ANTH 571/671
Seminar in Visual Anthropology & Materiality

INSTRUCTOR: Alexandrine Boudreault-Fournier

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES
This course has been designed to foster an in-depth and extensive overview of how the discipline of anthropology approaches materiality and ‘the’ visual. Cultural practices are shaped by diverse relationships, ones that involve humans, places, things, objects and materials. The spheres in which these interactions take shape are complex, multi-dimensional, and continuously produced. This course addresses some core theoretical approaches to materiality such as Actor Network Theory and the ontological turn. The visual, and other senses, shape how objects, narratives, politics and geographies are represented through the lenses of various audiences. Through mobility, objects are transformed and adapted to local needs and realities. Boundary crossings and consumption practices provide concrete evidences of how things acquire new meanings and aesthetics in processes of exchange. Theories of assemblages, composition, creativity and innovation add to the theoretical complexity of how materiality and the visual interrelate in various localities and temporalities.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
- Acquire an in-depth understanding of theoretical approaches related to the visual and material worlds;
- Develop the ability to communicate in the written and oral forms complex theoretical concepts;
- Share and learn in a seminar setting where it is expected that everybody participate to debates and conversations;
- Adopt a critical discourse in relation to various approaches related to the visual and material worlds;
- Design and write an essay that engage with concepts developed in the seminar.