ANT 2410 Introduction to Cultural Anthropology

University of Florida
Fall 2019

https://www.nathanwpyle.art/#/strangeplanet/

Instructor and TAs

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Course Description

Anthropology is the academic discipline that studies humanity across all space and time. Cultural anthropologists study the distinctive ways people create, negotiate, and make sense of their own social worlds in relation to the worlds of others. Through research in places both far away and near to home, anthropologists examine relations and events that influence and determine social belonging and exclusion, whether based in gender, kinship, religion, language, political economy, or historical constructions of race, ethnicity and citizenship. The scope of cultural anthropology is thus broad. Studying culture is crucial to understanding our increasingly connected planet, human relationships, and actions. An anthropological perspective is also essential to efforts which aim to resolve the major crises that confront humanity today.

This class provides an introduction to the discipline through a consideration of topics and themes that are not only of vital relevance today but also hold an enduring place in the intellectual tradition of anthropology. The purpose of this class is to increase your familiarity and comfort with concepts of cultural analysis and to show how these notions can increase awareness and understanding of your own and others’ life experiences. In so doing, the course aims to enhance sensitivity to social differences while also underscoring the moral and ethical dimensions entailed by ethnographic research.

After successfully completing this course, students will be able to:

- identify, recognize and recall influential anthropological concepts and concerns
- demonstrate a comprehension and appreciation of human cultural diversity
- describe how the contemporary world is interconnected and how it is being transformed through globalization, development, migration, and dynamics of power
- interpret and analyze ethnographic texts and films
- express a basic understanding of anthropological research and representation
- discuss ethical issues in ethnographic fieldwork
- apply key anthropological concepts to everyday life experiences

Expectations

- Do attend and participate in class and discussion sections. Class time will consist of a combination of lecture, discussion, and group activities.

- Do engage with course materials. When reading, watching a film, or listening to a podcast, focus on the main points and don’t get bogged down in anxiety about minute details. The point is to understand the main ideas and the types of evidence that are used to support them. This can be hard to get used to; if you would like help with this, please see your instructor or TAs. Some course materials are more challenging than others.

- Do seek clarification when confused. Please do not hesitate to ask questions about any areas that are unclear, either in class, before or after class, during office hours, or by e-mail. For office hours, walk-ins are always welcome, but students with
appointments have priority. E-mail the instructor or TAs to make an appointment for office hours or to schedule a meeting for another time.

-Do utilize university resources. The University of Florida offers a number of valuable resources to support student learning and wellness:

- For help with general study skills and tutoring, check out the Teaching Center in Broward Hall. You can call them at (352) 392-2010 or (352) 392-6420. More info at http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/.

- For help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers, visit the Writing Studio in 302 Tigert Hall. Their phone number is (352) 846-1138, and their website is http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/.

- For e-learning technical support, call (352) 392-4357 and select option 2. You can also e-mail them at learningsupport@ufl.edu or browse their website at https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml.

- For help using the libraries or finding resources, see http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask.

- For career and counseling services, visit the Career Connections Center in Reitz Union. Their phone number is (352) 392-1601 and their website is https://career.ufl.edu/.

- For mental health support, see the UF Counseling and Wellness Center at 3190 Radio Road. Their phone number is (352) 392-1575 and their website is https://counseling.ufl.edu/.

-Don’t distract yourself and others with technology: Technology can be a productive or counterproductive tool depending on how it’s used. In my own experience, I find that taking notes by hand, with pen and paper, helps me understand and retain more information than taking notes on a laptop.

Research on the psychology of learning suggests that this is a more general phenomenon. One study, for example, found that “even when laptops are used solely to take notes, they may still be impairing learning because their use results in shallower processing.” This is because “laptop note takers’ tendency to transcribe lectures verbatim rather than processing information and reframing it in their own words is detrimental to learning.”¹ A randomized trial at another university found that “average final exam scores among students assigned to classrooms that allowed computers were

18 percent of a standard deviation lower than exam scores of students in classrooms that prohibited computers."²

In light of these findings, I encourage you to take longhand notes and discourage the use of laptops, tablets, phones, and similar devices during class. Nevertheless, you are responsible for making your own decisions about what tools best serve your learning goals. If you feel that using electronic devices is the best choice for you then I will respect your decision as long as you respect those around you by resisting the temptation to check e-mail, read the news, peruse listicles, take quizzes, catch Pokémon, and/or shop online during class. Believe me, I know how entertaining those activities are, and I enjoy them myself—outside of class. Off-task technology use during class is not only detrimental to your own learning; it’s also distracting for those sitting nearby.

Evaluation

Students will be expected to complete five out of six exercises and five out of six assignments over the course of the semester. These exercises and assignments are the sole basis for assessment in this course. They are in place of quizzes, tests, exams, reading checks, attendance, participation, and the like. You are expected to submit exercises and assignments according to the instructions on the exercise or assignment sheet the day they are due. Late submissions not covered by university attendance and make-up policies (see below) will be penalized.

Exercises are short activities intended to take no more than one hour to complete. Each exercise is worth 5% of your grade. Taken together, then, exercises total 25% of your final grade. In general, exercises will be submitted in hard copy form in class, but as there are exceptions, please consult the relevant exercise or assignment sheet for specific instructions.

Assignments are 2-3 page essays (or equivalent work) intended to give you an opportunity to demonstrate your comprehension and analysis of course materials. Each assignment is worth 15% of your grade. Taken together, then, assignments total 75% of your final grade. In general, assignments will be submitted on Canvas by 11:59 pm on the day they are due, but as there are exceptions, please consult the relevant exercise or assignment sheet for specific instructions.

