INTRODUCTION TO CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

ANT 101  T TH 9:40-10:55  CHAMPERS 2187  moodle.davidson.edu
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Fall 2016 office hours:  TR 2-3:30pm (Elm); W 8:30-11:30am (on-campus Summit); or by appt.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Anthropology is perhaps the broadest discipline in the academy; literally, it means "the study of humans." This introductory course focuses on the subfield of cultural anthropology. The fundamental task of cultural (sometimes called social) anthropology is to make sense of the human condition by investigating all aspects of human thought and behavior in all its varied forms around the world.

This course will introduce you to key concepts and topical areas in anthropological thought: culture; language; ecology and economics; gender, race, and other aspects of identity; family and kinship; law and politics; religion and worldview; change and globalization. We will study and you will practice the research method invented by anthropologists – ethnographic fieldwork. Substantive engagement with the content and perspectives offered by this course will help you 1) to hone your awareness of, appreciation for, and comfort in dealing with cultural diversity and 2) to develop your ability and willingness to think critically and with curiosity about your own culture and your place in it.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Define cultural anthropology as a sub-discipline of anthropology
- Describe how anthropologists conduct research and compose ethnographic accounts of events
- Examine social, political and economic issues from a culturally relative perspective.
- Explain how institutions and communities impact how societies vary.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

These four textbooks are available for purchase at the college bookstore:


Additional readings will be made available on or through our Moodle course.

Film shown in class or assigned for viewing are the same as required readings.
YOUR COURSE GRADE WILL BE BASED ON:

75 pts. Attendance, participation, and professionalism
75 pts. American culture essay, due Thursday, September 15 (before midnight)
100 pts. Midterm review, Thursday, October 6 (in class)
100 pts. December review, Tuesday, December 6 (in class)
150 pts. Fieldwork project

1-page project proposal (25 pts.), due Thursday, October 13 (before midnight)
Fieldnotes (50 pts.) and final project (75 points), due Thursday, December 15 by 5:15pm

*Point total = grade:
500-466 pts. = A
465-451 pts. = A-
450-436 pts. = B+
435-416 pts. = B
415-401 pts. = B-
400-386 pts. = C+
385-366 pts. = C
365-351 pts. = C-
350-336 pts. = D+
335-316 pts. = D
315-301 pts. = D-
300 or below = F

*I reserve the right to fail students who do not complete a substantial portion of the coursework, even if they have earned more than 300 points.

HOW TO READ FOR THIS COURSE

Readings listed under a class meeting are meant to be read before class. The reading load varies throughout the semester, but regardless of the number of pages assigned each day, you should develop a habit of spending sufficient time to really think about and engage intellectually with the material. I expect you to come to class ready to ask questions about the day’s reading, to make connections between it and previous readings and lectures, and to refer closely to the text during class discussions. Throughout the semester, we will often spend class time discussing the day’s assigned reading. Sometimes, however, my lecture, a film, or a class activity may preclude much mention of the day’s assigned reading. You are responsible for mastering the key concepts of each reading regardless of how we use it during class time.

ATTENDANCE, PARTICIPATION, AND PROFESSIONALISM (=A/P/P)

Your punctual attendance and engaged, collegial participation at each class meeting are absolutely vital to the success of our course. If you are repeatedly tardy, absent, unprepared, or inattentive, your A/P/P grade will suffer. If you demonstrate a lack of professionalism through a serious inability or unwillingness to treat others with respect, in person or online, your A/P/P score will suffer. If you have more than six unexcused absences, you will fail the course.

One element of your A/P/P score for this course is the Thursday news round-up. Most Thursdays that we meet, we will spend up to 20 minutes in class discussing recent news stories with an anthropological angle; students find and share these news stories. To earn full A/P/P points, you must provide one item for a Thursday news round-up during the semester. Sign up for your presentation date at http://tinyurl.com/ANT101News (link also on Moodle.)

