

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY
ANTH 425 POWER AND CHANGE: ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE MIDDLE CLASS
COURSE OUTLINE, FALL 2024

I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. This territory is covered by the "Treaties of Peace and Friendship" which Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) Peoples first signed with the British Crown in 1725. The treaties did not deal with surrender of lands and resources but, rather, recognized Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: The focus this year is on "middle classing" – how fears of downward socio-economic mobility for some and seeking opportunities to get ahead through education or borrowing for others upset and reinforce power relations. What is the middle class? Is it an identity or the process by which one strives to attain social position? What does middle classness mean in different societies around the world? How is it achieved and performed? What are the gendered and racialized dimensions of middle-class identity? This course explores how these questions have been addressed in ethnographic research.

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Susan Vincent [contact information: telephone: 867-5281; email: svincent@stfx.ca; office: JBB 335E]

OFFICE HOURS (Sept. 4 to Dec. 6, excluding the Study Break): Mondays 1400-1600; Tuesdays 1300-1600; Wednesdays 1600-1700, or by appointment. I am also happy to respond to emails.

REQUIRED READINGS: Available on the library's electronic databases, on Moodle, or on the internet.

EVALUATION:

Active participation in course/contribution to discussion:	10
Reflective responses:	10
Essay plan (due October 2)	20
Essay (due November 20):	30
Presentation of essay/Pecha Kucha (December 4):	10
Final take home exam (December 11):	20

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Reading/activity. How to read: Don't feel you have to read each reading in detail (unless you want to). You might only glance at some, but find yourself fascinated by others. Make a note of the things that you find exciting, insightful, perplexing, or that catch your attention. Think about how these relate to your own experience or perceptions of the middle class. Come to class prepared to discuss your ideas. You are welcome and encouraged to find more sources on a particular issue if one strikes you as interesting.
Sept. 4	Introduction.
Sept. 11	INITIAL STATEMENT ON WHAT YOU UNDERSTAND BY "MIDDLE CLASS" DUE. Theoretical framings. READ: Holt, Douglas B. 1997. "Distinction in America? Recovering Bourdieu's theory of tastes from its critics." <i>Poetics</i> 25(2-3): 93-120. Graeber, David. 2014. "Anthropology and the rise of the professional-managerial class." <i>HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory</i> 4(3): 73-88.
Sept. 18	Fears of downward mobility among the middle class. READ: Jefferson, Anna. 2015. "'Not what it used to be': Schemas of class and contradiction in the Great Recession." <i>Economic Anthropology</i> 2(2): 310-325. Jefferson, Anna, and Charlotte Perez. 2023. "Modifying the American dream: An ethnography of foreclosure prevention in the great recession." <i>Papeles de Identidad</i> : 278-278. Lawson, Victoria, and Middle Class Poverty Politics Research Group. 2012. "Decentring poverty studies: Middle class alliances and the social construction of poverty." <i>Singapore journal of tropical geography</i> 33(1): 1-19. (Mostly theoretical) Matos, Patricia. 2012. "Call center labor and the injured precariat: shame, stigma, and downward social mobility in contemporary Portugal." <i>Dialectical Anthropology</i> 36: 217-243.
Sept. 25	Property, home ownership, debt and the middle class. READ: Chipkin, Ivor. 2012. "Middle-Classing in Roodepoort." <i>Capitalism and Social Change in South Africa</i> . Public Affairs Research Institute Long Essays 2. (This is quite long, so skip through it for things of interest). Donner, Henrike. 2022. "Liminal states: Propertied citizenship and gendered kin work in middle-class Kolkata families." <i>Critique of Anthropology</i> 42(4): 457-476. Mikuš, Marek. 2022. "'New'but 'Squeezed': Middle Class and Mortgaged Homeownership in Croatia." <i>Critique of Anthropology</i> 42(4): 439-456. Weiss, Hadas. 2014. "Homeownership in Israel: the social costs of middle-class debt." <i>Cultural anthropology</i> 29(1): 128-149.

