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Audiovisual Media as a Pedagogical Tool: A Brief Annotated Bibliography

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Media-based, pedagogical innovations are understudied and largely undocumented within anthropology and the social sciences more generally. While most instructors share the experience of showing films or employing YouTube clips as quick, contemporary examples, we rarely reflect critically on these techniques—much less publish our impressions. This bibliography mirrors the still tentative state of the literature and is neither exhaustive nor authoritative but intended instead as a starting point, profiling (1) examples of media-based pedagogy from the 1970s to the present, (2) critical assessments of the efficacy and impact of classroom media, (3) practical references outlining potential source material and relevant copyright restrictions, and (4) seminal works that form essential background reading. We hope that these sources will provide readers with the resources and inspiration needed to begin their own projects—and that you will contact us as you identify relevant additions for our list and begin to disseminate your work.

Media-Based Pedagogy Examples

Champoux, Joseph E.

1999 Film as a Teaching Resource. *Journal of Management Inquiry* 8(2):206-217.

Drawing on film theory and the film studies literature, Champoux assesses popular film as a teaching tool for management theory and organizational behavior. Coming from outside of anthropology, the author largely bypasses issues of representation and uncritically accepts film as a form of cross-cultural experience. The article is, however, useful for its careful attention to filmic techniques and vocabulary, providing a quick primer for instructors. A brief but

helpful discussion of ways of incorporating film and its relative advantages and anticipated effects is also included.

Demerath, N.J.

1981 Through a Double-Crossed Eye: Sociology and the Movies. *Teaching Sociology* 9(1):69-82.

Demerath offers a useful corrective to the assumption that films provide straightforward illustrations of social science concepts and helpfully provides six concrete suggestions for minimizing competing messages, ranging from providing shorter clips that privilege the start of the film to focusing on the more representative side-kick rather than the main character. He concludes with a brief but thought-provoking segment on alternative uses for film that go beyond delivering thematic content.

Engelbrecht, Beate, and Rolf Husmann

2004 Films in the Classroom. *In* Current Policies and Practices in European Social Anthropology Education. D. Dracklé and I.R. Edgar, eds., pp. 112-126. New York: Berghahn Books.

This chapter provides a brief overview of the varied pedagogical uses of ethnographic film. Engelbrecht and Husmann outline a series of university-level anthropology courses in which content delivery is paired with the extensive use of visual media. They then discuss multiple, in-class media uses, ranging from film analysis to reception analysis. While it would be preferable to link the course structure and methods segments (and provide concrete guidelines for film selection), the authors do give a concise summary of film's pedagogical possibilities and echo the distinction between "film as illustration" and "film as a source of detailed information" made by Cooper (this issue) and Leblanc (1997).

Goldfarb, Brian

2002 *Visual Pedagogy: Media Cultures in and beyond the Classroom*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Goldfarb presents an engaging history of media pedagogy from the Second World War to the present focusing initially on projects within school settings and then extending the analysis to consider applications outside of formal educational institutions. The book incorporates film, television, video, and computer-based media and has a decidedly global perspective. While the entire text is recommended, chapter 2 will be of particular interest for instructors looking to develop their own media-based projects.

Huber, Margaret Williamson

2009 Teaching *Star Trek* as Anthropology. *Southern Anthropologist* 34(1/2):32-53.

This detailed example piece outlines Huber's use of the original *Star Trek* series as the cornerstone of her theme-based introductory anthropology course. Huber's justification of the show as a teaching tool provides a nice set of criteria for media selection, and her extensive outline of the course with multiple concrete examples is easy to follow and replicate, particularly given the accompanying list of assigned course readings.

Jackson, John L., Jr.

2004 An Ethnographic Filmflam: Giving Gifts, Doing Research, and Videotaping the Native Subject/Object. *American Anthropologist* 106(1):32-42.

As a component of his larger argument, Jackson discusses film production as a particularly valuable teaching tool in the realm of anthropological ethics. Given the exploitative potential of filmic representations, Jackson argues that this medium provides students a valuable forum for considering the ethics of participant observation more broadly. As digital storytelling allows students increasing access to this creative process as documented by Thornburg (this issue), ethical considerations of this sort are becoming available for classroom negotiation.

