

## ANTH 472: PHOTO-ETHNOGRAPHY

FALL 2024 /// TUESDAY & THURSDAY, 12:30-1:50 PM



**Instructor: John Alexander, Artist in Residence, East Asian Languages and Cultures  
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ANTH 472 is a practice-based course that explores anthropology's complex entanglements with photography, both historically and in contemporary anthropological practice.

The course seeks to understand and critique anthropology's theoretical and methodological approaches to photography and photographs, serving as a prism into the discipline's shifting concerns over observation, representation, evidence, truth, agency, and power.

A key concern of the course is the relationship between photography and the practice of ethnography. We will explore the limits and possibilities of photography as a mode of ethnographic inquiry, while also focusing on the relationship between the written and the visual as "ways of knowing" in anthropology and related fields.

Making and discussing photographs constitutes a major component of the course, which devotes significant time to practice-based experiments in ethnographic-documentary photography. Over the course of the semester, in addition to smaller thematic and conceptual assignments, you will develop a substantial photo-ethnographic project on a topic of your choosing. You will be encouraged to think expansively and creatively and to challenge conventional modes of research and practice.

ANTH 472 takes a broad, interdisciplinary approach to the study of photography, photographic theory, and anthropology, engaging with critical issues and debates in the fields of visual anthropology, contemporary art, art history, post-colonial studies, and documentary studies.

ANTH 472 has no prerequisites. Students with prior experience in photography and media production are especially encouraged to enroll.

Image credits (l-r):

Waldemar Jochelson, 1901, "Yukaghir man and woman, showing costumes from rear, Siberia," AMNH Research Library

Pushpamala N, 2000-2004, *Native Women of South India: Manners and Customs (The Ethnographic Series)*

Stephanie Syjuco, 2016, "Cargo Cults (Cover-Up)"