

American Life and Culture

Online Class Syllabus

ANTH 180 / AMST 180

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

Instructor: Manoucherh 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

1 – Distant Mirrors: America As A Foreign Culture
Philip R. DeVita/James D. Armstrong (eds.)
Wadsworth/Thomson Learning

From the book advertisement:

"To understand the full impact of ethnography, to experience cultural relativity, and to gain a foundation to build informed comparisons, students need a firm grasp of their own culture. This third edition reader consists of 19 essays written by anthropologists and other scholars using an ethnographic perspective. The essays enable students to understand themselves better by focusing on their own culture and seeing it from a new perspective. This collection gives anthropology a comparative perspective that provides a reflective lens, a mirror, for understanding ourselves and the world in which we live."

2) Reflecting on America: Anthropological Views of U.S. Culture
Boulanger, Clare L. Boulanger (ed.)
Pearson

From the book advertisement:

"The anthology is primarily composed of articles written by American anthropologists on American mainstream culture, and addresses traditional ethnographic categories covered by anthropologists-myth and ritual, economy and

power, language and ideology. Overall, it examines how “U.S. culture” emerges from and shapes the cultures of component diverse populations.”

3) A series of short articles and chapters are also provided to complement the assigned test books.

Grading -- Total of 1000 points

Class Discussion Participation and Feedbacks: 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: 250 points -- 25% of total grade.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND MEANS OF ASSESSMENT

Class Discussion Participation and Feedbacks include:

1. Posting a detailed, comprehensive and well cited answers to discussion questions on the discussion board for each unit, and at least two (2) additional well-thought messages (or feedbacks) in reply to other students' answers.
2. Clearly contributing information to further understanding of the concepts involved in the readings.
3. Derive information only from the course texts or other assigned or academic sources and properly cite source (author and title) and page.
4. Exhibit a correct and comprehensive understanding of the issues (given that later messages can revise earlier ones).
5. Be courteous and "scientific" in attitude and communication.

The purpose of discussions and feedbacks is to develop a deeper and more complete understanding of specific key concepts and problems in subjects studied. By fully participating in the discussions, you will be prepared for the questions in the exams.

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.

Length of Research Report– Four or five pages, excluding bibliography. The report should show the progress of the research process during the quarter and your thinking behind it.

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

Readings:

Distant Mirrors – Chapter 1
Distant Mirrors – Chapter 2
Reflecting on America Introduction and Chapter 1
Reflecting on America - Chapter 17
Reflecting on America - Chapter 18

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

Readings:

Distant Mirrors – Chapter 3
Distant Mirrors – Chapter 4
Reflecting on America - Chapter 2
Reflecting on America - Chapter 3

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

Readings:

Reflecting on America - Chapter 4

Reflecting on America - Chapter 5

Reflecting on America - Chapter 6

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

Readings:

Reflecting on America - Chapter 7

Reflecting on America - Chapter 8

Reflecting on America - Chapter 9

Reflecting on America - Chapter 12

Unit 5 Socialization / Enculturation

Mid-term exam is scheduled after Unit Five is covered.

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

Readings:

Distant Mirrors – Chapter 6

Distant Mirrors – Chapter 7

Distant Mirrors – Chapter 15

Reflecting on America - Chapter 14

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

Readings:

Distant Mirrors – Chapter 8

Distant Mirrors – Chapter 9

Distant Mirrors – Chapter 10

Reflecting on America - Chapter 15

Reflecting on America - Chapter 16

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

Readings:
Distant Mirrors – Chapter 11
Reflecting on America - Chapter 10

Unit 8 Race, Ethnicity and Nationalism

Race and Racism in America
Constructing Ethnicity in America
Nation and Nationalism in America
Trans-Nationalism in America
Immigration and Making of America

Distant Mirrors – Chapter 12
Distant Mirrors – Chapter 13
Distant Mirrors – Chapter 14
Distant Mirrors – Chapter 16
Distant Mirrors – Chapter 17
Distant Mirrors – Chapter 19
Reflecting on America - Chapter 13

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

Readings:
Distant Mirrors – Chapter 18
Reflecting on America - Chapter 11

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

The following is from other BCC Anthropology syllabi. The subjects discussed also apply to our class.

