Course description:

This course examines covert and illicit forms of knowledge (and knowledge-making) as anthropological problems. It centers the modes of surveillance, suspicion, and secrecy as both fruitful lenses for thinking about sociality, and pressing social issues in and of themselves. We will draw together, discuss, and evaluate a range of conceptual tools for tackling these topics, including texts in anthropology, sociology, political theory, history, and popular culture. In doing so, we will situate the covert as a matter of both ethics (how should we act?) and epistemology (how do we know?). Throughout, we will pay particular attention to the sometimes uncomfortable relationships between surveillance, secrecy, and social science research.

As a class, in line with our needs and interests, we will develop questions to guide our inquiry. These may include: What is the social force and function of the secret? What kinds of conditions sustain, and disrupt secrecy? What kind of methods, ethics, and technologies are needed to study surveillance today? How do emerging techniques of surveillance relate to historical (particularly imperial and carceral) formations of the same? How do we deal with secrecy in our research and writing? And what kinds of knowledge production are possible outside a framework of secrecy / revelation?

Learning outcomes:

In this course, students will be expected to:

- Establish a working understanding of anthropological (and a few other) approaches to covert and illicit knowledge
- Grapple with the practical and ethical dilemmas posed by secrecy, suspicion, and surveillance in relation to ethnographic (and more broadly, interpersonal) research
- Critically analyze contemporary examples of surveillance in relation to relevant theories and texts
- Actively contribute to the intellectual community of the class

Course materials:

Readings (journal articles and selections from books) will be made available as PDFs on the course eLearning site. I strongly recommend, however, that graduate students purchase and read the following three ethnographies in their entirety:


**Evaluation:**

**Assessment**

Your grade will be calculated based on the following components:

- *Participation (15%) – Ongoing*
- *Reading Responses, or “QCQs” (35%) – Due every Monday (that we have class)*
- *Surveillance Presentations (15%) – To be scheduled*
- *Final Paper (35%) – Due Dec. 10*

*Participation* will be assessed on the basis of your in-class contributions, including discussions, group work, and activities.

“QCQs,” or “Quotation, Comment, Questions,” are short reading responses designed to guide and sharpen your engagement with course texts. First, you will locate a quotation in one of the week’s assigned readings that might be interesting, troubling, or confusing to you. Next, discuss (in approximately 300 words) the significance of this quotation in relation to the reading and the course themes. Finally, building on your quotation and commentary, pose a question that might prompt further discussion from the class.

In Unit II, each student will make a short *Surveillance Presentation*: find one specific instance of surveillance that interests you, and bring it to the class for us to think and talk about. Your examples can be contemporary or historical, real or fictional, local to UF or far away. You do not need to become an expert on your subject or prepare a formal talk – instead, think of this as an adult show and tell: explain your object’s basic contours and why it interests you in the context of this class.

*Final papers* will be introduced and explained in class.

**Grading scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100-93</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>82-80</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>69-67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>92-90</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>79-77</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>66-63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89-87</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>76-73</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>62-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>86-83</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>72-70</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assignments, late policy, and “grace day”

Written assignments (QCQs and Final Papers) should be submitted online through the course eLearning site. All assignments are due by the start of class on the due date.

I will grant extensions only in the case of exceptional circumstances, and only if you make arrangements with me in advance. In all other cases, your mark will be reduced by 5% for every day that your assignment is late.

That said, we all come up against the unexpected and unavoidable. For this reason, each student is granted one “grace day” that you may use to turn in one assignment one day (24 hours) after it is due. When invoking your grace day, simply write “Grace” in the comment box of your submission on eLearning.

Accessibility and accommodations

UF is committed to achieving full accessibility for people with disabilities, and I am committed to making this classroom accessible to you. If you are a student with a disability and think you may need accommodations, you are encouraged to register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/, or 001 Reid Hall) as soon as possible (but also know that it is never too late). Present your accommodation letter promptly, so I can make the necessary accommodations. Whether or not you are registered with the Disability Resource Center, I always welcome feedback about how to make this class more accessible – to you in particular, or overall.

Academic integrity

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code.” The Honor Code (http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions.

In this course, cheating and plagiarized work will result in a grade of zero, and will be reported to the Dean of Students.

Course policies

Expectations

Your full participation in this course is vital for building our intellectual community. I will offer short lectures to introduce context, case studies, and counter-examples, but the majority of our class time will be spent in conversation. Participation, then, requires having read, reflected on, and otherwise prepared yourself to discuss the day’s assignments. This doesn’t mean you need to understand everything! Or have a fully-formed opinion, or a uniquely brilliant hot take. But I do expect you to make time for careful, close reading, and come to class with any questions you have. Readings listed under a course date should be read by the start of class that day.
Communication

Email should be used for brief or urgent matters only – please bring questions about course content and assignments to class or office hours. I will reply to all emails sent during the week within 48 hours, but will not respond to course email over the weekend. Please plan accordingly if you need a quick reply.

Technology

Laptops are permitted in class for the purpose of consulting readings, taking notes, and completing activities. Using them in other ways is disrespectful (and obvious!), and you will be asked to leave the classroom if you do so. Cell phones should be turned off or kept on silent. Please come to class each day with a notebook and writing utensil, even if you plan to take notes on your computer.

Evaluations

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at: https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

University Resources

Library / Research Support: http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask

E-Learning / Technical Support: learningsupport@ufl.edu / 352-392-4357 (select option 2)

Counseling and Wellness Center: https://counseling.ufl.edu / 352-392-1575

U Matter, We Care (Resources for students in distress): umatter@ufl.edu / 352-294-2273

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS): Student Health Care Center / 352-392-1161
Course Schedule:

WEEK 1 | Introductions

W 8/21
[No reading due]

UNIT 1: HIDING

WEEK 2 | The Secret and Society

M 8/26

W 8/28

WEEK 3 | NO CLASS

WEEK 4 | Cultures of Secrecy

M 9/9


W 9/11

WEEK 5 | Transparency, Opacity

M 9/16

W 9/18

WEEK 6 | States, Institutions, Information

M 9/23
W 9/25

**UNIT II: WATCHING**

**WEEK 7 | Surveillance: Foundations**

M 9/30
Michel Foucault (1975). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, “Docile Bodies” (pp. 135-169) and “Panopticism” (pp. 200-204 only). Vintage Books.

W 10/2

**WEEK 8 | Surveillance: Emerging Formations**

M 10/7


W 10/9

**WEEK 9 | Surveillant Intimacies, Surveillant Affects**

M 10/14

W 10/16
WEEK 10 | Perception, Preemption, Prevention

M 10/21


W 10/23

WEEK 11 | Evasion

M 10/28


W 10/30

UNIT III: KNOWING

WEEK 12 | Anthropology and Espionage

M 11/4


W 11/6
WEEK 13 | Secrecy and Ethnography

M 11/11 - NO CLASS

W 11/13

WEEK 14 | Secrecy and Ethnography (cont.)

M 11/18

W 11/20 - NO CLASS

WEEK 15 | Suspicion, Paranoia, Conspiracy

M 11/25
Eve Sedgwick (2002). *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*, “Chapter Four: Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, Or, You’re So Paranoid You Probably Think This Chapter is About You” (pp. 123-152). Duke University Press.


W 11/27 - NO CLASS

WEEK 16 | Writing Around Knowledge

M 12/2


W 12/4