

Introduction to Cultural Anthropology
Anthropology 203.2, Fall 2007
Tues & Thurs, 4:00-5:15
Stevenson 1002

<http://bruceowen.com/introcultural/203-07f-2.htm>

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Introduction to Cultural Anthropology

Objectives: This course aims to help you learn:

- what cultural anthropologists study
- some of what we have learned about people and culture
- how much of what you "know" about people and life is actually specific to your culture, and not necessarily applicable when you deal with people from other cultures
- concepts and approaches that can help you to understand other cultures and your own
- examples of different ways that people live and comprehend the world
- how to have more respect and tolerance for people of other cultures
- intellectual skills that will help you deal with people of other cultures in social settings, school, job interviews, business, politics, and elsewhere
- new ways to think about what is, and what should be, going on in the modern world, from commentary on CNN to your next opportunity to vote.

GE requirement: This course satisfies the lower division Individual and Society (D1) General Education requirement.

Reading: This course requires just one small book. The rest of the readings will be posted on the class website, which will indicate what you should read for the coming class session(s). Please read the selections *before* the class session. I suggest that you print the online readings, so you can write notes in the margins, highlight, refer to them during class, and so on. The book is

Monaghan, John, and Peter Just

2000 *Social and Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, USA. ISBN 0-19-285346-5 (Paperback)

The book should be available from North Light Books & Cafe, 550 East Cotati Ave., next to Oliver's Market in the shopping complex on East Cotati Ave. (707 792-4300).

Lecture notes: Brief lecture notes and Powerpoint slides will be posted on the web page. These are useful for review, but they are no substitute for attending class and doing the reading.

Class web page: You are responsible for checking the class web page regularly. Not only the readings and lecture notes, but also announcements, assignment information, deadlines, and other information will be posted there. The web page will be updated throughout the semester. It is located at:

<http://bruceowen.com/introcultural/203-07f-2.htm>

Due to copyright restrictions, you will need a class user ID and password to access the readings on the class website. These are NOT the same ID and password that you use for other SSU functions. I will announce the ID and password in class. If you forget them, ask or email me.

Assignments and their weights in grading:

- 20% **Daily reading quiz** (a bit less than 1% each). Three multiple-choice questions about the day's reading at the start of each class. No make-ups.
- 10% **Assignment 1: Analytical reading.** You write a summary analysis of one of the early readings in the course using a two-column format. For each paragraph in the reading, you indicate in the left-hand column what information is provided in that paragraph. In the right-hand column, you explain the purpose of the paragraph, that is, why the author included that information, what point the author is making with or about it, and/or how it contributes to the overall argument. More details will be posted on the class web page.
- 15% **Assignment 2: Interview with an immigrant.** You find someone who immigrated to the US from another country after the age of 15. You conduct an extensive interview with that person, and write a 5 to 7 page paper outlining his or her story, his or her observations about life in the country of origin and here, and your interpretations, explanations, and reactions, using anthropological approaches you learn in this course. I will provide guidelines about issues to cover, format, and so on. The interviewee may be a friend, a relative, your roommate's third cousin, someone you meet buying groceries, or whatever - as long as her or she has not been interviewed for this assignment by someone else.
- 20% **Midterm exam.** In-class exam with questions calling for short answers and essays, largely based on readings and class discussions, including comparisons or applications to other situations.
- 15% **Assignment 3: Ethnographic videos.** You watch your choice of two ethnographic videos. You write a roughly five-page paper applying your choice of several anthropological concepts from the class to the videos. More details will be posted on the class web page.
- 20% **Final exam.** In-class exam during the scheduled final exam period, with questions calling for short answers and essays. The exam focuses on readings and concepts from class discussions, including comparisons and/or applications to other situations. It emphasizes material covered after the midterm, but still uses ideas from the whole course.

Submitting assignments: You must submit the written assignments BOTH on paper AND as a computer file attached to an email message to me. I will return the paper copy with comments and a grade written on it. The paper copy is due in class on the day indicated on the syllabus. The computer file OF THE IDENTICAL PAPER is due by midnight of that day. I must have BOTH versions to give you credit.

Deadline policy: I will consider an assignment to be on time if EITHER the paper version OR the computer file reaches me by the deadline. I must eventually receive both in order to give you credit. I will accept assignments up to one week late with a 15% grading penalty.

Drafts: I encourage you to submit drafts of the assignments so that I can comment on them and help guide you in a good direction for the final version. Email is fastest, but I will also look at paper drafts.

