take plagiarism and academic dishonesty very seriously, and I am required to report cases to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, whose policy is to fail students for the course. Please read the university’s Academic Integrity Code closely and ask me if you have any questions.<sup>3</sup>

*Special Note:* In addition to plagiarizing others, it is possible to plagiarize oneself when using your own previously written material without proper citation. To avoid self-plagiarism and related academic dishonesty, you must cite any and all material that you have written for any purposes other than this class. If you want to use material written for another class in this course, you must ask for permission in advance to do so.

### **My Responsibilities**

I pledge to the best of my ability to make this as enriching and exciting an academic experience as possible for everyone; to come prepared to lead engaging class sessions; to create a safe and nurturing environment in the classroom that encourages the free exchange of ideas; to remain open to—and encourage—all dissent, critique, suggestions about the class, and other feedback; to adapt the course as appropriate in response to feedback; to meet personally with course participants during my office hours and at other times by appointment or otherwise to discuss any aspect of the course; to read carefully and return all written assignments as quickly as possible; and to be fair in my evaluation and grading.

### **PRIMARY TEXTS**

De Leon, Jason. *The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail*. Oakland: University of California Press (California Series in Public Anthropology), 2015.

Desmond, Matthew. *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*. New York: Crown, 2016.

Fadiman, Anne. *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998.

#### *Optional*

Lamott, Anne. *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*. New York: Anchor, 1995.

Zinsser, William. *On Writing Well, 30th Anniversary Edition: The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction*. New York: Harper Paperbacks, 2006.

### **CLASS SCHEDULE**

All assignments and readings are due on the date indicated. Copies of assigned books should be available via the bookstore, used (and generally inexpensive) online, and in Library Reserves.

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<sup>3</sup> Michael Manson, Academic Affairs Administrator, College of Arts and Sciences, American University, Washington, DC, email communication, January 8, 2009.

I have listed texts in the suggested reading order. Texts other than books will be available via links provided, in class, or in our seminar's Google Drive folder. I highly recommend printing out all readings so that you can read them carefully and bring them to class for discussion.

*If you cannot find a reading or if a link does not work, please: 1) Look again online (try looking for the title or an editor's name or in another folder); and 2) let me know immediately if you still cannot find the reading.*

## **1/15: INTRODUCTIONS: WRITING, ETHNOGRAPHY, SOCIAL CHANGE**

### **1/22: HISTORIES: ETHNOGRAPHY, ETHNOGRAPHICALLY-INCLINED WRITING, AND SOCIAL CHANGE**

Geertz, Clifford. Selections from *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988. Pp. 1-6, 73-101.

"Ethnographic Writing Selections" packet. *Note: Read enough of each selection to get a feel for some of the many ethnographic writing styles and changes in style over time. Focus particularly on the content in Malinowski, Geertz, and Myerhoff.*

Boynton, Robert S. "Introduction." In *The New New Journalism: Conversations with America's Best Nonfiction Writers on Their Craft*. New York: Vintage, 2005. Pp. xi-xvii.

"Writing for Social Change Selections" packet. *Note: Read enough of each selection to get a feel for some of the many writing styles that bear some affinity to ethnography. Focus particularly on getting a feel for the styles of Bly, Riis, Hurston, Schlosser, Ehrenreich, Saviano, and Boo.*

### **1/29: ETHICS AND METHODS**

*Due: Office hours or other meeting with me, and project proposal as follows:*

Describe your semester-long ethnographic project in about one page. The proposal must indicate 1) your research site(s); 2) the initial focus of your investigation and any preliminary research question(s); 3) how you will safeguard your research participants; 4) any other ethical issues you will confront; and 5) why you believe this is an important site for ethnographic research. 6) At the bottom of the proposal, include the name of the book you will review and present 2/19.

American Anthropological Association, "Principles of Professional Responsibility," 2012, <http://ethics.americananthro.org/category/statement/>

Emerson, Robert M., Rachel Fretz, and Linda Shaw. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995. Chaps. 1-2. [Entire book recommended]

Pearson, Charles, and Philippe Bourgois. "Hope to Die a Dope Fiend." *Cultural Anthropology* 10, no. 4 (1995): 587-593.