Leblanc, Lauraine

1997 Observing Reel Life: Using Feature Films to Teach Ethnographic Methods. *Teaching Sociology* 25(1):62-68.

Leblanc investigates the advantages and disadvantages of using feature films to teach ethnographic methods, particularly observation, in this profile of her undergraduate course on the sociology of youth subcultures. Like Cooper (this issue), Leblanc is distinct in her use of media to encourage the application of social science skills rather than to convey content. Appendices containing an annotated listing of Leblanc's film selections and tips for film analysis are particularly helpful.

Mallinger, Mark, and Gerard Rossy

2003 Film as a Lens for Teaching Culture: Balancing Concepts, Ambiguity, and Paradox. *Journal of Management Education* 27(5):608-624.

This article is included as a counterexample, demonstrating that media is only as effective as its accompanying pedagogy. Here, Mallinger and Rossy introduce their Integrated Cultural Framework (ICF), a simplified taxonomy used to classify cultures based on: ability to influence, comfort with ambiguity, achievement orientations, dichotomies between individualism and collectivism, and time and space orientation. Students apply this framework to their out-of-class viewing of the comedy, *Gung Ho*, in order to learn about cultural differences between the U.S. and Japan. This example and its evident stereotyping demonstrate the danger of incorporating popular films as valid, ethnographic examples of existing cultures.

Sealy, Kelvin Shawn, ed.

2008 *Film, Politics, and Education: Cinematic Pedagogy across the Disciplines*. New York: Peter Lang.

This edited volume outlines various aspects of the history, theory, and practical application of moving images—particularly popular film and television—within the classroom. The collection's most notable contributions include (1) chapters by Sealy and Bickford

addressing the politics surrounding the educational use of media, specifically arguments contrasting elitist and popular forms of culture; (2) Broughton's detailed and engaging history of the pedagogic use of film; (3) Sun's Gramscian analysis of Disney's *The Lion King*; and (4) the concluding interview with bell hooks on the topic of film and education.

Shields, Donald C., and Virginia V. Kidd

1973 Teaching through Popular Film: A Small Group Analysis of *The Poseidon Adventure*. *Speech Teacher* 22(1):201-207.

In this early exploration of popular film as a teaching medium, Shields and Kidd use the 1973 feature film, *The Poseidon Adventure*, to demonstrate film's potential within the undergraduate classroom. The authors recommend popular film as a practical teaching aid that offers sensory stimulation, intellectual involvement, and contemporary themes that are both engaging and entertaining. They provide an extended listing of relevant films for various topics in communication theory along with a detailed case study outlining their use of *The Poseidon Adventure*.

Vande Berg, Leah R.

1991 Using Television to Teach Courses in Gender and Communication. *Communication Education* 40(1):105-111.

Vande Berg presents a model for studying sex-role orientations through television, arguing that television represents scripts for social interaction that both reflect, and at times challenge, mainstream norms—especially regarding gender. After introducing television's benefits (e.g., its high production value, positive reception, and familiarity) and briefly discussing practical issues of access and availability, Vande Berg concludes with an extended description of the teaching process incorporating multiple detailed examples from *Leave it to Beaver*, *The Honeymooners*, and *Who's the Boss*, among others.

Winegarden, Alan D., Marilyn Fuss-Reineck, and Lori J. Charron

1993 Using *Star Trek: The Next Generation* to Teach Concepts in Persuasion, Family, Communication, and Communication Ethics. *Communication Education* 42:179-188.

Winegarden, Fuss-Reineck, and Charron provide rationale and examples for using television programs in the classroom for courses in gender and communication. In particular, they focus on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, outlining in detail its application to themes of persuasion, family communication (i.e., family patterns, family roles, ecosystems and family life), and communication ethics. The authors discuss advantages and disadvantages surrounding the use of television series, but the article is largely an extended example of the theme-based analysis of television content.

Critical Assessments of Media Use

Bird, S. Elizabeth, and Jonathan P. Godwin

2006 Film in the Undergraduate Anthropology Classroom: Applying Audience Response Research in Pedagogical Practice. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 37(3):285-299.

