The ethnography of indigenous communities in South America has been a vibrant field of study in anthropology throughout the past decades. It has fostered key theoretical developments, including the highly influential ontological turn in sociocultural anthropology, and contributed importantly to the study of verbal art, performance, ritual, and oratory in linguistic anthropology. In this course we will read and discuss ethnographies and theoretical works about the languages and cultures of the continent. Our goal is to learn about the distinctiveness of particular indigenous communities, their languages, rituals, and everyday life and struggles, as well as understand general features of Amerindian cosmologies and practices. We will also discuss the effects of and responses to contact with national societies. The particular contribution of Amerindian ethnographic material to the anthropological concepts of "language" and "culture" will be the central concern of the course.

Prerequisites

While there is no mandatory prerequisite for this course, background in linguistic anthropology is essential. If you have not taken courses in linguistic anthropology at UCLA please discuss with the TA or instructor in order to make up any relevant material.

Course requirements

Full attendance of lectures and sections and all assigned readings are required! There will be frequent in-class multiple-choice quizzes on the readings, two cumulative in-class midterm quizzes in weeks 4 and 8, and an individual research project (there will be no regular midterm or final).

Readings: This is a reading-intensive course (over 100 pages/week)! Unless marked as optional all readings are required. You must finish all readings listed under each lecture before that lecture. Make sure to start early and read ahead; begin reading for week 3 in week 2, for example. You are expected to be able to answer quizzes and questions about the content of the readings in class.

In-class multiple-choice quizzes: You should expect a short quiz of up to three multiple-choice questions on the content of the readings every lecture. The quizzes will be administered with the PollEverywhere software platform.
**Cumulative in-class midterm quizzes:** There will be two short cumulative in-class quizzes (no longer than 20 min) in week 4 and week 8.

**Individual final paper:** You will write a final essay (10–12 pages, double spaced) for which you will do your own library research. Detailed instructions will be given out in week 3.

**Grading breakdown**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and participation</td>
<td>20 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-class quizzes</td>
<td>20 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative in-class midterm quizzes</td>
<td>20 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>40 %</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Accommodations**

For accommodations due to special needs please contact the UCLA Center for Accessible Education: A255 Murphy Hall, [www.cae.ucla.edu](http://www.cae.ucla.edu), (310) 825-1501.

**Attendance and participation**

Everyone is expected to attend every class and every section in its full length. Please arrive on time, be prepared, and stay until the end. It is disrespectful to your classmates and to the instructor to leave early or arrive excessively late. Turn off cellphones before the beginning of each class.

During discussions, you are expected to show respect to your classmates and the instructor. Although you may have a divergent or dissenting perspective on a certain topic, please be tolerant and respectful of others’ opinions and make sure to fully listen and understand their points before offering yours.

This is a screen-free class. Electronic devices are distracting for you and others around you. You will need an electronic device to answer quiz questions at the beginning of class but you must turn it off for the remainder of the class. If you need accommodations, please approach the instructor or the TA.

**Absences and lateness**

No points will be deducted for absences, lateness, and late assignments if they are due to (physical or mental) health issues, family emergencies, or jury duty, but you must provide documentation upon your return. Health issues must be documented through the university health system. If you arrive late to lecture you might miss the quiz and will not get credit for either the quiz or for attendance. Arriving late twice counts as one absence. In the case of the inability to turn in an assignment on time you must inform your TA 24 hours in advance of the deadline.

It is your responsibility to obtain information about topics discussed and announcements made in class during your absence from classmates or by coming to office hours (please do not email the instructors in these cases!). While we also make use of class email to communicate to students, most announcements and instructions for assignments will only be available in class. If you know you will have to miss a class, please ask one of your classmates to update you on what was discussed and take extra copies of any material that was handed out.

Please write down the email and/or phone–number of two of your classmates for this purpose below:

______________________________________________          ______________________________________________
Resources

Undergraduate Writing Center: Unless you have already taken a number of writing-intensive anthropology classes at UCLA you should make use of the Undergraduate Writing Center. It offers UCLA undergraduates one-on-one sessions with Peer Learning Facilitators trained to help with writing assignments from across the curriculum. Especially if English is not your first language, it is highly recommended to go over your writing with one of them. You can schedule appointments online at www.wp.ucla.edu/uwc or go directly to A61 Humanities for shorter walk-in appointments (10am–5pm, starting week 2 on a first come first serve basis).

Libraries: There are many libraries on campus. Some online tools to get you started can be found at: http://www.library.ucla.edu/support/research-help/start-your-own-research-guide-or-tutorial

Email policy

You must include “Anthro 159” in the subject line of your email to ensure the we receive them. We generally respond to emails within 24 hours. Should you not get a response within that timeframe kindly resend your email.

Please email us only about important matters that you cannot raise in person right after class or in office hours, and which can be answered in a few sentences. For non-urgent or complex issues please always come to office hours.

No emails about assignments or exams will be answered for the 24 hours before they are due, so make sure you start early. No emails about grades will be answered until 24 hours have passed after they are posted.

Academic integrity

All information that you use in your written assignments must be properly sourced. All references to, paraphrases of, and quotations from the articles must be properly referenced using in-text citations following the AAA/Chicago Author–Date format. The use of not properly sourced material in your academic work is considered plagiarism and will be dealt with through the office of the dean of students. Please review the UCLA policy on plagiarism here: http://www.registrar.ucla.edu/Registration-Classes/Enrollment-Policies/Class-Policies/Plagiarism-and-Student-Copyright

Readings

All readings will be provided as PDFs through the course website.

The syllabus is subject to minor changes throughout the quarter.
Class Schedule

Week 1

Monday, April 2 — Preliminaries / The Embrace of the Serpent
Movie “The Embrace of the Serpent” by Ciro Guerra.

Wednesday, April 4 — The Embrace of the Serpent
Movie “The Embrace of the Serpent” by Ciro Guerra, cont’d.

Week 2

Monday, April 9 — Ethnographic Introduction and Historical Overview


Optional:


Wednesday, April 11 — Linguistic Anthropology of Indigenous South America

Background to Linguistic Anthropology:

Week 3

**Monday, April 16 — Multilingualism and Community Formation**


Optional:


**Wednesday, April 18 — Modes of Discourse I**


Week 4

**Monday, April 23 — Modes of Discourse II**


**Wednesday, April 25 — Narratives and Oral History**


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**In-Class Cumulative Quiz I**
# Week 5

**Monday, April 30 — Language, Culture, and the Politics of Representation I**


**Wednesday, May 2 — Language, Culture, and the Politics of Representation II**


# Week 6

**Monday, May 7 — Indigenous Activism and the Environment**


**Wednesday, May 9 — Culture and Nature in Amerindian Thought**


# Week 7

**Monday, May 14 — Beyond Culture and Nature**


Optional:

Wednesday, May 16 — The Power of Song

Week 8

Monday, May 21 — Communication Beyond the Human I

Wednesday, May 23 — Communication Beyond the Human II

In-Class Cumulative Quiz II

Week 9

Monday, May 28 — Language, Ontology, and Difference

Wednesday, May 30 — Language Beyond Speech: Materiality and Self

### Week 10

**Monday, June 4 — Encounters and Transformations II**


**Wednesday, June 6 — Encounters and Transformations III**


### Finals Week

**Monday, June 11, 3pm**

*Due: Final papers*, PDF upload and hardcopy to front desk of Anthropology Department.