Marcus, George E., and Dick Cushman. "Ethnographies as Texts." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 11 (1982): 25-69.

Craven, Christa, et al., eds. "Foreword," "Introduction," and "Closing Questions." In *Feminist Activist Ethnography: Counterpoints to Neoliberalism in North America*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013. <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/aul/detail.action?docID=1203904>

Singal, Jesse. "The Internet Accused Alice Goffman of Faking Details in Her Study of a Black Neighborhood. I Went to Philadelphia to Check." *The Cut*, June 18, 2015. <https://www.thecut.com/2015/06/i-fact-checked-alice-goffman-with-her-subjects.html>

Lewis-Kraus, Gideon. "The Trials of Alice Goffman." *New York Times Magazine*, January 12, 2016. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/17/magazine/the-trials-of-alice-goffman.html>

Stoller, Paul. "Alice Goffman and the Future of Ethnography." *Huffington Post*, July 15, 2015. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/paul-stoller/alice-goffman-and-the-future-of-ethnography-b\\_7585614.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/paul-stoller/alice-goffman-and-the-future-of-ethnography-b_7585614.html)

*See Also*

Duneier, Mitchell. "Appendix." In *Sidewalk*. New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1999.

Dan Rather Reports, "Kidney Pirates," January 12, 2012. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihnw16lgKcM>

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. "Parts Unknown: Undercover Ethnography of the Organs-Trafficking Underworld." *Ethnography* 5, no. 1 (2004): 29-73.

Calvey, David. "The Art and Politics of Covert Research: Doing 'Situated Ethics' in the Field." *Sociology* 42, no. 5 (2008): 905-918.

**2/5: ORAL HISTORY AND THE POLITICS OF REPRESENTATION**  
**Guest: Dr. Manissa Maharawal**

Anti-Eviction Mapping Project, "Narratives of Displacement Oral History Project." Listen to at least one full oral history and several "5-minute clips." Familiarize yourself with the larger project and website. <https://www.antievictionmap.com/oral-history-interviews-1-1/> or <https://soundcloud.com/anti-evictionmappingproject>

Gwaltney, John Langston. *Drylongso: A Self-Portrait of Black America*. New York: New Press, 1993. Pp. xix-9. [See Ethnographic Writing Selections packet.]



Narayan, Kirin. "How Native Is a 'Native' Anthropologist?" *American Anthropologist* 95, no. 3 (1993): 671-686.

Studs Terkel. *The Working Tapes, Radio Diaries*. Listen to at least the Police Officer, Female Ad Exec, and Taxi Driver. <http://www.radiodiaries.org/the-working-tapes/>

Sound Portraits. "Witness to an Execution," 2000. <https://beta.prx.org/stories/2283>

Sound Portraits. "Ghetto Life 101," 1993. <https://beta.prx.org/stories/1510>

*For more*

Other Sound Portraits stories at <https://exchange.prx.org/accounts/2295-soundportraits/pieces> and the successor project, Story Corps at <https://storycorps.org/>

Studs Terkel Radio Archive. <https://studsterkel.wfmt.com>

The Archive is sort of overwhelming and some of the audio is not available in places. One place to start is here, with the Division Street Recordings:

<https://studsterkel.wfmt.com/programs/excerpts-division-street-recordings-oral-histories-regarding-race-religion-and-humanity>

or for an interview with James Baldwin, including about his book (recently made into a film), *Nobody Knows My Name*,

<https://studsterkel.wfmt.com/search?query=%22nobody+knows+my+name%22>

## **2/12: WRITING AND EDITING**

*Due by email to vine@american.edu: Revised proposal*

Vine, David. Selections from unpublished manuscript *If You Build Them, Wars Will Come: Military Bases, Permanent War, and American Empire from Columbus to Today*.

Selections from Lamott, Anne. *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*. New York: Anchor, 1995.

Zinsser, William. "Simplicity" and "Clutter." In *On Writing Well, 30th Anniversary Edition: The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction*, 6-16. New York: Harper Paperbacks, 2006.

