

**Anthropology 202 Syllabus
Spring 2008**

Anth202 B (5237)

5237 B TTh 5:30p-7:40p D101

Course Title: CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

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Office Hours: By appointment (T/Th 1-3 pm)

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to cultural understanding of contemporary human societies. We discuss major theoretical and conceptual principles and perspectives of present-day cultural anthropologists and compare life-ways of various non-Western and Western communities.

The goal of this course is to introduce what cultural anthropology is all about and how it fits into the social sciences and humanities-- what is unique about cultural anthropology, and what it shares with other fields. Our focus will be answering the question, what is culture and how can it be addressed and studied?

We also discuss contemporary processes of globalization and socio-cultural change. We compare the effects of these processes on lives of ordinary people in local communities in various societies and regions of the world, and different politico-cultural reactions to global processes.

Our focus will be on understanding local communities and larger societies in relation to their cultural and historical contexts.

Throughout the course we emphasize understanding the cultural Other(s), in relation to reflecting on the cultural Self (Selves).

Ethnographic data and cases from the two cultural areas of the Middle East and the U.S. are particularly emphasized and studied in this class.

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

You are encouraged to take an active part in your learning process. You are asked to come to the class prepared, work on research projects, share and actively participate in the class's learning process, and critically reflect on what they hear, read or see.

Readings:

1) Cultural Anthropology

A Perspective on the Human Condition

Emily A. Schultz and Robert H. Lavenda

Oxford University Press

2) A series of short articles and chapters are also provided to complement the assigned books and the audio-visual materials.

Audio-visual material: A major part of the information presented in the class is audio-visual in nature. Because of the comparative nature of anthropological method, we rely on films on other peoples--and also on the American culture/communities—to discuss various cultural anthropological concepts and ways of thinking.

The text book is also accompanied by a website.

Grading -- Total of 100 points.

Class Attendance and Participation: 10 points.

Weekly Quizzes: 20 points

Mid Term Exam: 20 points (5th week of the quarter)

Final Exam: 20 points

Research Project: 30 points

The focus of the final paper or project is the study of a social, cultural or political phenomenon or process, in one's own or another culture, in its historical and cultural context.

The students choose the topic of their final paper by the end of the second week of the quarter and show their progress working on their projects during the rest of the quarter.

Your final projects has to do with a subject or topic of your own research interest, it could be related to the reading material from your books or class discussions and your research.

It is possible to work in small study and research groups, but it should be shown that all team members were actively participating in every and all parts of the project.

Class Content – Weekly

Note: The numbers refer to the chapters in the text book.

Week One

1. The Anthropological Perspective

What Is Anthropology?

What Is the Concept of Culture?

What Makes Anthropology a Cross-Disciplinary Discipline?

Biological Anthropology

Cultural Anthropology

Linguistic Anthropology

Archaeology

Applied Anthropology

Medical Anthropology

The Uses of Anthropology

2. Culture and the Human Condition

How Do Anthropologists Define Culture?

What Is the Place of Culture in Explanations of the Human Condition?

Dualism, Idealism, and Materialism

Culture, History, and Human Agency

What Does It Mean to Be Human?

Holistic Explanations

Why Do Cultural Differences Matter?

Ethnocentrism

The Cross-Cultural Relationship

Cultural Relativism

How Can Cultural Relativity Improve Our Understanding of Controversial Cultural Practices?

Culture and Moral Reasoning

Did Their Culture Make Them Do It?

Does Culture Explain Everything?

Writing against Culture

Culture Change and Cultural Authenticity

Culture and the Politics of Difference

The Promise of the Anthropological Perspective

Week Two

3. Fieldwork

Why Do Fieldwork?

The Fieldwork Experience

A Meeting of Cultural Traditions

Ethnographic Fieldwork: How Has Anthropologists Understanding Changed?

The Positivist Approach

Applying Positivist Methods to Anthropology

Questioning the Positivist Approach

The Reflexive Approach

What Is the Dialectic of Fieldwork?

