

## American Life and Culture Online Class Syllabus Fall 2012

ANTH 180 / CES 180

Either ANTH 180 or CES 180 may be taken for credit, not both.

**Instructor: Manouchehr Shiva, Ph.D.**

Instructor's Email: mshiva@bellevuecollege.edu

### Course Description

This course provides an introduction to a cultural understanding of contemporary American society. We discuss major theoretical and conceptual principles and perspectives of present-day cultural anthropology and cultural studies, and the way they could be applied to study the life-ways of various American communities. We explore how the perspectives and methods offered by anthropology, so useful for understanding others, can assist us understand the United States.

This is an inter-active or a seminar-like class. Class participation, questioning, and critical thinking are highly encouraged.

You will take an active part in your learning process. You are asked to participate in the class discussions prepared, work on research projects, share and actively participate in the class's learning process, and critically reflect on what you read and discuss.

### Readings

**All readings and audio-visual material are online and free. See each unit's What to Do document to see the list of material to be covered for that unit.**

**Grading** -- Total of 1000 points

**Class Discussion, Participation, and Assignments:** 25 points for each unit - total of 250 points - 25% of total grade.

**Quizzes:** -- 5 quizzes (one quiz per two units) - 50 points each - Total of 250 points - 25% of total grade

**Final Exam:** 250 points -- 25% of total grade.

**Final Project Report:** 250 points -- 25% of total grade.

### Research Project

The focus of the research project is an outline of a study of an American social or cultural phenomenon, event, institution or process from an anthropological perspective.

**Students choose the focus of their research project by the second unit of the quarter.**

**Project topics** have to do with subjects and information from our readings, class discussions, and your own research and interest.

**Research Project Report**– Minimum four pages (double-spaced), excluding your bibliography. The report is a re-writing of your postings about your research topic during the quarter, based on the feedbacks you have received and your own further research.

### UNITS

## **Unit 1 Culture**

Understanding the Other and the Self  
Culture and Cultural Anthropological Perspectives  
Cultural Studies  
Anthropological Fieldwork and Research Methods  
Comparative Approach  
Cultural Relativism and Ethnocentrism  
Holistic Approach  
Culture and Power  
Culture and History  
Culture and Globalization,  
Culture and Gender  
Culture and Generation  
Culture and Class,  
Culture and Ethnicity/Nationalism

## **Unit 2 Ritual, Power, History and Myth**

Culture and Ritual  
Ritual and Ritualization  
Ritual and Construction of Class, Gender, Generation, Ethnic and National Identities  
Ritual and Power  
History, Myth, and Ritual

## **Unit 3 Religion**

Religion in America  
Anthropological Perspective in Studying Religious Beliefs and Practices  
Public and Private Dimensions of Religion in American Lives  
Religions and American Politics

## **Unit 4 Political Economy and Socio-Economic Stratification**

Political Economy and Class in the U.S.  
Production, Distribution, and Consumption Patterns in the U.S.  
Culture and Class  
The Meaningful and the Material  
Constructions of Class in America

## **Unit 5 Socialization / Enculturation**

Enculturation and Socialization  
Aspects of American Childhood and Adolescence  
Anthropology of American Education  
Anthropology of American Higher Education  
Socialization/Enculturation and Sub-cultures  
Media and Enculturation/Socialization

## **Unit 6 Language, Society, Worldview and Culture**

Language, Gender, Class, and Ethnicity in America

Language and Power  
Language and Worldview  
Language, Culture and Subcultures  
American Media and Language  
American English and Globalization

### **Unit 7 Gender, Generation and Family in the U.S.**

Gender in America  
Youth and American Culture  
Representations of the Youth in the Media  
The Elderly in America  
American Family Patterns

### **Unit 8 Race, Ethnicity and Nationalism**

Race and Racism in America  
Constructing Ethnicity in America  
Nation and Nationalism in America  
Trans-Nationalism in America

### **Unit 9 Power, Politics and The State**

Culture of American Politics  
Power and Politics  
Concepts in Political Anthropology  
The State  
Class, Power and the State  
Power and Ideology  
Political Rituals

### **Unit 10 Case Studies**

Based on the interest of the instructor and the students a few topics are chosen to study and apply cultural anthropological and cultural studies approaches.

Examples:

American Media and American Life  
Sports in America  
Violence in America  
American Politics Abroad

### **“EQUIPMENT AND SKILLS REQUIREMENTS**

Taking an online course requires basic computer literacy and a little more. You must be proficient in navigating the World Wide Web (the Web) and may have to be able to download and install plug-ins. An online course often requires accessing the Web on a regular basis. You need a reliable ISP that seldom responds to your call with a busy signal. You need to be able to write English on a word processor, save documents and organize the resulting files, copy documents into your clipboard and paste them into another application, and attach documents to e-mail and retrieve them.”

