

Anthropology of the Aftermath: History, Eschaton, Ruin
Reading and Composition (R5B) in Anthropology
Fall 2019

Instructor: Aaron Eldridge

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Class Time and Location: 115 Kroeber Hall, Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 1:00 PM – 2:00PM

Office Hours and Location: Barrows 55, Monday 11:00AM-1:00PM (or by appointment)



COURSE DESCRIPTION

What does it mean to study the end or ending of things? What endures in the aftermath of the end of a social world, a life, an event? What are the ramifications of ending in social and cultural life? How do we determine (historically, ethnographically) let alone study the aftermath of things? This course will engage these questions through careful readings of multiple scholarly literatures: anthropology, literature, philosophy, history, critical theory, psychoanalysis, and religious studies. The course seeks to directly engage with aftermath as an analytic problem for history and social theory, examining among others: the shared horizon of revolution and eschatology, the historiographic problem of ending, and the possibility of cultural life in the wake of catastrophe.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The R5B courses emphasize the systematic practice of reading and writing with the aim to develop proficiency in research skills—analyzing (reading, writing, crafting an argument) as well as proper citing. By the end of the course, you should be able to: **1)** identify topics of interest/ objects of analysis, paradoxes, and ask questions about them; find and evaluate source materials; **2)** synthesize information from multiple sources and reflect that synthesis in prose; **3)** develop and argument about research in prose.

In order to *write* critically, you must practice how to *read* critically. Over the course of the semester, we will develop together a reading toolkit, sharpen our understanding of writing strategies, and practice how to build and express a well-supported argument in an academic paper.

REQUIRED BOOKS:

Antoon, Sinan. *The Baghdad Eucharist*. Translated by Maia Tabet. Hoopoe, 2017.

Lear, Jonathan. *Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation*. Harvard University Press, 2006.

In addition to the required texts above, which you can find at local bookstores and online, you will find all required readings uploaded onto our course website at bcourses.berkeley.edu

GRADING RUBRIC:

Class Participation/Attendance	20%
Short Essay (3 Pages):	5%
Critical Precis (2-3 pages)	
Precis #1	10%
Precis #2	10%
Midterm Essay (6-8 pages)	
First Draft	5%
Revised Draft	20%
Final Essay (10-12 pages)	
First Draft	5%
Revised Draft	25%

GUIDE TO THE WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

No extensions will be granted for papers, and late papers will lose one full letter grade a day. This is in part because periodically we will be doing peer-review and in-class editing of your papers on the days they are due. If you do not have a paper ready, you will not be able to participate in the class.

Short Essay

At the beginning of the course you will be asked to write a short essay on the first few readings. This assignment is largely to help you recall your writing skills and to warm up for further reflective reading and critical writing.

Critical Reading Reflections

You are required to write two precis about the class readings; these will be due on September 20th and October 11th. The purpose of this exercise is to develop your critical reading and analytical writing skills, and these reflections are also meant to help you write the two longer essays.

Midterm Essay

The Midterm essay will be a 6-8 page paper that is based on class readings. I will ask you to choose at least 3 different readings from the syllabus and put them in conversation.

Final Essay

This essay is a space for you to explore an aspect of the course that interests you and share your findings in the form of a 10-12 page paper.

Academic integrity and plagiarism

All writing for this course must be your own original work. When referring to the work of others, be it paraphrase or quote, use appropriate citations. Please refer to the citation guide from the Berkeley library in order to understand what plagiarism is and avoid accidentally committing it: <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/instruct/guides/citations.html> . We will also workshop this in class.

Resources

Celia Emmelhainz is our anthropology librarian. You may email her for an appointment at emmelhainz@berkeley.edu. Take advantage of these other resources as well:

UC Berkeley Student Learning Center: <https://slc.berkeley.edu/writing>

Library Research Advisory Service: <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/help/research-help>

Purdue Online Writing Lab: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html

COURSE POLICIES:

Reading: Each class begins with a discussion of a specified section of the required texts. You are responsible for all readings listed for a given class date. You are encouraged (but not required) to read ahead.

Attendance is mandatory. I will take attendance at the beginning of each class and will factor

this into your participation grade. No unexcused absences. Five absences will result in a zero for class participation. Please let me know in advance if you will be absent for a religious holiday or athletic event. In case of medical emergency please send me a note from your provider.

Accommodations: Please contact me with any concerns or specific needs you may have. Students who require special accommodation, including students with disabilities and student Athletes, are asked to speak to me by **September 13th**.

Participation is required throughout the class. Active listening and note taking is a good start, but you are also required to demonstrate your involvement through oral participation in class discussion and in the peer review workshops. In order to get full credit for participation, come to class prepared to discuss the readings each week.

Further Support: Confidential counseling services are available at the Tang Center. Please see <https://uhs.berkeley.edu/counseling> to learn more, or come talk to me or the anthropology undergraduate student affairs advisor Frances Bright (f.bright@berkeley.edu).

SCHEDULE OF COURSE READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Week One: Introduction

Wednesday August 28th

Welcome and introductions.

