#### **Introduction to Cultural Anthropology - Honors**

ANT 302H - Unique 29970 Fall 2010

> MWF 8am-9am WAG 208

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#### I. Course description:

This course is an intensive introduction to in cultural anthropology: the comparative, ethnographic study of human social life, culture, and global diversity of the lived experience. Students will be exposed to the fundamental ideas, theories, research methods, and styles of interpretation and analysis used in the discipline. An overarching goal of the course is not only to read and write about the lives of people from other places in the world, but it is also to provide new models for considering why our own lives unfold as they do. Throughout the course, we will also be emphasizing the role of culture change over time, with a particular focus on the relationship between global capital and local practice.

# II. Course components and objectives:

### **Components**

- 1) Reading foundational and contemporary ethnographies from around the world to anchor our discussions; choosing one ethnography to read and analyze independently for the final paper.
- 2) Discussing core topics in cultural anthropology, including: ritual, religion and belief systems; language and symbolism; gender roles, kinship and the family; subsistence and economic systems; power, authority and social inequality; definitions of modernization and progress; nationalism, formation of publics and social conflict/violence; and multiculturalism, transnationalism and globalization.
- 3) Applying anthropological concepts such as cultural construction, cultural relativism, situated knowledge and creativity and agency to the analysis of ethnography and in the design of basic theoretical frameworks.
- 4) Each student will also pick several specific analytic concepts from a hat and be "in charge" of mastering those concepts during the semester. Students will do this through learning to recognize the use of their core terms in ethnographic texts, and by being able to provide illustrative examples of the terms in class discussions and in their own writing.
- 5) Taking part in an in-class methods practicum in order to gain first-hand experience in conducting participant observation, unstructured and semi-structured interviews, taking/organizing field notes, and finally, writing ethnographic descriptions based on these data-collection techniques.

#### Summary of Objectives

- 1) To gain a solid grounding in fundamental concepts in sociocultural anthropology.
- 2) To explore a wide range of specific ethnographic case studies through reading, discussion and writing assignments.
- 3) To practice basic research methodologies through first-hand experience.
- 4) To master core terms and be able to apply them proficiently in writing and analysis.
- 5) To gain a critical appreciation of the influence of culture and society on human behavior.

#### III. Format

This course is designed to be a smaller-scale seminar for motivated liberal arts honors students with an active interest in cultural anthropology. It is run as series of lively, fast-paced, interactive meetings in which students are encouraged to articulate and synthesize ideas with clarity, accuracy and sensitivity, and defend positions through evidence based on a common reading list. Discussion leaders, designated weekly, will raise questions, stimulate debate, and integrate ideas from the readings and core topics into our collective analysis. I will be asking for your feedback regularly so there is an open flow of communication and room for improvement during the semester.

#### IV. Course Requirements and Percentage of Final Grade:

- 1) Active intellectually rigorous participation in seminar component: 20%
- 2) Two 3-5 page papers elaborating core concepts through ethnographic examples: 20%
- 3) Two take-home quizzes analyzing readings: 20%
- 4) Two in-class quizzes on anthropological vocabulary, history and theory: 20%
- 5) A final written assignment, integrating all course components: 20%

**Mon-** An instructor-led discussion establishes the context and background for the readings and outlines their key data, arguments and ideas in the reading.

**Wed-** A small team of students, delegated in advance, will facilitate the discussion along with the instructor, raising questions, stimulating debate, and integrating ideas from the readings into the collective analysis.

**Fri-** Friday discussion sessions with the TA are reserved for writing and research workshops to guide small-scale field or library research projects as they develop.

#### IV. Course Requirements:

- Attendance, active intellectually rigorous engagement in class discussions and discussion sections, blogs and reading response papers (see below): 20%
- Timely submission of three short analytic papers: 20%
- Scores on four take-home guizzes covering assigned reading materials: 20%
- Final research paper which integrates readings and individual research: 40%

# NOTE ON ATTENDANCE: More than four unexcused absences will automatically lower your final grade by one letter grade.

#### V. Writing Assignments:

•When you lead discussion (with your group), you will write a two-page (12 pt. font, double spaced) response to the reading. These can be reflections, reactions, critical

commentaries or overviews. The two-page typed responses will be turned in class on those Wednesdays that we read an ethnography, and are marked on the course schedule below. These are informal, but are required, and are an important part of the participation grade. They will be marked with a  $\sqrt{+}$ ,  $\sqrt{-}$ , or  $\sqrt{-}$  based on their quality. Note: Reading response papers must be turned in on time and cannot be made up at the end of the course.