“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. You will need to put in about 15 hours of study a week, and you should log into the classroom at least five times a week to receive the week's schedule, read your e-mail, post commentaries and other assignments, and read and discuss the work of others. 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.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As your instructor, I have the responsibility to:

- provide a comprehensive syllabus and course weekly assignments calendar which displays all due dates for readings, assignments, and exams
- grade or otherwise respond to all submitted materials within a timely manner.
- monitor your group participation in the online classroom weekly and occasionally comment on it
- inform you of your current grade and relative class standing upon request
- respond to any e-mail and answer all appropriate questions in a timely manner
- behave professionally, respecting you as an individual of intelligence and sensitivity

As students, you have the responsibility to:

- behave to all others in the class in a professional manner, being especially careful in e-mail and other electronic communications to avoid personal attacks, harsh criticisms, and objectionable language
- keep up with the course work and submit your work in on time
- support your class members to establish a genuine learning community

Classroom Courtesy and Scientific Approach

Anthropology is a social science course. Physical anthropology is both a social and natural science course. What our studies will present is the current scientific understanding of biological evolution--especially human evolution--cultural evolution, the origin of language, human cognition, cultural organization, and the vast diversity of human cultures and values. The course may challenge many of your deepest beliefs about human nature and the origin and meaning of life. While the broad outlines of human biological and cultural evolution are agreed upon in the field, as in any science there are numerous outstanding questions yet to be resolved--that is the very nature and essence of science. To develop a learning community, we all need to be courteous and respectful of each other's work. Abrasive, abusive, sarcastic or intimidating messages directed to anyone in the class, including the instructor, will not be tolerated."

Classroom Learning Atmosphere

Classroom Ethics

Plagiarism

I define plagiarism as copying someone else's written work, ideas, or other materials without permission and without citing the source. The source may be a published article, book, Web site, or a lecture or other course material of an instructor, or the work of another student. In this instructional setting, plagiarism includes both unintentional but careless citation of sources and intentional submission of someone else's work whose authorship has been disguise by modifying the work.

Plagiarism does not include repeating "common knowledge," or expressing one's own experience, observations, insights, or conclusions drawn from sources, nor does it include commonly accepted facts of an academic field, the caveat being that students, who cannot distinguish what is commonly accepted from that which is the author's original work, should cite everything drawn from published materials.

All assignments submitted must be the student's own work and in the student's own words, except when explicitly referring to the work of others. Whenever you have occasion to use someone else's words, even if only a single phrase, you must indicate this fact by quotation marks and by a citation correctly giving the source. If you paraphrase a source, using your own words, you still must cite the source and page number directly after the paraphrase. If you simply repeat an idea expressed by another, even if you have used your own words, you must cite the source of the original idea. Somewhere in your document (be it a commentary, discussion message, or an exam), usually at the bottom, you must document **all** the sources, giving particulars of the source (such as the author's name, the publication date, the title of the article or book, the title of the publication if it is an article, the publisher, and the full URL to the Web site if that is where you got the information), as appropriate to the assignment. If you borrow without acknowledging a source you are plagiarizing. Please do not try to pass off someone else's work as your own!

Here are the guidelines for this course:

It is plagiarism if, in any written documents you present as your own, in fulfillment of any course assignment (discussion, quiz, exam, exercise, project, etc.) you:

- copy even a few consecutive words from any source not your own and present it as your own work
- copy even a few consecutive words from any source not your own and "forget" to put quotes around it
- attempt to paraphrase by changing only a few words of a sentence or paragraph not your own

- falsely cite a source
- cite a correct source but do so in such a way as to make it ambiguous which are your own words and which are the words from your source
- copy from another student's work from this or previous quarters

Avoiding Plagiarism

How To Avoid Plagiarism? Simple. If in doubt, cite the source (including page number where you can). View the definition of plagiarism and information on how to avoid it at http://turnitin.com/research_site/e_home.html. Here are a few more links, provided by BCC faculty, to help you understand what plagiarism is and [how to avoid it](#).

