

Fundamentals of Social and Cultural Anthropology

Anthropology 20203

Fall 2018 / MWF 9:25-10:15 am in Geddes Hall B034

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Or by appointment

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Or by appointment

The purpose of anthropology is to make the world safe for human differences. – Ruth Benedict

Intelligence plus character, that is the goal of true education. – Dr. Martin Luther King

It is important that students bring a certain ragamuffin barefoot irreverence to their studies; they are not here to worship what is known, but to question it. – Jacob Bronowski

Course description:

Cultural anthropology focuses on how people create and define distinct ways of living, and how these ways interact over time and across space. The discipline is rooted in the idea that understanding social and cultural difference enables us to better navigate our interconnected, multicultural world. This course will look at some of the key theoretical, topical, and ethical issues that cultural anthropologists grapple with. We will examine diverse ways in which people around the globe have constructed social organizations (such as kinship and political and economic systems) and cultural identities (such as gender, ethnicity, nationality, race, and class), and we will consider use these approaches and tools to think critically about pressing questions of our time. Throughout the course we will consider how different anthropologists go about their work as they engage in research and as they represent others through the writing of ethnographies.

The format of the class will be a mixture of lectures and discussions, which will allow for a thorough grounding in the concepts of social and cultural anthropology as well as provide the opportunity to fully analyze these issues within the ethnographic case studies we will examine and thus achieve a holistic understanding of being human.

As you know, the class meets three times a week. Prof. Smith-Oka will lead the class on Mondays and Wednesdays, and Ms. Johnson will lead class on Fridays. These latter meetings will involve more discussion to delve into the themes in greater depth.

Course Goals:

The goals of this class are fourfold: 1) de-exoticize and familiarize the “other” across space and time, 2) to assess how different, yet equally appropriate, lifestyles and worldviews arise, 3) to critically understand something about your own culture in reflection with others, and 4) to strive towards a holistic understanding of *being* human.

Learning Goals:

At the end of the semester I expect you to:

- a. Contribute ideas and positions confidently in a classroom setting
- b. Describe key concepts in cultural anthropology and their relevance to current problems
- c. Engage with anthropological literature in a critical manner – supporting arguments with research and producing coherent conclusions regarding class themes
- d. Establish fluency in cross-cultural understanding for work in multicultural settings, study abroad, international travel, and social analysis

An Anthropological Affirmation: Where We Are In 2018 And Why This Course Needs To Be Undertaken Seriously

Recently discourse in the USA is characterized by painfully divisive, often threatening rhetoric that is racist, sexist, anti-immigrant, and misogynistic. This has touched every corner of American society and, indeed, the entire world. The discipline of anthropology is distinctively placed to contribute valuable insights to advance our

collective understanding of sexuality, migration, cultural diversity, racism, inequality, and structural violence. As Anthropologists we are fully vested in a commitment to protecting the pursuit of free inquiry about the human condition with scholarly rigor, offering the greatest possible opportunity for people to take part in and benefit from that inquiry, and engage the many communities that make up the United States and the world in valuing diversity. As participants in this course all can expect to partake as valued stakeholders in an intellectually informed discourse rooted in core values of human dignity, mutual respect, equal rights, freedom of expression, and freedom from discrimination. We endeavor to build bridges of understanding, not walls of exclusion and division.

Readings:

This course has a significant but manageable amount of reading, which I have chosen to be both instructive and inspiring. These readings include a short textbook to ground you in some of the important terms and concepts in cultural anthropology, a book on field methods, two ethnographies, and a collection of chapters and articles. The readings are meant to give you a sense of the kinds of questions that anthropologists ask, and how we go about answering those questions through ethnographic research and writing.

A major part of contributing to the discussion is done by reading the relevant course material and extracting three major elements from it: **what** is being said, **why** is it being said, and **how** it is being said. Through challenging yourselves and each other the class discussion should bring forth not only the salient points of the reading and topic but also help you to understand the topic at a deeper level and place it in its relevant social, political, economic, or cultural context.

