

## **Public Engagement: Using Anthropological Knowledge**

ANTHRO 64200  
Monday, 11:30-2:20  
WALC 2051

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Office hours Monday 2:30-4:30 or by appointment

### **Course Description**

What is the last book you read, speech you heard, or post you shared that really connected with you? What story or discovery gripped you and helped you to see the world in a new way? Anthropologists study the human condition – our work could be a necessary component of virtually any and every public discussion on navigating difference, change, wellbeing, or happiness. By recognizing that different kinds of public engagement have different audiences and needs, professional anthropologists are breaking down the barrier between academic and engaged research. To use social science as a tool that benefits the communities where anthropologists work and contributes to a broader understanding of our shared human experience, we must become better at using and communicating anthropological knowledge. In this course, we will discuss what it means to work as an anthropologist, a professional academic, and an engaged scholar through our writing, speaking, teaching, and research programs.

This course is designed for students (1) to explore to the diverse ways that they can effectively use and communicate anthropological learning; (2) to learn about the public intellectuals who inspire us; and (3) to gain practical experience through a variety of modes of writing, lesson-planning, speaking, and engagement in their areas of interest. By the end of this course, students will practice writing and speaking for different audiences, refine their communication skills, familiarize themselves with public intellectual anthropologists, and develop research and teaching tools to build into their professional profiles.

This course is a seminar, meaning that students will be expected to lead each week's discussion with guidance from the professor. This class asks students to think of their communication as yet another social science method – a way of connecting to one's audiences and disseminating information. Students will be frequently asked to present to each other, critique each others' writing, and help each other improve. This will require both a sense of responsibility to help your classmates succeed and respect for the diverse forms of preparation and expertise in the room.

### **Learning Goals**

1. To learn about effectively using and communicating anthropological knowledge
2. To examine how well-known anthropologists have worked as public intellectuals in various times and settings

3. To familiarize students with the delivery of social science data and information for different purposes and in different formats
4. To gain experience with anthropological critical thinking, writing, and presentation skills
5. To position students as successful engaged anthropologists in their areas of interest

### Assignments and Grading

This class will be run as a seminar, so **participation and attendance are a large part of student grades**. Select students will prepare questions and lead a discussion each class while the rest of us use this time to think critically about our assignments, projects, and course readings (**25% of final grade**). Professor Flachs will lead in-class activities and lay groundwork for the first half of class, while the second half will be devoted to student discussion.

Each student will submit a short (~1/2 pagef) reading response each week by **Friday at 5 PM** on their reaction to the following Monday’s readings (**10% of final grade**) – What stood out to you? What made sense or was confusing? Why? Do you agree or disagree with the author’s perspective? Can you imagine using your work in a similar way? Ask a question, make a comment, relate the reading to thoughts you’re having about your career development. If we have a guest speaker/practitioner, what specific questions do you have for them? Comment on both the reading’s content and on how well the information is being communicated overall and for particular audiences. Follow up and comment on others students’ posts, but don’t simply repeat each others’ ideas. If you disagree with someone, that’s okay – but be respectful. These blackboard posts will guide our discussions.

To experience with a wide range of communications, there will be a small assignment most weeks that builds on the theory and practice that we discuss in class. These small assignments will test student engagement with different modes of communication and give us a chance to reflect on how they work for our particular research interests (**65%**).

Communication project	Due date	Length	Points out of 65
Elevator Pitch	August 26	2 minute pitch	5
Book review	September 30	1500 words excluding references + 100 word bio	5
Public Anthropologist Report	October 21	Wikipedia page + 15 minute report	10
Blog Post	November 4	500 words, 3 photos	10
Infographic/Poster	November 18	1 powerpoint slide	5
TED Talk or Public Presentation	November 25	Variable (no fewer than 10 minutes)	10
Technical Report	Finals Week TBA	5 pages excluding figures and references	15

Assignments are subject to change and will all be discussed in class. All written work should be size 12 font, times new roman, double spaced, with 1 inch margins. **All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day for which they are assigned. Late work will be marked down by 1 point (out of their total value) per day.** Revisions and resubmissions are a core element in academic and professional writing, and will be discussed in class.

Throughout this course students will work on a long-term project to encourage professional development and engagement. Students will work with ANTH 640 or another community partner decided in consultation with Professor Flachs to share best practices, distill findings, and disseminate their results. They will then prepare a brief technical report that summarizes their findings and deliver it to their city and class partners. Students can work in pairs or groups for this project in the sense that multiple students can work on the same project. The assignments and exercises are, however, individual. The pitch, infographic/poster, blog post, and TED/public talk may be related to the community engagement project but do not need to be.