Bird and Godwin explore audience response to film in the undergraduate anthropology classroom, addressing claims that films “speak for themselves,” evoke better student response, and improve retention of class materials. Using a four-field, introductory anthropology course at the University of South Florida as a case study, they conduct in-class observations and student focus groups, administer structured questionnaires, and interview faculty with experience teaching the course. Their results offer keen insight into how instructors’ expectations of media reception are not always consistent with student experience. The article concludes with an excellent set of concrete recommendations for more effective use of classroom visuals.

Blum, Denise

- 2006 Expanding the Dialogue: A Response to Bird and Godwin's "Film in the Undergraduate Anthropology Classroom." *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 37(3):300-306.

In this follow-up to Bird and Godwin (2006), Blum explores and expands upon the observation that film in the classroom actually inhibits learning by merely transferring information as opposed to nurturing a more profound understanding. Assessing her own two-year media project, Cineculture Friday, a series of first-release cultural documentaries shown in what Blum terms her "public classroom," the author uses extensive participant observation and structured questionnaires to demonstrate that film reception is dependent upon the unique interaction of the film, the instructor, the post-viewing discussion, and the viewers.

Chu, Godwin C., and Wilbur Schramm

- 2004 *Learning from Television: What the Research Says*. Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.

This is a newly available reprint of a late 1960s classic meta-analysis of instructional television and radio. While the technology assessed is now clearly dated, the research and design principles are sound, and it should be of use for instructors looking to bring a more systematic approach to the evaluation of media's potential benefits for pedagogy.

Englehart, Lucinda

- 2003 Media Activism in the Screening Room: The Significance of Viewing Locations, Facilitation, and Audience Dynamics in the Reception of HIV/AIDS Films in South Africa. *Visual Anthropology Review* 19(1/2):73-85.

While focusing outside of the classroom on public reaction to HIV/AIDS films, Englehart remains relevant for her careful consideration of the impact of context and framing on audience response. In particular, she demonstrates the effect of "situated interactions" such as group viewing and establishes that films seen independently do not receive the same level of complex

interpretation. This work has clear implications for the use of class time.

Martinez, Wilton

1995 The Challenges of a Pioneer: Tim Asch, Otherness, and Film Reception. *Visual Anthropology Review* 11(1):53-82.

Martinez exposes the disconnect between the goals of noted ethnographic filmmaker Timothy Asch, with his deep commitment to education, ethnographic veracity, and humanistic ideals, and student reception of his films, which ironically center on the otherness he sought to dispel. Conducting original research at University of Southern California, where Asch taught during the final years of his life, Martinez examines student reactions to (1) *The Ax Fight* in isolation and (2) the full body of Asch's Yanomamö films. He concludes that despite Asch's cultural relativism and best intentions, the films often fail to achieve teaching goals and learning outcomes, contributing instead to the students' existing cultural stereotypes. He argues for a reevaluation of the true impact of ethnographic film and closer attention to its pedagogical framing and use.

Smith, Don D.

1973 Teaching Introductory Sociology by Film. *Teaching Sociology* 1(1):48-61.

This article is an early assessment of the value of film for in-class use. Smith's primary focus is increased efficiency within diverse classrooms with limited prerequisites—what he views as the standard introductory environment. Defining success as positive student evaluations, he finds no significant differences between comparable film and non-film classes, allowing him to argue for the in-class use of film as a means of freeing the instructor for other tasks.

Practical References

Crews, Kenneth

2006 *Copyright Law for Librarians and Educators*. Chicago: American Library Association.

Essentially a second edition to Crew's *Copyright Essentials for Librarians and Educators* (2000), this is a professional handbook and primer on copyright law ranging from the scope of protectable works to rights of ownerships, fair use, the TEACH Act, and the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. Highly approachable with checklists, sources for additional reading, and an index, this is a good reference tool for instructors negotiating legally permissible uses of media.

Gerster, Carole, and Laura W. Zlogar, eds.

2006 *Teaching Ethnic Diversity with Film: Essays and Resources for Educators in History, Social Studies, Literature, and Film Studies*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company.