The books are available at the University Bookstore. The other readings are available on Sakai.

1. John Monaghan & Peter Just (**MJ**) – Social and Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction. Oxford U. Press.
2. Seth Holmes (**FF**) – Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States. U. California Press.
3. L. Kaifa Roland (**KR**) – Cuban Color in Tourism and *La Lucha*. Oxford University Press.
4. Julia Crane and Michael Angrosino – Field Projects in Anthropology: A Student Handbook. Waveland Press. (Optional)
5. Various readings (**VR**) – on Sakai:
 - a. Miner, Horace. 1956. Body ritual among the Nacirema.
 - b. Fedorak, Shirley. (I). 2013. What are the challenges in ethnographic fieldwork?
 - c. Lee, Richard B. 1969. Eating Christmas in the Kalahari.
 - d. Chagnon, Napoleon. 1992. Doing fieldwork among the Yanomamö.
 - e. Stainova, Yana. 2017. Enchantment as Methodology. <https://savageminds.org/2017/11/01/enchantment-as-methodology/>
 - f. Wilk, Richard R., and Lisa C. Cliggett. 2007. Economies and cultures
 - g. Counts, David. 1990. Too many bananas, not enough pineapples, and no watermelon at all.
 - h. Stack, Carol B. 1974. Child keeping.
 - i. Goldstein, Melvyn C. 1987. When brothers share a wife.
 - j. Kolbert, Elizabeth. 2012. Spoiled rotten: Why do kids rule the roost?
 - k. Simmons, Ann M. 1998. Where fat is a mark of beauty.
 - l. Turner, Victor. 1967. Betwixt and between: The liminal period in *rites de passage*.
 - m. Slocum, Sally. Woman the gatherer: Male bias in anthropology.
 - n. Ortner, Sherry. Is female to male as nature is to culture?
 - o. Nanda, Serena. 2012. The Hijras: An Alternative Gender in India.
 - p. Mock, Janet. 2011. I was born a boy. <http://www.marieclaire.com/sex-love/advice/a6075/born-male/>
 - q. Gravlee, Clarence. 2009. How Race Becomes Biology: Embodiment of Social Inequality.
 - r. AAA. 1998. The American Anthropological Association Statement on "Race."
 - s. Mullings, Leith. 2005. Interrogating racism: Toward an antiracist anthropology.
 - t. Gmelch, George. 1971. Baseball magic.
 - u. Genovese, Taylor. 2017. Casting into the Cosmos: Magic and Ritual in Human Spaceflight, Part 1 (<https://savageminds.org/2017/07/02/casting-into-the-cosmos-magic-and-ritual-in-human-spaceflight-part-1/>) and Part 2 (<https://savageminds.org/2017/07/06/casting-into-the-cosmos-magic-and-ritual-in-human-spaceflight-part-2/#more-21813>)
 - v. Brown, Peter J., et al. 1998. Medical anthropology: An introduction to the fields.
 - w. Farmer, Paul. 2005. On suffering and structural violence.
 - x. Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 2003. Death without weeping.