Oct. 2	<p>ESSAY PLAN DUE. Making middle-class neighbourhoods. READ: Elwood, Sarah, Victoria Lawson, and Samuel Nowak. 2015. "Middle-class poverty politics: Making place, making people." <i>Annals of the Association of American Geographers</i> 105(1): 123-143. Jean, Sandrine. 2016. "Neighbourhood attachment revisited: Middle-class families in the Montreal metropolitan region." <i>Urban Studies</i> 53(12): 2567-2583. Low, Setha M. 2008. "Fortification of residential neighbourhoods and the new emotions of home." <i>Housing, Theory and Society</i> 25(1): 47-65. Waldrop, Anne and Sissel Egden. 2018. "Getting Behind the Walls and Fences: Methodological Considerations of Gaining Access to Middle-class Women in Urban India." <i>Forum for Development Studies</i>, 45(2): 239-260.</p>
Oct. 9	<p>Education, student loans and the middle class. READ: Mannon, Susan E. 2018. "Misery loves company: Poverty, mobility, and higher education in the post-welfare state." <i>Sociological Perspectives</i> 61(2): 276-294. Leo, Aaron. 2020. "Success and failure in the "land of opportunities": How social class informs educational attitudes among newcomer immigrants and refugees." <i>American Educational Research Journal</i> 57(4): 1567-1591. Zaloom, Caitlin. 2018. "A right to the future: Student debt and the politics of crisis." <i>Cultural Anthropology</i> 33(4): 558-569. Zaloom, Caitlin M. 2021. "Indebted No More." <i>American Educator</i>, Fall. https://www-aft-org.libproxy.stfx.ca/ae/fall2021/zaloom.</p>
Oct. 16	<p>Study break, no class</p>
Oct. 23	<p>Gender and the middle class READ: Boyle, Bryan, and Kobe De Keere. 2019. "Aesthetic labour, class and taste: Mobility aspirations of middle-class women working in luxury-retail." <i>The Sociological Review</i> 67(3): 706-722. Camellia, Suborna, and Rahil Roodsaz. 2023. "Juggling Masculinities: Being a Middle-Class Young Man in Dhaka." <i>Men and Masculinities</i> 26(3): 415-434. Lane, Carrie M. 2009. "Man enough to let my wife support me: How changing models of career and gender are reshaping the experience of unemployment." <i>American Ethnologist</i>. 36(4): 681-692. Murray, Margaret Anne. 2020. "White, male, and bartending in Detroit: Masculinity work in a hipster scene." <i>Journal of Contemporary Ethnography</i> 49,(4): 456-480.</p>

