

Department of Anthropology

ANTHRO 3326G-200: Inheritance: Time, Memory, and Racial Afterlives

BRIEF COURSE OUTLINE

Winter 2027

Date: June 15, 2026

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:

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?

This course explores the anthropological study of inheritance as a way of tracing how pasts carry into the present not only through property or genetics, but through memory, silence, racialized structures, and affect. We examine 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.

The course combines weekly seminar discussions with an asynchronous Anthropological Practice Lab. Through field notebook exercises, material and archival analysis, oral history methods training, and reflective writing, students will develop skills in ethnographic observation, interpretation, and analysis while exploring the course themes in relation to their own lives and communities.

The anchor of the course is an Oral History Project, in which students design and conduct an interview, collaboratively analyze excerpts, and use their findings to develop an anthropological analysis of inheritance, memory, and social reproduction. Alongside this project, course materials include ethnographic texts, memoirs, films, visual culture, and oral histories, with thematic focuses such as kinship and rupture, haunting, archival absences, historical memory, racial afterlives, and the transmission of land.

A full course schedule including a week-by-week breakdown of topics and assigned readings will be posted on the OWL Brightspace course site at the beginning of the term.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify and explain key anthropological concepts related to inheritance, kinship, social reproduction, and memory
- Analyze ethnographic texts, films, and other media to show how different forms of inheritance are produced and experienced
- Conduct and analyze Oral History interviews;
- Situate individual narratives (particularly those gathered through oral history) within broader historical, political, and social contexts that shape what can be inherited and by whom
- Reflect critically on positionality and lived inheritances, considering how power, race, gender, class, and place organize one's relationships to course themes.

Course Materials:

Most of the readings for this course can be found in digital format on OWL Brightspace and through the "Course Readings" tool in the course OWL site, at no cost to students.

Note that the Course Readings service passes the readings through optical character recognition (OCR) software to render them accessible and searchable. If you encounter readings that are not formatted for accessibility, please bring this to my attention.

Textbook

There is no textbook required for this course. Assigned non-textual materials (ie. videos, art, podcasts) can all be found in digital format on the OWL Brightspace course site.

Other Materials

A physical notebook and black/blue ink pen is required. Any kind or size. If one cannot be acquired, please indicate as such on the survey (distributed during the first class) and one will be provided. Please bring these to each class.

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.

10%- Participation and Engagement

15%- Anthropological Process Portfolio

- Throughout the semester, students will complete short weekly activities during the asynchronous course hour to apply the readings to skills needed for the oral history project. In Week 10, students will submit a curated portfolio of selected lab activities along with a short reflective essay (approximately 500 words) that considers how their understanding of inheritance, memory, and anthropological practice developed over the course.

20%- Take Home Midterm Essay Exam (short and long answers, on content from the first 5 weeks of the course)

25%- Oral History Project

- Oral History Interview Proposal and 30-minute recorded interview- 10%

- Group Analysis Memo (1000 words)-15%

30%- Final Essay (due during the final exam period)

- Students will use the oral history project to respond to a prompt in ~2000 words.

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

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