ANT 302 CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

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Instructor: Sofian Merabet (sofian.merabet@austin.utexas.edu)
Office hours: Wednesday 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. in SAC 5.164

Teaching Assistants: Eshe Cole (haileshe.c@utexas.edu)
Office hours: Monday 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Mubbashir Rizvi (mubbashir.rizvi@gmail.com)
Office hours: Friday 9:00 a.m. – 10 a.m.

Course Description:
This course is an introduction to the anthropological study of social and cultural phenomena. It aims at communicating basic thoughts, concepts, and theories that are part of the sub-discipline of cultural anthropology. Based on the required readings and ethnographic films, students will be exposed to the ways in which these concepts and theories are applied to the study of contemporary groups of people. Next to discussing some of the important debates in current qualitative social science, we will critically examine three ethnographic studies of three different cultures to understand some of the differences and commonalities of human experience.
**Required Texts:**
Books (listed alphabetically by the author and ordered at the University Co-Op, www.universitycoop.com, 2246 Guadalupe St, Austin, (512) 476-7211):
- Malinowski, Bronislaw *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. Waveland, 1984 (orig. 1922)

**Additional readings on Blackboard (listed alphabetically by the author):**
- Laura Bohannan “Shakespeare in the Bush: An American anthropologist set out to study the Tiv of West Africa and was taught the true meaning of Hamlet” in *Natural History* 75: 1966, pp. 28–33

**Ethnographic Films:**
- Segments from Black in Latin America / a production of Inkwell Films, Wall to Wall Media LTD and Thirteen in association with WNET.org; written by Henry Louis Gates Jr.; series producer, Ricardo Pollack.
- “Les maîtres fous” by Jean Rouch followed by interview.

**Course Requirements for Registered Students:**

In combination with the TA-led discussion sections, the lecture class relies on the intellectual commitment and active participation of all students. In order for the lectures to be effective, all students must have the reading assignments completed and ready for in-depth discussion before each meeting. Regular attendance is required, and so is active participation in the discussion section. Students are encouraged to ask questions and contribute to the discussion in both the section meetings as well as during the lectures. You must come to class having carefully read all materials and be prepared to discuss, question, and argue about issues raised in the readings. It will be beneficial for you to take excerpts/notes on any material that you find enlightening, controversial, or objectionable. You should also take notes in class on themes, key terms, and debates we discuss. These note-taking strategies will be crucial when you write your response papers. In short:

- Attend all classes (lectures and discussion sections).
- Do all assigned readings (while taking excerpts/notes!) by the date indicated on the syllabus and participate actively in the discussion sections.
- Two written **Blue-Book-Exams** on **Monday, September 24**th and **Monday, November 12**th to be taken during the lecture class and covering a theoretical question based on the assigned readings. **All students are responsible to bring their own blue book!** **THERE WILL BE NO MAKE-UP EXAMS!**
- One Take-Home exam to be handed in to the TAs during the lecture class on **Monday, October 15th** [no more than 3-pages (double-spaced/12 point)] (assignment will be posted on blackboard on Friday, October 12**th after 11:00 a.m.).
- One Three-page paper based on a joint/group project that is based on observation and deals with a topic focusing on some aspect of social life on the UT Austin campus to be handed in during the final lecture class on **Wednesday, December 5**th. The Project will be first discussed with and approved by the instructor and Teaching Assistants! Groups will be constituted by up to five individuals who are part of the same discussion section.
- 10-minute presentations on the respective final ethnographic group project during discussion sections of weeks 12 and 14. They are intended to give general
feedback (by TAs and fellow students) to be incorporated in the final version of the written paper.

The two exams and two writing assignments (take-home exam and final group project) are designed to develop critical reading, analytical, and writing skills. Evaluation criteria include: critical and integrative analysis of texts, clarity of thought, ability to synthesize readings and class discussions into your own argument, and ability to formulate a theoretical grounding for it. For the in-class exams, make sure your handwriting is legible!

PLAGIARISM:

Anyone plagiarizing will first be given an “F” (Fail) and a report will be forwarded to the appropriate university authorities.

Notice regarding academic dishonesty (e.g. Plagiarism)
- Honor Code or statement of ethics.
  - University of Texas Honor Code: Each member of the university is expected to uphold The University of Texas Honor Code through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, to "plagiarize" means
  - to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own.
  - to use (another's production) without crediting the source.
  - to commit literary theft.
  - to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source.