- y. McCormack, Carol. 1996. Risk, prevention, and international health policy.
- z. Armelagos, George J. 1998. The viral superhighway.
- aa. Kleinman, Arthur. 2010. The art of medicine: Four social theories for global health.
- bb. Markowitz, Lisa. 2010. Expanding Access and Alternatives.
- cc. Leatherman, Thomas L., and Alan Goodman. 2005. Coca-colonization of diets in the Yucatan.
- dd. Reese, Ashanté M., 2018. "We will not perish; we're going to keep flourishing."
- ee. Linder, Joshua M. & Rachel E. Palkovitz. 2016. The threat of industrial palm oil expansion to primates and their habitats.
- ff. Jordan, Brigitte. 2009. Blurring Boundaries: The "Real" and the "Virtual" in Hybrid Spaces.
- gg. Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 2004. Parts unknown
- hh. Fedorak, Shirley. (IV). 2013. How do living, studying, and working in a foreign country affect people?
- ii. Williams, Bianca. 2017. #MeToo: A Crescendo in the Discourse about Sexual Harassment, Fieldwork, and the Academy. Part 1 (<https://savageminds.org/2017/10/24/metoo-a-crescendo-in-the-discourse-about-sexual-harassment-fieldwork-and-the-academy-part-1/>) and Part 2 (<https://savageminds.org/2017/10/28/metoo-a-crescendo-in-the-discourse-about-sexual-harassment-fieldwork-and-the-academy-part-2/>)
- jj. Harrison, Faye. 1997. Decolonizing Anthropology.
- kk. Besteman, Catherine. 2010. In and Out of the Academy.
- ll. Rohde, David. Army enlists anthropology in war zones.
- mm. Fattahi, Kambiz. US army enlists anthropologists.
- nn. Lende, Daniel. 2010. Anthropology as a science blogs. Neuroanthropology.

Assignments:

We will create Google folders for each of you as well as for the group projects you participate in; this way you can submit and receive feedback with greater ease. Written assignments are to be uploaded to your Google folder by 5:00 PM on the date listed in the syllabus. Late assignments will be penalized (they will be reduced one grade for every day they are late = from an A- to a B+ and so forth). Once an assignment is three days late, I will not accept it. I strongly encourage you to meet with me or with Ms. Symone Johnson to discuss any concerns or questions you have with your assignment and/or grades. Due to the short length of the term, however, these concerns or questions can only be addressed within two weeks after we have returned the assignment.

While I prefer assignments as electronic documents, if you must hand something tangible in, please do so single spaced and double sided (saves trees and money). Instructions for these assignments are on Sakai.

If you have a documented disability and are authorized to have special arrangements for assignments, please inform me at the beginning of the course.

I will determine your grade from the following sources in order to evaluate your progress towards attaining the class goals.

Assignment	Percentage	Due Date(s)
Mini-Research Papers (5)	50% (10% each)	09/05, 09/24, 10/10, 11/14, 12/03
Ethnographic project	35% (15%, 20%)	09/10, 11/05, 12/10
Leading discussion	10%	Variable
Attendance and Participation	5%	Daily

I have high expectations from the students in my courses and grade accordingly. The grading scale I use is as follows: **A= 97-100, A- = 90-96, B+ = 87-89, B= 83-86, B- = 80-82, C+ = 77-79, C= 73-76, C- = 70-72, D = 60-69, F = under 60.** I do not use a grading curve.

Grading Rubric:

A – Excellent: Mastery of course content at the highest level of attainment that can reasonably be expected.

Over and above the expected standard. A distinguished result that is excellent with regard to the following aspects: theoretical depth, analytical ability, and independent thought.

B – Good: Strong performance demonstrating a high level of attainment. Meets expectations. A good result with regard to the above-mentioned aspects.

C – Satisfactory: An acceptable performance demonstrating an adequate level of attainment. Just below expectations. The result is of a satisfactory standard with regard to the above-mentioned aspects.

D – Poor: A marginal performance in the required exercises demonstrating a minimal passing level of attainment. Below expectations. The result satisfies the minimum requirements with regard to the above-mentioned aspects, but not more.

F – Fail: An unacceptable performance. The F grade indicates that performance in the required exercises has revealed almost no understanding of the course content. Well below expectations. The result does not meet the minimum requirements with regard to the above-mentioned aspects.

Mini-Research Papers:

There will be five mini-research papers throughout the semester. You should write approximately **1000 words** for each one. Each will require a synthesis of the reading and class material applied to the appropriate topic. Each question/topic is posted on Sakai. Additionally, your own response to and analysis of the topic(s) is of vital importance in this assignment. This goes beyond “I believe” and into an evaluation/analysis of the topic, making an effort to synthesize the issues and make larger sense of them. Each one is worth **10%** (for **50%** of the class grade). Because a central part of knowledge is to ask questions, you need to conclude your paper with 1-2 substantive questions that have arisen about the topics and issues we are discussing. This is an important exercise in critical thinking. The process of questioning what we know is part of the academic enterprise.

