

Anthropology 2200G (Section 1)
Introduction to Anthropology
Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays
8:00 AM to 8:50 AM

Classroom: 1103 Blair Hall
Office: 3153 Blair Hall
Office Hours:
8:00-9:00 AM; T (Starbucks)
12:00-1:00 PM; M, F (3153 Blair Hall)
2:00-3:00 PM; M, W (3153 Blair Hall)

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Course Description

This course examines what it means to be human. We will do this by focusing on the concept of culture. Arguably, culture is humankind's most powerful "tool." Among other things, it enables us live in places that wouldn't be possible without it (i.e. the Arctic), it helps us identify prospective spouses and enemies, it informs our understanding of history and our outlook on the future, and it offers answers to fundamental questions of human existence (who are we? where do we come from? what happens when we die?). And although it is universal—no people lack it—it is incredibly diverse in its expression. Drawing on culture's dual diversity and universality, we will explore its significance for understanding the human condition.

Introduction

A former professor of mine once said that everything is anthropology. His point is that since we cannot perceive and understand the world outside of ourselves—and thus without looking through a cultural lens—everything is invariably "anthropological." While perhaps a bit extreme, certainly much of what we "know" and do is informed by culture. As such, a course on culture will invariably cover a lot of ground—politics, religion, kinship systems, marriage, family life, technology, economy, health and sickness, sex and death, and more. And because culture is a universal feature of human society, our sample size is the entire world. Accordingly, our perspective will be broad and sweeping.

This is very likely the first anthropology course you have ever taken. You may find that anthropology is difficult, but perhaps not in the way that some other subjects are. The difficult part is that in order to understand other cultural practices, beliefs, and behavior—often so different from our own—it's necessary to suspend judgment. This is not easy to do (some say it is impossible) but it's important. Consider cannibalism: if you believe that the reason that people eat other people is because they are primitive, dumb, or crazy, you are going to find (not surprisingly) that all cannibals are primitive, dumb, and crazy. Obviously, by taking such a stance you would learn little about these people's belief systems and their own explanations for this cultural practice. But by asking questions, you may discover that by consuming the dead some "cannibals" believe that they can prevent the souls of the deceased from haunting them. Of course, such responses only beg more questions: like, why do these people perceive the dead as harmful? Do other people who practice cannibalism share the same beliefs? Why or why not? Anthropology requires an open mind—and I might add a willingness to consider and think critically about our own cultural practices too.

Aims

- To introduce you to a wide range of cultural practices and beliefs
- To explore the ways that anthropologists have sought to understand cultural diversity
- To encourage you to think critically about these different anthropological approaches and perspectives
- To give you the opportunity to think critically and reflect "anthropologically" on "American culture"

Assessment

<u>assignments</u>	<u>percentage of grade</u>	<u>date</u>
Exam 1	30%	2/27
Exam 2	30%	5/6 (8:00 AM)
Kinship Quiz	5%	2/20
“Anthropological Experience” essay (2 pages)	10%	anytime before 3/30
“American Culture” essay (3 pages)	25%	4/20

Exams

Exams are based on class lectures, discussions, readings, films, guest speakers—anything covered and presented in the course of the semester. Exams typically include short answer, essay, and multiple choice questions. Each exam is weighed equally (30% of final grade).

Kinship Quiz

This quiz will assess your understanding of different kinship systems and post-marriage residence patterns. We will spend a few days leading up to the quiz talking about this—don’t miss these classes. The quiz is worth 5% of your final grade. You cannot make up a missed quiz.

“Anthropological Experience” Essay

For this paper I want you to go out and have an “anthropological experience” and write about it. Try to reflect on the experience as an anthropologist would (what did you notice? any cultural patterns?). Be sure to write from a position of cultural relativism. You can attend a lecture or performance on/off campus that is anthropological in content (ethnic issues, music/dance, travel, race, etc), see a museum exhibit (i.e. Field, Spurlock, Eiteljorg museums), or even go to an ethnic restaurant (preferably one that offers an “experience”). I’m open to ideas, just be sure that the content is appropriate (check with me if you are unsure). The paper is due 3/30, but I would prefer that you complete the assignment before then. Tip: don’t procrastinate!

“American Culture” Essay

For this paper I want you turn the anthropological gaze on us and reflect on some aspect of American culture in the form of an essay. I prefer that you choose something rather narrow to focus on, such as dating etiquette, tipping in restaurants, attitudes toward the elderly or children, gendered differences in tattoos—there are a lot of possibilities. Try to pick a topic that you have some first-hand experience or knowledge of. A student who has been a waiter or waitress, for example, would be well-suited to talk about American tipping culture; an athlete could speak to pre-game rituals.



Your essay should be well written, organized, and argued. In terms of content, it should clearly describe the prevailing cultural pattern (behavior) but also attempt to explain it. If, for example, you are suggesting that men tip better than women, you will also need to explain why this occurs. Give this aspect of your paper a lot of careful thought.

