

Students in Public exemplar details

Faculty, School and Subject Area: Humanities, SoSS, Social Anthropology

Course Unit/activity: SOAN20852 Materiality and Representation,

Course Unit Director/activity leader: Penelope Harvey

What is the assignment/knowledge product?
Blog

Why was it introduced? The course theme is materiality and representation and I wanted the students to make their own 'representation' through which they reflect on 'materiality' ... I can forward details of the task to you if that is useful.

Where is/could it be published?

At present the blogs are only visible to each student's tutorial group.

What are the challenges (e.g. copyright)?

Because the blogs are not made public there are no copyright issues at present

What are the student perceptions/responses/attainment?

Not clear what you are after with this question.

If published, how do you monitor use of the resource/s?

Not applicable in the current regime – although I do look through blackboard to monitor responses within the tutorial group.

Any other comments

Nothing at present – but I have no plans at present to make the blogs public either so not sure if this case will work for you.

The blogs are assessed as 20% of the mark for the course – It is the first time I have done this exercise so it also depends on the quality of what comes in ... once I see what the students actually come up with I'd also be happy to discuss whether this is something that could usefully be made public. My concerns would be on the 'challenges' – that we could get into areas of copyright in terms of the images they use, and ethical concerns around interviews etc. Currently I don't have to worry about any of that because the materials is totally closed and akin to a student essay.

Materiality and Representation

Unit code : SOAN20852

Credit rating : 20

Aims

- To introduce students to a range of key anthropological approaches to materiality, sensoriality and visuality.
- To introduce students to key theoretical approaches, including semiotics and phenomenology.
- To introduce students to the challenges of representation.

Objectives (Learning outcomes)

On completion of this unit, successful students will:

- Understand a range of concepts employed in anthropological approaches to human sensory perception of and engagement with matter and things;
- Become familiar with ethnographic analysis and the use of theory in the anthropology of materials, of the senses and of display;
- Acquire insight into how anthropology contributes to an understanding of how objects and materials shape human worlds;
- Become aware of the importance of cultural and historical variation in human perception of material forms;
- Engage in a critical analysis of material displays

Assessment methods

1. Assessed Essay of 3000 words. Weighting within unit: 70%
2. A short blog, using images and 500 words based on the course workshops. The blog will build from group discussions of the museum visit, the film screening and a personal accounts of the collection and display of material forms. Weighting within unit: 20%

3. Short class exercises drawing on seminar discussions of key concepts. Weighting within unit: 10%

Course unit overview

This course will introduce students to the ways in which objects and materials shape human worlds. We will discuss some of the key preoccupations and philosophical questions concerning objects and materials, and explore the anthropological debates that address such issues as the social life of things, the vitality of matter, and the affective force of material forms and substances. We will also consider the ways in which expressive arts and rituals use material forms and bodies as communicative media. The course will combine lectures and workshops - including a museum visit and a film screening. We will consider the qualities of materials such as texture and colour, and the ways in which material forms can move, unsettle or excite. We will address the material dimensions of key contemporary issues such as environmental change, toxicity and pollution, the built environment, and practices such as collecting, hoarding, and display. We will think about infrastructures and the ways in which material and informational forms combine, and we will also discuss the internet of things, virtual worlds, and spectral figures.