

Introduction to Cultural Anthropology

ANT110-02
Union College
Fall 2007
Social Sciences 017
MWF 1:50-2:25 PM
<http://minerva.union.edu/fayd/07fallintro>

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Office Hours:
Tuesday 1:30-2:30 PM, Wednesday 3-4 PM
or by appointment

Course Overview

This course is designed to introduce students to the methods, theories, and concepts of cultural anthropology. Drawing on ethnographic materials from all parts of the world we will investigate how people define themselves and others, make sense of their world, and organize their lives. We will look at past and contemporary ways that anthropologists have thought about culture, and use anthropological perspectives to examine the ways in which the “culture concept” is used by a variety of people and groups.

The goals of this course are 1) to furnish an overview of cultural anthropology, its historical and theoretical developments, and its present scope of inquiry; 2) to expose students to a wide range of ethnographic writing; 3) to examine the relationships between cultural diversity and relationships of power and inequality; 4) to encourage critical thinking and help students develop skills in analytical thinking.

Requirements

Read this syllabus. Understand the policies stated here. If anything is unclear, contact me for clarification. Always bring your syllabus to class in case changes are announced. Check it frequently to be sure you are aware of upcoming assignments and due dates. The syllabus is subject to change. I will announce all changes in class and post an updated version on the course web site.

Attend class. Attendance is required, and absences will be taken into account in determining the participation component of your grade (see below). If you expect to miss class due to an athletic event or other commitment please let me know at least a week in advance. If you miss class it is your responsibility to get notes, find out about any announcements, etc.

Participate in class discussions. This class is a group effort, and will include much dialogue and discussion. The more members of the class contribute and are actively engaged in our discussions, the better the class will be. Participation also counts towards your grade (see below). Do the readings listed prior to class. For example, you should read the selections listed from *Social and Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction* and the article by Terence Turner prior to class on September 7. The readings be necessary for adequate class participation. You may be called on if you are not an active participant.

Bring your texts to class. If you’ve read something, it’s because we’re going to discuss it in class. I will frequently refer to specific pages and passages from the readings, and expect you to be ready to do the same.

In the classroom: Please turn off all cell phones, laptops, etc. You are welcome to eat and drink (from recyclable or reusable containers only) as long as you are not disturbing others.

If you plan to take the course pass-fail, you must contact the Registrar within the first three weeks of the term.

ADA Requirements

It is Union College policy to make accommodations for individuals with disabilities. If you have any disability or special concern, please let me know what your needs are in order that they may be accommodated. All discussions will remain confidential to the extent permissible by law.

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations must also:

1. Register with and provide documentation to the Dean of Students Office.
2. Bring a letter to the instructor from the Dean of Students Office indicating you need academic accommodations. This must be done within the first two weeks of the term.

Required Texts (available for purchase at the Union bookstore):

John Monaghan and Peter Just, *Social and Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction*

Elizabeth Fernea, *Guests of the Sheik: An Ethnography Of An Iraqi Village*

Paul Stoller, *Money Has No Smell: The Africanization of New York City*

Sherry Ortner, *Life and Death on Mount Everest: Sherpas and Himalayan Mountaineering*

Evaluation

Class Participation: 15%

Midterm take-home (October 5): 25%

Midterm (October 8): 25%

Final (to be scheduled): 35%

Do not schedule your trip home until the final exam schedule is posted!

There will be no possibilities for extra credit or makeup work.

Class Schedule

The following abbreviations are used in the course schedule:

VSI -- Monaghan and Just, *Social and Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction*

R -- Reserve reading available at Schaffer Library and/or from library web site

www -- Reading available from course web site

TBA -- To be announced

Week One - Introduction

- Wed Sep 05** Introduction to the course and the syllabus
- Fri Sep 07** In-class video: The Kayapo
VSI pp. 1-12
Terence Turner, "Social Body and Embodied Subject: Bodiliness, Subjectivity, and Sociality among the Kayapo" (www)