- Short papers: Two short papers, 3-5 pages in length, preparing for your final project analyzing our reading in more depth are due at various points in the semester, edited typed and including a bibliography. A prompt and rubric will be provided two weeks in advance.
- Final paper: a 10-15 page (12 pt. font, double spaced) analysis paper that includes a bibliography of literature cited (should have at least 6-10 references total, 3-5 from scholarly sources outside the course, 3-5 from the course).

To receive a grade, all submissions must include at least 10 pages (typed or hand written) of field notes upon which the project was based.

#### V. Grading

Grades will be based on the following scale:

- A 95-100% Excellent grasp of subject matter; explains conceptsclearly; provides relevant details and examples; draws clear and interesting connections, exceptionally original, coherent and well-organized; ideas clearly written/stated, outstanding classroom participation
- **A-** 90-94% <u>Very good</u> grasp of subject matter; explains concepts clearly; provides relevant details and examples; draws clear connections; ideas clearly written/stated
- **B+** 86-89% Good grasp of some elements above, others need work
- **B** 83-85% <u>Satisfactory</u> grasp of some elements above
- **B-** 80-82% <u>Uneven, spotty</u> grasp of the elements above
- C+ 76-79 % Limited grasp of the above
- C 73-75% Poor grasp of the above
- C- 70-72% Very poor grasp of the above
- **D** 60-69% <u>Little evidence</u> of grasp of material, having done readings, attended class, or completed assignments
- **F** 0-59% No evidence of having done readings, attended class, or completed assignments

#### VI. Important notes on grading and participation:

Complete written assignments on time: I am committed to returning assignments to you promptly so you can benefit from my feedback while material is fresh in your mind. I do not grade papers or exams until I have the entire printed set in front of me. For these reasons, **I do not accept late assignments**. Bring a hard copy at the beginning of class on the day it is due. If you anticipate a problem, or have a history of deadline problems, meet with a consultant at the learning or writing center to help you plan ahead.

The UT Learning Center: <a href="http://www.utexas.edu/student/utlc/">http://www.utexas.edu/student/utlc/</a>

Undergraduate Writing Center:

#### http://uwc.utexas.edu/

Grading policy: I am very happy to discuss how you may improve your work, and will read early drafts, but **I** will not reconsider grades on papers or quizzes. I grade all the papers in a set at the same time to ensure that I am applying the same standards, and I make every effort to be fair.

Plagiarism and copying: Although this course is designed for creative, individual work and synthesis of ideas from various sources (it would be hard to cheat in the conventional sense of the word), any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit must be the student's own work. Should copying occur from another student, both the student who copied work and the student who gave material to be copied will both automatically receive a zero for the assignment.

Penalty for violation of this Code can also be extended to include failure of the course and University disciplinary action.

Here are University statements about plagiarism and the consequences of plagiarizing. <a href="http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/faculty/plagiarism/preventing.html">http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/faculty/plagiarism/preventing.html</a> <a href="http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/learningmodules/plagiarism/">http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/learningmodules/plagiarism/</a>

Using office hours, getting help: I check email regularly, and will usually reply to emails within 24 hours for basic questions, and no longer than three days for more complicated ones. My door is open from 10am-11am on Mondays and Wednesdays. Ask for an appointment if you can't come in during my regular hours.

Attendance, contribution, and classroom vibe: Regular attendance is not only the key to your own success as a student in this course, but also for the quality of the course as a dynamic whole. Arriving late and leaving early disrupts class flow, so make every effort to arrive to class on time with your materials prepared and phones and computers, etc. off. This is a low-tech, highly interpersonal seminar. Attendance and participation are factored into your final grade.

# VII. University Notices and Policies University of Texas Honor Code

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

In this course, that means we will all work to ensure that the discussion space is shared relatively equally among the participants, and to maintain an atmosphere of respect for each other's perspectives and arguments, especially when there are strong disagreements.

**Students with disabilities** Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD)

at (512) 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone). Please contact me as early in the semester as possible to let me know if you need anything to participate fully.

#### **Religious Holy Days**

By UT Austin policy, students are required to notify me of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will certainly give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence

#### V. Required Texts (for purchase at the Co-op Bookstore)

Core Concepts in Cultural Anthropology (4th Edition) by Robert Lavenda and Emily. Don't Sleep, There are Snakes by Daniel Everett Guests of the Sheikh by Elizabeth Warnock Fernea Cuba in the Shadow of Change by Amelia Rosenberg Weinreb Coming of Age in New Jersey by Michael Moffat

**Note:** a required course pack is available for purchase at Abel's Copies (located at University Towers, 715D West 23rd St.)