Assigned Readings

Chagnon, Napoleon

1997 *The Yanomamo*. Wadsworth. [read entire book before exam I]

Abu-Lughod, Lila

1986 *Veiled Sentiments*. University of California Press [read entire book before exam II]

Policies

Assignments

Exams must be taken on the date specified in the syllabus. Failure to take the exam on the assigned date without adequate forewarning and documented excuse will result in a 10% penalty on the make up. Don't miss the final.

Quizzes must be taken on the date specified in the syllabus. A missed quiz cannot be made up.

All writing assignments must be typed and double-spaced, employ a standard 10-12 size font, and run the required amount of pages (see specific assignment) not including the bibliography. If you cite anything, it must be referenced in a bibliography following the body of the document. I prefer that you use the American Anthropological Association's citation style (see http://www.aaanet.org/pubs/style_guide.htm).

All papers are due on the date specified. Papers will be assessed a 5% penalty for each day late for up to three days following the deadline, after which a failing grade will be assigned for the paper. Papers should be handed directly to me or to the department secretary on the date due and before the office closes. Emailed papers will not be accepted; please hand me a hard copy. And always save a copy!

I do not tolerate plagiarism; if you are unsure how to properly cite or reference a piece of work please come and see me.

I do not give extra credit.

Classroom Environment

A significant portion of the exams is based on material presented and discussed in class. As such, I could not imagine how a student could do well in the course without regularly attending class. More importantly, your presence and active participation simply makes for a better course. Your classmates and I are counting on you. I also encourage you to come see me during office hours. This time has been set aside for you. You are also welcome to drop by my office outside of office hours. Feel free to come with questions and concerns or simply to chat. I can also be reached on my office phone (typically on class days) or through email (although I'd prefer to talk with you in person). Don't be a stranger!

Disabilities Statement

Students with documented disabilities are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) if they wish to discuss any necessary academic accommodations.

Medical Emergency Statement

For medical emergencies, go to the nearest phone and call 911. All faculty offices have telephones and during normal business hours (8-12 & 1-4:30), the Sociology Office (Blair 3170) is open. Be sure to state the floor and room number of the emergency to the 911 operator. If possible, someone should go to the central entrance of Blair Hall to direct EMS personnel to the medical emergency scene. If the medical emergency is on the second or third floor, someone else should hold the elevator on the first floor for EMS use.

Tornado Statement

In case of a tornado warning, proceed to the center of the hallway on the first floor, near the posted severe weather signs. Under no circumstances should you attempt to leave the building.

Building Fire Statement

In case of fire, activate the fire alarm and exit the building. When a fire alarm sounds, everyone must exit the building and cannot re-enter the building until allowed by the building coordinator or fire department official. Fire alarms are located at the north and south ends of the corridors just inside the fire doors. The closes exits for all classrooms in Blair are on the north and south ends of the building. Under no circumstance should the elevator be used. Group assembly areas for all classes in Blair are either on the patio area between Blair and Old Main or on the southeast corner of the North Quad. As you exit the building, continue moving well away from the exits so that you do not impede the egress of other students or the work of fire officials. Move a safe distance away from the building.

Class Schedule

<u>date</u>	<u>topic & assignment</u>
12 January	welcome
14 January	culture
16 January	race
19 January	no class (MLK Jr. Birthday)
21 January	language
23 January	body talk
26 January	fieldwork (you too)
28 January	food i
30 January	food ii
2 February	ritual
4 February	kids
6 February	sex and marriage
9 February	for love and money
11 February	kinship i
13 February	no class (Lincoln's Birthday)
16 February	kinship ii
18 February	kinship iii (Yanomamo kinship)
20 February	kinship quiz
23 February	<i>film</i> : love Iranian-American style
25 February	<i>film</i> : love Iranian-American style (& discussion)
27 February	exam I (finish "Yanomamo" before exam)
2 March	fierce people? "Yanomamo" discussion
4 March	sex
6 March	gender
9 March	politics i
11 March	politics ii
13 March	the gift
16-20 March	no class (Spring Break)
23 March	<i>film</i> : Onga's big Moka
25 March	art i
27 March	art ii
30 March	landscape; last day I will accept "anthropological experience" essay
1 April	guest lecture : "what a classic authentic tradition is, and other thoughts"
3 April	no class (Central States Anthropological Society meetings, Champaign)
6 April	illness & health
8 April	intelligence and emotion
10 April	mental illness
13 April	<i>film</i> : latah
15 April	death
17 April	magic
20 April	war i; "American culture" papers due
22 April	war ii
24 April	<i>film</i> : magical death & evaluations
27 April	understanding culture change
29 April	the end of anthropology?
1 May	looking in the mirror
6 May (Wednesday)	exam II (8:00 AM; finish "Veiled Sentiments" before exam)