ANTH 3215B: Critical Ethnography and Agency in Postcolonial Settings

Instructor	Chikezirim (Chike) Nwoke
Term	Winter 2025
Course Delivery	In-person
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the theory, practice, and ethics of critical ethnography within postcolonial settings, highlighting the ethnographic research process as a form of witnessing, knowledge co-production and community engagement. Students will explore how ethnographic research can either mask or unveil the complexities of power dynamics and identity formation – especially in relation to past and ongoing forms of colonialism. The course adopts a decolonial approach that involves a combination of theoretical readings and discussions, guest lectures, and practical exercises centered on various contexts including the geographical regions of Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Oceania. By the end of the course, students will be prepared to conduct nuanced, ethically grounded, transformative ethnographic research that highlights the voices and experiences of marginalized groups.

EVALUATION

Assignments	**weight**
Reading Reflection	25 %
Discussion Forum	10%
Attendance and class participation	10%
Final Research paper	30%
Final Presentation	25%

SELECTED READINGS

Comaroff, Jean and John Comaroff. 2003. “Ethnography on an Awkward Scale: Postcolonial Anthropology and the Violence of Abstraction.” Ethnography 4(2): 147–179.

Grosfoguel, Ramon. (2011). Decolonizing post-colonial studies and paradigms of political-economy: Transmodernity, decolonial thinking, and global coloniality. *Transmodernity: journal of peripheral cultural production of the luso-hispanic world*, *1*(1).

Mbembe, Achille, Mongin, O., Lempereur, N., Schlegel, J. L., & Fletcher, J. (2006). What is postcolonial thinking?. *Esprit*, (12), 117-133.

Simpson, Audra (2007). On ethnographic refusal: indigeneity, 'voice' and colonial citizenship. Junctures: the journal for thematic dialogue, (9).

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. 2012. "Introduction." In Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples. London and New York: Zed. Watt, A.C. (2011) "The Relevance and Complexity of Civilizing Missions c. 1800-2010", in Mann, M. & Watt, A.C. (Eds.) *Civilizing Mission in Colonial and Postcolonial South Asia: from Improvement to Development*. pp.1- 34

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. 2003. "Anthropology and the Savage Slot: The Poetics and Politics of Otherness." In Global Transformations: Anthropology and the Modern World. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Pp. 7-28