Occasional small tasks or exercises may be assigned as homework to be brought to class or as in-class work; these too will fall under your A/P/P score.
AMERICAN CULTURE ESSAY

For this assignment, you will channel Horace Miner (author of "Body Rituals of the Nacirema") to describe and analyze a familiar cultural experience from the assumed viewpoint of a non-native anthropologist. You may choose to focus on material culture, holiday festivities, religious rites, sporting events, or a boring daily routine.

Strong essays will be roughly 5-6 double-spaced pages (~1500-1800 words) long (not including title, notes, or appendices such as photographs, maps, charts, etc.), and will feature rich descriptive writing and thoughtful analysis, as well as correct writing mechanics. You may refer to course readings; if you do so, use Chicago: Author-Date citation style (posted on Moodle.) Submit your essay in Microsoft Word or PDF format, using the Moodle assignment titled “American Culture Essay.”

REVIEWS

The midterm review will take place during the first 50 minutes of class and will cover material assigned through Week 6. The December review will cover material assigned from Week 7 through the end of the course.

These reviews are meant primarily to assess your mastery of course readings (including films) and will consist of multiple-choice, true-false, fill-in-the-blank, and short-answer questions. Students are encouraged to form study groups to prepare for reviews.

FIELDWORK PROJECT

This assignment gives you an opportunity to experience ethnographic research, primarily using participant-observation, and to apply relevant concepts from the material covered throughout the semester in analyzing your own ethnographic data. Early in the semester, you will identify a recurring event in a public context – for example, a worship service, organizational meeting, or one sports team’s matches.

Some public recurring events would run afoul of the ethical and liability safeguards of the college’s Institutional Research Board. You may not study children (defined as under 18 years of age) or vulnerable populations such as people with developmental delays or those seeking treatment for mental health issues.

I must approve your fieldsite and research plans; to this end, you will submit a one-page project proposal describing your chosen recurring event and explaining your interest in it. Submit this proposal in Microsoft Word or PDF format, using the Moodle assignment titled, “Project proposal.”

You will arrange to attend the event at least four times, writing up detailed fieldnotes after each event. Your fieldnotes will be submitted to me for evaluation, and you will also use them extensively in your project paper.

Your project paper will describe your research methods and provide a summary and interpretation of your observations. Strong papers will have a clear thesis statement, argument, and conclusion and will demonstrate familiarity with and mastery of relevant anthropological concepts. You must cite course readings to accomplish this last criterion, and you are welcome but not required to include one or two relevant outside scholarly sources to strengthen your understanding of your topic. For example, if your fieldsite is a Roman Catholic mass, you might incorporate one historical source on the emergence of Catholicism in North Carolina into your analysis of your ethnographic observations.
While online ethnography is now an important research tool for anthropologists, my goal with this assignment is to get you offline and out into the actual, not virtual, community. Accordingly, you may not study a virtual or cyber community for this project.

The finished paper will be roughly 8-10 double-spaced pages (~2000-3000 words) long, not including a title page, bibliography, or any appendices. Use Chicago: Author-Date citation style (link on Moodle), including references.

Submit your fieldnotes using the Moodle assignment titled “Fieldnotes.” Your fieldnotes may be word-processed from the start or originally handwritten and then scanned for upload in PDF format. Just be sure that the file size does not exceed Moodle’s upper limit of 500 MB.

Submit your final project paper in MS Word or PDF format, using the Moodle assignment titled “Final project paper.”

I am happy to meet with you to discuss your research ideas and help you think through any problems in conducting your fieldwork and writing up your analysis. I will not read paper drafts. I encourage you to consult the writing center early and often.

**LATE WORK POLICIES**

American culture essay = penalized 15 points per calendar day
Fieldwork project proposal = penalized 5 points per calendar day

No late penalty is offered for the fieldwork project (fieldnotes & paper), because they are due at the very end of the final exam period. If you submit these items late without an approved extension request, you will receive no credit and will fail the course.