Ethnographic project:

Part of the fun of being a cultural anthropologist is to be able to carry out ethnography within contexts we may not necessarily be too familiar with and thus learn more, not only about other cultures, but our own in turn. A very important part of your grade for this class will be to carry out an ethnographic project, which can be on or off campus. The primary stipulation for this project is that you will undertake this as an ethnography, meaning that you will immerse yourself as much as possible in the culture and will carry out participant observation and interviews. For instance, perhaps you can research the rituals existent in sports teams, or discuss the concept of the “Notre Dame family” with different segments of the members of the university, or investigate the social networks created through different campus organizations, or attend the meetings and talk with the members of a student-run political group to which you do not belong, or investigate eating disorders among athletes, or explore the role of janitorial staff on campus. The options are limitless. The main stipulation is that you push yourself out of your comfort zone and explore something that is not commonplace.

You must carry this project out in a group of no more than three people. You must inform me who the members of your group are. The grade obtained for this assignment will thus be for the entire group, not on an individual basis. It is up to the group members to assign duties and roles so the final grade is acceptable to everyone. For this assignment you will propose a project early on in the semester (graded as 0 or 1), submit a 2000-word mid-way report (**15%**), and prepare a poster of your research (**20%**) at the end of the semester for an in-class poster session.

Leading class discussion:

An important part of your grade will be to lead class discussion once in the semester. To do this, you, and two or more of your classmates, will lead one discussion during the semester using any methods you deem appropriate, the only stipulation being that it must be interactive and engage the class in some way. This activity will prepare you for public speaking and critical thinking. You **MUST** come to talk to me beforehand to brainstorm ideas. Some Notre Dame students in the past have chosen to lead these discussions using examples from ND, visual aids, participant observation, role playing, debates, etc. Be creative.

Important policies:

Attendance:

Because an important part of the class is participation, attendance is mandatory. I will give you one “freebie” absence during the semester, no questions asked. BUT, more than three unexcused absences will result in the failure of this course. Frequent lateness will also be taken into account.

Honor Code:

I expect all students to adhere to academic honesty following the tenets of the Notre Dame Honor Code (“As a member of the Notre Dame community, I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to learn and abide by principles of intellectual honesty and academic integrity, and therefore I will not participate in or tolerate academic dishonesty”). Any work in our class, whether graded or ungraded, is expected to conform to the standards articulated within the course syllabi. All assignments should reflect a student’s own effort, unless otherwise approved by Prof. Smith-Oka. All research papers must utilize appropriate citation conventions (APA, AAA, Harvard). A violation of this code is serious and could result in a failing grade.

Office hours:

We encourage you to come to our offices to discuss your queries, progress in class, or any issues that come up. If you cannot come to our office hours, you can make an appointment at another suitable time. This is an opportunity for you to ask questions outside of class in a less formal setting.

Student mental wellbeing:

Both Ms. Johnson and Prof. Smith-Oka are very cognizant that students might experience mental wellbeing issues such as anxiety, stress, or lack of sleep over the course of the semester. If you are struggling with anything that is affecting your wellbeing please reach out to us, to the people at McWell (<https://mcwell.nd.edu/>), St. Liam's, or others who can advocate for you.