Friday August 30th

Anna Tsing, “Preface” and “Ch. 1 Arts of Noticing” in *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*

PART ONE: Historiography as Aftermath

Week Two

September 2nd

NO CLASS

Wednesday September 4th

Reinhardt Koselleck, “Preface” and “1. Modernity and the Planes of Historicity” (pp. 9-25) in *Futures Past*.

Friday September 6th

Workshop: Close reading and summarizing an argument.

Week Three

Monday September 9th

Reinhardt Koselleck, “2. Historia Magistra Vitae: The Dissolution of the Topos into the Perspective of a Modernized Historical Process” (pp. 26-42) in *Futures Past*.

Short Essay (3 pages) writing due.

Wednesday September 11th

Michel De Certeau, “The Inversion of What Can Be Thought: Religious History in the Seventeenth Century” (117-145) in *The Writing of History*.

Friday September 13th

Michel De Certeau, “The Formality of Practices from Religious Systems to the Ethics of the Enlightenment (the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries)” (145-205) in *The Writing of History*.

Week Four

Monday September 16th

Friedrich Nietzsche, “On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life” in *Untimely Mediations*.

Wednesday September 18th

Friedrich Nietzsche, “On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life” in *Untimely Mediations*, cont.

Friday September 20th

Workshop: Short essay feedback.

Critical Precis #1 Due

Week Five

Monday September 23rd

Charles Hirschkind “Granadan Reflections”, *Material Religion*, 12:2 (2016)

Wednesday September 25th

Charles Hirschkind “Granadan Reflections”, *Material Religion*, 12:2 (2016), cont.

Friday September 27th

Walter Benjamin “Theses on the Philosophy of History” in *Illuminations*

PART TWO: Eschatological Scenes

Week Six

Monday September 30th

Lenin, “What is to be done?” Chapters 1 and 2

Lenin, “The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism”

Wednesday October 2nd

Lenin, “What is to be done?”, cont.

Friday October 4th

Lahusen, T., “Decay or Endurance? The Ruins of Socialism”, *Slavic Review*, vol. 65, no. 4 (2006), pp. 736–46.

Week Seven

Monday October 7th

Pavel Florensky, “Lecture Two: The Contemporary and the Ecclesial World - Understanding Eschatological Signs” in *At the Crossroads of Science and Mysticism*

Wednesday October 9th

Pavel Florensky, “Lecture Three: On the Signs of the Epoch” in *At the Crossroads of Science and Mysticism*

Friday October 11th

Caroline Humphrey, “Schism, Event, and Revolution: The Old Believers of Trans-Baikalia.” *Current Anthropology* 55, no. S10 (December 1, 2014): S216–25.

Critical Precis #2 Due

Week Eight

Monday October 14th

Jonathan Lear, *Radical Hope*

Wednesday October 16th

Jonathan Lear, *Radical Hope*, cont.

Friday October 18th

Jonathan Lear, *Radical Hope*, cont.

Week Nine

Monday October 21st

Jonathan Lear, *Radical Hope*, cont.

Wednesday October 23rd

Brian Goldstone. "Critique of Abysmal Reasoning." *Theory & Event* 11, no. 2 (2008)

Friday October 25th

Workshop. Peer Review in class.

Midterm Essay First Draft (6-8 pages) due.

PART THREE: Ruin Inexistent

Week Ten

Monday October 28th

Film - *Stalker* Andrei Tarkovsky

Tarkovsky, 'Chapter VI: The author in search of an audience' in *Sculpting in Time*

Wednesday October 30th

Film - *Stalker* Andrei Tarkovsky

Friday November 1st

Film - *Stalker* Andrei Tarkovsky

Midterm Essay Revised Draft (6-8 pages) due online.

Week Eleven

Monday November 4th

Gil Anidjar (2006) "Futures of al-Andalus." *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*, 7:3, 225-239.

Wednesday November 6th

Elanor Kaufman. "The Inexistence of the Western Jewish Archive." *PMLA* 127, no. 2 (2012): 375-79.

Friday November 8th

Workshop: Writing the Final Research Paper (choosing a research topic, formulating a research question, finding sources). Final paper discussion.

Week Twelve

Monday November 11th

NO CLASS

Wednesday November 13th

Stefania Pandolfo, "Divine Trial and Experimentum Mentis: The Psychoanalyst, The Imam, and The Ordeal of Madness" (2018)

Friday November 15th

Workshop: Improving writing style

Week Thirteen

Monday November 18th

Sinan Antoon, *The Baghdad Eucharist* (2014)

Wednesday November 20th

Sinan Antoon, *The Baghdad Eucharist* (2014), cont.

Friday November 22nd

Sinan Antoon, *The Baghdad Eucharist* (2014), cont.

****Abstract/outline/bibliography for final research paper project due in class****

Week Fourteen

Monday November 25th

Writing Workshop: Guidelines for Peer Review Feedback

Wednesday November 27th

NON-INSTRUCTIONAL DAY (NO CLASS)

Friday November 29th

NO CLASS

Week Fifteen

Monday December 2nd

******First draft of final essay due in class******

Student Peer Review Sessions

Wednesday December 4th

Student Peer Review Sessions

Friday December 6th

Final discussion and reflections on the course themes

Evaluations

****** FINAL ESSAY REVISED, DUE MONDAY December 16th online by 5pm******