

Introduction to Cultural Anthropology: Notes 1

Introduction to the course

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- Anthropology 203.1: Introduction to Cultural Anthropology
 - I'm Bruce Owen
 - My own research is in Peruvian archaeology
 - but like most archaeologists in the US, I studied in an anthropology department, and I work as an anthropologist
 - I teach not only archaeology, but also cultural anthropology and biological anthropology
 - that is one of the great things about anthropology: it is an exceptionally diverse field
 - a license to follow interests in a wide range of areas
 - I work mostly in Peru
 - I've spent over 5 years there since 1983
 - Working with Peruvian colleagues, from university professors and students through farmers in remote rural areas
 - so I will use examples from Peru frequently
- This class is an introduction to cultural anthropology
 - You will learn what cultural anthropology is all about
 - the study of people in terms of their culture
 - Culture is the framework that sets up...
 - how people understand themselves and the world,
 - and from there, what they do, how they relate to each other, and how they organize themselves in groups.
 - Anthropology is based on learning what people do and think by first-hand experience with them.
 - the classic image of the anthropologist in a pith helmet, living with natives in a jungle somewhere
 - but anthropologists have studied all kinds of people, in all sorts of settings
 - Shi'ites in Iraq
 - Mexican farmworkers in San Diego
 - crack dealers in New York
 - nuclear weapons designers at Los Alamos National Laboratory
 - American high school and college students, and many others
 - 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.
- Opening our minds to other cultures also gives us insights into our own culture and society.
 - Anthropology helps us recognize some of our own assumptions
- In this course, you will get a taste of some of the wide range of findings and issues anthropologists work on
 - culture, and ways of thinking about and explaining cultures
 - race and ethnicity
 - ways that different people make a living: foraging, farming, herding, working for wages...
 - economics and exchange, in ways you won't get in an economics class
 - ideas about truth and justice
 - social inequality and hierarchies
 - how people come to have their own identities, including gender roles
 - the wide variety of ways families and marriage can work
 - language, and how it relates to thought and belief
 - religion, ritual, witchcraft, and magic
 - this is more applicable to our own society than you might think!
 - globalization
 - immigration
 - and much more...
- By the time you finish this course, you will have learned
 - That much of what you "know" about people and life is actually specific to your culture, and not necessarily true of all people
 - "common sense" is actually not common, but specific to every culture
 - 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 the news
 - to your next opportunity to vote
- Before we get to the mechanics of the course...
 - Has anyone spent any time outside the US?
 - Has anyone spent much time in a culturally different place or community inside the US?
 - Does anyone have a friend, relative, roommate, co-worker, or other acquaintance who is from a different culture?
 - You might keep those experiences in mind throughout this course
 - I hope you will have comments, critiques, additions to make to class discussions
 - I don't want to put anyone on the spot, but a lot of anthropology involves personal experiences and what we learn from them
 - some of you may have direct, personal knowledge that contradicts or adds to the course material

- please bring it up!
- Now, on to the mechanics of the course.
 - This is also covered in the syllabus, which you should review.
- Format of the course
 - Mostly lectures
 - usually with some Powerpoint slides
 - occasionally with a bit of video or other media
 - I hope you will ask questions and make comments
 - Enrollment
 - The class is currently full
 - I am not allowed to make a waiting list, give special permissions, etc.
 - If you want to get in from the waiting list, just keep checking PeopleSoft and hope that enough people drop the course
 - This course satisfies the lower division Individual and Society (D1) General Education requirement.
- Readings
 - Two books, plus online readings
 - Fernea, Elizabeth W. (1989 [1965]) *Guests of the Sheik, An Ethnography of an Iraqi Village*. Anchor Books. ISBN 0-385-01485-6
 - An ethnography that reads like a novel
 - Gives a personal taste of what fieldwork is like
 - Describes experiences from the 1950s, but very relevant to Iraq and the world today
 - Lee, Richard B. (2003) *The Dobe Ju'hoansi*, Third Edition. Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology, Wadsworth Thomson Learning. ISBN 0-15-506333-2
 - This is a classic ethnography of a foraging (hunting and gathering) people in Africa
 - with updates on how they are integrating into the modern world
 - we will read it in parts that parallel the subjects we discuss in class
 - be sure to get the Third edition; it has corrections and new material not in the previous editions.
 - Both books are available
 - online (Amazon.com, Half.com, textbook rental sites, etc.)
 - from the campus bookstore
 - but cheaper 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)
 - 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.
 - Online readings
 - Throughout the course, we will also use readings posted on the class website (which I will discuss later)
 - The reading for the next class session is online
 - but you will need Fernea for next week, and Lee a week or two later