This helpful edited volume provides comprehensive chapter overviews on the filmic representations of African-Americans, Asians and Asian-Americans, American Indians, and Latinos over time, introducing extensive source material for instructors seeking provocative examples for classroom use. It also profiles methods of film analysis for a non-specialist and offers specific instructions for the social studies discipline on the identification of stereotypes and cultural appropriation. Although the final section of the volume is geared toward the high school classroom, the information is sound, and the text as a whole offers lots of inspiration for syllabus design and media-based classroom activities.

Heider, Karl, and Carol Hermer

1995 *Films for Anthropological Teaching*. Washington: American Anthropological Association.

Now in its eighth edition (and unfortunately out of print), this filmography includes over 1,500 films arranged alphabetically by

title. Heider and Hermer provide the release date, length, production credits, distributor, order code number, purchase and rental prices, description, and review references as available for each film along with “focusing questions” and “warnings” for a select number of titles. The guide is prefaced by geographical and topical listings of the films along with a name index and a distributors’ list. This collection privileges those films reviewed in *American Anthropologist* and still in distribution, although the selection criteria are not explicit.

Howard, Jennifer

2011 What You Don't Know About Copyright, but Should. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, June 3: A6.

This brief primer on copyright law includes information on multiple online resources and introduces readers to the classroom use exemption to copyright, offering options beyond the standard fair use exemption.

Husmann, Rolf, Ingrid Wellinger, Johannes Rühl, and Martin Taureg

1992 *A Bibliography of Ethnographic Film*. Munster, Hamburg: LIT-Verlag.

In addition to the approximately 1,000 film reviews organized by director in the fourth and final chapter, this 335-page reference includes an extensive set of briefly annotated books and articles on the general topic of ethnographic film (chapter 1); citations for academic reviews of film conferences, symposia, and festivals (chapter 2); a wide-ranging selection of additional reference materials, including catalogues and bibliographies (chapter 3); and an appendix of selected journals. The volume is well indexed—searchable by review author or the film’s title, director, ethnic group, and country or geographic origin. It is current up to the spring of 1992 and includes over 3,000 references—many from non-abstracted sources.

Jhala, Jayasinhji

1998 *A Guide to Visual Anthropology*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Jhala presents a selection of 50 classic and contemporary films recommended for use in introductory, cultural anthropology courses. The films are organized alphabetically with a listing of the production crew, U.S. distributors, format, genre and key words. Jhala's brief summaries are supplemented by notes on the films' importance and suggested classroom use.

Mitchell, Charles P.

2004 *Filmography of Social Issues: A Reference Guide*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

In his noteworthy introduction, Mitchell presents a set of 20 social themes ranging from abortion to divorce and violence with multiple related titles and a historical overview of each theme. The remainder of the text is devoted to a set of 100 feature films from the 1930s to 2002. Principal social themes are provided for each listed title along with an overview, synopsis, and critique. With its index of titles, actors, locations, and themes, Mitchell's work offers an excellent reference for constructing syllabi and film-based classroom activities.

Seminal Background Reading

Acciaioli, Greg

2004 *The Consequence of Conation: Pedagogy and the Inductive Films of an Ethical Film-Maker*. In Timothy Asch and Ethnographic Film. E.D. Lewis, ed. Pp. 123-148. London: Routledge.

In this piece, Acciaioli claims that the Conative mode of communication (i.e., the pedagogical or teaching mode) was always, and perhaps increasingly, at the heart of Timothy Asch's filmic practice. This article is recommended as useful background reading for instructors considering incorporating ethnographic film, particularly in light of the reservations expressed by Bird and

Godwin (2006) and Cooper (this issue), as well of those in Martinez's (1995) work on student reception of Asch's films.

Ginsburg, Faye D.

