

ANTH 103 (Introduction to Cultural Anthropology)

Fall 2004

MWF 8:00-8:50

Professor Donna Perry

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Office Hours: M 2:00-5:00, R 2:00-5:00

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Anthropology is the study of humankind, and includes four sub-fields: archeology, physical anthropology, linguistic anthropology, and cultural anthropology. This class introduces students to cultural anthropology. Cultural anthropologists examine the lifestyles and belief systems of diverse peoples around the world, looking at both the material basis of human existence and at the symbolic systems through which people give meaning to social life. A wide range of issues come under the anthropological lens, including economy, marriage, gender, family, politics, religion, ritual, and social inequality. The cultural anthropologist's central quest is the study of "culture," that body of values, assumptions, and practices that we acquire as members of society and that shapes who we are, what we do, and how we see the world. Although "culture" is often associated with "tradition," anthropologists believe that *no* non-Western culture is timeless, exotic, or isolated, and now take great interest in the globalization and social change that people experience everywhere.

This class is structured as a first course in cultural anthropology for those without previous exposure to the discipline. We will review the core concepts and theoretical approaches of cultural anthropology, the history of the discipline, and the methods whereby anthropologists learn about cultural difference. Books, articles, and films enable student to examine culture groups whose lifestyles differ radically from their own. These in-depth case studies give them an "insider's view" to non-Western social practices and broaden their understanding of human diversity. While our focus is mainly on so-called "indigenous" societies, students will be asked to do their own ethnographic analysis of life in the United States. Thus the class not only "makes the strange familiar, but the familiar strange."

GOALS

- 1) To familiarize students with the sub-discipline of cultural anthropology, the many aspects of culture that anthropologists study, and the research methods they employ.
- 2) To promote critical thinking about the cultural roots of social thought and action, and the ways that culture shapes who people are.
- 3) To dissuade students from a quick and negative judgment of "exotic" social practices and to encourage among them an analytical approach whereby they endeavor to understand the local logics of such social practices.
- 4) To nurture in students an appreciation of human diversity, creativity, and adaptability.

READINGS

A. Books

Students will read one textbook (by Lassiter) and three ethnographies (book-length anthropological case studies). All books are listed below in the order in which you will read them. Each is available at the college bookstore and each is required. In order to be prepared for in-class discussion, students should complete all readings **by Tuesday** of the week they are assigned (see the schedule below). Students will write short papers (3-5 pages) on the three ethnographies and will be asked questions on all books for the midterm and final exams.

To assist you in reading the ethnographies I will post reading guides on Blackboard. These will consist of a series of questions that help you to know what to focus on. Your answers to the questions will not be collected—these are purely guides. The study guides will cover mainly the "nuts and bolts," or details and definitions presented in the books. They will not cover the larger theoretical issues, which we will discuss in class and which you will tackle in your mini-papers. .

- 1) *Invitation to Anthropology*, by Luke Eric Lassiter (Altamira Press, 2002)

- 2) *Wisdom from a Rainforest: The Spiritual Journey of an Anthropologist*, by Stuart A. Schlegel (The University of Georgia Press, 1998)
- 3) *The Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea*, by Annette B. Weiner (Wadsworth, 1988)
- 4) *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures*, by Anne Fadiman (Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1998)

B. Articles

The articles for this class are available on Blackboard under the button "Course Documents." I will give an in-class demonstration on how to access the articles. Students are required to **print up** all articles and read them in the order they appear on the syllabus below. In order to be well prepared for in-class discussion, students should complete all assigned readings **by Tuesday** night of the week they are assigned. For ten of the class's 15 weeks, you will choose one article comment on; these comments will be posted to the class's electronic discussion board. You will also be asked questions on the articles on the midterm and final exams. To see a complete list of articles and their full references (along with page length), go to the end of this syllabus. For instructions on making posts to the class's electronic discussion board see the handout I provide.

FILMS

To give students a visual entrée into other cultures I will show a number of ethnographic films. Students will watch a total of 7 films, four outside of class. On the day a film is shown I will provide students with a film guide that summarizes the film and asks relevant questions. Students will fill these guides out as soon as they can after class and hand them in the next time class meets for credit. Film guides are a good resource when studying for the mid-term and final exams, as questions on films will be included on these exams.

If you are unable to come to class on the day a film is scheduled day due to illness or emergency, you may contact me no later than the day that the film was shown (and preferably earlier) to arrange an individual viewing of the film. I will provide students *who have a valid excuse* with film guide, which they can hand in for credit. The films we will view, in the order in which we view them, are:

Film 1 (wk. 3): "Nai: The Story of a Kung Woman"❖

Film 2 (wk. 5): "Guardians of the Flutes"❖

Film 3 (wk. 6): "A World without Fathers or Husbands"

Film 4 (wk. 11): "Caste at Birth"❖

Film 5 (wk. 12): "Trinkets & Beads"

Film 6 (wk. 13): "Between Two Worlds: A Hmong Shaman in America"

Film 7 (wk. 14): "A World of Differences: Understanding Cross-Cultural Miscommunication" & "Body Art"❖

❖These films must be viewed outside of class in the Media Theater in Mussulman Library. See the schedule below for exact dates and times.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

To receive a good grade in this class, you must be present at and attentive during all lectures, discussion, and films. I will take attendance and consider this when calculating your participation grade. Lectures and discussions will not only highlight relevant issues from the readings, but introduce new concepts. Because we are not using a lengthy textbook, I will often provide key definitions, outlines, and theories during class time. You are advised to take careful notes of both the written and verbal material that I present when we meet. I will **not** post lecture notes on the Internet or give them to students who have missed class. Neither will I provide students with hand-outs from a class that they missed unless they contacted me the day of the missed class with a valid excuse. A person who has missed class can obtain paper topics on Blackboard under "Assignments".