- Key to the course: the class web page
 - note that this is NOT a WebCT (Blackboard) page
 - You can get to it from the SSU “Class web pages” list
 - From the SSU web page (sonoma.edu)
 - click on "Academics",
 - then "Class web pages",
 - then "Anthropology203.1: Introduction to Cultural Anthropology (Owen)"
 - You are responsible for checking the website regularly
 - The web page takes precedence over the paper syllabus
 - It *will* change over the semester, so check it!
 - I will post new announcements, assignment information, deadlines, study guides, etc.
 - I may adjust the reading schedule if we fall behind or get ahead
 - I may add or subtract readings
 - but don't worry, it won't be too much
 - I may change deadlines, exam dates, etc.
 - The web page features:
 - Announcements: Class news, reminders, changes to assignments deadlines, readings, test dates, etc.
 - These can be important!
 - These announcements are generally in the red “Announcements” box that is always at the top right of the web page
 - The schedule of readings
 - Each day shows what you should read from the books and online
 - the online items are links directly to the assigned material
 - Please do the readings *before* the class session
 - The readings are a significant but not excessive amount, averaging about 35 pages per class, or 70 pages per week
 - notice that the assignments are a bit shorter in the first half of the class
 - and a bit longer in the second half
 - The schedule also has links to
 - lecture notes
 - Usually will be posted before the class session
 - These notes can be useful for studying
 - PowerPoint slides used in class
 - usually posted after the class session
 - also good for assignments and preparing for tests
 - Optional online sources of additional information and images related to some class sessions
 - The schedule also shows
 - dates when assignments or an optional draft is due
 - dates of the tests
 - Virtual handouts
 - the syllabus

- detailed instructions for the assignments
- study guides for the tests, etc.
- Links to other websites with useful and interesting information and images
- To access some items, you will need a class user ID and password
 - because some of the reading is copyrighted, and because some of the images in the PowerPoint slides are copyrighted
 - in order to use these materials legally for "educational purposes", I have to restrict them to just you lucky students
 - Class user ID:
 - Class password:
- Grading
 - 2%: Recognizable digital photo of yourself
 - so I have some chance of linking your name to your face
 - two ways to get it to me
 - send it to me attached to an email message
 - name the file like a203-2-11s-SmithJane.jpg
 - or have your photo taken here at the end of this or a future class
 - 5%: Short “concept” paper
 - I assign you a concept or term discussed in the first few weeks of class
 - you find an example of it in *Guests of the Sheik*, by Fernea
 - you write a one-page essay
 - briefly explaining the concept
 - identifying and explaining the example in Fernea
 - and discussing how or why the example illustrates the concept, or how the concept applies to the example
 - mostly to get some practice writing for the tests and interview paper, with early feedback on it
 - 5%: A second short “concept” paper later in the course
 - mostly to refine your writing after the first feedback, and get more
 - 18%: Reading quizzes (around 0.7% per quiz).
 - Three multiple-choice questions about the readings at most class sessions.
 - 20%: 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
 - maps on which you mark countries and other geographic landmarks covered in class.