Oct. 30	<p>Racialized middle-classness. READ: Bolt, Maxim. 2022. "'Creature of statute': Legal bureaucracy and the performance of professionalism in Johannesburg." <i>Critique of Anthropology</i> 42(4): 419-438. (Kind of unclear, but does deal with race) Hornberger, Julia. 2018. "A Ritual of Corruption." <i>Current Anthropology</i> 59(S18): S138-S148. Mohamed, Kharnita. 2011. "Refashioning the local: Black masculinity, class and clothing." <i>Agenda</i> 25(4): 104-111. Moore, Kesha S. 2008. "Class formations: Competing forms of black middle-class identity." <i>Ethnicities</i> 8(4): 492-517 Pauli, Julia. 2020. "Class-Switching: Migrants' Multiple Class Identities in Rural and Urban Namibia." <i>Africa Today</i> 66(3): 114-135.</p>
Nov. 6	<p>Cultural manifestations of middle classness. READ: Jayadeva, Sazana. 2018. "'Below English Line': An ethnographic exploration of class and the English language in post-liberalization India." <i>Modern Asian Studies</i> 52(2): 576-608. Newhouse, David R. 2011. "Urban Life: Reflections of a Middle Class Indian." In Heather A. Howard and Craig Proulx, eds. <i>Aboriginal peoples in Canadian Cities: Transformations and Continuities</i>. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press. pp. 23-38. Schilbach, Tina. 2016. "Between the worlds: Shanghai's young middle-class migrants imagining their city." <i>City, Culture and Society</i> 7(4): 245-257. Sheild Johansson, Miranda. 2022. "From 'beasts of burden' to 'backbone of society': The fiscal forging of a new Bolivian middle class." <i>Critique of Anthropology</i> 42(4): 381-399.</p>
Nov. 13	<p>Marriage and sexuality. READ: James, Deborah. 2017. "Not marrying in South Africa: consumption, aspiration and the new middle class." <i>Anthropology Southern Africa</i>, 40(1): 1-14. Kang, Dredge Byung'chu. 2017. "Eastern orientations: Thai middleclass gay desire for 'white Asians.'" <i>Culture, Theory and Critique</i>, 58(2): 182-208. Krishnan, Sneha. 2021. "Where do good girls have sex? Space, risk and respectability in Chennai." <i>Gender, Place & Culture</i>, 28(7): 999-1018. Pettier, Jean-Baptiste. 2023. "Marrying the perfect child—Middle class norms and intergenerational arrangements in the marriage corners of urban China." <i>Ethnography</i> 24(4): 515-536. Rivers Moore, Megan. 2010. "But the kids are okay: motherhood, consumption and sex work in neo liberal Latin America." <i>The British Journal of Sociology</i> 61(4): 716-736.</p>

Nov. 20	<p>ESSAY DUE. More on middle class lifestyle. READ:</p> <p>Darmon, Muriel. 2012. "A people thinning institution: Changing bodies and souls in a commercial weight-loss group." <i>Ethnography</i> 13(3): 375-398.</p> <p>Ehlert, Judith. 2021. "Food consumption, habitus and the embodiment of social change: Making class and doing gender in urban Vietnam." <i>The Sociological Review</i> 69(3): 681-701.</p> <p>Maddox, Callie Batts. 2020. "Young middle-class women, consumption and fitness in contemporary India: 'To tackle all that is thrown her way'." <i>South Asia Research</i> 40(1): 111-126.</p> <p>Monaghan, Lee F. 2014. "Civilising recalcitrant boys' bodies: pursuing socialfitness through the anti-obesity offensive." <i>Sport, Education and Society</i>, 19(6): 691-711.</p> <p>Murdeswar, Sagar, Sarah Riley, and Alison Mackiewicz. 2019. "I like to go out and have a good time: An ethnography of a group of young middle class urban Indian women participating in a new drinking culture." <i>International Journal of Drug Policy</i> 66: 1-8.</p>
Nov. 27	<p>Doing middle class. READ:</p> <p>Dickey, Sara. 2012. "The pleasures and anxieties of being in the middle: Emerging middle-class identities in urban South India." <i>Modern Asian Studies</i> 46(3): 559-599.</p> <p>Rocha, Ana Raquel Coelho, Angela da Rocha, and Everardo Rocha. 2017. "Rituals of cruise consumption and the 'new' middle class: desiring and 'devouring' maritime cruises." <i>Leisure studies</i> 36(4): 468-480.</p> <p>Rothstein, Frances Abrahamer. 2016. "Not Just Migrants: People on the Move in Rural Mexico." In <i>Ethnographic Collaborations in Latin America: The Effects of Globalization</i>, edited by June C. Nash and Hans C. Buechler, pp. 185-201. New York: Palgrave Macmillan US. STFX ebooks.</p> <p>Spronk, Rachel. 2014. "Exploring the middle classes in Nairobi: from modes of production to modes of sophistication." <i>African Studies Review</i> 57(1): 93-114.</p> <p>Spronk, Rachel. 2020. "Structures, feelings and savoir faire: Ghana's middle classes in the making." <i>Africa</i> 90(3): 470-488.</p>
Dec. 4	<p>Pecha Kucha Day!</p> <p>Course conclusion</p>

DESCRIPTION OF TESTS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

Active participation in course/contribution to discussion (10 %): This is a seminar course. You will be expected to attend class, having done the readings, and participate in the discussion. Your mark will reflect both your attendance and your participation.

