

ANTH 103: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL/CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

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Spring 2007, T, Th 10:00–11:50a
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Anthropology, the science of man [humans], is often held to be a subject that may satisfy our curiosity regarding the early history of mankind, but of no immediate bearing upon problems that confront us. This view has always seemed to me erroneous. Growing up in our own civilization we know little how we ourselves are conditioned by it, how our bodies, our language, our modes of thinking and acting are determined by limits imposed on us by our environment. Knowledge of the life processes and behavior of man under conditions of life fundamentally different from our own can help us obtain a freer view of our own lives and our problems.

-Franz Boas

OVERVIEW

This course introduces the student to branch of anthropology known as sociocultural anthropology. The texts, lectures, films, discussions, projects, and other assignments are designed to provide you with:

1. an appreciation of contemporary human cultures and tools to analyze and compare the unity and diversity among them according to a problem-based approach to culture, which stresses that all societies face certain functional problems (e.g., subsistence, violence, social organization) to which there are typically a range of viable cultural “solutions” (rather than one, as the ethnocentrism tends to assume).
2. an understanding of the basic concepts and theories of cultural anthropology and how they can help us understand not only other cultures but our own;
3. a grasp of the scope and methods of cultural anthropology and its product, ethnography;
4. ways to find and evaluate anthropological information in the library, internet, and other media;
5. strategies for applying anthropological perspectives to contemporary societal issues, such as nationalism, globalization, and cultural change.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND WEBCT

1. *Cultural Anthropology: A Problem-Based Approach (CA, 4th ed.)* by R. Robbins serves as a basic text.
2. *Conformity and Conflict (CC, 12th edition)*, edited by J. Spradley and D. McCurdy, is a collection of mini ethnographies reporting on the results of anthropological research.
3. *My Freshman Year* by R. Nathan is an effort to understand contemporary university student culture from an anthropological point of view.
4. *Body, Self and Society* by A. Becker is an exploration of Fijian constructions of the body and what they can teach about such things as body image, identity, and eating disorders in our own culture.
5. Other course readings and resources (e.g., syllabus and web links) will be posted on WebCT, an internet resource to facilitate communication and distribution of course materials. Students are automatically enrolled in WebCT and can access class resources with their odin account and a password (usually the last 4 digits of your PSU ID) at www.psuonline.pdx.edu. If you do not have an odin account, please obtain one (www.account.pdx.edu).

These texts will be supplemented with additional handouts and other media, especially films.

FORMAT & EVALUATION

Each week we will cover approximately 1 chapter in the *Cultural Anthropology* text and/or several of the *Conformity and Conflict* mini-ethnographies, or one of the major ethnographies. It's important to keep up with assignments to be an effective participant in class and because not all topics are covered in class.

Evaluation is based on the following:

- 1) *Exams (45% or 450 points total)*: Two in-class short answer/essay exams will be given. The midterm will be worth 200 points, the final 250 points.
- 2) *Short Papers (40% or 400 points)*: These 2-3 page papers will be based on the 2 major ethnographies we read (see course schedule). More details will be given in separate handouts.
- 3) *Talking Points, etc. (15% or 150 points)*: Students will be asked to complete minor assignments both inside and outside of class, and occasionally on WebCT (PSU's course support computer program). Among the most important of these are Talking Points worksheets (questions, comments, quotes, etc for discussion—see example) to be turned in to the instructor most weeks. Preparing Talking Points should enhance your understanding and participation, while at the same time giving the instructor valuable feedback. On occasion students may be asked to attend campus or local events.

Grading is: 970+ points = A+; 930-969 = A; 900-929=A-; 870-899=B+; 830-869 =B; 800-829=B-; 770-799=C+; 730-769 =C; 700-729 = C-; 670-699=D+; 630-669 =D; 600-629 = D-; < 600 = F (⊗).

