



Reading and Writing Culture: A Course for Study Abroad Returnees

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Intl St 389-7, Section 20
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T/Th 11-12:20
Davis Seminar Room (Kresge 2-315)

I. Course Description

This course is designed for students who have studied abroad for Northwestern credit and wish to continue learning about their host country and reflecting on their experience. Students will share their insights and experiences with each other through class discussion as well as through various personal and analytical writing assignments. They will also read and discuss articles related to the theory and practice of cultural analysis, especially of foreign cultures. Course readings will come primarily from anthropology and will revolve loosely around the theme of “cross-cultural encounters.”

For the final project, students will write a research proposal that articulates a question for further investigation. In most cases, the topic will address an issue related to the host country, such as gender or race relations, diversity, media portrayals of the U.S., environmental activism, European integration, etc. Students may elect to explore an issue in the U.S. that pertains to the host country culture (for example, a student who studied in Bolivia may research English learning among Bolivian immigrants in Chicago). In developing the final research proposal, students will work closely with the instructor, their classmates, faculty from the Writing Program, and staff from the Office of Fellowships and the Northwestern library. They will also seek advice from faculty members in the academic department most related to their proposal.

Through this final project, students will learn to identify and formulate a research question—a skill that is crucial to all fields. Students are encouraged to use their final research proposal as the basis for further academic work, in the form of a senior thesis, independent study, fellowship, or postgraduate studies. But for some students, the proposal will be an end in itself—and they will have learned more about their study abroad country, and their own experience there, in the process of developing the proposal.

II. Course Goals

Through reading, writing, discussion, and library workshops, this course aims to help students do the following:

- 1) reflect personally and intellectually on their study abroad experience
- 2) from that experience, identify and develop a particular issue of interest for further research
- 3) gain a broader understanding of cultural and social issues in different regions of the world and some of the ways in which researchers study these issues
- 4) learn the process of identifying and formulating a research question.

III. Course Policies

Attendance and Participation

As an upper-level seminar, this class will revolve around discussion, including small group workshops. Your attendance and active participation is crucial. Please contact me in advance if you will not be able to attend class.

Assignments

The course is divided into three units: Unit 1: Reflecting on Study Abroad, Unit 2: Studying Culture, and Unit 3: Writing Culture—Developing a Research Proposal. In Units 1, you will submit two written Reflections each of 3-5 pages (see Assignment at end of syllabus). In Unit 2, you will submit two written Reading Conversations each

of 3-5 pages (see Assignment at end of syllabus). In Unit 2, you also will complete two short assignments related to developing a research proposal, to help you start identifying possible topics. In Unit 3, you will complete a more extended series of assignments aimed at helping you develop a research proposal, including peer review sheets to be used in small group workshops. The capstone assignment will be the Final Portfolio, which will include a project abstract, a research proposal of five to seven pages, an annotated bibliography, and a short reflection.

Assignments will be submitted either on Blackboard or in class. Please contact me in advance if you expect to have difficulties turning in an assignment on time.

Presentations

Each student will present one time, either during Unit 1 or Unit 2. Students who present during Unit 1 will read their Reflection for that day to the class and then facilitate class discussion around one question or idea related to the readings and the Reflection. Students who present during Unit 2 will prepare a presentation with their co-presenter, based on the readings and their Reading Conversations. They will share with the class the key terms and main points that they identified in the readings, and the significance of the readings to their experience/research interests/study abroad countries. They will then facilitate class discussion around a few main questions or ideas from the readings/their presentations.

I'll facilitate discussion with you!

Posting Writing Assignments to Blackboard for Units 1 and 2

It is informative and fun to read each other's essays, so I would like you to post your writing assignments for Units 1 and 2 to Blackboard and use the discussion threads to share thoughts outside of class if you feel the desire to do so. To post a document, follow these instructions:

Go to our Blackboard site.

Click on Communication.

Click on Discussion Boards.

Click on Unit 1 or Unit 2.

To **post** an essay, click on Add New Thread. Create a title that indicates your country and topic, and write a quick message (otherwise it won't let you post). Attach your document using the Browse button and then click Submit.

To **read** a posting, click on that posting. Download the attachment to read the essay. To reply to it, click on Reply, type your message, and then click on Submit.