Interpretation and Translation

Beyond the Dialectic

The Dialectic of Fieldwork: Some Examples

Ruptures in Communication

How Have Global Changes Affected Fieldwork?

The Effects of Fieldwork

How Does Fieldwork Affect the Researcher?

The Humanizing Effects of Fieldwork

Where Does Anthropological Knowledge Come From?

Anthropological Knowledge as Open-Ended

4 . Anthropology in History and the Explanation of Cultural Diversity

Where Do Cultural Traditions Begin?

Capitalism, Colonialism, and the Origins of Ethnography

Capitalism and Colonialism

The Fur Trade in North America

The Slave and Commodities Trades

Colonialism and Modernity

The Colonial Political Economy

Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter

What Explains Human Cultural Variation?

Evolutionary Typologies: The Nineteenth Century

Social Structural Typologies: The British Emphasis

Doing without Typologies: Culture Area Studies in America

Postcolonial Realities

Studying Forms of Human Society Today

The Comparative Study of Processes

Week Three

5. Language

Why Do Anthropologists Study Language?

Language and Culture

Talking about Experience

What Makes Human Language Distinctive?

What Does It Mean to Learn a Language?

Language and Context
Does Language Affect the Way We See the World?
What Are the Components of Language?
Phonology: Sounds
Morphology: Word Structure
Syntax: Sentence Structure
Semantics: Meaning
Pragmatics: Language in Contexts of Use
Ethnopragmatics
What Happens When Languages Come into Contact?
Pidgin and Creole
Negotiating Meaning
Linguistic Inequality
Language Habits of African Americans
Language Ideology
Language Habits of Women and Men
What Is Lost If a Language Dies?
Language and Truth

6. Culture and Individuals

Perception
Schemas and Prototypes
Perception and Convention
Illusion
Visuality: Learning to Look
Cognition
Cognitive Capacities and Intelligence
Cognitive Style
Reason and the Reasoning Process
Culture and Logic
Emotion
The Cultural Construction of Emotion
Motivation
Socialization and Enculturation
The Sociohistorical View
Is Cognitive Development the Same for Everyone?
Self/Personality/Subjectivity
How Do Violence and Trauma Alter Our View of Ourselves?
Structural Violence
Trauma
Chosen Trauma
How Does Individual Psychology Depend on Context?

Week Four

7. Play, Art, Myth, and Ritual

Why Play?

Thinking about Play

Some Effects of Play

Alternative Views of Reality

Do People Play by the Rules?

Culture and Sport

Sport in the Nation-State

Sport as Metaphor

Baseball and Masculinity in Cuba

Art

A Definition of Art

Transformation-Representation

"Primitive" and Ethnic Art

But Is It Art?

The Mass Media: Anthropological Perspectives

Myth

Myth as Orthodoxy

Myth as a Charter for Social Action

Myth as a Conceptual Tool

Ritual

A Definition of Ritual

A Birthday Party as Ritual

Ritual as Action

Rites of Passage

Play and Ritual as Complementary

How Do Cultural Practices Combine Play, Art, Myth, and Ritual?

Week Five

8. Worldview

What Is a Worldview?

What Is the Role of Metaphor, Metonymy, and Symbol in Constructing Worldviews?

Metaphor

Metonymy

Symbol

What Are Some Key Metaphors for Constructing Worldviews?

