

**Sonoma State University**  
**Anthropology**  
**203, Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, section 2,**  
**Spring 2010**

**Instructor:** Bruce Owen

**Office Location:** Stevenson 3007

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**Office Hours:** Tuesday and Thursday 4:00-5:00

**Class Days/Time:** Tuesday and Thursday 5:25-6:40

**Classroom:** Stevenson 1002

**GE/SSU Studies Category:** D1 (Individual and Society)

**Course Description**

**Course description from the course catalog:**

Examination of the anthropological approach to the study of human behavior.  
Exploration of human dependence on learned, socially transmitted behavior through consideration of ways of life in a broad range of societies.

**Course description specifically for this section:**

Cultural anthropology is the study of people in terms of their culture: the ideas about the world and behavior that are learned and shared in common with others. Culture structures how people understand themselves and the world, and from there, how they behave, relate to each other, and organize as groups. Anthropology is based on learning what people do and think by first-hand experience with them. Over a century of anthropologists' first-hand experience has shown that very little about culture is universal. A lot of what we grow up thinking is just "the way it is", isn't. The range of ways that people live, think, and act is vast. Our way is just one of many.

Yet we are increasingly tied together by a global web of interactions, for better and for worse. To understand the world and work successfully in it, as individuals, groups, businesses, and nations, we have to set aside the preconceptions of our own native culture and open our eyes to understanding other ways of thinking. Doing so also gives us insights into our own culture and society.

Anthropology helps us recognize some of our preconceptions, and shows us other ways of living and conceptualizing the world. In this course, you will get a taste of some of the wide range of issues that anthropologists study, the concepts that anthropologists have

developed to help to comprehend those issues, and many examples of different cultures, viewpoints, stories, and studies that illustrate them. Some of these issues are controversial, some are irritating or depressing, and many have to do with how we as individuals, a society, and a nation view and respond to real, current problems.

## **Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives**

### **Official description of GE Area D**

The social sciences concentrate on the description and explanation of organization, variation and change in social practices and institutions. Courses in this area examine the diversity, variety and complexity of human life at every scale from the individual to the global. Courses instill an appreciation of the multiple perspectives and methodologies that social science disciplines offer for understanding the human experience.

### **Official Learning Outcomes (LO) for all GE Area D courses**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- LO1 Apply the principles, methodologies, value systems and ethics employed in social scientific inquiry to construct evidence-based arguments and to express them in writing.
- LO2 Develop knowledge of discipline-based methods of reasoning and research in the social sciences.
- LO3 Examine social, political, economic, and environmental issues in temporal and spatial settings and in a variety of cultural contexts.
- LO4 Understand how cultural diversity and complexity influence individuals, institutions, and societies.

### **Official Course Content Learning Outcomes for GE Area D1 courses**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- LO5 Demonstrate understanding of how cultural diversity and social factors influence the individual, society, and social institutions.
- LO6 Demonstrate understanding of the interchange among individuals and social systems and institutions, and how these develop.
- LO7 Apply social science perspectives to social issues and problems as manifested in individuals, groups, societies, and/or internationally.
- LO8 Demonstrate understanding of the factors influencing inequality and social justice among individuals, groups, societies, and/or across nations.

### **Learning Outcomes for this section**

Every course covers specific material in order to fulfill the broad objectives above. This introduction to cultural anthropology aims to help you learn:

- § What cultural anthropologists study, and how
- § Some of what anthropologists have learned about people, culture, race, economics, inequality, identity, gender, marriage, families, language, religion, globalization, and more
- § That much of what you "know" about people and life is actually specific to your culture, and not necessarily true of all people
- § 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
- § Information and 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

## **Required Texts/Readings**

### **Textbook**

Robbins, Richard H.

2009 *Cultural Anthropology: A Problem-based Approach*, Fifth Edition. Cengage Advantage Books, Wadsworth Cengage Learning. ISBN 978-0-495-50928-8

### **Other Readings**

Lee, Richard B.

2003 *The Dobe Ju/'hoansi*, Third Edition. Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology, Wadsworth Thomson Learning. ISBN 0-15-506333-2

Chavez, Leo R.