Grades

Units 1, 2, and 3: 25% each, calculated as follows:

- Attendance, including outside library sessions and instructor meetings, 5%
- Class Participation, inc. facilitation of class discussion, 5%
- Written Assignments, excluding the Final Portfolio, 15%

Final Portfolio: 25%

UNIT 1: Reflecting on Study Abroad

Date	Topic	Reading (due the date it is listed)	Writing and Outside Assignments (due the dates they are listed)
Tuesday, January 4	Introduction to Course and Unit 1		<p>Bring a photograph and meaningful memento or email from your study abroad experience (related to your host country, not a travel experience). Be prepared to share stories with the class.</p> <p><i>Outside Assignment:</i> Meet with Jennifer for 15 minutes this week or next to talk about your experience abroad and your personal goals for this course. Make an appointment by calling 847-467-6400. For our meeting, please write a few paragraphs about an object that was meaningful to you abroad (same or different from what you brought to the first class).</p>
Thursday, January 6	Unit 1	Start reading <i>Tonderai</i> or <i>Learning to Bow</i>	<p>Reflection: Relate a meaningful moment from the book to a meaningful moment from your experience. Focus on a single passage or section, and reference it at the beginning of the Reflection.</p>
Tuesday, January 11		Complete <i>Tonderai</i> or <i>Learning to Bow</i>	<p>Reflection: Discuss an interaction that you had with a local person OR a meaningful article/book/movie related to your host country and why it is meaningful. Focus on a single passage or section, and reference it at the beginning of the Reflection.</p>
Thursday, January 13		Read <i>The Concept of the Foreign</i> , Preface & Ch. 2 “Belonging, Distance” (Blackboard) & Ch. 6 “Foreign Bodies: Engendering Them and Us” (regular reserve)	<p>Reflection: Discuss a time when you felt “foreign.” Focus on a single passage or section from today’s readings, and reference it at the beginning of the Reflection. You may also include discussion of previous readings, if you like.</p>
Tuesday, January 18		Read <i>Letters of Transit</i> , Foreword (Blackboard) & 2 essays of your choice (regular reserve)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection: Discuss a time/place/experience that made you think of home—explore the connections. Focus on a single passage or section from today’s readings, and reference it at the beginning of the Reflection. You may also include discussion of previous readings, if you like. • Complete Research Proposal Assignment #1: Notes on Initial Research Ideas and post it to your Blackboard Geographical Group, by 11 am WEDNESDAY (tomorrow). Title your document with your last name. <p><i>Outside Assignment:</i> Library Research Workshop on Identifying a Research Topic is this week:</p>

UNIT 2: Studying Culture—Cross-Cultural Encounters (Cultures/People)

Date	Topic	Reading	Writing and Outside Assignments (due the dates they are listed)
Thursday, January 20	Identifying Research Topics and Questions: Discussion & Small Group Workshops (Geographical)	Read <i>The Craft of Research</i> , pp. 37-55 (Blackboard)	<p>Complete a Peer Review Sheet on Research Topics for each member of your Geographical Group. Bring 2 copies of each to class: 1 to submit to the instructor and 1 to give to the writer at the end of class. Also of course bring a copy of your own assignment to class.</p> <p><i>Optional:</i> Meet with Jennifer this week or next to discuss your initial ideas about research topics. Make your appointment early! Call 847-467-6400.</p>
Tuesday, January 25	Global Capital	See Reading Assignments	<p>Reading Notes</p> <p><i>Outside Assignment:</i> Schedule small group library workshops for next week. Identify 2-3 possible days/times and email Scott Garton at s-garton@northwestern.edu.</p> <p><i>Note:</i> Unit 1 grades and comments will be handed out today.</p>
Thursday, January 27	Global Structures	See Reading Assignments	Reading Notes
Tuesday, February 1	Immigration	See Reading Assignments	<p>Reading Notes</p> <p><i>Outside Assignment:</i> Small Group Library Workshops on Formulating a Research Question are this week (Small Groups: Geographical):</p>
Thursday, February 3	Commodity Flows Unit 2 Review	See Reading Assignments	Reading Notes

