

ANT302 | Introduction to Cultural Anthropology
FALL 2010 | M W 3:00PM-4:00PM | CAL 100

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Class description

This class is an introduction to the main concepts, questions, theoretical orientations, and practices that define today the field of cultural anthropology. We will seek together an understanding of culture, difference, and power by exploring these theoretical concerns in a variety of geographical contexts, through ethnographic case studies. Ethnography—as main methodology and intellectual product of anthropology—will be central to this semester-long journey.

In the first part of the semester, we will outline the scope and the boundaries of the discipline, defining moments in its history, as well as its relationship to the larger domains of sciences and humanities. Next, we will focus on several classic areas of interest to cultural anthropology, in a way that reflects current concerns: subsistence and economics, political organization, social and cultural construction of reality and identity, kinship and descent. In the second part of the semester, we will turn to questions of culture, difference, and power in today's global world. The final two weeks of the semester will be dedicated to reading and discussing a full-length ethnography.

Class objectives

By the end of semester you will have:

- gained an understanding of what cultural anthropology is, its interpretivist approach, the significance and limitations of ethnography in understanding and representing social life;
- learned key concepts in anthropology, translated them into your own words, and applied them through exercises, discussions, writing assignments, and exams;
- critically read and evaluated anthropological texts and materials used in class, both orally and in writing;
- demonstrated an ability to critically analyze and evaluate information about culture and cultural difference, as you encounter it in everyday conversations, media, or other classes.

Preparing for the class

This is a reading intensive class, and some of the texts can be quite challenging. Please come and see us if you find like you have trouble keeping up, and we can help you devise strategies to succeed. We advise you to do all the reading before the indicated class time: all lectures and discussions will assume your thorough knowledge of these materials. Also, reading that is not active and critical is half wasted. Take careful notes, jotting down:

- the main question that is being asked
- the evidence that is examined
- main arguments and conclusions
- how it relates to concepts discussed in class

For your convenience, I have posted selections from Simon and Schuster's *Handbook for Writers* on Blackboard to give you an idea of what is expected of college level reading.

Being prepared and up to date with your readings makes a big difference in how the class is run and how you benefit from it. We encourage your participation not only during discussion sections but also during lectures. Please bring your ideas, questions, observations to class and don't be afraid to share them. We only ask you that you be respectful toward the instructors and your colleagues.

Take careful and complete notes during class, as well. We will try to post lecture outlines before the class meets, to help you structure those notes.

Requirements and evaluation

You will be asked to write two (02) papers for this class. We expect your writing to be college level, carefully thought out and edited. The Undergraduate Writing Center (FAC 211 <http://uwc.utexas.edu>) is available for help.

In addition, you will be expected to write six (06) response pieces to the assigned weekly readings. These can be your response to any set of weekly readings. These pieces will not be returned to you but will form part of your grade (18%) and failure to turn them in will affect your final grade. For your convenience, I have posted selections from Simon and Schuster's *Handbook for Writers* on Blackboard to give you an idea of what is expected of a college level essay in terms of writing and research.

Please avoid committing plagiarism or other forms of scholastic dishonesty. In fairness to your colleagues who are being honest, such behavior can have severe consequences, reflected in your grade or recommendations to be suspended or expelled from the university.

Attendance is compulsory for the discussion sections (two unexcused absences allowed) and strongly recommended for the lectures.

There will be two exams: a mid term and a final. They will include multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions, and will test knowledge gained in lectures, discussion sections, and readings.

Structure of the final grade:

Two papers (5-6 pages) 2 x 10%= 20%

Mid term exam 15%

Final exam 30%

Six Response Pieces (half-page long, single-spaced) 18%

Attendance and participation (discussion section) 17%

Late papers: you will have 20% of the score deducted for every day your paper is late. If your inability to turn the paper in on time is due to some major catastrophe, see the instructor or the TA and be ready to document it.

Make-up exams: the same applies to exams—document any emergency that might have prevented you from getting to class in time for the exam. If you know you will not be here on the day of the exam, come and see your instructor beforehand. I will only accept legitimate reasons. The final exam is scheduled for December 15, from 7PM to 10PM.

Special needs or requirements

If there are special needs that require you to have particular arrangements for attending the class, turning in assignments, or taking tests, let me know in the beginning of the semester and, again, be prepared to document them. If you think you need special assistance or have a disability that needs accommodating, you should contact Services for Students with Disabilities on the 4th floor of the Student Services Building ((512) 471-6259, ssd@uts.cc.utexas.edu).