2009 *Shadowed Lives: Undocumented Immigrants in American Society*. Second Edition. Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology, Wadsworth Thomson Learning. ISBN 978-0-1550-8089-8

### **Where to buy the books**

New and used copies are available at the campus bookstore, through online booksellers and textbook rental companies, and at North Light Books & Cafe, 550 East Cotati Ave., next to Oliver's Market in the shopping complex on East Cotati Ave. (707 792-4300). North Light is a locally-owned small business with lower prices on new and used books and better service than the campus bookstore. It is also a good place to eat, drink, and hang out in the real (ish) world off campus.

### **Other equipment / material requirements**

Frequent access to a computer with internet access to check the class web page, access online readings and other materials, submit work by email, and receive email from me.

## **Class Protocol**

### **Class web page**

You are responsible for checking the class web page regularly. The schedule of assigned readings, links to online readings, lecture notes and slides, due dates, study guides, announcements, and other information will all be posted there. The web page will change during the semester, so do not depend on a printout of it. The web page takes precedence over information in this syllabus. The web page is NOT a WebCT page. You can click to the class web page from the SSU "Class web pages" list, or go to:

<http://bruceowen.com/introcultural/a203-10s.htm>

### **Class User ID and password**

Due to copyright issues, you need a class user ID and password to access some material on the class web page. These are *not* the same ID and password that you use for other SSU functions. I will provide them in class. If you forget them, ask or email me.

### **Lecture notes and PowerPoint slides**

Lecture notes and PowerPoint slides for most class sessions will be posted on the class web page. The notes will usually be posted before the class session, so you can print them out and add your own notes during class if you wish. The PowerPoint slides will usually be posted after the class session.

### **Readings**

The readings for each class session are listed on the class web page. Please read the selections *before* the class session. Readings average 35 pages per class session, starting shorter and getting a bit longer in the second half of the semester.

### **Daily quizzes**

Most class sessions will include a brief quiz on the reading assigned for that date. See the class web page for the reading assignments. The quiz will often be at the beginning of class, so you should arrive on time. There are no makeups for daily quizzes except for documented emergencies that cause an extended period of absence.

### **Attendance**

I do not record attendance or formally count it in grading. However, attending class is the only way to take the daily quiz, and since most of the quizzes will come at the beginning of class, arriving on time is also important. I may consider your record of taking or missing quizzes if your course grade is a borderline case.

### **Submitting assignments**

The written assignment must be submitted as a file attached to an email message to me. No paper copy is needed. I will comment and grade the paper on an evaluation form tailored to the assignment. This form will be included in the assignment information, to help you understand what I am looking for. I will email your assignment back to you, with the completed form added to the end of the file. The computer file is due by midnight of the due date. The due date is on a day when the class does not meet, so that coming to class will not conflict with last-minute work on your assignment. The due date is indicated on the class web page. Details on submitting the assignment will be included in the assignment information.

## **Drafts**

I encourage you to submit a draft of your assignment by the draft due date by email, just as with the final assignment. I will return the draft with comments which can often help you to improve the final draft and get a better grade. There is no credit for submitting the draft in itself.

## **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.

## **Open invitation**

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

## **Furloughs**

Because of the severe state budget cuts to the California State University system, most staff other than Police Services must take 2 unpaid furlough days a month, and faculty must take 9 unpaid furlough days each semester. We have to sign a statement that we will not work on furlough days. President Armiñana has set six Fridays as campus-wide furloughs. The rest are to be divided, no more than one per week, between class days and days for preparation and grading. For this course, the result is two class sessions cancelled, or about 7% less school for your increased fees. The furlough days are indicated in the class schedule. Other furlough days may delay my returning some assignments or tests.

## **Dropping and Adding**

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, etc. [Information on add/drops are available at http://www.sonoma.edu/ar/registration/addclasses.shtml](http://www.sonoma.edu/ar/registration/addclasses.shtml). Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for adding and dropping classes.