Societal Metaphors

Organic Metaphors

Technological Metaphors

Religion

Religion and Communication

Religious Organization

Maintaining and Changing a Worldview

Syncretism and Revitalization

Worldviews as Instruments of Power
Is Secularism a Worldview?
Religion and Secularism

Week Six

9. Culture and Power
Who Has the Power to Act?
Kinds of Social Power
The Role of the State
How Does a State Exercise Power?
The Role of Physical Force
Domination and Hegemony
Power and National Identity
Biopower and Governmentality
Resistance to Governmentality
The Ambiguity of Power
Power as an Independent Entity
The Power of the Imagination
The Power of the Weak
Bargaining for Reality
History as a Prototype of and for Political Action
Negotiating the Meaning of History

Week Seven

10. Making a Living
What Are the Connections between Culture and Livelihood?
Self-Interest, Institutions, and Morals
Subsistence Strategies
What Are Production, Distribution, and Consumption?
How Are Goods Distributed and Exchanged?
Neoclassical Economics and Capitalism
Modes of Exchange
Does Production Drive Economic Activities?
Labor
Modes of Production
The Role of Conflict in Material Life
Applying Production Theory to Social & Cultural Life
Why Do People Consume What They Do?
The Internal Explanation: Malinowski and Basic Human Needs
The External Explanation: Cultural Ecology
How Does Culture Construct Human Needs? , Food Storage and Sharing
The Original Affluent Society

The Cultural Construction of Utility
Institutionalized Sharing
Consumption Studies Today
A Dialectic between the Meaningful and the Material

Week Eight

11. Imagined Communities: Kinship and Other Forms of Relatedness

How Do Human Beings Organize Interdependence?

Friendship

Bangwa Friendship

American College Student Friendship and Friendliness

Kinship

Sex, Gender, and Kinship

How Many Sexes Are There?

Understanding Different Kinship Systems

What Is the Role of Descent in Kinship

Bilateral Kindreds

What Role Do Lineages Play in Descent? , Unilineal Descent Groups

Lineage Membership

The Logic of Lineage Relationships

Patrilineages

Matrilineages

What Are Kinship Terminologies?

Criteria for Distinguishing Kin

Kinship and Alliance through Marriage

Adoption

Kinship as Social Idiom

Sodalities

The Dimensions of Group Life

12. Marriage and Family

How Do Anthropologists Define Marriage?

Woman Marriage & Ghost Marriage among the Nuer

Marriage as a Social Process

Patterns of Residence after Marriage

Single and Plural Spouses

Polyandry, Sexuality, and the Reproductive Capacity of Women

Marriage and Economic Exchange

Brothers and Sisters in Cross-cultural Perspective

Brothers and Sisters in a Matrilineal Society

Brothers and Sisters in a Patrilineal Society

How Do Anthropologists Think about Family Structure

The Family Defined

The Nuclear Family
The Polygynous Family
Extended and Joint Families
How Do Families Change over Time?
Divorce and Remarriage
Breaking Up Complex Households
International Migration and the Family
Families by Choice
The Flexibility of Marriage
How Do Sexual Practices Differ?
Heterosexual Practices
Other Sexual Practices
Female Sexual Practices in Mombasa
Male Sexual Practices in Nicaragua
Sexuality and Power

Week Nine

13. Dimensions of Inequality in the Contemporary World

Gender
Class
Caste
The Value of Caste as an Analytic Category
Race
Race in Colonial Oaxaca
Ethnicity
Nation and Nation-State

Week Ten

14. A Global World

What Happened to the Global Economy after the Cold War?
Cultural Processes in a Global World
Globalization and the Nation-State
Migration, Transborder Identities, and Long-Distance Nationalism
Flexible Citizenship and the Postnational Ethos
Anthropology and Multicultural Politics in the New Europe
Are Human Rights Universal?
Human Rights Discourse as the Global Language of Social Justice
Rights versus Culture
Rights to Culture
Rights as Culture
How Can Culture Help in Thinking about Rights?
Cultural Imperialism or Cultural Hybridization?

Cultural Hybridity

Can We Be at Home in a Global World?

Cosmopolitanism

Border Thinking

15. Anthropology in Everyday Life

Anthropology beyond the University

Sorghum and Millet in Honduras and the Sudan

How Can Anthropology Influence Policy?

Anthropology and Democracy

Anthropology and Human Rights

Awareness and Uncertainty

Freedom and Constraint

Week Eleven

Review and Discussion of Research Projects