Website and communication

All course materials (readings, lecture outlines, assignments) will be posted on the course's Blackboard site. Go to <http://courses.utexas.edu>, log on using your UTEID, and choose "Cultural Anthropology" from the list of classes you are registered for. You can send emails to the instructors and your fellow students, or post messages on the discussion board using the communication function. Occasionally, we will post announcements on the Bb page, so check the page a couple of times a week.

You can contact us via email. Please put ANT302 in the subject line so your message doesn't get lost.

Grades for papers, exams, response pieces will be posted on CLIPS, as they become available. CLIPS is a service part of UT Direct. Look under "My Classes."

Course materials

There are three books and a Course Pack required for this course. The three books assigned for this class should be available for sale at the University Co-op store, on Guadalupe:

Foley, Douglas. 1990. *Learning Capitalist Culture: Deep in the Heart of Tejas*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

McHugh, E. 2005. *Love and Honor in the Himalayas: Coming to Know Another Culture*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Robbins, Richard H. 2006. *Cultural Anthropology. A problem-based approach*. 5th Edition. Thomson Wadsworth.

The Course Pack or *ANT302 Reader* will be available at Abel's Copies.

The other required readings will be posted on the university Blackboard site under “Course Documents.”

NOTE: This syllabus is a tentative document and not a contract. Assigned readings will be changed according to the needs and pace of the class.

Class schedule

PART I—INTRODUCTION, FOUNDATIONS

CULTURE AND MEANING

Week 1

Wednesday, August 25 LECTURE

Introduction; review of syllabus and course outline

Friday/Thursday, August 27 DISCUSSION SECTION

Williams, “Culture” pp.87-93, ‘Society’ (Blackboard),
(Recommended) Simon and Schuster, pp. 101-138 (Blackboard)

Week 2

Monday, August 30 LECTURE

Robbins, *Cultural Anthropology*: Chapter 1, pp. 1-38

Bohannon, Shakespeare in the Bush

Miner, “Body Ritual among the Nacirema”

<http://www.msu.edu/~jdowell/miner.html>

Culture
Meaning
Ethnocentrism
Cultural relativism

WHAT IS CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY?

Wednesday, September 01

Malinowski, “Introduction: The Subject, Method and Scope of Inquiry,” pp. 1-25 (Bb)

Friday, September 03 DISCUSSION SECTION

Week 3

Monday, September 06

Labor Day Holiday

(Continue reading/digesting Malinowski)

Wednesday, September 08 LECTURE

Geertz, “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture,” pp. 3-32 (Bb)

Friday, September 10 DISCUSSION SECTION

Cultural anthropology:
--- defining the field: object, scope,
boundaries; rel. to anthropology,
ethnology, sociology, history, folklore,
cultural studies;
--- some useful concepts: social fact,
ideal type, situated knowledge;
--- methods: the comparative method

FIELDWORK: WHAT ANTHROPOLOGISTS DO

Week 4

Monday, September 13

Geertz, “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight” (Reader)

Narayan, “How Native is a ‘Native Anthropologist?’” pp. 671-686 (Reader)

Watch out of class: Anthropologist Alan Macfarlane at work in Nepal.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jBZ108Ao2Ws&feature=related>

Wednesday, September 15 Lecture

McHugh, *Love and Honor in the Himalayas*, Preface and Chapter 1

Friday, September 17 DISCUSSION SECTION

LIMITS OF “CULTURE”: COLONIALISM AND RACE

Week 5

Monday, September 20 LECTURE

Asad, Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter (Reader)

Understanding Race: <http://www.understandingrace.org>

go to [History], read all “Science timeline” articles

Wednesday, September 22 FILM

Film: *First Contact*

Colonizer and the colonized, racial subjugation, knowledge and power, “culture” or “race”, anthropology’s role

Persistence of colonial thought, reproduction of racial categories

Friday, September 24 DISCUSSION SECTION

FIRST PAPER TOPIC ASSIGNED

PART II— LANGUAGE, IDENTITY AND KINSHIP

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY

Week 6

Monday, September 27 LECTURE

Robbins, Chapter 4, pp.123-166

McHugh, *Love and Honor in the Himalayas* Chapter 2

Wednesday, September 29 LECTURE

McHugh, Chapter 3

Friday, Friday October 01 DISCUSSION SECTION

Communication, language, world-view: Sapir-Whorf hypothesis

Symbol, metaphor, key metaphor, symbolic action, ritual, myth

KINSHIP, MARRIAGE, AND DESCENT

Week 7

Monday, October 04 LECTURE

Robbins, *Cultural Anthropology*, Chapter 5, pp.167-204
McHugh, Chapters 4

Wednesday, October 06 FILM

McHugh Chapter 5
Dadi's Family

Friday, October 08 DISCUSSION SECTION

FIRST PAPER DUE

Family, kinship as culturally constructed;

