

**Department of Anthropology**

**ANTHRO 3326G-001: Inheritance: Time, Memory, and Racial Afterlives**

**BRIEF COURSE OUTLINE**

**Winter 2026**

*Date: July 9, 2025*

**Instructor and course information:**

Instructor: Dr. Jameelah Morris

Method of delivery: In Person

Credit value: 0.5

Antirequisites: None.

Prerequisites: Registration in third year or above.

Please ensure you have the correct requisites by checking [the Academic Calendar](#).

**Course Description:**

This course explores the anthropological study of inheritance as a mode of tracing how pasts carry into the present not only through property or genetics, but through memory, silence, racialized structures, and affect. We explore how anthropologists work with fragments, absences, and traces to understand how people live with what they did not choose and how institutions, kinship systems, and cultural practices transmit both violence and possibility. Rather than treating inheritance as static, we attend to its production: the social labor that renders something an "inheritance," the exclusions it requires, and the futures it forecloses or enables.

Overall, the course asks: What lives in your life that did not begin with you? What do we inherit, materially and psychically, and how do those inheritances shape our sense of time, belonging, and responsibility? How do families, states, and disciplines decide what is preserved, silenced, or disavowed? Course materials include ethnographic texts, memoirs, films, and visual culture, with thematic focuses such as kinship and rupture, haunting, archival absences, historical memory, and the transmission of land and language.

Students will engage the course material through a combination of reflective, analytical, and creative assignments designed to deepen their understanding of how inheritance operates across time and through various social forms. These include weekly quizzes and asynchronous, ethnographically grounded exercises (such as a personal inheritance map, an interview, or a concept tracing activity) designed to help connect abstract theories to lived experience. We will dedicate the last hour of most classes to these activities (to be indicated in the final course outline).

The critical reflection project combines a 1000-word analytical paper with a creative or multimodal component. The course culminates in a 2,000–2,500 word final essay that asks students to craft an original argument drawing on course materials and discussions. Together, these assignments aim to help students develop their analytical writing skills, learn to work with cultural fragments and silences and reflect critically on how memory, race, and history shape various topics of interest.

A full course schedule including a week-by-week breakdown of topics and assigned readings will be available on the course's OWL Brightspace site before the first day of class.

**Course Materials:**

No textbook

Required readings and other material will be available through the Course Readings tool on the course site.

**Evaluation:**

\*\* Provisional – check with the final version before classes begin

Grades will be based on the following:

*Note: Please come to class prepared to engage in discussion of the assigned readings. If you must miss a class session you are responsible for getting notes from another student. Lecture notes for missed classes will not be provided and there will be no make-up quizzes.*

15%- Weekly Quizzes

15%- Online/asynchronous Ethnographically-based Assignments  
(More details will be given during class and on OWL.)

35%- Critical Reflection/Research Project

20% - 1000 word analytical paper

15% - creative/multimodal project to be presented in class (connected to the analytical paper)

*You will have a range of prompts to choose from for your paper topic. More details will be given during class and on OWL.*

35%- Final Essay (2000 words )

Students will write a larger paper (2000-2500-word) that explores key themes, theories, and cases/other material from the course. Students will develop their own thesis and argument based on prompts and suggested topics distributed in class. The final essay should be an in-depth analysis of the concepts and cultural/social meanings explored in the course readings and films and must be based on your own original writing, with citations to course readings. Final essays will be due during the exam period.

More information on writing assignments, including due dates, will be made available to students on the course Brightspace site.

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