

Living in a Pluralistic World
Anthropology 340, Spring 2007
Tuesday and Thursday, 5:25-6:40
Stevenson 1002
Class page: <http://bruceowen.com/pluralistic/340-07s.htm>

Dr. Bruce Owen
Office: Stevenson 2054C
Office hours: Tues & Thurs 2:30-4:30
Office phone (I rarely check the voicemail!): 664-2307
Email: bruce.owen@sonoma.edu

Living in a Pluralistic World

People are all fundamentally the same. Yet some women in Iraq believe that allowing men up to four wives is better than the American limitation of just one. Very conservative Muslims know that God requires them to brush their teeth with a certain kind of fibrous stick. Hmong immigrants may disregard doctors' instructions about dosages of drugs, even when lives are in danger. Men who pick the fruit and vegetables you eat leave their families and sometimes comfortable homes to risk their lives crossing the US border, live in appalling conditions, and do dangerous, low-paying work. You probably couldn't convince any of these people to change their minds, and they would consider you ignorant for thinking they should. How can sane, smart people think and act so differently? How can we deal with people so determined to be different from us?

Objectives: This course aims to help you learn:

- ways to understand and deal with seemingly incomprehensible behavior and beliefs of people from other cultures
- 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
- how to have more respect and tolerance for people of other cultures
- some ways that global economics and politics force us to deal with other cultures
- specifics about some cultures that are important to us right now: Muslims in Iraq and Afghanistan, and Latino farmworkers and immigrants
- specifics about some issues involving other cultures that are important right now: health care, and immigration from Latin America
- 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 upper division Integrated Person (E) General Education requirement.

Reading: This class requires around 50 pages of reading per class session. But unlike dense, dry textbook readings, this material is mostly real books, plus a few short articles and extracts. The syllabus indicates what you should read *before* each class. The books are all affordable paperbacks. All are available from North Light Books & Cafe, 550 E. Cotati Ave., next to Oliver's Market in the shopping complex at East Cotati (707 792-4300). The books are:

- **Guests of the Sheik: An Ethnography of an Iraqi Village**, by Elizabeth Warnock Fernea. Anchor Books, 1989.
- **West of Kabul, East of New York: An Afghan American Story**, by Tamim Ansary. Picador USA, 2003.
- **The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down**, by Anne Fadiman. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1997.
- **With These Hands: The Hidden World of Migrant Farmworkers Today**, by Daniel Rothenberg. University of California Press, 2000.

- Plus some additional online readings available through the class website.

Lecture notes: Brief lecture notes and class Powerpoint graphics will be posted on the web page. The notes and Powerpoint files 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 change and grow over the semester. You can click to it from SSU's online list of class web pages, or go to:

<http://bruceowen.com/pluralistic/340-07s.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. The ID and password will be announced in class. If you can't recall them, email me.

Assignments and their weights in grading:

- 20% **Daily reading quiz** (about 1% each). Three multiple-choice questions about the day's reading. No make-ups.
- 5% **How cultural difference made a difference one-pager.** A one-page essay explaining how a difference in cultures between people affected an interaction in *Guests of the Sheik*.
- 5% **A cultural theme one-pager.** A one-page essay explaining a cultural theme and how it shows up in three different places in *Guests of the Sheik*.
- 5% **Adaptation, meaning, and system one-pager.** A one-page essay explaining a cultural feature as an adaptation, another feature in terms of meaning, and another in terms of culture as a system, drawing the three examples from *West of Kabul, East of New York* and/or *The Spirit Catches You And You Fall Down*.
- 20% **Bus ethnography.** You take four trips on a Santa Rosa city bus and spend some time at the transportation mall, unaccompanied by anyone you know. You observe people waiting for and riding the buses. You write a roughly five page discussion of how people form or seem to belong to different cultural groups, how they interact, and your own responses to the experience, using anthropological concepts from the course. More details will be posted on the class web page.
- 20% **Midterm exam.** Essay questions, largely based on readings and class discussions, including comparisons and/or applications to other situations.
- 25% **Final exam.** Cumulative, comparative, and synthetic, covering the whole semester. Essay questions focusing on readings and concepts from class discussions, including comparisons and/or applications to other situations.

Submitting the papers: You must submit your work 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. Please name files in this format, for each assignment:

340-07s-difference-SmithJane.doc

340-07s-theme-SmithJane.doc

340-07s-adaptation-SmithJane.doc

340-07s-bus-SmithJane.doc

Your word processor will add the 3-letter file extension, like doc, wps, cwk, or rtf. Any of those is fine. If you send me a draft to comment on, use the same format but add "-draft". For example,

340-07s-bus-SimpsonBart-draft.doc

Deadline policy: If circumstances prevent you from successfully submitting the paper or computer version, I will consider the assignment to be on time if either one of the two copies reaches me by the deadline. I must eventually receive both in order to give you credit, though. I will accept assignments no more than 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 just 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: To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact the disabled student services (DSS) office in Salazar 1049, or call 664-2677. If you have a letter from DSS indicating that you require 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 a reduced or zero grade for that assignment. Severe or repeated plagiarism results in an F for the course. 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.