You may use the same dataset to do every single one of these projects if you like – the goal of this class is to engage the public and communicate with different audiences. You may also repackage material from other classes, provided that you are presenting original work in this class. This means you can turn a previous paper into a talk or infographic, and you can rewrite as a blog, but it would not be appropriate to use that previously written paper as your paper in this class unless you have seriously revised it with a new dataset and/or analysis. The book review is not designed to be related to your projects as it is a review of a pop science engagement.

*Elevator Pitch:* What's your thesis/project about? What do you do? Why? Develop a 2 minute pitch that explains your research to an educated but non-expert audience.

1. You must: Explain clearly and concisely your research question, methods, and context. Essentially, what do you study, why do you study it, and how do you study it.
2. You must not: overload the audience with jargon, skimp on the broader impact of your work, or leave unaddressed why *you* think it is so very interesting.

*Public Anthropologist Report:* This project will allow you to explore the career of a well-known anthropologist who has had a significant impact inside and outside our discipline. For this project, you will identify an anthropologist, give a 20 minute presentation (15 minutes oral presentation with 5 minutes for q/a) about their notable achievements and how they work as a public intellectual, and edit or create their Wikipedia page to include relevant facts. You will also reflect on what you learned from this career exploration and what insights you can translate for your own work. Depending on Wikipedia's backlog, you will likely have to take a screenshot to get credit for this piece.

*Book Review:* Review a recent pop/well-received anthropology book as if you were reviewing it for an academic journal. Discuss your book with the professor in class before settling on it. In the style of academic book reviews, your review:

1. Should be about 1000 words
2. Should be critical but not too critical
3. Should summarize the themes of the book fairly but

4. Should also provide commentary on the wider relevance of the book in classrooms, in applied settings, in anthropology, or in policy
5. Should append a 100 word (in addition to the length of the review) bio of the author, their credentials, and their research.

If you choose, go to your favorite academic/pop site that publishes book reviews in this genre and choose one from their list of books to review, and submit it!

*Blog Post:* Write a 500 word blog post designed for a medium like the Forage!

(<https://ethnobiology.org/forage/blog>), Voices for Biodiversity (<http://voicesforbiodiversity.org/>), or National Geographic Explorer's journal (<https://voices.nationalgeographic.org/blog/explorers-journal/>) blogs. This can be, but does not have to be, related to your scientific paper or technical report. Your blog can either relate a story from your fieldwork that engages the audience into your broader research questions or can repackage your writing for a general audience. Your post:

1. Should be interesting and written in plain language
2. Must communicate why this research matters
3. Must include at least 3 pictures or other media, with captions
4. Must, as ever, explain what you did, why you did it, how you did it, and what you found.

If you choose, go to your favorite blog site that publishes posts in this genre and submit it!

*TED Talk or Public Presentation:* Go into a community school, go to a club, volunteer to teach in professor's class, offer yourself up as a PAST or AGSO speaker, or present at the Anthropology Seminar series. Give a public talk of appropriate length for the venue. Give the world's most engaging AAA talk. The goal is to be engaging and get people to ask you questions after the fact while talking about anthropology itself. Information about your research should be part of the talk, but only as a way to talk more broadly about what anthropology is and does. The themes and venues will vary. The talk you give to an elementary classroom about anthropology should be different from the pitch you give to undergraduate students deciding on a major. Turn in:

1. A plan in which you outline what you will be talking about and for how many minutes. This should include about 1 page of notes for every 10 minutes that you're talking. Outline topics, personal stories, reflections, and other important information you want to convey.
2. A selfie of you at the event posted to social media

*Infographic or Poster:* Design an infographic or poster that communicates anthropological information. This can be, but doesn't have to be, from your scientific paper or technical report. The requirements will vary depending on the project, but you should hand in:

1. A powerpoint slide with a good combination of visual and text information that engages the viewer
2. Visualizations or sections that clearly say what you did, why you did it, how you did it, and what you found. Visual mediums are still arguments!
3. Evidence that you are presenting data in an informative and useful way. Visuals are inherently more interesting than a block of text or a table. Use the appropriate format to give us data in an interesting way.

*Technical Report:* This report should briefly summarize the work that you did for the community organization. Include sections about:

1. The organization
2. What question you sought to answer and why the organization sought to answer it
3. The methods you used to answer your question and why you chose them
4. Your analysis of the data collected
5. Your conclusions that state the answer to the original question based on the data collected. The answer may be, we need to do a bigger study or use different methods. That's okay – write the truth as you find it.