In other words, plagiarism is an act of fraud. It involves both stealing someone else's work and lying about it afterward.

All of the following are considered plagiarism:

  - turning in someone else's work as your own.
  - copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit.
  - failing to put a quotation in quotation marks.
  - giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation.
  - changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit.
  - copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not (see our section on "fair use" rules).

Most cases of plagiarism can be avoided, however, by citing sources. Simply acknowledging that certain material has been borrowed, and providing your readers with the information necessary to find that source, is usually enough to prevent plagiarism.
Grading Procedure:
- 2 Exams: 40%.
- 1 Take-Home: 20%
- Final Group Project: 20%
- Regular attendance/participation: 20%.

Documented Disability Statement
- Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone) or http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd. Students need to inform the instructor and the teaching assistant(s) about their disability right at the beginning of the semester.

Please note that the instructor reserves the right to make changes in the syllabus when necessary to meet learning objectives.

Reading Schedule: (this schedule is tentative and subject to possible revision)

Week 1: What is Anthropology?
- Wednesday, August 29th Introduction and Orientation
  No discussion sections on week 1!

Week 2: The Practice of Anthropology
- Monday, September 3rd Labor Day

Week 3: The Complexity of the Ethnographic Field Site
- Monday, September 10th  Laura Bohannan “Shakespeare in the Bush: An American anthropologist set out to study the Tiv of West Africa and was taught the true meaning of Hamlet” in *Natural History* 75: 1966, pp. 28–33


Week 4: British Social Anthropology (1)
- Monday, September 17th  Bronislaw Malinowski “Introduction: The Subject, Method and Scope of this Enquiry” and “I. The Country and Inhabitants of the Kula District” in Bronislaw Malinowski *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, pp. 1-48

- Wednesday, September 19th  Bronislaw Malinowski “II. The Natives of the Trobriand Islands,” “III. The Essentials of the Kula,” and “VI. Canoes and Sailing” in Bronislaw Malinowski *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, pp. 49-104

Week 5: British Social Anthropology (2)
- Monday, September 24th  1st in-class Exam!

- Wednesday, September 26th  Bronislaw Malinowski “V. The Ceremonial Building of a Waga” and “VI. Launching of a Canoe and Ceremonial Visiting–Tribal Economics in the Trobriands” in Bronislaw Malinowski *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, pp. 105-145

Week 6: Classical Social Thought (1)

Week 7: Classical Social Thought (2)
- Wednesday, October 10th Clifford Geertz “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture” in The Interpretation of Cultures, New York: Basic Books, 1973, pp. 3-30

Week 8: American Cultural Anthropology (1)

**Hand in Take-Home Exam! (Questions Posted on Blackboard on Friday, October 12th after 11:00 a.m.)**


Week 9: American Cultural Anthropology (2)
- Wednesday, October 24th Ethnographic Film: “Les maîtres fous” by Jean Rouch followed by interview.

Week 10: Religion, Magic, and Ritual
Week 11: Gender, Sexuality, and the Body
- Monday, November 5th  

- Wednesday, November 7th  

Week 12: Race, Politics, and the Body
- Monday, November 12th  
2nd *in-class Exam!*

- Wednesday, November 14th  

Week 13: Race in Latin America
- Monday, November 19th  
*Ethnographic Film: Segments from Black in Latin America* / a production of Inkwell Films, Wall to Wall Media LTD and Thirteen in association with WNET.org; written by Henry Louis Gates Jr.; series producer, Ricardo Pollack.

- Wednesday, November 21st  
*Thanksgiving*

No discussion sections on Week 13!

Week 14: Reading a Contemporary Ethnography (1)
- Monday, November 26th  

- Wednesday, November 28th  
Week 15: Reading a Contemporary Ethnography (2)

- Monday, December 3rd

- Wednesday, December 5th
  Jafari S. Allen “¡Hagamos un Chen! (We Make Change!)” and “Coda: ¡Vamos a Vencer! (We Will Win!)” in Jafari S. Allen ¡Venceremos? The Erotics of Black Self-Making in Cuba, pp. 157-194

Final paper version of the group project due in Class!
No discussion sections on Week 15!