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>

Living in a Pluralistic World
Class and Reading Schedule, Spring 2007

- Readings for some class sessions will be posted on the class website:

<http://bruceowen.com/pluralistic/340-07s.htm>

- Read the assignments *before* each class, so you are ready for the daily reading quiz and can 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. I will assume that you have read the assignment scheduled for each class. 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 Tue Jan 30 Introduction

Understanding others: Anthropological tools

- 2 Thur Feb 1 Online: Kluckhohn, *Queer Customs* (7 pgs)
Online: Middleton, *The Challenge of Human Diversity*, Introduction (7 pgs)
Online: Middleton, *The Challenge of Human Diversity*, Culture Shock (17 pgs)
- 3 Tue Feb 6 Online: Middleton, *The Challenge of Human Diversity*: Extracts from Our Lived Difference (15 pgs)
Online: Nanda and Warms on “emic and etic” (1 pg)
Online: Kottak on “emic and etic” (2 pgs)

Using anthropology and looking at American culture

- 4 Thur Feb 8 Online: Cerroni-Long, *Life and Cultures: The Test of Real Participant Observation* (13 pgs)
Online: McIntosh, *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack* (4 pgs)

Culture shock over there: Shia women in southern Iraq

- 5 Tue Feb 13 Fernea, *Guests of the Sheik*: Introduction and Part I through pg. 56 (55 pgs)
- 6 Thur Feb 15 Fernea, *Guests of the Sheik*: Part I, pp. 57-102 (46 pgs)
- 7 Tue Feb 20 Fernea, *Guests of the Sheik*: Part II (66 pgs)
* **How cultural difference made a difference one-pager DUE**
- 8 Thur Feb 22 Fernea, *Guests of the Sheik*: Part III (76 pgs)
- 9 Tue Feb 27 Fernea, *Guests of the Sheik*: Part IV, Part V (50 pgs)
- 10 Thur Mar 1 Fernea, *Guests of the Sheik*: Part VI and Postscript (29 pgs)
Online: Fernea and Fernea, *Symbolizing Roles: Behind the Veil* (7 pgs)

Afghanistan, America, Islam, and 9/11

- 11 Tue Mar 6 Ansary, *West of Kabul, East of New York*: pp. 289-292 and pp. 3-82 (84 pgs)
12 Thur Mar 8 Ansary, *West of Kabul, East of New York*: pp. 83-152 (71 pgs)
* **A cultural theme one-pager DUE**
13 Tue Mar 13 Ansary, *West of Kabul, East of New York*: pp. 153-219 (67 pgs)
14 Thur Mar 15 Ansary, *West of Kabul, East of New York*: pp. 223-285 and pp. 293-300 (71 pgs)
15 Tue Mar 20 Catch-up, discussion, review. No reading.
16 Thur Mar 22 * **Midterm exam (in class)**

Hmong immigrants and Western doctors

- 17 Tue Mar 27 Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You*: pp. vii-ix, 291-292, 3-37 (40 pgs)
18 Thur Mar 29 Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You*: pp. 38-92 (55 pgs)
19 Tue Apr 3 Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You*: pp. 93-139 (47 pgs)
20 Thur Apr 5 Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You*: pp. 140-180 (41 pgs)
Tue Apr 10 **Spring Break: No class**
Thur Apr 12 **Spring Break: No class**
21 Tue Apr 17 Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You*: pp. 181-224 (44 pgs)
* **Adaptation, Meaning, and System one-pager DUE**
22 Thur Apr 19 Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You*: pp. 225-288 (64 pgs)

Culture, connections, and business here at home: The people who harvest our food

- 23 Tue Apr 24 Rothenberg, *With These Hands*: Forward, both Prefaces, and Chapter 1 (43 pgs)
24 Thur Apr 26 Video in class: Harvest of Shame
25 Tue May 1 Rothenberg, *With These Hands*: Chapter 2, 3 (60 pgs)
26 Thur May 3 Rothenberg, *With These Hands*: Chapter 4, 5 (63 pgs)
27 Tue May 8 Rothenberg, *With These Hands*: Chapter 6, 7 (51 pgs)
28 Thur May 10 Rothenberg, *With These Hands*: Chapter 8, 9 (67 pgs)
* **Bus ethnography DUE**
29 Tue May 15 Rothenberg, *With These Hands*: Chapter 10, 11, Postscript (55 pgs)
30 Thur May 17 Catch-up, discussion, review, evaluations.

Final exam: Tuesday, May 22, 5:00-6:50, in our regular classroom, Stevenson 1002.