



Anthropology 297
The Anthropology of Experts and Expertise
Seminar, Fridays 10-1, Haines 314

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Overview

How are power and knowledge re-oriented as expertise becomes more common, easier to access and more diverse? Are disputes about truth, accuracy, measurement or evidence being adjudicated differently, and with what impact on political or governmental practices? What technological and political thresholds have been crossed, and what continuities with older forms of expertise persist? What difference have the Internet, new media and rapid technological innovation made to the formation of collectives and how are experts adapting their skills and knowledge to them? How are practices of government, development or management being rearranged in light of more need for expertise, increasingly complex social and environmental problems, and changing understandings of the role of publics, markets and government power in addressing them?

This course addresses both classic understandings of expertise and experts, as well as newer attempts to make sense of them, primarily in social sciences and philosophy, with an emphasis on anthropology, sociology, philosophy and science studies. Key topics of scientific and technologically governed domains like climate change, surveillance and security, global health, work, international development, labor and production will be covered alongside renewed questions of expert/lay participation in citizen science, international development, participatory democracy, hacking, hacktivism and new protest movements.

The course meets once a week for 3 hours, students are expected to attend all sessions, write reading responses and conduct a quarter-long exploration of a form of expertise relevant to the course.

Goals

The goals of the course include

- To explore concepts and practices of expertise across disciplines and domains, with special attention to both disciplinary differences in approach and substantive distinctions in practice.
- To understand the relationship between expertise and nonexpertise—amateurism, lay participation, unskilled, deskilled, illegitimate expertise, etc.
- To investigate a particular form of expertise and come to an understanding of what is involved in becoming such an expert as well as how it fits into the political and technological contexts where it functions.

Requirements

Students will be graded on three things:

- *25% Discussion and intellectual engagement:* Students are required to attend at least 9 of 10 sessions (from beginning to end), participate in discussion, and present their own independent investigations on the topic in class where appropriate.
- *25% Reading responses:* Students are required to submit a total of eight reading responses. These are to be divided into four (4) prospective and four (4) retrospective reports in any combination. Prospective reports are due no later than 24 hours **before** class meets. These responses are expected to help guide discussion, raise issues for clarification, and connect to the ongoing research project (see below). Retrospective reading responses are due no later than 24 hours **after** class meets. These responses reflect on the discussion that occurred in class. Remember that you can only do four of each kind, lest your procrastination get the better of you.
- *50% Quarter long research project:* Become an expert. Can you? Why or why not? If not, what kinds of things do you need to know or experience to become this kind of expert? What would it take, and how long and in what ways, to become this expert? Pick a domain where expertise plays a key role. Throughout the course, investigate this domain in as many ways as you can. Your reading responses and discussion in class can reflect this interest, as you attempt to connect it to the readings for each week. By the end of the course you will produce a paper (no longer than 6000 words) which summarizes your understanding of the case in terms of the readings and discussions in the course. What kind of expertise is at stake? Who are the experts and how did they become experts? What is the relation of expertise to governance, ethics, politics?

Some examples of contemporary issues that might make for interesting cases: Apple iPhone backdoors, Zika, ISIS/ISIL, Flint, Michigan, Refugees and Asylum, disasters, recent or ongoing (Fukushima, earthquakes, storms), etc..

Books and Articles

Books to buy at the bookstore:

- Max Weber. *The Vocation Lectures (Hackett Classics)*. New York: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2004
- Harry M. Collins. *Rethinking expertise*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007
- Penelope Harvey. *Roads : an anthropology of infrastructure and expertise*. Ithaca London: Cornell University Press, 2015
- Candis Callison. *How climate change comes to matter : the communal life of facts*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014
- Timothy Mitchell. *Rule of experts Egypt, techno-politics, modernity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002
- Peter Miller. *Governing the present : administering economic, social and personal life*. Cambridge: Polity, 2008

- Tania Li. *The will to improve : governmentality, development, and the practice of politics*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007
- E Coleman. *Hacker, hoaxer, whistleblower, spy : the many faces of Anonymous*. London Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2015
- Stephen Collier, Andrew Lakoff, and Christopher Kelty. *Limn Number 5: Ebola's ecologies*. California: CreateSpace, 2015

All other materials will be available as PDFs on the CCLE Website.

Syllabus

Part 1: [Weeks 1-2] Overviews and Classics What kinds of things do we care about when we care about experts and expertise? How is it related to professionals, scientists, skilled labor, manual and mental labor, calling, vocation, knowledge/power, doxa/epistemé, omnicompetent individuals and great communities, rational actors and think tanks and so on. What kinds of empirical, critical and philosophical work has been done in this domain?