Week Two - Fieldwork

- Mon Sep 10** VSI pp. 13-33, 131-136
Richard Lee, "Eating Christmas in the Kalahari" (1969) from *Natural History* (www)
- Wed Sep 12** Bronislaw Malinowski, "Introduction" in *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1966 [1922]) . New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., inc. (www/R)
Ferne ch. 1-2
- In-class video: Off the Verandah (first half)
- Fri Sep 14** Laura Bohannan, "Shakespeare in the Bush" (1966) from *Natural History* (www)
Philippe Bourgois, "Understanding Inner-City Poverty: Resistance and Self-Destruction under U.S. Apartheid" (R)

Week Three - The Concept of Culture

- Mon Sep 17** VSI ch. 2
Ferne ch. 3-4
D. Posey, "The Importance of Bees to Kayapo Indians of the Brazilian Amazon" (www)
- Wed Sep 19** Fredrik Barth, "Towards a Richer Description and Analysis of Cultural Phenomena" (2002) in R. Fox and B. King, eds., *Anthropology Beyond Culture*. London: Berg. (R)
- Fri Sep 21** Terence Turner and Vanessa Fajans-Turner, "Political innovation and inter-ethnic alliance: Kayapo resistance to the developmentalist state" (www)
In-class video: The Kayapo: Out of the Forest

Week Four - Representing Others

- Mon Sep 24** Catherine Lutz and Jane Collins. Chapters One and Two of *Reading National Geographic* (1993). Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (www)
- Wed Sep 26** Horace Miner, "Body Ritual among the Nacirema" (www)
Ferne, ch. 5
In-class videos: The Gods Must Be Crazy, N!ai! (excerpts)
- Fri Sep 28** In-class exercise: Exploring National Geographic

Week Five - Constructing Difference

- Mon Oct 01** VSI ch. 3
Ferne ch. 6-8
- Wed Oct 03** Shirley Fedorak, "Is the Practice of Purdah and Wearing the Hijab Oppressive to Women or an Expression of Their Identity?" (R)
L. Abu-Lughod, "Fieldwork of a Dutiful Daughter" (R)
- Fri Oct 05** In-class video: American Tongues
Take-home component of midterm due

Week Six - Kinship and Marriage

Mon Oct 08

Midterm

Wed Oct 10

VSI, ch. 4

Fernea, ch. 9-11

Fri Oct 12

Fernea, ch. 12-14

Bob Simpson, "The Unclear Family" (www)

Week Seven - Religion and the Material World

Mon Oct 15

VSI, ch. 7

Fernea, part III (ch. 15-18)

Wed Oct 17

Fernea ch. 25-26

VSI, ch. 5

In-class video: In and Out of Africa

Fri Oct 19

No class - Professor will be at African Studies Association meeting in NYC

Week Eight - Exchange

Mon Oct 22

VSI, ch. 6

Stoller, ch. 1-2

Wed Oct 24

B. Malinowski, "The Kula" (www)

Stoller, ch. 3-4

In-class videos: The Godfather, Off the Verandah (part two) (excerpts)

Fri Oct 26

Jane Schneider, "World Markets: Anthropological Perspectives" (R)

Stoller, ch. 6 and 8

Week Nine - Tourism

Mon Oct 29

T. Weis, "The Rise, Fall and Future of the Jamaican Peasantry" (R)

In-class video: Life and Debt (part one)

Wed Oct 31

In-class video: Life and Debt (part two)

N. Savishinsky, "Transnational Popular Culture and the Global Spread of the Jamaican Rastafarian Movement" (R)

Fri Nov 02

J. MacClancy, "Paradise Postponed: The Predicaments of Tourism" (R)

Ortner, ch. 1-2, pp. 185-197

Week Ten - The Anthropology of Cross-Cultural Encounters

Mon Nov 05

Ortner, ch. 3-4

Edward Bruner, "The Masai and the Lion King: authenticity, nationalism, and globalization in African Tourism" (www)

Wed Nov 07

Ortner, ch. 6 and 8

Emily Martin, "The Egg and the Sperm" (www)

Fri Nov 09

Adrie Kusserow, "Dehomogenizing American Individualism" (www)

Additional readings TBA

Week Eleven

Mon Nov 12

Review for final exam

FINAL EXAM date TBA

REMINDER: do not schedule your travel home until you know the date of the final exam.