Reflective responses (10%): On September 11 you will submit an initial statement of how you define "middle class." This initial assignment will be about 500 words, and will be worth 5 %. Each week (due by 3 pm each Friday – email me asap if you miss it by a bit) you will submit a reflection on how that week's readings and class discussion relate to your initial statement.

These will be about 50-100 words each. They will be worth a total of 10% (You must do 10 reflections).

Final take home exam (due December 11; 20%): One week after the last class you will submit your updated understanding of “middle class.” This assignment builds on the initial statement you submitted on September 11 and the weekly reflections you have done. You will explain how your understanding has remained the same or shifted in response to the readings and discussion in the course. This must not repeat material in your essay. It will be about 1000-1200 words in length.

Essay plan (due October 2; 20 %): This is the first stage of the essay (see below). For this assignment, you will articulate your focus (150 words), and provide an annotated bibliography of 8-10 relevant sources (at least 5 must be peer-reviewed ethnographic works). See <https://stfx.libguides.com/c.php?g=101558&p=658461> for a description of an annotated bibliography.

Essay, due November 20 (30%): The paper should be 10 to 15 pages in length (double-spaced, one inch margins on all sides; 10 or 12 characters per inch; indent the first line of paragraphs rather than leaving extra spaces between paragraphs; This is about 2500-3750 words).

Note that for students who submit their papers on time, I have a revise and resubmit policy: you may rewrite your paper, taking into account the comments I made on your first version, with a view to improving the paper. The revised version would be due one week after the end of classes.

Some rules:

- 1) Use the style described outlined on the Anthropology “Writing and Citing” tab of the library’s web site (http://stfx.libguides.com/ld.php?content_id=3538355).
- 2) Abide by the StFX Academic Integrity Policy, which is described in 3.8 of the Academic Calendar.
- 3) **You are permitted no more than THREE direct quotations from your sources, and none of these three quotations may be more than 30 words in length. For all other references to content from your sources you must paraphrase. Note that proper referencing is essential: improperly referenced papers are unlikely to receive a passing grade.**

Topic: You are encouraged to choose your own topic, in conversation with me. Please begin the process by September 25. Possible topics would include choosing a dimension of middle class identity or process in a particular society and developing an argument about it. There is a fair amount written about debt (or home ownership), as well as about higher education. Alternatively, you could compare middle class identity (or some dimension of it, such as “race” or gender) in two different societies (more than that prevents you from going into adequate depth).

Remember to keep the focus anthropological – that is, focused on cultural lifeways and based on readings by people who have conducted lengthy (at least a few months) qualitative research in a specific society. Sometimes, the work is auto-ethnographic (that is, the author writes about their

own experience, examining it critically with respect to the literature on the topic).

Objectives: This assignment builds critical reading, analytical and writing skills and promotes knowledge development on a specific subject. You will use library research skills to identify appropriate sources, examine relevant evidence, and analyse it to develop an argument. You will be marked on whether you have presented a clear, appropriate essay that presents and supports an argument about the material, following the guidelines.

Presentation of essay/Pecha Kucha (December 4; 10 %): We will celebrate your learning on the last day of the course by hearing what you discovered in your essay research. You will deliver a pecha kucha based on your essay. A pecha kucha is a slide show-based presentation, involving 20 slides, each of which is shown for 20 seconds, for a total of 400 seconds (6 minutes, 40 seconds). You will present the pecha kucha and send me a copy of it.

RE CLASS CONDUCT: the following rules have been designed to ensure fairness to all students, to facilitate your academic success, and to allow me to fulfill my responsibilities.