Anthropology Department activities

If you'd like to keep up with activities in the Anthropology Department, get information about internships, grants, etc., connect with friends and alums, read about the accomplishments of your classmates, and/or learn more about your professor's research, please consider joining the "Department of Anthropology, University of Notre Dame" Facebook group at: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=98638715768>

Anthropology Mentorship Program

The Anthropology Mentorship Program (<https://anthropology.nd.edu/news/anthropology-mentorship-program/>) pairs undergraduate majors and minors with graduate student mentors to advise students as they move through their degrees. Mentors are available to help with graduate school applications, thesis projects, conference papers, coursework, and more. With this program, we aim to support mentees as Notre Dame students and as budding anthropologists, and we hope to energize your engagement with anthropology! For more information, contact Amanda Cortez (acortez1@nd.edu) or Emily deWet (edewet@nd.edu).

Lecture and Reading Schedule:

WEEK	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
Week #1	<u>What is culture?</u>	
08/22	No reading today	
08/24	No reading today	
Week #2	<u>Fieldwork and Ethics</u>	
08/27	MJ – Introduction - Ch. 3; VR – Miner	
08/29	VR – Fedorak I; Lee; Chagnon	
08/31	VR – Stainova	
Week #3	<u>Culture and economy</u>	
09/03	MJ – Ch. 6; VR – Wilk & Cliggett	
09/05	VR – Counts	Paper #1
09/07	No reading today	Student-led discussion
Week #4	<u>Families, kinship, and descent</u>	
09/10	MJ – Ch. 4; VR – Stack	Ethnography project proposal
09/12	VR – Goldstein	
09/14	No reading today	

Week #5	<u>Rites of passage and coming of age</u>	
09/17	MJ – Ch. 7; VR – Simmons, Turner; Kolbert	
09/19	MJ – Ch. 8 Video – Born into Brothels (we'll watch in class)	
09/21	No reading today	
Week #6	<u>Gender and Sexuality</u>	
09/24	VR – Slocum, Ortner; KR – Preface	Paper #2
09/26	VR – Nanda; Mock; KR – Ch.1	
09/28	No reading today	Student-led discussion
Week #7	<u>Ethnicity and race</u>	
10/01	MJ – Ch. 5; VR – Gravlee; AAA on Race; KR – Ch. 2-3	
10/03	KR – Ch. 4-Epilogue	
10/05	VR – Mullings	
Week #8	<u>Magic, Science, and Religion</u>	
10/08	VR – Gmelch	
10/10	MJ – Ch. 7 (read again)	Paper #3
10/12	VR – Genovese (Parts 1 & 2)	Student-led discussion
10/13-10/21	No class – Mid-term break!	
Week #9	<u>Illness and health</u>	
10/22	MJ – Ch. 8 (read again); VR – Brown et al.	
10/24	VR – Farmer; Scheper-Hughes I	
10/26	No reading today	
Week #10	<u>Health in the globalized world</u>	
10/29	VR – McCormack	
10/31	VR – Armelagos; Kleinman	
11/02	Reading TBD	Student-led discussion
Week #11	<u>Political organization and social complexity</u>	
11/05	MJ – Ch. 5 (re-read); FF – Introduction - Ch. 2	Mid-way report of your ethnography
11/07	FF – Ch. 3 – 4	
11/09	No reading today	Student-led discussion

Week #12	<u>Applied anthropology, food, nutrition</u>	
11/12	VR – Markowitz; Leatherman and Goodman; Reese	Paper #4 due
11/14	Video – La Cosecha/The Harvest (in class)	
11/16	No reading today	
Week #13	<u>Global issues and the role of anthropology</u>	
11/19	FF – Ch. 5 – 7; VR – Linder	
11/21-23	No class, Thanksgiving	
Week #14	<u>Where to next?</u>	
11/26	VR – Jordan; Scheper-Hughes II	
11/28	VR – Fedorak IV; Williams (Parts 1&2)	
11/30	VR – Harrison	
Week #15	<u>Last thoughts</u>	
12/03	VR – Besteman; Rohde; Fattahi	Paper #5 due
12/05	VR – Lende Evaluation, summing up	
Exam Week		
12/10	Poster Session today from 8:00 to 10:00 am Posters due in my office by 11:00 am latest Happy holidays!	