UNIT 3: Writing Culture—Developing a Research Proposal

Date	Topic	Reading	Writing and Outside Assignments (due the dates they are listed or as otherwise specified)
Tuesday, February 8	Introduction to Unit 3	Read for your proposal	Complete Research Proposal Assignment #2: Moving from a Research Topic to a Research Question and post it to your Blackboard Geographical Group, by 11am WEDNESDAY (tomorrow) . Title your document with your last name. Bring a copy to class on Thursday.
Thursday, February 10	Research Questions: Geographical Group Workshops	Read for your proposal	Complete the assignment, Peer Review for Research Proposal Assignment #2 . <i>Outside Assignment:</i> Meet with Jennifer or Chris the week of 2/15 or 2/22 to discuss your ideas. Make your appointment ahead of time! For Jennifer, call 847-467-6400. For Chris, call 847-491-2617. (Chris is out of town the week of 2/22.) <i>Note:</i> Unit 2 grades and comments will be handed out today.
Tuesday, February 15	Successful Proposals: From Beginning to End	Read Erin Metz's 1 st draft proposal	Complete a Peer Review Sheet for Sample Proposal . Bring 1 copy to class to use in workshoping and then to submit to the instructor.
Thursday, February 17	General Discussion: Annotated Bibliographies/ Literature Reviews/ Research Questions	Read for your proposal	Complete a Draft of your Annotated Bibliography for your proposal. Submit the draft at the end of class.
Tuesday, February 22	Class cancelled to work on proposals	Read for your proposal	Complete Draft #1 of your proposal and post it to your Blackboard Geographical Group, by 11am WEDNESDAY morning , to discuss Thursday.
Thursday, February 24	Workshop 1 st Drafts: Geographical Groups	Read for your proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a Peer Review Sheet for Draft #1 for each member of your Geographical Group. Bring 2 copies to class: 1 to submit to the instructor and 1 to give to the writer at the end of class. • Complete Draft #2 of your proposal and post it to your Blackboard Random Group, by 11am SUNDAY morning, February 27, to discuss Tuesday.

Date	Topic	Reading	Writing and Outside Assignments (due the dates they are listed or as otherwise specified)
Tuesday, March 1	Workshop 2 nd Drafts: Random Groups	Read for your proposal	Complete a Peer Review Sheet for Draft #2 for each member of your Random Group. Bring 2 copies to class: 1 to submit to the instructor and 1 to give to the writer at the end of class.
Thursday, March 3	Wrap-up	Read for your proposal	Think about the relationship between your study abroad experience and your research question (one possible theme for your final reflection). Be prepared to share some thoughts.
March 7-11	READING WEEK		<i>Optional:</i> Meet with Jennifer to discuss your final proposal/portfolio. Make your appointment ahead of time by calling 847-467-6400.
Tuesday, March 15, 12 noon	FINAL PORTFOLIO DUE (You may also submit this earlier, during Reading Week)		Submit by email to j-hirsch@northwestern.edu , as ONE WORD document, titled by your last name.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Unit 1 Reflections

You must do 2 of the 4 Reflections assignments explained in the Unit 1 Assignments column. Each Reflection should be 3-5 double-spaced pages. Turn them in at the beginning of class. Be prepared to present and discuss your Reflections with the class. Within 24 hours after class, post your Reflection to Blackboard (see instructions at beginning of syllabus). For weeks that you do not write a Reflection, you should still think about the assignment in relation to the readings and be prepared to share your thoughts in class.

Unit 2 Reading Conversations: Synthesizing the Arguments

Choose two weeks to write Reading Conversations of 3-5 double-spaced pages. They are due at the beginning of class. At least one Conversation must include a reading that you find on your own (you may include more if you like). This reading should be about the topic for the day as it relates to your research interests and/or study abroad country.

As you read each article, take your own notes on the following questions (not to be turned in):

- 1) What is this article about, specifically?
- 2) What methods does the author employ in her research?
- 3) What are the key terms in this article? List 2-3.
- 4) What is the author's argument, specifically? Include: what is she arguing *against* or, what gap is she addressing?
- 5) What broader debates does her argument contribute to?

Then, in your Reading Conversation, discuss all the articles in relation to each other, in terms of the day's topic. Pick out the main, overarching arguments and discuss how they fit together. Make sure to give some specific examples to support your points (include page numbers).

When applicable, at the top of the page, include full citations of the articles that you read in addition to the core readings (articles that you chose from a list on the syllabus, or articles that you found related to your research/country), and write a one-paragraph summary of these articles (your notes on number 1 above) and their arguments (your notes on number 4 above).

To conclude your Conversation, discuss the significance of this week's topic to *you* (1-2 points). You may focus on the topic in general or on one particular article. Relate it to your study abroad experience, and/or your research interests, and/or an issue related to your study abroad country. If you do not feel that you know anything about this week's topic as it relates to your host country, you may need to do a little bit of research (e.g., read some newspaper articles online from a newspaper from your country, find an article that explores this topic in your host country, etc.).