## IX. Key due dates at-a-glance:

#### Plan ahead!

W 9/1: Quiz #1

W 9/22: Short paper #1

F 10/8: Quiz #2 F 10/29: Quiz #3

M 11/15: Short paper #2

W 11/25: Quiz #4

M 11/30: FINAL PAPER

**X. Tentative Course Schedule:** \*\*This syllabus represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.

Date	Main Topic(s)	Work to do at home Readings – to be completed before class	Evaluation
W 8/25	Introduction to this class and its structure; choosing concepts from a hat, and analyzing a an common artifact.		
F 8/27	How do I learn about Culture? Introduction to the 4 fields, place of cultural anthropology.	Read Core Concepts, Chapters 1-2;	syllabus: type up: a) what surprises you; b) what you

			look forward to; c) what you most dread
M 8/30	Anthropology in the news	Be prepared to summarize, discuss and workshop your article	Bring current (2010) newspaper article on anything to do with anthropology
W 9/1	<b>✗ Student-led</b> Classics,	Read selections from <i>Classic Edition: Sources</i> in bulk pack: p. Selection 1-3; 5-6; 11; 23-24.	
F 9/3	<b>✗ Student-led</b> , Trivial Pursuits	Continue <i>Classic Edition:</i> Sources in bulk pack selections 12; 14; 15; 23-24; 27-28.	In class Trivial Pursuits; submit quiz questions over discussion board
M 9/6	LABOR DAY HOLIDAY NO CLASS		
W 9/8	X Student-led, Language and Culture,	Read chapter 3 debate on dying languages in <i>Taking Sides</i> for discussion	Quiz #1, Inclass covering introductory concepts.
F 9/10	ROSH HA SHANAH HOLIDAY NO CLASS		- Company
M 9/13	Ethnography: Don't Sleep there are Snakes	Part 1 for discussion	
W 9/15	<b>✗ Student-led</b> discussion on Snakes	Don't Sleep, parts 2-3 for discussion	
F 9/16	YOM KIPPUR OBSERVED NO CLASS		
M 9/20	Wrap up Snakes	Chapters 6 to end	
W 9/22	Male domination?	Taking Sides in Course- Pack, issue 11	Paper #1 on Language and Globalization due
F 9/24	Religion and Belief	Read Chapter 4-5 in <i>Core Concepts</i>	
M 9/27	Guests of the Sheik	Guests Parts I	
W 9/29	<b>Student-led</b> discussion on	Guests Part II	

	Guests		
F 10/1	Guests	Guests Part III	
M 10/4	Wrap-up Guests	Guests Part IV-VI	
W 10/6	Student-led methodology and field projects: Overview of participant observation, interviewing, fieldnotes	Read course pack items:- Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes Preface, ch. 1-2;	
F 10/8	Taking fieldnotes workshop	Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes, ch. 3-4	Quiz #2 Due; Take home
M 10/11	Workshop on research questions		Come with a research question to discuss; Due: field notes typed up
W 10/13	<b>XStudent-led</b> discussion on social organization	Read <i>Core Concepts</i> chapter 6	
F 10/15	Political Anthropology, Economic Anthropology	Core Concepts ch 7-8	
M 10/18	Cuba in The Shadow of Change	Cuba. Intro 1	
W 10/20	<b>XStudent-led</b> discussion on Cuba	Cuba 2-3	
F 10/22	Cuba	Cuba 4-6	
M 10/25	Wrap-up <i>Cuba</i>	Cuba 6-7	
W 10/27	Kinship and Marriage	Core concepts 9-10	Trivial Pursuits
F 10/29	From <i>Taking Sides</i> Is Gay marriage natural?	1	Quiz # 3 take- home
M 11/1	Globalization and the culture of capitalism	Core-Concepts 11-12	
W 11/3	Student-led The Concept of Race	Taking sides debate on race	
F 11/5	Race in the 21st Century	Race, Chapters 3-4	
M 11/8	Race in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century	Race, Chapters 5-6	
W 11/10	Student-led Reading Scholarly Journals, 1	CSI Science as Wishful Thinking (from <i>American Anthropologist</i> )	
F 11/12	Reading Scholarly Journals, 2	Bluegrass Cowboys in Thailands	
M 11/15	In-class film <i>The Devil's</i> Playground		Due: Short Paper #2
W 11/17	<b>XStudent-led</b> Ethnography: Coming of Age in New Jersey	Coming of Age 1-2	
F 11/20		Coming of Age 2-3	
M 11/23		Coming of Age 4-7	

W 11/25	Wrapping up Coming of Age	Quiz #4, Inclass
F 11/27	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY NO CLASS	
M 11/30	Student Presentations, round 1	DUE: FINAL PAPER
W 12/1	Student Presentations, round 2	
F 12/3	Final Party, secret Santa exchange	