*Extensions will be granted in the case of illness or family emergency.*

**EMAIL & APPOINTMENT POLICY**

Except during office hours held in Elm, email is usually the fastest way to reach me. My intention and typical practice is to reply to student emails within 24 weekday non-holiday hours. If you don’t hear back from me by that time, then it is your responsibility to email me again. I never take offense at a politely-worded reminder/nudge sent after 24 weekday hours. I try to avoid writing lengthy emails, and so my response may be: “Please arrange to call me or meet with me in person to discuss this.”

To see me during office hours, just show up. If I’m with another student, catch my eye so I know you’re waiting for me. To make an appointment to see or call me outside of office hours, use Outlook’s calendar to invite me to an appointment time when I appear to be available. As with other email messages, give me 24 hours to respond and then nudge if needed. Our appointment does not exist until I accept or confirm it.
SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. Davidson College is committed to creating and maintaining an environment that is free of sexual misconduct, stalking, and relationship abuse and violence, and that promotes a healthy spirit of responsibility, dignity, and respect in matters of sexual conduct and interpersonal relationships. The college does not condone and will not tolerate sexual misconduct, stalking, or relationship abuse or violence. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources at http://www.davidson.edu/offices/dean-of-students/sexual-misconduct

DISABILITY POLICY

Full accommodations are the legal right of students with all kinds of disabilities, whether learning disabilities or physical disabilities. If you are a student with a learning disability documented by Davidson College who might need accommodations, please identify yourself to me within the first week or two of class so that I can learn from you as early as possible how to best work with your learning style. Students with other disabilities are also encouraged to self-identify if there is any way in which I can make accommodations that will enhance your learning experience. All such discussions will be fully confidential unless you otherwise stipulate.

COURSE OUTLINE

Note: I reserve the right to change the course outline, including assigned readings and topics covered. Every effort will be made to preserve deadlines as planned. Any changes to the syllabus will be announced in class and on Moodle, and for major changes a revised syllabus will be posted on Moodle.

Tuesday 8/23............................................ Intro, overview
No reading

Thursday 8/25............................................ What is anthropology?
    C&C reader ch 31, Miner, “Body Ritual Among the Nacirema”
    Lassiter ch 1, “Evolution and the Critique of Race: A Short Story”

Tuesday 8/30......................................... Culture and ethnography
    Lassiter ch 2, “Anthropology and Culture”
    C&C reader ch 1, Spradley, “Ethnography and Culture”

Thursday 9/1------------------------------- Ethnography and fieldwork
    Lassiter ch 3, “Ethnography”
    C&C reader ch 3, Sterk, “Fieldwork on Prostitution in the Era of AIDS”
Tuesday 9/6 .................................................. Material bases for cultural patterns  
**Lassiter** ch 4, “History, Change, and Adaptation: On the Roots of Our World System”  
**C&C reader** Part Three “Ecology and Subsistence” intro  
**C&C reader** ch 8, Lee, “The Hunters: Scarce Resources in the Kalahari”  

Thursday 9/8 .............................................. Gender and kinship  
**Lassiter** ch 5 “Sex, Power, and Inequality: On Gender”  
**C&C reader** ch 17, McCurdy, “Family and Kinship in Village India”

Tuesday 9/13 .............................................. Kinship and family  
**C&C reader** Part Five “Kinship and Family” intro  
**C&C reader** ch 18, Goldstein, “Polyandry: When Brothers Take a Wife”  

Thursday 9/15 .............................................. Social class  
**C&C reader** Part Six “Identity, Roles, and Groups” intro  

**American culture essay due on Thursday 9/15, before midnight**

Tuesday 9/20 .............................................. Applied and public anthropology  
**C&C reader** Part Ten “Using and Doing Anthropology” intro  
**C&C reader** ch 39, McCurdy, “Using Anthropology”  
**C&C reader** ch 37, Patten, “Medical Anthropology: Improving Nutrition in Malawi”  