Epic Finale

Since there is no final exam in this course, our final exam period will be repurposed for the epic finale, which will comprise Exercise and Assignment 6. The epic finale will be a mock congress dedicated to debating and voting on a bill that would allow courts to consider cultural background as a mitigating circumstance when sentencing defendants convicted of felony behavior that is common and acceptable to their cultural group. Assignment 6 will involve preparing and, ideally, presenting a speech that draws on the court cases assigned during Week 15 to support or oppose the proposed bill. Exercise 6 will involve attending the epic finale, listening to the presentations, voting on the proposed bill, and writing a brief reflection on why you voted the way you did.

Don’t want to show up for the epic finale at 7:30 am during finals week? No problem! Simply submit Exercises 1-5 and Assignments 1-5 during the course of the semester, and then you’re done!

University Policies

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx.

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/. Please note that your instructor and TAs also welcome your feedback at any point during the semester. If there is something that we can do to help you and your peers learn better (or if we are doing something that you find especially helpful), you don't have to wait until the end of the semester to say so. We encourage you to attend our office hours or make an appointment with one of us to discuss your suggestions.

University policy requires that you be provided with the following link to information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points: https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/. You may
notice that this information classifies W, H, I, N, and U as “non-punitive grades,” which implies that other kinds of grades may in fact be punitive. Please note that the instructor unequivocally rejects the idea of any grades as punitive. A grade is simply an instructor’s assessment of a student’s learning outcomes in a given course—no more, no less. The idea that grades are punitive is pedagogically unjustifiable, counterproductive to effective teaching and learning, and has no place whatsoever in the instructor’s philosophy or practice of teaching.

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (http://www.dso.ufl.edu/ssrr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Course Materials

There are no required or recommended textbooks for this course. All course materials are available on Canvas, through the University of Florida library, or online. Please note that ethnographic films to be watched outside of class are available to you at no cost either online or through Ethnographic Video Online, an online database provided by the library: http://lp.hscl.ufl.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip_uid&db=cat04364a&AN=ufl.023291037&site=eds-live. Films not available for free online or library-facilitated viewing outside of class will be screened in class.

Course Schedule

Introduction: The Culture Concept

Week 1: Anthropology and the Culture Concept

T, 8/20


R, 8/22


Activity: Pick one definition of culture from Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1952 that you more or less agree with—one that you feel really captures the essence of culture as you understand it. Pick another definition of culture from Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1952 that you disagree with, don’t understand, or have a question about. Bring these two definitions to class in electronic or hard copy form and be prepared to share why you agreed with one and disagreed with (or were confused by) the other.


No discussion sections this week!

Unit 1: Culture in the World

Week 2: Culture and Counterinsurgency

T, 8/27


R, 8/29


Discussion Section


Week 3: “Corporate Culture”

T, 9/3


R, 9/5


Discussion Section

• **Due: Exercise 1.**

Week 4: “Culture of Poverty”

T, 9/9


Th, 9/11


Discussion Section


Unit 2: Kinship, Gender, and Sexuality
Week 5: Kinship

T, 9/17


R, 9/19

- Work on Assignment 1.

Discussion Section

- In-class: Kinship activity.

F, 9/20, 11:59 pm

- Due: Assignment 1.

Week 6: Kinship, Gender, and Sexuality

T, 9/24


R, 9/26


Discussion Section


Week 7: Kinship and Political Economy
T, 10/1

- **Due: Exercise 2**

R, 10/3


**Discussion Section**


  **Unit 3: Political Economy**

**Week 8: Subsistence and Reciprocity**

T, 10/8


R, 10/10

- Work on Assignment 2.

F, 10/11, 11:59 pm
• **Due: Assignment 2 due.**

**Discussion Section**


**Week 9: Gifts and Politics**

**T, 10/15**


**R, 10/17**


**Discussion Section**


Week 10: Markets and Money

T, 10/22


R, 10/24


Discussion Section

• **Due: Exercise 3 (in-class activity)**

Unit 4: Ritual and Religion

Week 11: Ritual, Land, and Art

T, 10/29


R, 10/31
• Work on Assignment 3.


Discussion Section

• TBD

**F, 11/1, 11:59 pm**

• **Due: Assignment 3**

Week 12: Witchcraft and Magic

**T, 11/5**


**R, 11/7**


Discussion Section


Week 13: Millennial Movements

**T, 11/12**


R, 11/14


Discussion Section

- **Due: Exercise 4**


  Conclusion: Examining Ethnographic Representation

Week 14: Emotional Force and Cultural Caricature

T, 11/19


R, 11/21

- Work on Assignment 4.

Discussion Section

- Due: Exercise 5 (in-class activity)

F, 11/22, 11:59 pm

- Due: Assignment 4

Postscript: Culture and Law in the United States

“Week” 15: The First Amendment and the “Cultural Defense”

T, 11/26

- Read:
  o *Wisconsin v. Yoder*, 406 U.S. 205 (1972)

T, 12/3

- Read:
  o *People v. Kimura*, No. A-091133 (Super. Ct. LA County, April 24, 1985)
  o *People v. Moua*, No. 315972 (Fresno Super. Ct. 1985)
  o *People v. Dong Lu Chen*, No. 87-7774 (N.Y. Sup. Ct., Dec. 2, 1988)

No discussion sections this week!

F, 12/6, 11:59 pm

- Due: Assignment 5
Final Exam Epic Finale

R, 12/12, 7:30-9:30 am

- Due: Exercise 6
- Due: Assignment 6