The two steps involved in this assignment will help you develop the reading and analysis skills that you will use in writing a literature review. First, you read *into* specific articles; then, you read *out* of them into a broader conversation, that is based on multiple articles/resources but shaped by you.

Within 24 hours after class, post your Conversation to Blackboard. For weeks that you do not write Conversations, you should still think about the assignment questions and be prepared to share your thoughts in class.

Research Proposal Assignments: Unit 2 and 3

These assignments will be handed out separately later in the quarter.

READING ASSIGNMENTS FOR UNIT 2: STUDYING CULTURE

Global Capital

Read:

- *The Anthropology of Globalization*, ed. by Jonathan Xavier Inda and Renato Rosaldo: Introduction (Blackboard) plus Ch. 4 “Designing Women: Corporate Discipline and Barbados’s Off-shore Pink-collar Sector,” by Carla Freeman (Blackboard from a different source)
- “Cosmopolitans in the Bush and at the Millennium,” by Charles Piot (Blackboard)
- *Optional*: find another article on your own—the effect of global capital on countries/communities

Optional Readings—Psychological Anthropology:

- “Culture, Gender, and Work in Japan: A Case Study of a Woman in Management,” by Jennifer Hirsch (focus on single-person identity) (Blackboard)
- “‘Shopping’ for the Future: Culture Change, Border Crossings, and Identity Options of Teenagers from the C.I.S.,” by Fran Markowitz (study abroad) (Blackboard)

Global Structures

Read:

- *An Anthropology of the European Union: Building, Imagining and Experiencing the New Europe*, ed. by Irène Bellier and Thomas M. Wilson: Introduction (Blackboard)
- One article from this book from Part I, which focuses on institutions (book is on regular reserve)
- One article from this book from Part II, which focuses on the effects of institutions on communities OR one of the following articles (or find your own—global structures, like the EU, NAFTA, Free Trade Agreement of the Americas, IMF, World Bank, etc.):
 - “Mixe Responses to Neo-Liberalism: Questioning Sustainable Development as a Remedy to Free Trade and Global Capitalism in Oaxaca, Mexico,” by Catherine Newling (Blackboard)
 - “Interpreting Social Movements: Bolivian Resistance to Economic Conditions Imposed by the International Monetary Fund,” by June Nash (Blackboard)

Immigration

Read:

- *The Anthropology of Globalization*, Ch. 7, “Mexican Migration and the Social Space of Postmodernism,” by Roger Rouse (Blackboard from a different source)
- “Cultural Citizenship as Subject-Making: Immigrants Negotiate Racial and Cultural Boundaries in the United States,” by Aihwa Ong (Blackboard)
- One article from the following list (or find your own—immigration):
 - *Structuring Diversity: Ethnographic Perspectives on the New Immigration*, any chapter (see attached summary and Table of Contents) (book is on regular reserve)
 - “Social Boundaries Within and Between Ethnic Groups: Armenians in London,” by V. Talai (Blackboard)
 - “Chinese and European American Cultural Models of the Self Reflected in Mothers’ Childrearing Beliefs,” by Ruth K. Chao (psychological) (Blackboard)
 - “Childhood and Community: On the Experience of Young Japanese Americans in Chicago,” by Mark J. Gehrie (psychological) (Blackboard)
 - “Polka Bands and Choral Groups: The Musical Self-Representation of Polish-Americans in Detroit,” by Paula Savaglio (Blackboard)
 - “Language Use and Media Orientations in Bilingual Mexican-Origin Households in Southern California,” by Adalberto Aguirre, Jr. (Blackboard)
 - “Issues in Access to Healthcare: The Undocumented Mexican Resident in Redmond, California,” by Erin Moore (Blackboard)
 - “Putting Power in the Anthropology of Bureaucracy: The Immigration and Naturalization Service at the Mexico-United States Border,” by Josiah McC. Heyman (Blackboard)

Commodity Flows

Read:

- *The Anthropology of Globalization*, Ch. 12, “The Global Traffic in Human Organs,” by Nancy Scheper-Hughes (Blackboard from a different source)
- From *Re-Made in Japan: Everyday Life and Consumer Taste in a Changing Society*, ed. by Joseph Tobin, choose one of the following chapters (book is on regular reserve) (or find your own article—commodities):
 - Ch. 6, “Images of the West: Home Style in Japanese Magazines,” by Nancy Rosenberger
 - Ch. 9, “A Japanese-French Restaurant in Hawaii,” by Jeffrey Tobin
 - Ch. 10, “The Aesthetics and Politics of Japanese Identity in the Fashion Industry,” by Dorinne Kondo
 - Ch. 12, “‘Bwana Mickey’: Constructing Cultural Consumption at Tokyo Disneyland,” by Mary Yoko Brannen
 - Ch. 13, “Tango in Japan and the World Economy of Passion,” by Marta E. Savigliano
- From *Media Worlds: Anthropology on New Terrain*, ed. by Faye Ginsburg, Lila Abu-Lughod, and Brian Larkin, choose one of the following chapters (book is on regular reserve) (or find your own article—media crossing borders):
 - Ch. 1, “Screen Memories: Resignifying the Traditional in Indigenous Media” (Canadian Inuit and Australian Aborigines)
 - Ch. 6, “Epic Contests: Television and Religious Identity in India”
 - Ch. 8, “Television, Time, and the National Imaginary in Belize” (U.S. television influence in Belize)
 - Ch. 10, “A Marshall Plan of the Mind: The Political Economy of a Kazakh Soap Opera” (British media influence in Kazakhstan)
- NOTE: You may find your own article in place of **either** a chapter in *Re-Made in Japan* **or** a chapter in *Media Worlds*, but not both.

Optional Readings:

- “From Kashrut to Cucina Ebraica: The Recasting of Italian Jewish Foodways,” by Steve Siporin (Blackboard)
- “Going to McDonald’s in Leiden: Reflections on the Concepts of Self and Society in the Netherlands,” by Peter H. Stephenson (Blackboard)
- “Local Interpretations of Global Music,” by Andy Bennett (hip hop in England) (Blackboard)

BOOKS READ IN OTHER UNITS OF THE COURSE

Tonderai: Studying Abroad in Zimbabwe, by Perrin Elkin

Learning to Bow: An American Teacher in a Japanese School, by Bruce S. Feiler

The Craft of Research, by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams

Letters of Transit: Reflections on Exile, Identity, Language, and Loss, ed. by André Aciman

The Concept of the Foreign: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue, ed. by Rebecca Saunders

Structuring Diversity: Ethnographic Perspectives on the New Immigration
Edited by Louise Lamphere

Summary

The articles in this book explore relationships between new immigrants from multiple countries and established residents in the 1990s as they are structured within particular urban arenas: work sites, housing complexes, schools, and local government. The analyses connect the arena to the larger community, and the larger community to macro-economic and political processes. The central argument is as follows:

“ . . . newcomers and established residents live in ‘divided social worlds’ characterized by separation and social distance. [. . .] We argue what is perhaps a controversial thesis: separation and division are not merely a matter of choice, language barriers, or cultural differences too difficult to bridge. They are also patterns supported and even created by the structure of the institutions in which newcomers interact with established residents. These institutions—corporations, school systems, city governments, and housing corporations—mediate and shape interrelations, often making it difficult for bridges to be built between new immigrants and others. Where interaction is fluid and where boundaries are transcended, the institutions themselves are being structured or even transformed to make participation and integration more possible. Our analysis teases out the importance of class and power as they operate in these local ‘microlevel’ settings, often pushing immigrants aside or giving them little voice in their everyday lives. It focuses our attention on the possibility and the necessity of changing these institutions if newcomers are to become more fully integrated into American life.” (Preface, p.viii)

Table of Contents

1. The Price of a Good Steak: Beef Packing and Its Consequences for Garden City, Kansas
By Donald D. Stull, Michael J. Broadway, and Ken C. Erickson (anthropology and geography)
2. On Machines and Bureaucracy: Controlling Ethnic Interaction In Miami's Apparel and Construction Industries
By Guillermo J. Grenier, Alex Stepick, Debbie Draznin, Aline LaBorwit, and Steve Morris (sociology/anthropology)
3. RECOMMENDED: Life In Big Red: Struggles and Accommodations in a Chicago Polyethnic Tenement
By Dwight Conquergood (ex-NU professor in communication studies/performance studies)
4. Recent Economic Restructuring and Evolving Intergroup Relations in Houston
By Jacqueline Maria Hagan and Nestor P. Rodriguez (sociology)
5. Transcending Boundaries and Closing Ranks: How Schools Shape Interrelations
By Judith G. Goode, Jo Anne Schneider, and Suzanne Blanc (anthropology and linguistics)
6. The Politics of Diversity in Monterey Park, California
By John Horton (sociology)