### **COURSE ASSUMPTIONS**

All humans learn and all humans teach. Humans learn and teach in communities, and communities embody more knowledge than any one individual possesses. These characteristics have been fundamental first to human biological evolution, and then

to the origin and evolution of cultures. Formal education takes place in a special community -- the learning community. The more cohesive the learning community and the more focused it is on shared goals, the more intense is the learning experience.

In the best of learning communities, both "instructor" and "students" are learners. The instructor takes responsibility for the overall goals and direction of the course, the materials, pacing, lessons, and assessment. But students must take responsibility for their own learning. They must bring questions to the table, and act critically upon the materials of the course. Learning cannot be passive; it's hard work. Certainly it's useful and rewarding, but like long distance running, it hurts a lot while you are doing it and feels great when you stop.

Online courses are in many ways more focused and intensive learning communities than those encountered in the classroom ("on the ground"). You will be reading a lot and writing a lot, and communicating intensively with your fellow class members.

It's assumed that we are all there to learn some anthropology, to develop and exercise critical thinking skills, and to stretch ourselves creatively in the exploration of ideas. But above all we are all there to discover ways the tools of anthropology can illuminate our daily lives and current problems of the human condition in the U.S.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** If you have medical information to share with me in the event of an emergency, please contact me via email or come to see me during office hours. Emergency preparedness is important! 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/>

**EXPLORE THE LMC!** The Library Media Center is at your fingertips! I *strongly* encourage you to visit the LMC at least this quarter, but you can also access it via the web. Talk to a Reference Librarian at the Library (D-126), by calling (425) 564-6161, or by email: [reference@bellevuecollege.edu](mailto:reference@bellevuecollege.edu).

- **Main Library Media Center:** <http://bellevuecollege.edu/lmc/>
- **For the LMC online catalog:** <http://bellevuecollege.edu/lmc/catalogs.html>
- **For article databases:** <http://bellevuecollege.edu/lmc/periodicals.html>

**For all of your written work:** Submit proofread work **only**. Work not proofread will be returned **once** for a rewrite, expected to be handed in within 48 hours. If you need help with your writing, please make use of the following student support services:

- Academic Success Center: <http://bellevuecollege.edu/academicsuccess/>
- Academic Tutoring Center: <http://bellevuecollege.edu/tutoring/>
- TRiO Student Support Services: <http://bellevuecollege.edu/TRiO/>
- Writing Lab @ BCC: <http://bellevuecollege.edu/writinglab/>

**Preventing Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty occurring when students use information or material from outside sources and do not properly cite those sources. This is grounds for disciplinary action. It is your responsibility to understand plagiarism and its consequences. Plagiarism occurs if:

- a. You do not cite quotations and/or attribute borrowed ideas.
- b. You fail to enclose borrowed language in quotation marks.
- c. You do not write summaries and paraphrases in his/her own words and/or doesn't document his/her source.
- d. You turn in work created by another person.
- e. You submit or use your own prior work for a current or past course, or work from one current course in another course *without express permission* from your professors. This may also be considered academic dishonesty.

- f. Consequences: If it is determined that you have plagiarized or engaged in other forms of academic dishonesty, you will likely fail the assignment and possibly the course, despite points earned through other work. Acts of academic dishonesty are reviewed for disciplinary action.

### **WHAT COURSES IN ANTHROPOLOGY ARE OFFERED AT BC?**

There is a general introductory class (Survey of Anthropology) which highlights all four sub-disciplines of anthropology. BC offers in-depth courses in Anthropology which I encourage you to take: archaeology (Great Discoveries in Archaeology; Archaeology; Ancient North America; Incas & Their Ancestors; Aztecs, Mayas, & Their Ancestors), biological anthropology (Biological Anthropology; Bioanthropology with Lab; Cross-cultural Medicine; Forensic Anthropology), cultural anthropology (Food, Drink, & Culture; American Life & Culture; Cultural Anthropology; Sex, Gender, & Culture; Environment & Culture; REEL Culture; Religion & Culture) and linguistics (Language, Culture, & Society). Check BC's Course Catalogue for a full description of each course. We will also be offering several special topics courses spanning the discipline. Topics may include Primatology, Experimental Archaeology, Anthropology of Immigration and Scandinavian Culture. There are no prerequisites for any of these courses and they fulfill degree requirements. Different formats (on campus, on-line, hybrid) are offered. Stop by and visit the Social Science Advisor, Deanne Eschbach, in Room D110, for free professional planning and advising, or contact Anthropology Prof. Tony Tessandori ([tony.tessandori@bellevuecollege.edu](mailto:tony.tessandori@bellevuecollege.edu)) to learn more about majoring in anthropology.