

**Anthropology:  
A Fieldwork Science/Documentary Art.  
*Vision, Memory and the Senses.***



**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Anthropology can be defined as a '*fieldwork science/documentary art*' insofar as it carries out practical modes of research and participant observation in the field to generate new knowledge about human beings, and then uses written texts, images, objects and recordings to communicate its theories and findings. As such the aim of the proposed teaching programme "*Anthropology: A Fieldwork Science/Documentary Art: Vision, Memory and the Senses*" is to explore a range of epistemological and practical ways of understanding and representing human life including classic and experimental approaches; film and sensory ethnography, mobile and multi-media methods; photo essays, performance and ethnofiction. The teaching programme will include lectures, workshops, masterclasses and a public lecture, through which we will explore what it means to "learn to see" and how the world is formed and shaped through the senses.

*"Anthropology: A Fieldwork Science/Documentary Art: Vision, Memory and the Senses"* opens by exploring the evolution of our human and non-human ancestors so as to understand the human body and foundations of visual and sensory perception, and memory. This allows us to grasp the possibilities and limits of perception, including how humans see and understand the world in ways that are both similar and different to other animals. However, vision, memory and the senses cannot simply be reduced to the mechanics of cognition, perception or biology given they are simultaneously social, political and historical phenomena that change over time

in relation to different social, cultural and material environments. If we are to better understand the diverse ways of being encountered around the world then we must consider the relationship between the human eye, brain and body in relation to things such as language, art and the imagination; media, advertising and technology; race, gender and power; everyday life and performance; architecture and cities; war, illness; and death.

Approaching vision, memory and the senses from an anthropological perspective allows us to understand their vital role in people's everyday lives. The course introduces a range of scientific, artistic and practical perspectives. By considering how relations between persons are framed by discourses of power, gender and ethnicity—and how these are embedded within different ways of looking, sensing and understanding—the lectures and workshops will take us beyond the mechanics of perception to form a better understanding of social life.

The teaching programme combines theoretical and practice based classes and draws on courses that have been awarded teaching prizes and commendations at the University of Manchester. The programme is conceived of as a journey through time and place. It is a journey that draws on ethnographic examples from around the world including Africa, India, Japan, Melanesia and America that takes us from the art and early cave paintings of early humanity to the abstractions of Picasso and mass reproductions of Warhol; from aesthetics to anaesthetics; from regimes to resistance; from modernity to postmodernity to the contemporary world, from the power of 'the gaze' to that of 'glance'; from the real to the hyper-real and the realms of imagination, hallucination and trance.

**TEACHING HOURS:** 06/04/2021 – 27/05/2021 (60h)

Thursdays 12:30-14:00 & 14:15-15:45 (CET)

Fridays 12:30-14:00 & 14:15-15:45 (CET)

**5 ECTS**

**TEACHING METHODS:** Lectures, seminars, practical workshops, guided learning, audiovisual materials.

**Andrew Irving** is Professor of Anthropology at the Granada Centre for Visual Anthropology and Department of Anthropology at the University of Manchester. His research areas include sensory perception, time, illness, death, urban anthropology and experimental methods, film and multi-media.

Recent books include *"The Art of Life and Death: Radical Aesthetics and Ethnographic Practice"* (2017: University of Chicago Press); *Anthropology and Futures: Researching Emerging and Uncertain Worlds* (2017 with Sarah Pink, Juan Salazar and Johannes Sjöberg, Bloomsbury). *Beyond Text? Critical Practices and Sensory Anthropology*, (2016 with Rupert Cox and Christopher Wright, Manchester University Press); *Whose Cosmopolitanism? Critical Cosmopolitanisms, Rationalities and Discontents*, (2014 with Nina Glick-Schiller, Berghahn Press).

Recent film, television and multi-media works include: *See, Make, Sign* (Exhibition; Children's Museum of the Arts, New York, 2020); *Deaf Lifeworlds: Expressions of Resilience* (Exhibition; KwaZulu Natal Gallery, Durban, 2019); *Wandering Scholars: Or How to Get in Touch with Strangers* (Live film and sound installation: Österreichisches Museum für Volkskunde, Vienna, 2016). *The Man Who Almost Killed Himself* (BBC Arts, Odeon Cinemas, Edinburgh Festival 2015). And the *New York Stories Project* (2013), which is currently hosted on more than thirty websites including Scientific American, National Public Radio and the Wenner Gren. Current research project: <http://deafcamsa.net/>