POLICIES

All work must be completed to receive a grade. Late papers will be penalized or rejected, except in cases of verifiable illness or emergency. Also, please be advised of the following Department policies: a) a "P" grade for the course requires an accumulated grade of C- or better; b) an "I" grade requires, in addition to the instructor's approval and "passing" standing in the course, a written petition, documenting (extraordinary) circumstances, approved by the Department Chair; c) the Anthropology Department insists upon academic integrity and intellectual honesty and is vigilant on the matter of plagiarism (see: see <http://www.anthropology.pdx.edu/assets/plagiarism.pdf>).

Students with a documented disability (e.g., physical, learning, psychological, vision, hearing, etc.) who need to arrange reasonable accommodation must contact both the instructor and the Disability Resources Center at the beginning of the term. Also, be aware of your responsibilities for academic integrity and intellectual honesty ().

To be an effective participant in class, it is important to keep up with the readings because they provide an important basis for what is covered in class. For discussions to succeed students must attend class and prepare assignments in a timely manner.

ADVISING

If you are an anthropology major, or are considering declaring the major, please chose a faculty advisor and meet with them once or twice a year to chart a course and assess your progress through the major.

COURSE SCHEDULE (not etched in stone)

Wk	Week	Topics	Assignments
1	T 4/3 Th 4/5	Pre-Assessment, & Overview. What is Anthropology? Culture? Cultural Anthropology? Culture, Meaning & Ethnography Film: <i>Ishi: The Last Yahi</i>	CA 1 CC 1-4 Th: Talking Points #1 due
2	Tu 4/10 Th 4/12	Production, Ecology, Evolution, and "Progress" Ecology (cont); Film: <i>The Goddess and the Computer</i>	CA 2 CC 5, 10-12 Th: Talking Points #2 due
3	Tu 4/17 Th 4/19	The Nacirema Ytisrevinu. Reflections on MFY & PSU	<i>My Freshman Year</i> (all) Th: Talking Points #3 due
4	Tu 4/24 Th 4/26	The Construction of the Nation State Economic Systems & Globalization	CA 3, Essay #1 Due CC 13, 14, 31, 32
5	Tu 5/1 Th 5/3	Language, Communication, and Culture Ethnography of Communication (cont)	CA 4 CC 6-9
6	Tu 5/8 Th 5/10	Magic and Religion Film: <i>Holy Ghost People</i> Midterm Exam	CC 27-30; Midterm Review Midterm Exam
7	Tu 5/15 Th 5/17	Social Structure & Family Relations Social Structure (cont) Film: <i>Rabbit Boss</i>	CA 5 CC 16-19, 20 Th: Talking Points #4 due
8	Tu 5/22 Th 5/24	The Cultural Construction of Identity Body, Self, and Society Film <i>Barbie Nation</i>	CA 6 <i>Body, Self, and Society</i> (all) Th: Talking Points #5 due
9	Tu 5/29 Th 5/31	The Cultural Construction of Social Hierarchy	CA 7 CC 15, 21, 22 Essay #2 Due
10	Tu 6/5 Th 6/7	The Cultural Construction of Violence Culture Change & Applied Anthropology	CA 8 CC 35-37 Th: Talking Points #6 due
11	Tu 6/13	Final Exam	Final Exam T 6/12, 10:15a-12:05p

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TALKING POINTS

Name _____

Date _____

I. KNOWLEDGE, COMPREHENSION & ANALYSIS

1. What are the central questions or problems the authors are addressing? Methods?

2. What are the authors' main theses (cite page #s), sources of evidence, major findings and conclusions? What passages in the readings would you most like to analyze?

II. APPLICATION & SYNTHESIS & EVALUATION

3. How does the content of the articles relate to other readings and course themes?

4. What 2-3 stimulating questions/issues do you wish to raise for class discussion (cite appropriate passages)?

5. What questions remain? Are there aspects of the arguments/texts that remain unclear, confusing, or unconvincing?