

SUMMER 2013

ANTH 180: AMERICAN LIFE & CULTURE

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Jaime Holthuysen

EMAIL: j.holthuysen@bellevuecollege.edu

OFFICE HOURS: By appointment only

CLASS TIMES: M-Th 11:30am--1:20pm

Course Description:

This course provides a view of American culture from the broad lens of anthropology. Students will be exposed to theoretical approaches and concepts that will enhance their understanding of American culture from a number of perspectives. We will begin by looking at what exactly is American culture? It is generally quite difficult to critically examine that which is closest to us, but in this class that is exactly what we intend to do. In other words, our goal is to attempt to view American culture from an etic (or outsider's perspective) to gain insight into aspects of life we may take for granted as insiders or participants within that culture. We will explore intersections of American society like family, gender, and ethnicity, and this will enhance our understanding of the interactions and norms that structure our social world. In particular we will examine how these variables are constructed within the realm of American popular culture (e.g. movies, television and sports) and how this is relevant to our everyday lives.

Required Texts:

DeVita, Philip R., editor, 2002. *Distant Mirrors. America as a Foreign Culture*. Wadsworth Thomson Learning.

Boulanger, Claire L., editor, 2008. *Reflecting on America. Anthropological Views of U.S. Culture*. Pearson Publishing.

You will also need:

- Two Scantrons for exams
- A binder to keep track of notes and handouts
- A notebook or paper to take notes
- Access to reliable internet (the library also has free access)
- Convenient web access

COURSE OUTCOMES

Listed below are the course outcomes for ANTH 180.

- Acquire an understanding of a variety of cultural anthropological methods (e.g. semi-structured interviews, participant observation)
- Acquire an understanding of key principles such as ethnocentrism, comparative methods and holism
- Analyze current theoretical/anthropological views of social variables (such as ethnicity, language and gender)
- Recognize how social variables are constructed, represented and influenced in American popular culture
- Appreciate insights about American culture from a foreign perspective of the US

Outcomes will be assessed through class activities, exams, online discussions and a research project.

COURSE INFORMATION (Ratings)

- This course is rated “3” in the areas “Critical Thinking” and “Cultural Diversity” and “2” in the area of “Lifelong learning”.
- Course is worth 5 credits (Humanities)
- Course counts towards the Concentration in Anthropology.

GRADING

Participation	(10%)
Midterm and final exams	(35%)
Field-based research project	(35%)
In class activities	(20%)

Grading scale

Final grades will be calculated based on the following grading scale:

95-100%	A
90-94%	A-
85-89%	B+
80-84%	B
75-79%	B-
70-74%	C+
65-69%	C
60-64%	C-
55-59%	D+
50-54%	D
below 50%	F

Details of the Bellevue College grading policy can be found at:

http://bellevuecollege.edu/policies/3/3000_grading.asp

INFO ON EXAMS

Exams:

- Each exam will consist of 50 multiple choice and true/false questions, so you will need to bring a scantron and a number 2 pencil to each exam. Scantrons are available from the cashier at the BC Bookstore.
- The last exam will NOT be comprehensive, but will cover only material not covered in previous exams.
- I will post a review sheet before each exam, summarizing the topics to be covered.
- All exams are closed book, so you may not consult any other sources during the exam.
- All electronic devices must be turned off before the start of the exam. This includes MP3 players, computers, electronic dictionaries and cell phones.

In Class Activities:

- You MUST be present to do in class activities, therefore you CANNOT make them up!
- In class activities work with material we are covering to help enhance understanding.
- They are graded for effort, understanding of material and evidence of critical thinking.

Participation:

- This will be a self-evaluation of what you think your level of participation in the class is.
- You will assign yourself a number out of 100 (to be converted to a percentage out of 10)
- Although you are scoring yourself, as the instructor I will have the final say in assuring that both of our perceptions are in line.

CLASS EXPECTATIONS

1. Syllabus and Social Science Division Guidelines and Procedures Review

You are required to review this syllabus and the Social Science Division Procedures and Guidelines (at the end of the syllabus), which apply to students in this class. Enrollment in the course constitutes an agreement to abide by the procedures and guidelines set forth in these two items. If you have any questions about the meaning of any of this material, please ask me.

2. Make-up exams

- Assessments such as exams are important, and should be a priority while you are a student. Since they count significantly towards your final grade, I aim to be fair to students who are unable to attend exams for valid reasons, while not allowing students to skip exams for trivial reasons and then make them up later. Please read the following guidelines carefully.
- Vacation, attendance at social activities, sleeping in, picking up someone from the airport, etc. are **not** valid excuses for missing exams and you will not be able to make up exams for these reasons.
- If you are requesting a make-up exam, because you know in advance that you will have to be absent on the day of the exam, you will need to write me a note or email ahead of time explaining why you need to miss class, and you will be required to provide appropriate documentation (e.g. medical or legal documents) to explain your absence.
- If you are too sick to come to campus on the day of an exam, be sure to contact me as soon as possible. Normally this should be **before** the time of the exam. NOT AFTER.

- Any other kind of emergency request will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

3. Technology in the classroom

Please turn off cell phones, if you must use a computer it is ONLY for typing notes. I reserve the right to make this a no-computer classroom if people are abusing this privilege

4. Unscheduled class cancellations

It is always possible that class may be cancelled unexpectedly because of weather or problems on campus. In this case, I will post information on the course website. This will include lecture material, assignments and handouts. It is your responsibility to check this in a timely manner and before the next class session. Material provided in this way will be covered as a review in class but will not be lectured on in detail.