Orwell, George. "Politics and the English Language," 1946.

<https://faculty.washington.edu/rsoder/EDLPS579/HonorsOrwellPoliticsEnglishLanguage.pdf>

Claus, Annie. "How a Professional Writer Improved My Academic Writing." *Savage Minds* blog, February 16, 2015. <https://savageminds.org/tag/savage-minds-writing-group/>

**2/19: PICK-EM ETHNOGRAPHY WEEK**

*Due: 8-minute presentation in class*

**2/26: NO CLASS: DEDICATE WEEK TO ADVANCING ETHNOGRAPHIC PROJECTS**

**3/5: READ ONE: *EVICTED OR THE LAND OF OPEN GRAVES***

*3/6: What's the Feminist Frequency? Anita Sarkeesian Event, 6pm, MGC 3-5*

**3/12: SPRING BREAK**

**3/19: PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION AND DESCRIPTION**

*Due: 2-Page Paper*

**3/26: *THE SPIRIT CATCHES YOU AND YOU FALL DOWN***

**4/2: WRITING ABOUT PEOPLE**

*Due: 2-Page Paper*

**4/9: OTHER MEDIA: FILM/VIDEO, VR, TV, AUDIO, GRAPHIC NOVELS, ART...**

Committee for the Republic Event: Costs of War Project with Dr. Catherine Lutz (and me), 6:30 pm, Metropolitan Club, 1700 H Street NW, Grill Room on 1st Floor. Please arrive by 5:30 pm, if you can make it at that time for a discussion of the below. Carefully note the following (which is a reminder that this will also be an ethnographic experience): "Business attire for men and cocktail attire for ladies is required for entry to Metropolitan Club." Rough translation: male presenting humans need a "sport" or suit jacket and pants that are not jeans; female presenting people should wear a dress, skirt and blouse or similar top, pant suit, or something of that ilk.

Review the Costs of War website: [www.costsofwar.org](http://www.costsofwar.org)

*Other non-written media can be substituted for or added to the following based on requests.*

Black, Stephanie. *Life and Debt*. Directed by Stephanie Black. New York: Tuff Gong, 2003.  
<https://catalog.wrlc.org/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?BBID=14015747>

OR

Oppenheimer, Joshua. *The Act of Killing*. Directed by Joshua Oppenheimer. Cinedigm Entertainment Corporation, 2014. AU Library on reserve at Media Services: [DVD 12262](#).

AND

*Serial*. Podcast, Season 3, Episode 1. <https://serialpodcast.org/>

OR

*S-Town*. Podcast, Chapters 1-2. <https://stownpodcast.org/>

#### **4/16: DIALOGUE AND QUOTING**

*Due: 2-Page Paper*

#### **4/23: STRUCTURAL FORCES AND HISTORY**

*Due: 2-Page Paper*

#### **4/30: FINAL PAPER WORKSHOP**

*Due: Draft final paper*

Zinsser, William. "The Lead and the Ending." In *On Writing Well, 30th Anniversary Edition: The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction*. New York: Harper Paperbacks, 2006. Pp. 54-66.

#### **5/7: FINAL EXAM PERIOD SEMINAR MEETING**

*Final Paper Due by email to [vine@american.edu](mailto:vine@american.edu) before 5/8, 11:59 p.m.*

#### **GENERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR ACADEMIC READING**

In my opinion, detailed note taking and underlining or highlighting are essential to reading academic texts. Another useful way to ensure that you read carefully and are well prepared for class (and for academia generally) is to answer the following questions for each assigned text. I strongly suggest writing out the answers and any other thoughts inspired by a reading. *And keep your notes!* They will be incredibly helpful for future papers, other classes, comprehensive exams, dissertations and theses, and teaching (I still use my notes from college).

#### **Suggested Questions to Ask of Each Reading**

1) **Thesis and Findings?** What is(are) the main argument(s) or thesis(es) of the work? What are the other primary conclusions and findings of the work? What was the author's goal or aim in writing?

2) **Methods and Evidence?** What evidence does the author provide to support the main argument? What research methods did the author employ to collect evidence? What key authors or theories does the author build upon, advance, and/or critique?

