

# ANTH 585/685

## Advanced Research Seminar: Space, Place, Knowledge, and Power

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*INSTRUCTOR: Brian Thom*

Seminar Days: Fridays 1:30-4:20pm, Cornett A319

Fieldwork Day: Fridays: 9:30am-4:30pm, Cowichan Tribes (Duncan)

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In Anth 585/685 we will grapple with the key theoretical themes of the course – space, place, knowledge & power – through collaboratively engaging in a knowledge mobilization and research with Cowichan Tribes for the *Commemorating Ye’yumnuts* project (<http://www.yeyumnuts.ca>).

Students will have the opportunity to regularly visit the Cowichan Valley and be key partners in mobilizing Indigenous and anthropological / archaeological knowledges at the once-contested now-celebrated site of Ye’yumnuts. We will do a deep dive into the archaeological, oral history, ethnographic, government, news media, and archival records of this site and work with Elders and Cowichan community members, School District curriculum staff, and local government planners, to interpret these materials in the contexts of sharing with the public and school children, while respecting and honouring Coast Salish laws and protocols around knowledge circulation. Our work will form the core of the narrative texts, website materials, and graphic interpretive panels to be installed and published for the site.

Concurrent with our community engagement, the seminar component of the class will facilitate discussions of how theoretical insights from our core scholarly reading list are manifest in the project. We will both participate in and theorize acts of space-making underway at this place. We will explore our ‘senses of place’ through the experiences of ourselves and our collaborators at the site. We will closely examine the Indigenous, archaeological and anthropological knowledges generated at this site and situate them in their broader social contexts. We will document the contests and power struggles experienced around urban development at this 2,300 year-old ancestral site, taking time to listen to Elders and community members sharing their oral histories and future visions for this place, and hear from external community partners with divergent visions for this site. What better place to see the intersection of Space/place, Knowledge, and Power!

The syllabus will require some pre-reading over the summer, and regular course-readings for the seminars during the term, to allow us to fully engage the theoretical ideas during our work on the project. In addition to actually producing the materials requested by our community partners as part of the *Commemorating Ye’yumnuts* project, the students will reflect on their experiences through graduate seminar discussions, and in a final paper produced for the course. Specific projects will be organized with groups of students, and will allow for sharing and enhancing existing skills, as well as trying on

anthropological techniques you may not ever have encountered. Students will receive regular feedback and mentorship from Dr. Thom during their term in the course, and will have opportunities for working closely with peers and individually.

This will be an amazing experience for everyone involved, but will have logistics challenges which go beyond the standard in-class seminar. The *Ye'yumnuts* site is in Cowichan Tribes' territory, 64km [up-Island](#) (Duncan). I don't anticipate travelling to the site every week, but we will no doubt be there at last half a dozen times during the term – generally on Fridays -- using combined UVic and personal transportation (depending on final class size). Given travel time needed, these days we will be spending more than the usual 3-hour class time. Your flexibility and availability on Fridays in this regard will be important. In terms of out-of-class time, the course design will endeavour to balance the demands of 'doing' a project, deeply engaging theoretical readings, while acknowledging the typical graduate student workloads from other classes and commitments. In this respect, though there will be pre-reading during the summer, there will be fewer scholarly readings during the term to accommodate the variety of rich data and experience that we will be working through in the project.



1. *Ye'yumnuts at Dawn* (1994, photo by B. Thom)