Part 2: [Weeks 3-4] The Phenomenology of Expertise What does it feel like to be an expert? What's the relation between the expert and the expertise? Craft, skill, mastery, vs. credentials and rituals of legitimation. How does apprenticeship relate to expertise, and how is embodied expertise transformed into bureaucratic structure or systematic forms of management and audit?

Part 3: [Weeks 5-6] Truth and Politics How is expert knowledge related to political power? How are different kinds of expertise arranged along with different forms of political and governmental systems? Who are the “meta-experts” in this form of arrangement?

Part 4: [Weeks 7-10] Cases A look at expertise, experts, science and government in several domains: climate change, infrastructure, international development/aid, and information technology.

Detailed Schedule

Part 1: Overviews and Classics

EXPERT

Expert is from fw *expert*, oF, rw *expertus*, L, past participle of *experiri* - to try. It appeared in English, as an adjective, in 1C14, at the same time as the closely related **experience**. It is characteristic that it began to be used as a noun - *an expert* - from eC19, in an industrial society which put increasing emphasis on specialization and qualification. It has continued to be used over a wide range of activities, at times with a certain vagueness (cf. *qualified* and the more deliberate *formal qualifications*). It is interesting that *inexpert*, as a noun in the opposite sense, was occasionally used from 1C19, but the main word in this sense is, of course, *layman*, generalized from the old contrast between *laymen* and *clerics*. *Lay* is from fw *laicus*, L - not of the clergy, from rw *laikos*, Gk - of the people. There is a comparable movement in *profession*, C13, from rw *profiteri*, L - to declare aloud, which was originally an avowal of religious belief, becoming the basis of two nouns; *professor* - a ranked teacher, C14, an avower, C15; and *professional*, C18, in a widening range of vocations and occupations. *Amateur*, fw

amatore. It, rw *amator*, L - lover, and thence one who loves something, developed in an opposed pairing with *professional* (first as a matter of relative skill, later as a class and then monetary distinction) from C18.

See INTELLECTUAL

From: R. Williams. *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. Routledge re-
vivals. Routledge, 2011

Friday April 1, Orientation and Classic readings

Required Readings

- Max Weber. *The Vocation Lectures (Hackett Classics)*. New York: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2004
- Laura Nader. “Up the Anthropologist: Perspectives Gained from Studying Up”. In: *Reinventing Anthropology*. Ed. by Dell Hymes. New York: Pantheon Books, 1972, pp. 284–311
- Andrew Abbott. *The system of professions: An essay on the division of expert labor*. University of Chicago Press, 2014, Introduction only.

Reviews

- Dominic Boyer. “Thinking through the Anthropology of Experts”. In: *Anthropology in Action* 15.2 (2008), pp. 38–46
- Gil Eyal and Larissa Buchholz. “From the Sociology of Intellectuals to the Sociology of Interventions”. In: *Annual Review of Sociology* 36 (2010), pp. 117–137
- E Summerson Carr. “Enactments of expertise”. In: *Annual Review of Anthropology* 39 (2010), pp. 17–32

Optional/Selections

- Lucien Lévy-Bruhl. *How Natives Think*. New York: A. A. Knopf, 1925
- Paul Radin. *Primitive man as philosopher*. New York: NYRB Classics, 2015
- Claude Lévi-Strauss. *The Savage Mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966
- Diana E Forsythe. “Ethics and politics of studying up in technoscience”. In: *Anthropology of Work Review* 20.1 (1999), pp. 6–11
- Nick Seaver. “Studying Up: The Ethnography of Technologists”. In: *Ethnography Matters (blog)* (2014)
- Hugh Gusterson. “Studying up revisited”. In: *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 20.1 (1997), pp. 114–119
- Ulf Hannerz. “Studying down, up, sideways, through, backwards, forwards, away and at home: Reflections on the field worries of an expansive discipline”. In: *Locating the field: space, place and context in anthropology* (2006), pp. 23–42
- Sherry B Ortner. “Access: Reflections on studying up in Hollywood”. In: *Ethnography* 11.2 (2010), pp. 211–233

- Esther Priyadharshini. “Coming unstuck: Thinking otherwise about “studying up””. In: *Anthropology & education quarterly* 34.4 (2003), pp. 420–437

Friday April 8 Contemporary theories of expertise

Required

- Harry M. Collins. *Rethinking expertise*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007
- Gil Eyal. “For a Sociology of Expertise: The Social Origins of the Autism Epidemic”. In: *American Journal of Sociology* 118.4 (2013), pp. 863–907

Optional/Selections

- Pierre Bourdieu. *Distinction : a social critique of the judgement of taste*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1984
- Evan Selinger and Robert P. Crease. *The philosophy of expertise*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006

