Course Description
Critical interest in an expanded literary canon demands evaluating different types of cultural texts in complex ways. James Clifford and George Marcus’s *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (1986) has been an influential signpost pointing to the writing of literature, ethnography, literary and cultural criticism as “blurred genres.” In this seminar, we’ll continue the exploration at the crossroads with James Clifford as guide, beginning the journey with his *The Predicament of Culture* (1988) and continuing with his *Routes* (1997).

Class praxis will include reading paired novels/short stories/poetry, viewing art works and films with examining ethnographies and criticism to interrogate Clifford’s findings. We will read authors who have written ethnographies and novels, who write novels as if they were ethnographies and who write ethnographies as if they were novels in “an unfinished series of paths and negotiations.”

Texts
(All texts are required and are available for purchase at Marwil’s Bookstore and online, and for reading on three-hour reserve at Purdy-Kresge Library.)


Additional readings & film clips
Other readings will be posted on ERes/Blackboard as noted in the syllabus or as agreed upon by seminar members. Selected film clips will be shown occasionally within seminar discussions.

Blackboard-assisted course
Please check the Blackboard website for this course regularly as I will post some full-text readings noted in the syllabus as well as announcements, class information, assignments, and website links. To access Blackboard and to communicate by email, you will need to activate your
WSU Access ID at http://computing.wayne.edu/accessid/activate.php. You should do this even if you have another email address. If you do use another email address, you should have email that is sent to your WSU account forwarded to you by going to http://computing.wayne.edu/email/forwarding.php.

Course requirements
Course requirements are four short commentaries related to course readings with variable due dates, a longer paper on a topic of the student’s choice due April 17, 2008, and class participation including a work-in-progress report on the research project, attendance, and discussion:

1. Commentaries (40%)
   These four 3-page commentaries (10% each) should be tied fairly tightly to course readings and/or discussion. Each student has an option to select a point in reading or discussion that s/he would like to explore critically, drawing on in-class readings with outside references optional. MLA Commentaries’ due dates are flexible, usually within one to two weeks after assigned class readings as they are designed to facilitate and deepen discussion. Please turn in hard copies of commentaries to instructor, and post copies online through Blackboard’s discussion board. Rewrites are possible.

2. Longer research paper (40%)
   This paper (c. 15-20 pages, double-spaced) is a wide-open one, drawing on any topic or critical interest the student might have, but still related in some ways to broad seminar themes. It may be connected to a master’s essay or dissertation chapter already in progress, to other ongoing projects, or to new topics moving beyond class readings. Please plan an individual consultation with the instructor whose goal is to have students write research pieces that contribute to work already begun, to future graduate work or conference presentations or to article manuscript production. Fuller guidelines will be given separately.

3. Work-in-progress oral report (10%)
   A work-in-progress report is an oral presentation, outlining your research paper topic, your critical approach, problems, questions, findings, etc. that will be given in the seminar from February 28 to April 19, depending on when each student signs up for the presentation. Each student may also take questions, comments and suggestions from the floor. The class presentation grade will be part of the class participation grade, and will be determined by organization, clarity of development, support for argument/issues and relevance to class focus. Presentation and Q & A times may vary according to each student’s design, but 15-20 minutes has been the norm. Most students distribute an outline of their presentations to seminar members. (The other 10% of the class participation grade is attendance and discussion).

Syllabus (in process)

1. Jan. 10         Introduction

2. Jan. 17

3. Jan. 24

4. Jan. 31
   Readings: Clifford, Predicament of Culture, Part I: Discourses, chapter 3, pp. 92-113; Conrad, Heart of Darkness including introduction and Conrad’s “Congo Diary.”
Film clips *Apocalypse Now*

5. Feb. 7
Readings: Clifford, *Predicament of Culture, Part II: Displacements* and *Part III: Collections*, chapters 4-10, pp. 115-251; selected poems of Aimé Césaire (ERes/Blackboard).

Film clips from French ethnographic filmmaker Jean Rouch

6. Feb. 14

7. Feb. 21

8. Feb. 28

9. March 6

work-in-progress reports

10. March 13
    NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK

11. March 20

work-in-progress reports

12. March 27

work-in-progress reports

13. April 3

work-in-progress reports

14. April 10

15. April 17 concluions/new directions
Research papers due/student evaluations
Class matters:

Attendance
The English Department attendance policy is as follows:
Enrolled students in any English classes must attend one of the first two class sessions; otherwise, they may be required to drop the class. The instructor will not add students to the class after the third class session. In addition, the instructor counts attendance as part of the class participation grade based on % of classes attended. Students are allowed up to 2 excused absences that require advance notice to instructor; 3 or more unexcused absences, however, will lose attendance points and may constitute withdrawal.

Late Assignments
To be discussed per each assignment.

Paper Format
Papers should be typed, double-spaced, one-inch margins, no larger than 12 pt. type, no binders.

Paper Revision
To be discussed per each assignment.

Plagiarism
The College of Liberal Arts & Sciences Policy on Plagiarism states:
The principle of honesty is recognized as fundamental to a scholarly community. Students are expected to honor this principle and instructors are expected to take appropriate action when instances of academic dishonesty are discovered. An instructor, on discovering such an instance, may give a failing grade on the assignment or for the course. The instructor has the responsibility of notifying the student of the alleged violation and the action being taken. Both the student and the instructor are entitled to academic due process in all such cases. Acts of dishonesty may lead to suspension or exclusion.
The instructor’s policy, on a case-by-case basis, follows the English Department’s guidelines based on college and university guidelines.

Incompletes (REVISED UNIVERSITY POLICY)
The mark of “I” (Incomplete) is given to either an undergraduate or a graduate student when he/she has not completed all of the course work as required for the term and when there is, in the judgment of the instructor, a reasonable probability that the student can complete the course successfully without again attending regular class sessions. The student should be passing at the time the grade of “I” is given. A written contract specifying the work to be completed should be signed by the student and instructor and filed with the English Department.
Students receiving incompletes must finish their assignments by the end of a year or the grade will be replaced by an “F.” The University will not allow any extensions past the year’s deadline.

Withdrawals (REVISED UNIVERSITY POLICY)
The grade of “WN” replaces the “X” grade and applies to any student who has never attended class, or did not complete any assignments, or did not participate in credit-earning activities by the withdrawal date. If a student decides not to go to class after having received a grade for any component of a course, these grades will be issued only as follows: “WP” (Withdrawal with a passing grade earned to date) or “WF” (Withdrawal with a failing grade earned to date).

Educational Accessibility Services
If you have a physical or mental impairment that may interfere with your ability to complete successfully the requirements for this course, please contact the Educational Accessibility Services Office in Room 1600 of the David Adamany Undergraduate Library to discuss appropriate accommodations.