Assessment Guidelines – ANTH4100 Core Themes in Contemporary Anthropology. Spring 2022.

General assessment guidelines:
The exam is a take-home exam, where the student has to answer one question out of three. The exam essays are assessed with the aid of the grading scale with letter values where A is the best grade, E the lowest pass grade and F is fail.

A well-written essay documents the student's overview and understanding of the literature and his/her ability to use the literature in an independent manner and shape an argument of interest. In addition, the essay is a well-organized text, and is written clearly and precisely.

Specific assessment guidelines:

Question 1: Anthropological studies of the state raise important substantive and methodological questions. Discuss some of these questions. Draw on at least six of the assigned course readings in answering, quoting from them as relevant.

An excellent or very good answer draws on at least six of the assigned course readings and shapes an argument that offers answers to the following questions: What is the "state" (or how do we best think and conceptualize the state) and how can we best study it anthropologically? The candidate does not have to discuss *both* substantive *and* methodological questions – no, a candidate can choose to focus on, and discuss, only a set of conceptual/substantive questions or only a set of more methodological questions. The important is that the essay discusses more than one question and that the argument is of a sufficient interest and is well organized and clearly formulated. Assigned course readings that can be used are, for example: Abrams; Gupta; Gupta et al.; Kivland; Abarca and Coutin; Uribe; Krohn-Hansen; McKinnon and Cannell; Lazar; Stoler.

Question 2: Discuss how Uribe in his *Frontier Road* analyzes the relationship between symbolic and physical violence. Use, in addition to Uribe's book, at least four of the other assigned course readings in answering.

An excellent or very good answer uses Uribe's monograph and at least four of the other assigned course readings in order to shape an argument about how Uribe's analysis can be said to convey theoretically anchored perspectives on, and understandings of, the relationship between symbolic and physical violence. An excellent essay does not have to discuss in theoretical detail (or very sophistically) our uses of the terms "violence", "symbolic violence," and "physical violence" (but it can choose to do this). However, Uribe himself uses the distinction between symbolic and physical violence in his analysis. An excellent or very good essay demonstrates, and reflects on, how Uribe with the aid of a critical exploration of specific forms of hierarchical (or violent) thinking (or the Colombian state-building project's dominating, legitimating discourses on civilization

and savagery) analyzes the historical construction of a particular stretch of road, and more generally the state, in the Colombian Amazon as a history of different forms of actual or physical violence. There are several different ways of shaping an excellent or very good essay – the decisive here is the candidate's ability to satisfactorily make use of selected parts of Uribe's book and other texts and to formulate an argument of sufficient interest. Assigned course readings that can be used (in addition to Uribe's book) are, for example: Abrams; Gupta; Abarca and Coutin; Krohn-Hansen; Ferguson; Stoler; Trouillot; Palmié and Stewart; Ferguson and Gupta; Mintz.

Question 3: Why do anthropologists maintain that it is necessary to seek to read across social domains if one wants to be able to understand contemporary global capitalism? Draw on at least five of the assigned course readings in answering, quoting from them as relevant.

An excellent or very good answer draws on at least five of the assigned course readings and shapes an argument that does at least two things simultaneously. The essay both (1) presents briefly, and reflects on, important anthropological thinking against the "domaining" practices that have been so key to the narratives of modernity, and (2) explains why and how anthropologists seek to read across domains in their ethnographic analyses of contemporary capitalism. An excellent or very good essay should in some way or another include a brief problematization or critique of conceptions of capitalism as unilinear, singular, and outside of other social formations. Assigned course readings that can be used are, for example: McKinnon and Cannell; Yanagisako; Wright; Carsten; Ferguson; Tsing; Wellman; Lazar.