1994 Culture/Media: A (Mild) Polemic. *Anthropology Today* 10(2):5-15.

Ginsburg calls for an expansion of visual anthropology's range of media, highlighting the increase in filmic media produced by indigenous, diaspora, and other (often disempowered) filmmakers. Consideration of the relationship between this genre of native ethnographic film along with more traditional visual anthropology, Ginsburg suggests, facilitates recognition of a "parallax effect": the differences of perception of an object based on a difference in the position of the observer. Thus, consideration of this broader range of filmic media necessitates an acknowledgement that ethnographic films are second-order representations, cultural representations of cultural representations. This is an essential understanding to impart to students in classrooms in which filmic media is utilized as more than a proxy for ethnographic data. It is a strong companion piece to Worth and Adair (1997) and useful background for the justification of participatory projects and instruction in accessible, inexpensive technologies such as digital storytelling.

Ginsburg, Faye D., Lila Abu-Lughod, and Brian Larkin, eds.

2002 *Media Worlds: Anthropology on New Terrain*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

This landmark collection covers the anthropology of media broadly conceived from cultural activism to national and transnational imagery, technology, and social sites of production. This text is recommended as a primer for those wishing to engage with media in a broader framework, addressing its cultural impact and beginning to study the medium itself in an ethnographic sense.

Hall, Stuart

1980 Encoding/Decoding. *In Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972-1979*. Pp. 128-138. London: Hutchinson.

This is a seminal piece in the movement away from the “effect” studies of the 1970s and 1980s and their narrow focus on media’s impact on the audience in isolation. When introduced, Hall’s model was unique in its attention to viewer characteristics and the tendency for race, class, gender and other identity markers to serve as lenses, differentially decoding media messages to fit an individual’s existing worldview. This short, approachable piece is good background reading for class exercises that consider audience response and the importance of context.

Heider, Karl

2006 *Ethnographic Film*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Often considered the film primer for anthropologists, Heider’s classic text (originally published in 1976) focuses on what it means to be ethnographic, providing both attributes and extended examples through the work of Jean Rouch, John Marshall, Robert Gardner, and Timothy Asch. Technique, ethics, and financing are also considered before Heider concludes with a brief section on teaching with film. Though his attention to pedagogy is somewhat anemic, Heider’s work remains important background for those considering the classroom use of ethnographic film.

Loizos, Peter

1993 *Innovation in Ethnographic Film: From Innocence to Self-Consciousness, 1955-1985*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

In this review of 50 influential films produced between 1955 and 1985, Loizos provides an accessible history of the nature and development of ethnographic film. He covers classic works by John Marshall, Timothy Asch, Jean Rouch, and Robert Gardner as well as the earlier projects of contemporary filmmakers like Melissa Llewelyn-Davies. Changes in production technology, content, strategies of argument, and ethnographic authentication are highlighted, and Loizos is careful to discuss issues of representation (for both filmmaker and subject) in regards to each individual film. Loizos is detailed and direct in his presentation of the films’ context, argument, and approach, making this a solid

pre-viewing text for student audiences in line with the recommendations of Bird and Godwin (2006).

Postman, Neil

1985 *Amusing Ourselves to Death*. New York: Penguin Books.

Postman's critique of television as an incoherent, anti-participatory medium defined by its mandate to entertain continues to inform debates regarding the appropriateness of television and film in educational contexts. Chapter 10, "Teaching as an Amusing Activity," is particularly relevant for instructors, and it is recommended background reading for those looking to engage with television in a meaningful way.

Strong, Mary, and Laena Wilder, eds.

2009 *Viewpoints: Visual Anthropologists at Work*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Though primarily a collection profiling current research and techniques in visual anthropology, the final chapter details digital and interactive technologies that can be used to present research findings or engage in applied collaborations. These techniques can be easily adapted for classroom use and instruction contributing to a media-based pedagogy.

Worth, Sol, and John Adair

1997 *Through Navajo Eyes: An Exploration in Film Communication and Anthropology*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Originally published in 1972, this classic project chronicles Worth and Adair's experiences training a small group of Navajo youth to produce their own films. The participants—most of whom had no previous film exposure – were taught basic camera and editing skills and allowed to develop their own narrative style and sequencing, which were then compared to the techniques of inner-city teenagers in Philadelphia to explore the impact of culture on visual language. The results are intriguing, particularly given the emerging interest in digital storytelling as a pedagogical tool (see

Thornburg, this issue). This book is recommended both as background reading for instructors and as a potential course text.