Part 2: The phenomenology of expertise

Friday April 15, Expertise, Corporeality and the AI Debates

Required Readings

- “Expertise” in Alessandro Duranti. *Key terms in language and culture*. Malden, Mass: Blackwell, 2001.
- Hubert Dreyfus and Stuart Dreyfus. *Mind over machine : the power of human intuition and expertise in the era of the computer*. New York: Free Press, 1986, Prologue, chapters 1 and 4, Conclusion and Epilogue.
- Hubert Dreyfus. *What computers still can't do : a critique of artificial reason*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1992, part III pps. 143-194.
- Nick Seaver. “The nice thing about context is that everyone has it”. In: *Media, Culture and Society* 37.7 (2015), pp. 1101–1109

Optional/Selections

- Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. *Flow : the psychology of optimal experience*. New York: Harper-Perennial, 1991
- Michael Polanyi. *The tacit dimension*. Chicago London: University of Chicago Press, 2009
- Schön. *The reflective practitioner : how professionals think in action*. New York: Basic Books, 1983

Friday April 22: Cont'd

Required Readings

- Natasha Dow Schüll. *Addiction by Design: Machine Gambling in Las Vegas*. First Edition. Princeton University Press, 2012 Chapters 2, 5 and 6.
- Dominic Boyer. “The corporeality of expertise”. In: *Ethnos* 70.2 (2005), pp. 243–266

- Erin O'Connor. "Glassblowing Tools: Extending the Body Towards Practical Knowledge and Informing a Social World". In: *Qualitative Sociology* 29.2 (2006), pp. 177–193
- Hélène Mialet. "Do angels have bodies? Two stories about subjectivity in science: The cases of William X and Mister H". in: *Social Studies of Science* 29.4 (1999), pp. 551–581

Optional/Selections

- Richard Sennett. *The craftsman*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008
- Graham Jones. *Trade of the Tricks Inside the Magician's Craft*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011
- Natasha Myers. *Rendering life molecular : models, modelers, and excitable matter*. Durham London: Duke University Press, 2015
- Harry West. *Ethnographic sorcery*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007

Part 3: Experts in Truth and Politics

Friday April 29

Required Readings

- Timothy Mitchell. *Rule of experts Egypt, techno-politics, modernity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002, Introduction, Chapters 1, 7, 8, and 9.
- Peter Miller. *Governing the present : administering economic, social and personal life*. Cambridge: Polity, 2008, Introduction, Chapters 5, 7 and 8

Optional/Selections

- C Mills. *The power elite*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999
- Paul Rabinow. *French modern : norms and forms of the social environment*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995
- Paul Rabinow. *Making PCR : a story of biotechnology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996

Friday May 6

Required Readings

- Stephen Collier, Andrew Lakoff, and Christopher Kelty. *Limn Number 5: Ebola's ecologies*. California: CreateSpace, 2015
- Stephen J Collier and Andrew Lakoff. *Vital Systems Security: Reflexive Biopolitics and the Government of Emergency*. Vol. 32. 2. 2015, pp. 19–51
- "What is critique?" in Michel Foucault. *The Politics of Truth*. Ed. by Sylvère Lotringer. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 1997 (Experts on Magic should read "Christianity and Confession" instead).
- Stephen J Collier. "Topologies of Power Foucault's Analysis of Political Government beyond 'Governmentality'". In: *Culture & Society* SAGE 26.6 (2009), pp. 78–108

- Noortje Marres. “The costs of public involvement Everyday devices of carbon accounting and the materialization of participation”. In: *Economy and Society* 40.4 (2011), pp. 510–533

Optional/Selections

Part 4: Cases

Friday May 13

Required Texts

- Candis Callison. *How climate change comes to matter : the communal life of facts*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014

Optional/Selections

- Paul Edwards. *A vast machine : computer models, climate data, and the politics of global warming*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2010

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Friday May 20

Required Texts

- Tania Li. *The will to improve : governmentality, development, and the practice of politics*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007

Optional/Selections

- David Mosse. *Adventures in Aidland : the anthropology of professionals in international development*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2011
- Susan Greenhalgh. *Just one child : science and policy in Deng’s China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008
- Maia Green. *The development state : aid, culture and civil society in Tanzania*. Woodbridge, Suffolk Rochester, NY: James Currey, 2014
- James Scott. *Seeing like a state : how certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998

Friday May 27

Required Reading

Penelope Harvey. *Roads : an anthropology of infrastructure and expertise*. Ithaca London: Cornell University Press, 2015

Optional/Selections

- Deborah Cowen. *The deadly life of logistics : mapping violence in global trade*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014
- *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management Safety Science*

Friday June 3 IT/Security/Crisis

Required Reading

- E Coleman. *Hacker, hoaxer, whistleblower, spy : the many faces of Anonymous*. London Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2015

Optional/Selections

- Joseph Masco. *The theater of operations : national security affect from the Cold War to the War on Terror*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014

Friday June 10 *Research Paper Due*