

Course Evaluations, SOSANT9100B – Recent Theory in Anthropology Autumn 2025 (Multimodal Ethnography)

The course was evaluated using an online form where students were asked to assess the course on several indicators. Four questions were based on a qualitative scale (with multiple-choice answers), and seven open-ended questions allowed students to provide open answers, including suggestions for improvements. Below is the breakdown for the quantitative question and a summary of responses to the qualitative questions.

1. Overall - has this course (SOSANT9100) taught you new approaches to multimodal ethnography?	
Definitely	16 (84.2%)
Mostly new approaches and material	2 (10.5%)
Somewhat new approaches and material	1 (5.3%)
Not exactly new approaches and material	0
Don't know/Can't answer	0

2. Where the readings and assignments helpful for preparing for and engaging with the course?	
Definitely	9 (47.4%)
Mostly helpful	10 (52.6%)
Less helpful	0
Not helpful	0
Don't know/Can't answer	0

3. Did the lectures and facilitations help you understand the material?	
Definitely	11 (57.9%)
They mostly helped	8 (42.1%)
I didn't feel they helped	0
They did not help	0
Don't know/Can't answer	0

4. Did the teachers create a safe space for conversation and engagement?	
Definitely	19 (100%)
Mostly	0
Not really	0
They did not	0
Don't know/Can't answer	0

The numerical responses indicate an exceptionally high level of overall satisfaction with the course. A large majority of students reported that the course definitely taught them new approaches to multimodal ethnography, and all respondents found the readings,

assignments, and lectures either “definitely” or “mostly” helpful. All students agreed that the teachers created a safe space for conversation and engagement.

Qualitative responses strongly reinforce these results. Students consistently described the course as inspiring, intellectually generative, and highly relevant to their PhD projects. Many emphasized that the course expanded their understanding of multimodality beyond visual anthropology, helping them conceptualize multimodality not only as a method of representation, but as a way of thinking, theorizing, and generating knowledge. Several students highlighted that the course provided both a conceptual language and new confidence to articulate multimodal approaches within their dissertations (or at least to begin a conversation around the topic).

Hands-on exercises were repeatedly identified as the most valuable component of the course. Assignments such as the curatorial reflection, object-based exercises, and multimodal appreciation activities (related to the MA exhibit visit -more below) were described as particularly effective in helping students engage analytically and creatively with their own material. Group discussions and peer exchange were also highly appreciated, especially the opportunity to meet and think alongside other PhD participants working with related approaches. Many comments highlighted the supportive and relaxed atmosphere as essential for enabling experimentation and intellectual risk-taking.

The lectures were described as crucial for contextualizing dense theoretical readings and making complex concepts accessible. Participants particularly valued examples drawn from the lecturers’ own fieldwork, as well as sessions that connected multimodality to broader theoretical and philosophical debates. The participation in the MA student exhibition was described as inspiring and generative for thinking through alternative modes of presentation.

At the same time, the evaluation points to some areas for adjustment. Several participants experienced the overall workload, particularly the volume of readings and assignments, as intense. While most found the material enriching, some requested clearer indication of priority readings or a distinction between core texts and supplementary resources (this should be relatively easy to implement going forward). A few participants would’ve liked more time dedicated to sharing and discussing individual projects, including structured opportunities to rotate groups and hear short presentations from all participants. Part of this will happen in the feedback they received for the work submitted, but rotation of groups can be easily implemented in a future iteration.

Overall, students described SOSANT9100B as an engaging, experimental, and intellectually enriching course that meaningfully contributed to their PhD development (for those at earlier stages) and dissertation work (for those who are post-fieldwork). The evaluation suggests that the course successfully balances theoretical depth, practical experimentation, and community-building, while also indicating that minor adjustments could further strengthen future iterations.