3) **Significance?** What is the significance of the text—both for academic thought and the larger world? How might it help us understand related issues and phenomena?

4) **Your Analysis?** Are you convinced by the author's argument? Why or why not? How is the text helpful? What, if anything, is missing from the analysis, discussion, or the presentation of data? How is the text weak or problematic? How could it be strengthened or improved (perhaps linked to the work of others)? Don't just critique! Think critically about how an analysis can be usefully improved and built upon.

5) **Questions and Thoughts?** What questions does the reading raise for you? What other thoughts, ideas, or inspiration? What parallels do you draw with other ideas or writing? Where does your mind go? Write down any notes, thoughts, and even glimmers of ideas, no matter where they might take you. They will likely be helpful later.

Many also find that maintaining an organized bibliography using Endnote, Zotero, or another computer software program greatly assists future research and writing.

## ON WRITING

### Requirements

All written assignments must be turned in *on paper* (i.e., not electronically) no later than the start of class on the day it is due, unless indicated otherwise. If there is a legitimate reason why you must turn something in late, you should contact me at least 24 hours before the due date to explain the problem and make other arrangements (just as you would for a job). I cannot promise detailed comments or editing for any work turned in late. If you have any problems printing, Jeanie Wogaman can assist you with printing on the department printer/copier.

*Writing requirements (except for Critical Reactions):*

- Begin with your name, date completed, and the course name;
- Double space;
- 12-pt. font, 1-inch margins on all sides;
- Page number and your name on each page;
- For guidance on generally accepted rules of writing, style, and proper academic citation, see the following style guides. The American Anthropological Association and I generally prefer Chicago's style (below), but you may use any style as long as you follow it *consistently* and *rigorously*.

*Chicago Manual of Style* (available online through the library):

<http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org.prox.yau.wrlc.org/home.html>

*MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*

*Little, Brown Handbook*

### **Help with Writing: AU Writing Center**

Bender Library 1st Floor; 202-885-2991 for appointments; <http://www.american.edu/cas/writing>  
The Writing Center offers free, individual coaching sessions to all AU students. In your 45-minute session, a student writing consultant can help you address your assignments, understand the conventions of academic writing, and learn how to revise and edit your own work.

### **LEARNING & LIFE RESOURCES**

If you encounter any difficulty this semester for any reason that affects your participation in the course, please don't hesitate to speak with me. In addition to the department's assistance, the university offers a variety of learning and life resources. See:

<https://my.american.edu/content.cfm?load=includes/help.cfm> or the following:

**Academic Support and Access Center:** MGC 243; 202-885-3360;

<https://www.american.edu/ocl/asac> Supports the academic development and educational goals of all AU students while also providing support to students with disabilities. We offer workshops on topics of interest to all students such as time management, note taking, critical thinking, memory skills, and test taking. Additional support includes free private and group tutoring in many subjects, supplemental instruction, The Math Lab and The Writing Lab.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** MGC 243; 202-885-3360;

[asac@american.edu](mailto:asac@american.edu) AU is committed to making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. The Academic Support and Access Center assists students with disabilities and promotes full participation in academic programs and other campus activities.

Students are not required to notify the university or any of its offices or personnel of a disability either prior to or subsequent to admission; however, if a student plans to request accommodations, documentation of the disability must be provided. As accommodations are not retroactive, timely notification at the beginning of the semester, if possible, is strongly recommended. To register with a disability or for questions about disability accommodations, contact the Academic Support and Access Center at 202-885-3360, [asac@american.edu](mailto:asac@american.edu), or drop by MGC 243. For more information, visit AU's [Services for Students with Disabilities web page](#).

**AU Help Desk** (IT issues other than Blackboard—see below): 202-885-2550;

[helpdesk@american.edu](mailto:helpdesk@american.edu), or [AskAmericanUHelp](#) Answers to your technology questions are just an e-mail, instant message, or phone call away. Contact the IT Help Desk at to reach one of our professional staff who can answer your questions and provide general troubleshooting assistance. Students can also log on to the [Need Help Now?](#) portal for support.