Penalty for Plagiarism

Students who are found to have plagiarized will receive a score of zero (0.0) for the assignment in which the plagiarism occurred. If the plagiarism occurs in a quiz or discussion message, the zero will not count as a "lowest quiz or discussion score" of the quarter, so that it will always count as the loss of 20 and/or 40 points, as the case may be, from the final grade. Upon a second instance of plagiarism, a student will receive a course grade of F. In addition, documentation of the plagiarism will be submitted to and placed on record at the Office of the Dean of Student Services. Don't let something like this damage your career. If in doubt, cite; if still in doubt, ask.

Classroom Courtesy and Scientific Approach

To develop a learning community, we all need to be courteous and respectful of each other's work. Abrasive, abusive, sarcastic or intimidating messages directed to anyone in the class, including the instructor, will not be tolerated.

That does not mean that you should avoid correcting, questioning and challenging each other, but I expect you to limit the subject of your agreements and disagreements to assigned subjects and to support your opinions with liberal citations from the texts and other recommended course materials. I also expect your discussion to be courteous and constructive in tone. The kinds of contributions you should make in your "Commentaries" and in "Discussion" are spelled out in the two documents about those subjects in the Syllabus folder.

If any of you feel intimidated by someone else's communications, private or public, please report it to me, along with copies of anything sent to you. I will isolate or expel anyone who persistently indulges in intimidating behavior of any kind. Anyone who has a problem with the pedagogy of this course should contact me privately -- do not attempt to create dissension in the classroom.

Procedures and Guidelines of the Social Science Division

The procedures and guidelines of the Social Science Division govern the conduct of this class and are

Affirmation of Inclusion

Bellevue College is committed to maintaining an environment in which every member of the campus community feels welcome to participate in the life of the college, free from harassment and discrimination.

We value our different backgrounds at Bellevue College, and students, faculty, staff members, and administrators are to treat one another with dignity and respect. <http://bellevuecollege.edu/about/goals/inclusion.asp>

PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCE DIVISION

ONLINE PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCE DIVISION

Revised Summer 2009

Bellevue College's Affirmation of Inclusion

Bellevue College is committed to maintaining an environment in which every member of the campus community feels welcome to participate in the life of the college, free from harassment and discrimination. We value our different backgrounds at BC, and students, faculty, staff members, and administrators are to treat one another with dignity and respect.

The college's "Affirmation of Inclusion" is in line with the principle of free speech in a free society: we have the right to express unpopular ideas as long as we don't show disrespect for reasonable people who might believe otherwise. In an online course, you will be expressing ideas through the medium of the course site rather than face to face in the classroom. In that case, these expectations refer to the courtesy with which you communicate with one another through e-mails and e-discussions. Part of this respect involves professional behavior towards the instructor, colleagues, and the class itself.

Cheating, Stealing, and Plagiarizing* and Inappropriate Behavior

Cheating, stealing and plagiarizing (using the ideas or words of another as one's own without crediting the source) and inappropriate/disruptive behavior are violations of the Student Code of Conduct at Bellevue College. Examples of unacceptable behavior include, but are not limited to: plagiarizing material from the Internet and posting rude or personal attacks in discussions. When you are in doubt about any behavior, please consult your instructor. In addition, you may wish to review the general applicable rules of cyberspace, such as in the Core Rules of Netiquette.

The instructor reserves the right to remove posted messages, and downgrade assessments as a result of these types of behaviors. The instructor can refer any violation of the Student Code of Conduct to the Vice President of Student Services for possible probation or suspension from Bellevue College. Specific student rights, responsibilities and appeal procedures are listed in the Student Code of Conduct, available in the office of the Vice President of Student Services, link to Student Code.

Incomplete

If a student fails to complete all the required work for a course, an instructor may assign the grade of Incomplete ("I").

