

UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH
College of Social and Applied Human Sciences
Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Winter 2025

Anth 4740: Seminar in Anthropology

Focus: *The Anthropology of Place*

Instructor: Thomas McIlwraith
Office: Mack 616
Hours: TBA
Ext: 53545

Time: M/W 1:00p-2:20p
Place: MCKN 119a
Email: tmcilwra@uoguelph.ca

Course Description

What does it mean to be “in place?” How do human beings construct socially meaningful relationships with places? Drawing on scholarship from cultural anthropology, linguistic anthropology, philosophy, and geography, the course investigates emplacement in a global age. It considers places as locations of social, political, and personal expression. It uses symbolic and post-modern approaches and, with the diversity of scholarship available, the course allows for a wide range of analytical strategies for considering our place(s) in our world(s).

In the course, we will wonder how the natural resources of our planet will be managed when different people, with different interests, see the same location as fundamentally different places. We will ask about how places are constructed – and thus become meaningful – in a world that is increasingly global in orientation and said to be shrinking. And, we will pursue the constructions of person-place relationships around notions of personal and group identities. The course will emphasize Indigenous connections to places, along with activism related to the protection of place but, in the coursework, students will be free to explore the relationships between any particular group of people and/or any particular place(s).

Objectives

- Through lectures and seminar discussions, consider the basic ideas and interpretive approaches that have shaped recent work in the anthropology and ethnography of place.
- Through independent study, consider the cultural dimensions of some particular locality.

Format

This is an advanced seminar course. Class sessions will include student-led seminar discussions. Student participation – including the reading of assigned material prior to class and participating actively during classroom discussions – is expected.

Required Readings

- Basso, Keith H. 1996. *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Abram, David. 1997. *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-than-Human World*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Other readings will be required through Courselink / ARES.

(Tentative) Evaluation

Participation (online quizzes)	10
Book Review	15
Paper Proposal	10
Term Paper (10-12 pages)	30
Seminar participation and presentation	15
Final exam (take home)	20

Note: This outline may change. A complete outline will be available at the first class.