## **Course Requirements**

- 25% Reading quizzes (around 1% per quiz). Three multiple-choices questions about the readings at most class sessions.
- 25% Interview with an immigrant. You interview someone who immigrated to the US from another country after the age of 16. You write a 5 to 7 page paper that deals with your interviewee's culture and your own, using anthropological approaches you learn in this course. The interviewee may be a friend, a relative, someone you met standing in line, or whatever - just not the same person as anyone else in this class is interviewing, and not someone who has been interviewed for this assignment in a previous semester. Guidelines about themes to cover, format, and so on will be posted on the class website.

- 25% In-class midterm. Short-answer and essay questions, and maps on which you mark countries and other geographic landmarks covered in class.
- 25% Final exam. Similar to the midterm, emphasizing material from the second part of the course, but using many concepts from the first part.

## **Grading Policy**

### **How I assign letter grades**

This course is graded on a curve. That means that you and your colleagues set the grading level, rather than me imposing an arbitrary standard. For each assignment and test, I assign a number of points, based on an assignment grading rubric included in the assignment instructions, or a number of points per question in the case of tests. I then plot a histogram (“curve”) of these scores, and break the scores into roughly equal segments for letter grades such that the cutoff between a C+ and a B- is around or slightly below the median (middle) score. This ensures that around half of the scores are graded as B- or higher. I may shift the grade scale slightly up or down if I feel that the class has done unusually well or poorly as a group. For the course grade, I total the assignment and test scores and do the same procedure.

### **Extra credit**

There are no provisions for extra credit in this class.

### **Late assignment policy**

I will accept the interview assignment up to one week late, with a 10% grading penalty.

## **University Policies**

### **Academic integrity**

Students should know that the University’s [Cheating and Plagiarism policy is available at http://www.sonoma.edu/UAffairs/policies/cheating\\_plagiarism.htm](http://www.sonoma.edu/UAffairs/policies/cheating_plagiarism.htm). Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at Sonoma State University and the University’s policy, require you to be honest in all your academic course work..

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person’s ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified.

Plagiarism is using someone else’s words, information, or ideas without giving that person credit. This includes copying from your peers, websites, or other public sources, even brief phrases, on papers, tests, or any other work. Simply editing or changing parts of copied text does not make it your original work; the result is still plagiarized.

Plagiarism is immoral and dishonest. It is easy to avoid: just use your own words and indicate the sources of all your information. I have failed numerous students for plagiarism. University policy requires me to report plagiarism, and the University may impose sanctions up to expulsion. A more complete explanation, including advice on how to use material without plagiarizing, is posted on the class website. The assignment

information posted on the class website will include guidelines on how to format citations, if appropriate.

### **Campus Policy on Disability Access for Students**

If you are a student with a disability and you think you may require accommodations, please register with the campus office of Disability Services for Students (DSS), located in Salazar Hall - Room 1049, Phone: (707) 664-2677, TTY/TDD: (707) 664-2958. DSS will provide you with written confirmation of your verified disability and authorize recommended accommodations. This authorization must be presented to the instructor before any accommodations can be made. [The policy can be found at http://www.sonoma.edu/uaffairs/policies/disabilitypolicy.htm](http://www.sonoma.edu/uaffairs/policies/disabilitypolicy.htm)

### **Emergency Evacuation**

If you are a student with a disability and you think you may require assistance evacuating a building in the event of a disaster, you should inform your instructor about the type of assistance you may require. You and your instructor should discuss your specific needs and the type of precautions that should be made in advance of such an event (i.e. assigning a buddy to guide you down the stairway). We encourage you to take advantage of these preventative measures as soon as possible and contact the Disability Services for Students office if other classroom accommodations are needed.

### **SSU Writing Center**

The SSU Writing Center is located in Schulz 1103. The Writing Center helps SSU students, faculty, and staff members (as well as members of the wider community) become better writers and produce better written documents. [The Writing Center website is located at http://www.sonoma.edu/programs/writingcenter/default.html](http://www.sonoma.edu/programs/writingcenter/default.html).

### **Course schedule**

The lecture and reading schedule is on the class web page, at <http://bruceowen.com/introcultural/a203-10s.htm>

It is not included here because dates and readings will probably be adjusted during the semester. You are responsible for checking the class website frequently for the current reading assignments and other course announcements.