### Grading summary

Assignment	Due date	Points out of 100
Discussion and discussion leading	Every week	25
Blackboard posts	Every week	10
Communication projects	Various	65

<b>Grades:</b>	A	=	91-100
	A-	=	90-91
	B+	=	89
	B	=	81-88
	B-	=	80
	C+	=	79
	C	=	71-78
	C-	=	70
	D	=	60-69
	F	=	Below 60

### Office Hours and Support

Office hours for the course are listed above. Students are encouraged to attend office hours, which are a good opportunity to ask questions not addressed in class, seek clarification about readings or further information on a topic, or discuss aspects of the course materials that are especially interesting. Office hours are on a first come, first served basis. If you are unable to attend office hours because of scheduling conflicts, please contact the instructor or the TAs directly to schedule a meeting. In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances. Here are ways to get information about changes in this course: BlackBoard web page, the instructor email address, and the instructor office phone: 765-494-2774.

**CAPS Information:** Purdue University and professor Flachs care about your success. We are committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, such individuals should contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at

(765)494-6995 and <http://www.purdue.edu/caps/> during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or through its counselors physically located in the Purdue University Student Health Center (PUSH) during business hours.

## **Disabilities**

Students with disabilities must be registered with Disability Resource Center in the Office of the Dean of Students before classroom accommodations can be provided. If you are eligible for academic accommodations because you have a documented disability that will impact your work in this class, please schedule an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss your needs. You are also encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center at: [drc@purdue.edu](mailto:drc@purdue.edu) or by phone: 765-494-1247.

## **Behavior**

I encourage students to interact with myself and one another at certain times during class; however, free speech does not mean we are not all entitled to express our opinions whenever we see fit without consequence. Purdue University and professor Flachs are committed to providing a safe and secure learning space. Sexist, racist, violent, and otherwise offensive comments will result in me asking you to leave the class for the day. If someone's behavior does not improve, they will be referred to the Student Conduct Coordinator. My classroom is a safe space for all. Also, please silence your cell phones during class and practice good 21<sup>st</sup> century manners. Laptops are tools for helping us work better in class. If they become a distraction, then we'll ban laptops in the classroom.

## **Academic Integrity**

Purdue prohibits "dishonesty in connection with any University activity. Cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to the University are examples of dishonesty." [Part 5, Section III-B-2-a, University Regulations] Furthermore, the University Senate has stipulated that "the commitment of acts of cheating, lying, and deceit in any of their diverse forms (such as the use of substitutes for taking examinations, the use of illegal cribs, plagiarism, and copying during examinations) is dishonest and must not be tolerated. Moreover, knowingly to aid and abet, directly or indirectly, other parties in committing dishonest acts is in itself dishonest." [University Senate Document 72-18, December 15, 1972]. All students are expected to adhere to high standards of academic integrity. In this class especially, that means that all work presented as original must, in fact, be original.

It is your duty to uphold the Purdue honors pledge. As a boilermaker pursuing academic excellence, I pledge to be honest and true in all that I do. Accountable together - we are Purdue. Learn more at: <https://www.purdue.edu/provost/teachinglearning/honor-pledge.html>

**Readings:** The following texts will be required:

Hedican, Edward J. 2016. *Public Anthropology: Engaging Social Issues in the Modern World*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press

Stein, Arlene and Jessie Daniels. 2017. *Going Public: A Guide for Social Scientists*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Other readings will be posted through the course website. Readings assigned for a particular week are to be completed before class each session so that we can discuss them.

## Syllabus

**Week 1, August 19:** Course overview and introduction to anthropological public engagement.

Hedican: *Chapter 1*

Porter: *Crafting a Sales Pitch*

Stein and Daniels: *Chapter 1*

**In class:** Meet fellow students, learn about each others' research programs. Discuss goals for the class and for public engagement writ large. Who are the different audiences you want to talk to? Why?

**Week 2, August 26:** Engaging questions through research and writing

Hedican: *Chapter 2*

Becker: *Tricks of the Trade* (120-128)

Beebe: *Rapid Appraisal*

Chambers: *Beyond Farmer First*

**In class:** Form community engagement teams and identify partner organizations for technical report project. Workshop pitches with "Bernie Beck's trick". Find community engagement research projects and think about what ethnography and other anthropological tools bring to their needs. Begin relationship with 640.