**Blackboard:** Participants will use their AU credentials to log in at <https://blackboard.american.edu>. AU's Blackboard Support team recommends using Chrome or Firefox to optimize your experience and avoid incompatibility issues that can occur when accessing Blackboard with other browsers. DO NOT USE INTERNET EXPLORER.

**Blackboard Support:** 202-885-3904 or [blackboard@american.edu](mailto:blackboard@american.edu) or for 24/7 support

Students should immediately report any problems to their course instructor and also contact the Blackboard Support Center. Students can also log on to [Blackboard Help](#) for support.

**Center for Diversity & Inclusion:** MGC 201; 202-885-3651; <http://www.american.edu/ocl/cdi/>  
Dedicated to enhancing LGBTQ, Multicultural, First Generation, and Women's experiences on campus and to advance AU's commitment to respecting & valuing diversity by serving as a resource and liaison to students, staff, and faculty on issues of equity through education, outreach, and advocacy.

**Counseling Center:** MGC 214; 202-885-3500; [www.american.edu/ocl/counseling](http://www.american.edu/ocl/counseling)  
Here to help students make the most of their university experience, both personally and academically. We offer individual and group counseling, urgent care, self-help resources, referrals to private care, as well as programming to help you gain the skills and insight needed to overcome adversity and thrive while you are in college. Contact the Counseling Center to make an appointment in person or by telephone, or visit the Counseling Center page on the AU website for additional information.

**Dean of Students Office:** Butler Pavilion 408; 202-885-3300; <http://www.american.edu/ocl/dos/>  
Offers one-on-one meetings to discuss academic, adjustment, and personal issues that may be interfering with a student's ability to succeed academically. The office also verifies documentation for students who have medical or mental health issues that cause them to be absent from class.

**Disability Support Services:** See "Accommodations" above.

**International Student & Scholar Services:** Butler Pavilion Room 410; 202-885-3340/3350; [www.american.edu/ocl/iss/](http://www.american.edu/ocl/iss/)  
Resources to support academic success and participation in campus life including academic counseling, support for second language learners, response to questions about visas, immigration status and employment and intercultural programs, clubs and other campus resources.

**New Student Programs:** 202-885-3303/74, Butler 407; [www.american.edu/ocl/orientation](http://www.american.edu/ocl/orientation).

**OASIS:** The Office of Advocacy Services for Interpersonal and Sexual Violence: 202-885-7070, provides free and confidential advocacy services for anyone in the campus community who experiences sexual assault, dating or domestic violence or stalking.

**Sexual Violence Advocacy Services:** See "OASIS" above.

**Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution Services:** Butler 408; 202-885-3328; <https://www.american.edu/ocl/scdrs/>

**Student Health Center:** 202-885-3380, McCabe 1<sup>st</sup> Floor; [www.american.edu/healthcenter](http://www.american.edu/healthcenter).

**Writing Center/Support:** See "On Writing" section above for more information.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT**

*American University expressly prohibits any form of discriminatory harassment including sexual harassment, dating and domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. The university is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution that operated in compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy), age, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, personal appearance, gender identity and expression, family responsibilities, political affiliation, source of income, veteran status, an individual's genetic information or any other bases under federal or local laws in its programs and activities.*

If you experience any of the above, you have the option of filing a report with the AU Department of Public Safety 202-885-2527 or the Office of the Dean of Students 202-885-3300 dos@american.edu. Please keep in mind that all faculty and staff—with exception of counselors in the Counseling Center, victim advocates in the Wellness Center, medical providers in the Student Health Center, and ordained clergy in the Kay Spiritual Life Center—who are aware of or witness this conduct are required to report this information to the university, regardless of the location of the incident.

## **INFORMATION AU ASKS FACULTY TO INCLUDE**

### **Religious Observances**

Students will be provided the opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance, provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes. Please send this notification through email to the professor. For additional information, see American University's [religious observances policy](#).