It is the student's responsibility for maintaining contact and adhering to the agreed-upon actions. Vista class sites, and material, may not be directly accessible after the end of the quarter so it important to make arrangements before the quarter

ends. The student must complete the coursework by the end of the next quarter, or receive the assigned letter grade (usually an "F"). There is a standard form that instructors have access to in their instructor's grade briefcase.

F Grade

Students who fail a course will receive a letter grade of "F."

Final Examination Schedule

Final examinations may involve proctored on-campus arranged exams or may be administrated completely online at the discretion of the instructor and in keeping with the stated policies provided in the course syllabus. Please refer to the syllabus at the start of the quarter for additional details and contact the instructor directly for any clarifications. A student who is not in compliance with the scheduled format may forfeit the right to make up the examination. If, for illness or some other circumstance beyond the student's control, the student is unable to be in compliance with any scheduled examination and has contacted the instructor on a timely basis, the student may be permitted to take such examination at a time designated by the instructor.

Withdrawal From Class

College policy states that students must formally withdraw from a class by the end of the seventh week of the quarter during the standard academic year (Registration Office, B125). If a student has not withdrawn by that date, an appropriate letter grade will be assigned for the course. Check Enrollment Calendar Deadlines, Refunds/Withdrawals, for additional details. As with most enrollment deadlines, it is the student's responsibility to be aware of these dates and act accordingly.

Hardship Withdrawal (HW)

From page 9 of the current course catalog, 2008-2009 online catalog, HW indicates a withdrawal request made because of extenuating circumstances after the official withdrawal period is over. The student must contact the instructor to request this withdrawal option, or the faculty member may initiate the contact. No points are calculated into the grade-point average. Students may also contact the Enrollment Services office BEFORE grades are assigned in cases of hardship.

Students Who Require Disability Accommodations:

Students with disabilities who have accommodation needs are encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Centre (DRC) link to DRC. The office is located in B132 (telephone 425.564.2498 or TTY 425.564.4110, email drc@bellevuecollege.edu). Students will need to establish their eligibility for accommodation. The DRC office will provide each eligible student with an accommodation letter or contact your online instructor directly by email.

Students who require accommodation in a course should review the DRC accommodation letter with each instructor during the first week of the quarter.

Distribution of Grades

Students should access their grades through the BC Web site. Any returned material should be accessed prior to the end of the quarter. After the end of the quarter, Vista class sites may not be accessible by students. Individual instructors may use non-Vista tools for recording and maintaining the students' progress. Questions about grades assigned should be initially directed to your instructor.

Submission and Returning of Papers, Assignments and Assessments:

Specific guidelines for taking exams and submitting assignments are published in the syllabus.

Please contact instructor at the start of the quarter for any clarifications.

*If you are accused of cheating, stealing exams and/or plagiarism, there is a Bellevue College Student Discipline and Appeals Procedure (the right to due process) which you may pursue. Contact the office of Division Chair (D110), the Vice President of Student Services (B231A) or the Associated Student Body (C212) for information regarding the appeals process.

Information about Bellevue Colleges copyright guidelines can be found at: <http://bellevuecollege.edu/lmc/links/copyright.html>

A good resource for Plagiarism is the Writing Lab: <http://bellevuecollege.edu/writinglab/Plagiarism.html>

Student Code

“Cheating, stealing and plagiarizing (using the ideas or words of another as one’s own without crediting the source) and inappropriate/disruptive classroom behavior are violations of the Student Code of Conduct at Bellevue College. Examples of unacceptable behavior include, but are not limited to: talking out of turn, arriving late or leaving early without a valid reason, allowing cell phones/pagers to ring, and inappropriate behavior toward the instructor or classmates. The instructor can refer any violation of the Student Code of Conduct to the Vice President of Student Services for possible probation or suspension from Bellevue College. Specific student rights, responsibilities and appeal procedures are listed in the Student Code of Conduct, available in the office of the Vice President of Student Services.” The Student Code, Policy 2050, in its entirety is located at: http://bellevuecollege.edu/policies/2/2050_Student_Code.asp