5. Due dates

- All course work should be submitted/completed by the due date.
- **I will generally NOT accept late assignments, as I think it is unfair to students who submit on time, and creates extra work for me.** However, I know that life can present unexpected challenges, and I am willing to take these into account in accepting late work. If you feel that you have a valid reason for needing to submit work late, you may write an email requesting that I make an exception. You should always do this as soon as possible, normally BEFORE the due date. In your email you should state why your assignment is/will be late, and provide any evidence you can to support your claim. I will consider these requests on a case by case basis. Vacations are not a valid excuse. If you will be out of town on due dates, you should complete the work before you leave.

6. My expectations of students:

- Be respectful to other students.
- Read instructions carefully and contact me whenever you have questions.
- Do not wait until the last minute to complete work and ask for help.
- Come to class on time and prepared. However, coming late or unprepared is better than missing class entirely!

7. What you can expect from me:

- Respectful responses to questions.
- Responses within 24 hours to email. I will warn you ahead of time if this will not be possible for any reason. If you do not hear back from me, please email again after 24 hours, to be sure that your message got through.
- Work usually graded within a week. Again, I will warn you if I cannot meet this goal. Project grading is time-consuming, and may take longer than a week.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO TO SUCCEED

Since this is a survey course, we will be covering a lot of material. In order to be successful in the course, you will need to be sure you attend regularly and keep up with the assigned readings and assignments. The following advice may help you to be more successful.

1. Contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

I welcome your emails and questions at any time. Often a problem can be easily solved if it is addressed immediately.

2. Reading

Reading is a very important part of learning in this course. If you find that you are having trouble understanding or completing the assigned readings, I suggest you try the following:

- i. Look at the review questions at the end of each chapter in the textbook, and the answers at the back of the textbook. Use the glossary at the back of the textbook to help you understand any technical terminology.
- ii. Email me to ask questions about any of the readings if you find them difficult.
- iii. Post a question on the general discussion board to see if your classmates can help explain what is puzzling you.

3. Attendance/Participation/Preparation

It is very important that you attend class regularly and participate actively.

- I will take **attendance** most days. This will be in the form of participation activities or reading summary exercises. Exams will focus on material covered in class so that your grade will suffer if you do not attend class regularly. Email me to let me know if you are ill, so that I can help you catch up when you are well enough to return to school. In general, if you cannot attend class for a valid reason, you can avoid missing credit by emailing me to let me know why you are absent.
- **Participating** actively while you are in class is also important. There will be some kind of group activity or discussion in almost every class meeting, and these activities will only enhance your learning if you take an active role.
- **Preparation** for class is also important. Many class activities will only be successful if you have completed required readings before class. To ensure that you are well prepared, I may ask you to complete reading quizzes before you come to class on some days.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

- My assumption is that each of you is here to learn, and I want to make the classroom environment as conducive to learning as possible. Side comments directed to fellow students during lecture or class discussion are distracting. Once a distracting student comes to my attention, I will ask him/her to refrain from talking. **If a student persists in distracting the class s/he will be asked to leave.**
- If a student in class is distracting you, and I do not notice, please let me know, so I can deal with the situation. I am not able to monitor everything going on in the classroom.
- During discussions, you may find that your fellow students hold beliefs and opinions that are very different from yours. This is an opportunity to perfect your critical reasoning skills, and to learn to examine claims based on supporting evidence. The on-line classroom, just like the on-campus classroom, must be safe and open for all students regardless of their age, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, disability, or perspective. We will observe the following guidelines for discussion. (Thanks to Dr. Nancy Gonlin for sharing these with me.)

1. We are not here to persuade others to our point of view; rather to examine the merits of each position, based on evidence.
2. We can respect the person even if we don't share his/her opinions.
3. We will question the evidence or the claim; not the person.
4. We will remain open to corrective feedback as to our views and/or the impact of our communication style.
5. We will avoid phrases such as: "People like that..." "That's a stupid question....idea....etc." "They always..."
6. No one should be understood to be 'representing' the racial/ethnic, gender, class, etc. group to which he or she belongs. You speak only for yourself.

AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is "the uncredited use (both intentional and unintentional) of somebody else's words or ideas." (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/>) It is considered a serious academic offense. You can avoid plagiarism by always citing the sources you use in researching projects or papers. Here are two excellent sources you can use to help you:

- <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>
- <http://bellevuecollege.edu/asc/writing/essays-guides/documents/plagiarism.pdf>

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have medical information to share with me, please contact me via email. If you need course modifications, adaptations, or accommodations because of a disability, I can refer you to our Disability Resource Center (DRC). If you prefer, you may contact them directly by going to B132 or by calling 425.564.2498 or TTY 425.564.4110. Information is also available on their website at <http://bellevuecollege.edu/drc/>. If you have already been approved for special accommodations, please make an appointment to meet with me so that we can go over these together to ensure that you have a positive experience with this class. Remember if you are someone who has either an apparent or non apparent disability and requires assistance in case of an emergency situation, such as a fire, earthquake, etc, please meet with your me to develop a safety plan.