1. Assignment dates are fixed and cannot be changed.
2. All assignments must be submitted **ON KWE'/MOODLE**.
3. Written assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day specified. **I WILL NOT ACCEPT LATE PAPERS.** If you have a legitimate reason for missing an assignment or test, inform me **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**, preferably ahead of time. I do not accept papers after I have returned those already submitted; in this situation you may be given an alternate assignment. Papers handed in after the last day of the term in which they are due will receive a mark of zero.
4. You are required to keep a copy of assignments when you hand them in. Keep the returned marked assignment until the end of the course.
5. This course is designed to promote your learning and intellectual development and to help you reach the course learning outcomes. **PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING WILL NOT BE TOLERATED:** Suspected cases of plagiarism will be reported to the appropriate authorities and proven cases will result in a mark of zero for the assignment. See the University's policy on plagiarism and cheating (see <https://www.mystfx.ca/registrars-office/academic-integrity>). **Not intending to plagiarise is not a legitimate excuse.** Know what is included in the definition and ensure that the paper you submit meets acceptable academic standards according to the policy. When in doubt, consult with me.
The use of generative AI tools in this course is prohibited. The use of these tools in any form of academic work for this course will be considered a violation of academic integrity.
6. You are expected to attend all classes and are responsible for all in-class discussion and assigned material. **IF YOU MISS THREE CLASSES OR MORE, WHETHER FOR ILLNESS OR FOR ANY OTHER REASON, YOUR ABILITY TO PASS WILL BE SEVERELY COMPROMISED.** Inform me or the if you must miss classes. If you must miss a test or exam, inform Dr. Cathy MacDonald's office at ada@stfx.ca or Rita Myatt at rmyatt@stfx.ca.

7. **Technology in the Classroom Policy:** The use of electronic devices in in class for purposes not related to the course distracts from the learning of the student using them as well as other students and inhibits the instructor's teaching; it is therefore prohibited.
8. **Class Materials Copyright Notification:** Course materials designed for use in this course at StFX University are the property of the instructor, unless otherwise stated by the instructor. Copying this material for distribution, online posting, or selling of this material to third parties without permission is subject to Canadian Copyright Law and is strictly prohibited.
9. Students may drop a course online in Banner, on or before the relevant deadline. See the calendar of events in the StFX Academic Calendar for the drop-date
10. Students are responsible for understanding and adhering to the requirements of this course as well as the academic regulations outlined in Chapter 3 of the Academic Calendar. I am responsible for maintaining the academic standards of St Francis Xavier University as well as of my discipline as I transmit knowledge about the course subject to the students and foster the development of critical academic reading, researching, analytical and writing skills. I will endeavour to do this in a way that recognizes that students have other demands on their time, and within the constraints presented by my other teaching, administrative and research duties. I will return marked assignments as quickly as I can and am delighted to meet with students to discuss the course.

EQUITABLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Everyone learns more effectively in a respectful, safe and equitable learning environment, free from discrimination and harassment. I invite you to work with me to create a classroom space – both real and virtual – that fosters and promotes values of human dignity, equity, non-discrimination and respect for diversity.

Please feel free to talk to me or to contact the Human Rights and Equity Advisor, Megan Fogarty if you have questions or concerns about equity in the classroom or in the StFX Community in general. Megan can be contacted by email at mfogarty@stfx.ca or by telephone at 902-867-5306.

INFORMATION ABOUT REQUESTING AN ACCOMMODATION AT STFX

If you have a disability and would like to request accommodations, please contact me during the first week of the semester so that your accommodations may be provided in a timely manner. The Tramble Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) provides assistance in determining and facilitating appropriate accommodations for students with verified disabilities.

The Tramble Centre for Accessible Learning welcomes students with documented permanent disabilities and offers them a student-centred program of support. Located in Room 108 of the Angus L MacDonald Library, new and returning students meet with program staff to discuss options for support. The deadline for registering with the Centre is two weeks prior to the end of classes each semester and three business days' notice is required for booking all accommodated tests and exams. To book an appointment go to the Tramble Room website: <https://www.mystfx.ca/accessible-learning/>