Kinship terms

Descent: bilateral, matrilineal, patrilineal kinship

Marriage:

--- Endogamy, exogamy

--- Polygamy, polyandry, polygyny

--- Incest prohibition

--- Bride service, bridewealth, dowry

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY

Week 8

Monday, October 11 LECTURE

Robbins, *Cultural Anthropology*, Chapter 6, pp.205-242
McHugh Chapter 6

Wednesday, October 13 FILM

FILM: *American Tongues*

Friday, October 15 DISCUSSION SECTION

Identity, alterity, self

Rites of passage

Primer to gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, class, subculture

Reciprocity, gift, commodity (gift giving at Christmas, moka, potlatch)

PART II—CULTURE, DIFFERENCE, POWER IN A GLOBAL WORLD

THE NATION STATE

Week 9

Monday, October 18 LECTURE

Ali, Kamran Asdar, "Constructing New Selves," pp.139-152
Kligman, "Building Socialism in Ceausescu's Romania:

Politics as Performance," pp. 19-41

Wednesday, October 20 FILM

Bernstein, "The Very Angry Tea Party"

<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/06/13/the-very-angry-tea-party/>

FILM: "The Children of the Decree" or "4 months, 3 weeks, and 2 days"

Friday, October 22 DISCUSSION SECTION

Political organization, economics, and the nation state

Race, ethnicity, and the nation-state

Violence and the nation-state

Family, reproduction, and the state

Citizenship

MIDTERM EXAM

Week 10

Monday, October 25 EXAM

Midterm Exam

SOCIAL HIERARCHIES, SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

Wednesday, October 27 LECTURE

Robbins Chapter 7 pp. 243-287

Lipsitz, "The Possessive Investment in Whiteness"

pp. 1-23 (Reader)

Friday, October 29 DISCUSSION SECTION

Week 11

Monday, November 1 FILM

FILM: *Race: The Power of an Illusion*

Wednesday, November 3 LECTURE

Lipsitz, *Learning from New Orleans: The Social Warrant of Hostile Privatism and Competitive Consumer Citizenship*

Watch out of Class: Manning Marable on *Race in the U.S.*:
Interview by Charlie Rose:

<http://www.charlierose.com/view/interview/2015>

Friday, November 5 DISCUSSION SECTION

Social stratification

Class, race, gender, ethnicity

Social reproduction

Poverty, culture of poverty, spatializing poverty

Structural oppression

ECONOMICS, DEVELOPMENT, GLOBALIZATION

Week 12

Monday, November 8 LECTURE

Robbins, Chapter 3 pp. 83-122

Bacon, "Children of NAFTA", pp. 19-40

Wednesday, November 10 LECTURE

Bacon, "Children of NAFTA", pp.42-79

FILM: "Made in China"(excerpts)

Friday, November 12 DISCUSSION SECTION

Globalization, cultural change, global economy

Development, critiques of development

Global inequalities

SECOND PAPER TOPIC ASSIGNED

RACE, GENDER, CLASS

Week 13

Monday, November 15 LECTURE

Cutter, "The Geography of Social Vulnerability: Race, Class, and Catastrophe"

Dyson, "Unnatural disasters: race and poverty"
Dominguez, "Seeing and Not Seeing: Complicity in Surprise"

Katrina mini-case study

Unequal distribution of social vulnerability

Intersections of class, race, gender

Discourses and images of poverty, third world, and the American Dream

PART III—ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY

LEARNING CAPITALIST CULTURE—DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEJAS

Wednesday, November 17 LECTURE

Foley, *Learning Capitalist Culture* "Foreword," "Introduction," "1. The Civil Rights Movement Comes to Town,"

Friday, November 19 DISCUSSION SECTION

Week 14

Monday, November 22 LECTURE

Foley, "2. The Great American Football Ritual," "Finding an Identity in the Social Status Scene," pp.vii-100

Wednesday, November 24 LECTURE

Foley: "Working and Playing Around in the Classroom," pp.101-134.

Friday, November 26 NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING

Continue reading Foley, "Learning Capitalist Culture"

SECOND PAPER DUE

Week 15

Monday, December 29 LECTURE

Finish Foley: "Looking Back on the 1970s: An Epilogue," pp.135-158, "Appendix B. Field Methods, Narrative Style, and Hermeneutic Interpretation," pp.206-231.

Wednesday, December 1 LECTURE

REVIEW

Friday, December 3 DISCUSSION SECTION

FINAL EXAM

Friday, December 10 7PM-10PM
FINAL EXAM—PLACE TO BE ANNOUNCED