**Assignment due in class:** Elevator Pitch

**Week 3, September 2:** Labor day (no classes)

**Week 4, September 9:** Social Scientists as Public Intellectuals

Hedican: *Chapter 3,4*

**In class:** Choose books and anthropologists for review. Form teams and discuss how social scientists engage with one of several controversial topics: Race, Climate Change, Zika, Police Violence, etc. Summarize how anthropologists engage, the sorts of impacts they had, and how they might better engage. When and where do public intellectuals overstep? Can you speak truth to power? **Guest Speaker: Wonderlab Director Emmy Brockman.**

**Week 5, September 16:** Book reviews

Tousignant: *review of Cooking Data*

Mollett: *How to write a book review*

Stone: *Malthus, Agribusiness, and the Death of the Peasantry*

Pfannepacker: *Repurpose your Desire*  
James Scott: *Crops, Towns, Government*  
Stein and Daniels: *Chapter 3*

**In class:** Find, share book reviews. What makes for a good book? What's the correct combination of rhetoric, data, argumentation, tone, voice, etc.? What theories underpin your own work? How do you bring anthropological theory to inform your assumptions and questions?

**Week 6, September 23:** Applying Anthropological Credentials

Sussman: *There is no such thing as race*  
Stoller: *Niger nightmare*  
Smith: *Border Walls*  
Stein and Daniels: *Chapter 4*

**In Class:** Hunt down citations and sources of arguments to show how they are distorted. Find journalistic writing, op-eds, and policy papers to contextualize reporting within structural issues. What does this genre look like? How is evidence marshalled? How is this different from scholarly writing, and as scholars, what is missing here? Is there a way to do this on social media (specifically Twitter and Facebook)? **Guest Speakers: Purdue Science Journalists Amy Patterson Neubert and Kayla Wiles.**

**Week 7, September 30:** Anthropological Research With and For the Community

Hedican: *Chapter 5, 7*

**In class:** Check in about community engagement. Book roundtable. Report on current progress and workshop questions and concerns. Walk through how to edit Wikipedia.

**Assignment due:** Book review

**Week 8, October 7:** Fall break (no classes)

**Week 9, October 14:** Research in private and public sectors

ReD associates: *The Future of Money*  
Scholars Strategy Network: *How and Why to Write a Two Page Brief*  
Stein and Daniels: *Chapter 6*

**In Class:** Write a policy brief, following SSN methods. Discuss writing white papers. Who are the audiences and funders? Does disclosure matter? **Special Guest: Ali Heller, anthropologist for Facebook.**

**Week 10, October 21:** Public Anthropology Day!

**In Class:** Student Presentations  
**Assignment due:** Public anthropologist report

**Week 11, October 28:** Communicating anthropological knowledge as a writer

Jarreau, *World of Science Blogging*



Crew, *How Science Blogging can lead to a Science Writing Career*  
Stein and Daniels: *Chapter 5*

**In class:** Explore blogs, define blog discourse, write a pitch for a blog and write blog draft.

**Week 12, November 4:** Communicating anthropological knowledge as a speaker

Kaye, *How to Create Your TED Talk*

**In class:** Workshop public talk or discuss how your talk went. **Special Guest: Associate Dean Melanie Morgan, Public Speaking Coach**

**Assignment due:** Blog post

**Week 13, November 11:** Infographics and Visuals

Hedican: *Chapter 9*

Banning-Lover, *How to make infographics*

**In class:** Explore data visualization. See how photoessays and other media are used by anthropologists and longform journalists. Discuss examples of these, including multimedia and art. How do the humanities use infographics and visuals? What are the best ways to illustrate your point?

**Week 14, November 18:** Community based research reflection

Fluehr-Lobban, *Collaborative Anthropology as 21st Century Ethical Anthropology*

Hedican: *Chapter 10*

Stein and Daniels: *Chapter 7*

**In class:** Present Infographics/Posters. Reflect back to participatory research and science communication. Did it work? Is there anything you could've done differently?

**Assignment due:** Infographic or Poster

**Week 15, November 25:** Anthropology and the Engaged University

Bal Grassiani and Kirk, *Teaching Anthropology in the Neoliberal University*

Veteto and Lockyer: *Applying Anthropology to What?*

Killgrove: *Bioarchaeology and the media*

**In class:** Work on technical reports **Special Guest: Dr. Kristina Killgrove, Science Writer**

**Assignment due:** Public talk (if not before)

**Week 16, December 2:** Advancing our Engagement

**In class:** Present reports to others. What more needs to or can be done? Course reflection: What are the biggest problems facing the world today, and how does anthropology engage? Assemble course materials as a portfolio/resume.

**Special Guest: Risa Cromer, member of AAA Op-Ed project**

**Assignment Due During Finals Week: Technical Report**