- a study guide will be posted on the web page
- 25%: Final exam during exam week
 - similar to the midterm
 - emphasizes material from the second half of the course, but uses concepts from the first half
 - a study guide will be posted on the web page
- Grading scheme: This course is graded on a curve, with the minimum score for a B- initially set near the median
 - that is, about half the class gets a B- or better
 - I may then shift the grade ranges up or down somewhat to better reflect the performance of the class.
- Attendance
 - I do not take attendance or formally count it in grading. But...
 - I cover things in class that are not in the readings
 - You and your colleagues can ask questions
 - Sometimes I announce changes to assignments, deadlines, readings, etc. in class
 - Students who come to class tend to do better on the assignments and tests.
 - Attending class is the only way to take the daily quiz
 - 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.
- Extra credit:
 - There are no provisions for extra credit in this class
- Submitting assignments:
 - The concept paper and the interview with an immigrant paper are submitted by attaching them to an email to me
 - detailed instructions will be posted on the class website
 - they are due at 11:59 PM on days when the class does not meet, so that last-minute work on the assignment does not cause you to miss class
 - you can also turn in a paper copy of the assignment at the next class as a backup
 - if I didn't get the emailed file for some reason, the paper copy will show that you had the assignment done by shortly after the deadline
 - I will accept such slightly-late papers with a 5% grading penalty
 - but I only grade the computer file, so you still have to get a matching file to me in order to get credit
 - this allows me to keep and search old papers, so no one should be tempted to recycle old assignments or to share work with classmates
 - it also allows me to return the assignment to you by email, with comments and grading notes added
- Late assignment policy:

- in addition to the 5% “slightly late” penalty for paper copies, I will accept assignments up to one week late with a 10% grading penalty.
- Drafts:
 - I encourage you to submit a draft of your interview with an immigrant 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.
- Plagiarism
 - 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.
 - Don’t do it!
 - 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.
 - Please see me if you have any doubts or questions about this
- Students with special needs:
 - If you are a student with special learning needs and you think you may require accommodations, your first step is to register with the campus office of Disabled Student Services, Salazar 1049, phone 664-2677.
 - DSS will provide you with written confirmation of your verified disability and authorize recommended accommodations.
 - You then bring this recommendation to me, and we work out how to handle the accommodations.
 - If you think you may require assistance evacuating a building in the event of a disaster, please let me know what type of assistance you think you may need.
- University policies
 - the syllabus includes a link to University policies on adding and dropping, appealing grades, cheating, and other things you might want to know about
- Contacting me:

- My office hours:
 - Tuesday and Thursday 2:30-3:30, Thursday 11:30-12:30
 - Stevenson 2054H
- I may be able to arrange other times on Tuesdays or Thursdays
 - please contact me to set up a time
 - or see me after class
 - email me at: bruce.owen@sonoma.edu , which I usually check at least once every day
 - or click on the email link near the top of the course web page
- You can try to catch me by phone on Tuesday or Thursday
 - but if I don't answer, don't bother leaving a message; I don't check the voice mail.
 - for the record, the number is 664-2181
- I have a box in the Anthro department office, Stevenson 2054, where you can leave messages or papers for me
 - If the door to Stevenson 2054 is locked, go in through Stevenson 2070
 - please don't slide things under my office door, stick them to a nearby bulletin board, etc., because I share that office and might not get your message
- Networking:
 - meet at least two people sitting near you
 - exchange names and email addresses
 - you might contact your new acquaintances if you miss a class, want to study together, etc.
- What to do next:
 - check out the class website
 - review the syllabus, plagiarism statement, etc.
 - find and read the online reading assignment for Tuesday
 - Bonvillain 2006: Extracts from *What is Anthropology?*
 - get the two books
 - first reading assignment in Fernea is next Tuesday
 - first reading assignment in Lee is Thursday, Sept. 15
 - get a recognizable digital photo of yourself to me
 - as “a203-11f-SimpsonHomer.jpg” attached to an email to me at bruce.owen@sonoma.edu
 - or have your photo taken here, after this or a future class