### **Sharing of Course Content**

Students are not permitted to make visual or audio recordings, including live streaming, of classroom lectures or any class-related content, using any type of recording devices (e.g., smart phone, computer, digital recorder, etc.) unless prior permission from the instructor is obtained, and there are no objections from any of the students in the class. If permission is granted, personal use and sharing of recordings and any electronic copies of course materials (e.g., PowerPoints, formulas, lecture notes, and any classroom discussions—online or otherwise) is limited to the personal use of students registered in the course and for educational purposes only, even after the end of the course. Exceptions will be made for students who present a signed Letter of Accommodation from the Academic Support and Access Center. Further details are available from the [ASAC website](#).

To supplement the classroom experience, lectures may be audio or video recorded by faculty and made available to students registered for this class. Faculty may record classroom lectures or discussions for pedagogical use, future student reference, or to meet the accommodation needs of students with a documented disability. These recordings are limited to personal use and may not be distributed (fileshare), sold, or posted on social media outlets without the written permission of faculty.

Unauthorized downloading, file sharing, distribution of any part of a recorded lecture or course materials, or using information for purposes other than the student's own learning may be deemed a violation of American University's Student Conduct Code and subject to disciplinary action (see Student Conduct Code VI. Prohibited Conduct).

### **Emergency Preparedness**

In the event of a declared pandemic (influenza or other communicable disease), American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or use of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any absence due to illness. Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of a declared pandemic or other emergency, students should refer to the AU Web site ([american.edu/emergency](http://american.edu/emergency)) and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean's office for course and school/college-specific information.

### **EVALUATION (AND, UNFORTUNATELY, GRADING)**

I expect your full participation in all aspects of class sessions and the completion of all assignments. My evaluation and (what I hope you will find to be) constructive feedback on your work will primarily come in the form of written comments returned to you on your assignments. Although I wish all our classes could be pass/fail, AU requires me to assign final grades. Improvement over the course of the semester and effort will also be factored into my evaluation. I will also consider a formal self-assessment that you will complete to review your participation in the seminar and suggest your own grade. I will ultimately assign grades according to the following point system and AU's guidelines:

Participation in the classroom and all other aspects of the seminar = 30 points

Project Proposal = 10 points

Book presentation = 10 points

2-page papers (4) = 5 points each

Final Paper = 30 points

Improvement and effort = 5 points

A: Superior, original, thoughtful work in completion of all course requirements (90-100 points);

B: Very good work in completion of course requirements (80-89 points);

C: Satisfactory work in completion of course requirements (70-79 points);

D and F: N/A or obvious.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See "Guideline of a General Education Syllabus," online document, available at <http://www.american.edu/academics/gened/faculty.htm>.



## DAVID'S EDITING ABBREVIATION AND SYMBOL GUIDE

¶ = new paragraph  
# = insert space between lines or characters  
? = unclear, clarify  
> = more  
< = less  
= [under a letter] = change to opposite case  
adj = adjective  
adv = adverb  
anth or anthro = anthropology; anthros = anthropologists  
assump(s) = assumption(s) (are you making them?)  
awk = awkward (construction, phrasing, wording, etc.)  
bc = because  
b/n = between  
cf. = compare [Latin]  
e.g. = for example [Latin; sometimes I use as "example"]  
ethnog = ethnography/ethnographic  
gr = grammar error  
graf or ¶ = paragraph  
HDYK? = How do you know? (What evidence?)  
i.e. = that is [Latin]  
intro = introduce/introduction  
ital = italicize  
judg(s) = (Are you making) judgment(s)?  
l.c. = lower case  
n. = noun  
passive = ineffective passive voice verb form (use active voice)  
p/o = participant observation  
p. = page; pp. = pages  
Q = question (also Q-ing = questioning; Q-ed = questioned)  
qte = quote or quotation (also qting = quoting; qted = quoted)  
r.o. = run-on sentence  
SDT = "show don't tell"  
sent = sentence  
signif = significance or significant  
sp = spelling error  
tense = error in verb tense  
trans = better transition needed between paragraphs or sections  
u.c. = upper case  
v. = very  
vb = verb  
w/ = with  
w/o = without  
wc = word choice? (i.e., is this the best word? Find another?)  
WDYT? = What do you think?