

## **Anthropology of American Life Online Class Syllabus**

ANTH 180 / AMST 180

Either ANTH 180 OAS/C (Item 5210) or AMST 180 OAS/C (Item 5211) may be taken for credit, not both.

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### **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**

I – 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 100 points

Class Participation: 15 points

Weekly Feedbacks: 15 points

Mid-Term Exam: 20 points

Final Exam: 20 points

Final Project: 30 points

### **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 week of the quarter. Projects 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/WEEKLY CONTENT**

### **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**

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

American Politics Abroad

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Readings:

Internet Library Sources

## **PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCE DIVISION**

**Revised Fall 2007**

### **Cheating, Stealing and Plagiarizing\***

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 Community 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 Dean of Student Services for possible probation or suspension from Bellevue Community College. Specific student rights, responsibilities and appeal procedures are listed in the Student Code of Conduct, available in the office of the Dean of Student Services.

### Incomplete

If a student fails to complete all the required work for a course, an instructor may assign the grade of Incomplete ("I"). The student must complete the coursework by the end of the next quarter, or receive the assigned letter grade (usually an "F").

### F Grade

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

### Final Examination Schedule

The Social Science Division will adhere to the final examination schedule as stated in the BCC Schedule. Final examinations will be held at the end of each quarter at fixed times. Instructors will not give examinations in advance of the regular schedule. A student who is absent from any examination held at any time during the quarter 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 present at 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 (Registration Office, B125). If a student has not withdrawn by that date, an appropriate letter grade will be assigned for the course.

### Hardship Withdrawal

Instructors may assign the grade of "HW" (hardship withdrawal) at their discretion in the event that a student cannot complete the coursework due to extreme and exceptional circumstances. 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 meet with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) office located in B132 (telephone 425.564.2498 or TTY 425.564.4110), to establish their eligibility for accommodation. The DRC office

will provide each eligible student with an accommodation letter. Students who require accommodation in class should review the DSS accommodation letter with each instructor during the first week of the quarter.

Students with mobility challenges who may need assistance in case of an emergency situation or evacuation should register with Disability Support Services, and review those needs with the instructor as well.

### Distribution of Grades

Grades will not be posted in the Social Science Division or in faculty offices, and secretaries will not give out grades. Students should access their grades through the BCC Web site.

### Return of Papers and Tests

Paper and/or Scantron score sheet returns will be arranged in the following ways ONLY: by mail, if student supplies the instructor with stamped, self-addressed envelope (with appropriate postage); or by the instructor designating a time and place whereby the student may retrieve his/her papers. Unclaimed papers and/or Scantron score sheets must be kept by the instructor for a minimum of sixty (60) instructional days following the end of the quarter.

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