Email: I usually reply to emails within 24 hours. If you do not hear from me within 48 hours, assume that I did not get your message and try again.

Invitation: If you want help, or would just like to talk about anthropology, assignments, preparing for tests, archaeology, or anything else, please drop by during my office hours, arrange to see me at some other time, or contact me by email.

Disability accommodations: If you have a disabling condition that may substantially limit your ability to participate in this class, please contact the disabled student services (DSS) office in Salazar 1049, or call 664-2677, for confidential assistance and authorization for accommodations such as more time or other special arrangements for exams. If you have a letter from DSS indicating that you are entitled to academic accommodations, please bring it to me so we can discuss arrangements for this class.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the use of someone else's words, information, or ideas *without giving that person credit*. This includes cutting and pasting from websites or other public sources, even brief phrases. Always indicate all your sources. Plagiarism results in penalties up to an F for the course; I have failed students for plagiarism. University policy requires me to report plagiarism. The University checks for repeat offenders, and may impose sanctions up to expulsion. For details, including how to use material without plagiarizing, please see the class website and/or the University Policies link below..

University policies: There are important University policies that you should be aware of, such as the add/drop policy; cheating and plagiarism policy, grade appeal procedures, accommodations for students with disabilities and the diversity vision statement. You can see them at:

<http://www.sonoma.edu/uaffairs/policies/studentinfo.shtml>

Introduction to Cultural Anthropology Class Schedule, Fall 2007

- Readings for each class session will be posted on the class website:

<http://bruceowen.com/introcultural/203-07f-2.htm>

- Read the posted material *before* each class, so you are ready to take the daily reading quiz and participate in class discussions. In some class sessions, we will do things other than discuss the reading assigned for that day -- but keep up with the posted readings. Readings may be covered in tests whether or not we discuss them in class.
- The class website will show any changes to the reading schedule, assignments, deadlines, exam dates, and so on. The information posted on the website takes precedence over the syllabus below, so check the website regularly!

1 Tues Aug 21 Introduction

2 Thurs Aug 23 What is anthropology?

3 Tues Aug 28 The concept of culture: deeper than you think

4 Thurs Aug 30 Race

5 Tues Sept 4 How diverse are we, and how do we deal with it?

- 6 Thurs Sept 6 Anthropological methods: ethnography
- 7 Tues Sept 11 Thinking about culture: adaptation, meaning, and system
- 8 Thurs Sept 13 Thinking about culture: cultural materialism; configurations; culture as text
* **Analytical reading assignment DUE Thurs. Sept. 13**
- 9 Tues Sept 18 Thinking about society: structure and function
- 10 Thurs Sept 20 Language
- 11 Tues Sept 25 Language use
- 12 Thurs Sept 27 Catch-up session
- 13 Tues Oct 2 Making a living and all that goes with it: foraging
- 14 Thurs Oct 4 Making a living and all that goes with it: pastoralism, horticulture, agriculture
- 15 Tues Oct 9 Discussion, review, catch-up.
- 16 Thurs Oct 11 * **Midterm exam (in class)**
- 17 Tues Oct 16 Reciprocity, redistribution, and socially embedded economic relations
- 18 Thurs Oct 18 Economic systems: the "M" word, capitalism, and class
- 19 Tues Oct 23 Naturalizing inequality: gender, rank, caste, and social race
- 20 Thurs Oct 25 Ethnicity
- 21 Tues Oct 30 Constructing identity: self, group, and rites of passage
* **Interview with an Immigrant DUE Tues. Oct. 30**
- 22 Thurs Nov 1 Constructing identity: gender and gender roles
- 23 Tues Nov 6 Family, kinship, and descent
- 24 Thurs Nov 8 Forms of marriage, residence, and their logic
- 25 Tues Nov 13 Religion, witchcraft, and magic
- 26 Thurs Nov 15 Religion, ritual, and creating and maintaining belief
- 27 Tues Nov 20 Colonization and resistance: social history and current events
- Thurs Nov 22 **Thanksgiving: No class**
- 28 Tues Nov 27 The modern world system: globalization and its discontents
- 29 Thurs Nov 29 Creating consumer culture and its impacts
* **Ethnographic videos paper DUE Thurs. Nov. 29**
- 30 Tues Dec 4 Applied anthropology and development
- 31 Thurs Dec 6 Catch-up, discussion, review, evaluations.

Final exam: Thursday, Dec 13, 5:00-6:50, in our regular classroom, Stevenson 1002.