Thursday 9/22 .............................................. The culture of pregnancy and reading  
**Han**, Preface and Introduction  
**Han**, Chapter One

Tuesday 9/27 .............................................. Language and pregnancy; Visual anthropology and pregnancy  
**C&C reader** Part Two “Language and Communication” intro  
**Han**, Chapter Two  
**Han**, Chapter Three  

Thursday 9/29 .............................................. Anthropology of food, economic anthropology, and pregnancy  
**Han**, Chapter Four  
**C&C reader** Part Four “Economic Systems” intro  
**Han**, Chapter Five

Tuesday 10/4 .............................................. Anthropology of the gift and pregnancy  
**Han**, Chapter Six and Conclusion  
**C&C reader** ch 12, Cronk, “Reciprocity and the Power of Giving”

Thursday 10/6 ............................................. **Midterm review (in class)**; start “Business of Being Born”  
No reading
Tuesday 10/11 NO CLASS (Fall break)
Thursday 10/13 .......................... Finish “Business of Being Born”
   No reading

Fieldwork project proposal due on Thursday 10/13 before midnight

Tuesday 10/18 .......................... Anthropology, climate change, and development
   C&C reader ch 10, Crate, "We Are Going Underwater"
   C&C reader ch 9, Williamson, “Illegal Logging and Frontier Conservation”
   C&C reader ch 11, Reed, "Forest Development the Indian Way"
Thursday 10/20 .......................... Anthropology of religion
   Lassiter ch 7, “Knowledge, Belief, and Disbelief: On Religion”
   C&C reader ch 29, Gmelch, “Baseball Magic”

Tuesday 10/25 .......................... Race as a cultural construct
   C&C reader ch 22, Fish, “Mixed Blood”
Thursday 10/27 .......................... Globalization
   C&C reader Part Nine “Globalization” intro
   C&C reader ch 32, Bestor, “How Sushi Went Global”
   C&C reader ch 34, Shandy, “Nuer Refugees in America”
   C&C reader ch 35, Ehrenreich and Hochschild, “Global Women in the New Economy”

Tuesday 11/1 .......................... Political anthropology
   Review political anthropology concepts from Lannister ch 4
   C&C reader Part Seven “Law and Politics” intro
   C&C reader ch 25, Spradley and McCurdy, “Law and Order”
Thursday 11/3 .......................... Cultures and laws
   C&C reader ch 24, Sutherland, “Cross-Cultural Law: The Case of the Gypsy Offender”
   C&C reader ch 26, Eames, “Navigating Nigerian Bureaucracies”

Tuesday 11/8 .......................... NO CLASS (Election Day)
Thursday 11/10 ..........................
   Holmes, Foreword, Acknowledgments, Appendix, and Introduction
   Holmes, chapter 2 ““We Are Field Workers””
Tuesday 11/15...........................................
   **Holmes**, chapter 3 “Segregation on the Farm”
Thursday 11/17 ........................................view “First Contact” (film in class)
   **C&C reader** ch 2, Lee, “Eating Christmas in the Kalahari”
   **C&C reader** ch 5, Bohannan, “Shakespeare in the Bush”

Tuesday 11/22...........................................
   **Holmes**, chapter 4 ““How the Poor Suffer””
   **Holmes**, chapter 5 ““Doctors Don’t Know Anything””
Thursday 11/24 ........................................Thanksgiving break – NO CLASS

Tuesday 11/29...........................................
   **Holmes**, chapter 6 ““Because They’re Lower to the Ground””
   **Holmes**, Conclusion
Thursday 12/1 ..........................................Course wrap-up, evaluations
   **Lassiter** Afterword

Tuesday 12/6...........................................**December review (in class)**

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*No final exam.*

*Fieldwork project (fieldnotes and paper) due Wednesday 12/15*