GRADING

A. Posts to electronic discussion group (8 posts at 2 points each) **16%**

- ◆ Dates: Posts are to be made in weeks 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14, & 15, although you may opt out of two posts (see below). Posts are generally due on Tuesday by midnight. The exceptions are during weeks when papers are due (weeks 4, 6, 10 & 15). In such cases the post is due Thursday by midnight.
*Note that during weeks when there are no articles assigned (weeks 5, 8, 9, & 13) you will not do posts.
- ◆ A post is a 1-2 paragraph commentary on one article (not the book!) assigned during the week. It is posted to the class's threaded discussion group on Blackboard. See the handout for a full explanation of posts.
- ◆ Late policy: Late posts will only be accepted within 48 hours of the due date. Late posts only receive half credit. A post that is more than 48 hours late will not be graded.
- ◆ Opt-out privilege: You may opt out of 2 posts without incurring a penalty, **but you may not opt out two posts in a row**

B. Mid-term Exam **16%**

- ◆ Date: Monday, October 18
- ◆ Policy on make-ups: If you miss the mid-term exam you forfeit your mid-term exam grade unless you have a truly serious illness, injury, or emergency and have contacted me before the exam.

C. Final Exam **16%**

- ◆ Date: Tuesday, December 14th from 6:30-9:30 PM
- ◆ The final will *not* be comprehensive, but will cover material since the mid-term
- ◆ Policy on make-ups: If you miss the final exam you forfeit your final exam grade unless you have a truly serious illness, injury, or emergency and have contacted me before the exam.

D. Mini-papers (3 papers at 11 points each) **33%**

- ◆ Dates: Papers will be due on Sept. 20, Oct. 6, Nov. 1, & Dec. 6
- ◆ Mini-papers are intended to help you think through important themes in the assigned books. The exception is mini-paper #1, which will consist of an original anthropological analysis (see hand-out). The topic for each mini-paper will be handed out one week before it is due, and can be accessed on Blackboard at any time prior to this. Students are welcome and encouraged to write other topics that interest them.
- ◆ Formatting: Mini-papers should be 3-4 pages long. They must be typewritten with double-spacing, 12-pt font, and 1" margins
- ◆ Late policy: You will lose five points on your mini-paper for every class meeting that you have failed to hand it in (or 15 points for every week it is late)
- ◆ Opt-out privilege: You may opt out of 1 mini-paper during the semester.

E. Film guides (6 film guides at 1.5 points each) **9%**

- ◆ Dates: weeks 3, 6, 7, 11, 12, 14 & 15
- ◆ Film guides will be handed out on the day a film is shown in class
- ◆ You should take about fifteen minutes to fill in your film guide. While these guides are an exercise in informal writing (your spelling, organization, and neatness will not count against you), note that you will be marked down for vague and excessively short answers
- ◆ Completed film guides will be due the next class meeting
- ◆ Policy on make-ups: Only a person with a valid excuse who has informed me before or on the day of the missed class may make up a missed film and receive credit for filling in a film guide.
- ◆ Opt-out privilege: You may opt out of 1 film guide during the semester.

E. Participation **10%**

In addition to attendance, your contributions to class-discussions, debates, and group-work will be assessed in determining your final grade. I encourage all students to explore ideas by taking part in verbal exchanges within the classroom, and will provide ample opportunities to do so. I will lead discussions and organize group activities. But in addition to these, I hope that students will feel free to spontaneously contribute their thoughts and to ask

questions: You may reflect on debates and ideas that arise on our class's electronic discussion board; you may ask questions about the book guides I have handed out; or you may request clarification of ideas and concepts from lectures or readings. If you find that the class size inhibits you from participating, please discuss the matter with me. You will be asked to assess your participation at mid-term and at this time I will give you feedback on how I view your performance.

HONOR CODE

In order to participate as a registered student in this class, you must agree to adhere to the standards of academic integrity espoused by Gettysburg College. In particular, you must write and sign the Gettysburg Honor's Pledge at the end of all mini-papers, exams, and film guides (posts are given exception to this rule).

The Gettysburg Honor's Pledge affirms that you have not cheated on an exam or plagiarized an essay other take-home assignment. It is considered plagiarism when you:

- Submit the words, sentences, ideas, conclusions, and/or examples from a source (a book an article, the Internet, another student's paper) without citing the source.
- Submit another person's work in place of your own
- "Recycle" a paper that was written for another class and for which you have already received credit
- Knowingly aided another student in plagiarizing an assignment as defined above.

Violations of this Honor code will be penalized according to the college's policies. For more information on the Gettysburg Honor Code go to: http://www.gettysburg.edu/academics/acad/honor_code/index.html.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities should notify me as soon as possible so that I can make all reasonable efforts to accommodate your needs.

SCHEDULE

Week 1: August 30 & September 1, 3

Topics: Evolution and the Critique of Race
Culture—a core concept
The holistic approach in anthropology

Readings: Lassiter book: intro and chapters 1 & 2
Miner e-reserve
Schlegel book: Prologue & chapter 1

Week 2: September 6, 8, 10

Topics: Ethnography/Fieldwork/Participant-Observation
Cultural relativism

Readings: Lassiter book: chapter 3
Kurin e-reserve
Lee e-reserve PICK 2 OUT OF THESE 3
Raybeck e-reserve
Schlegel book: chapter 2

Presentation: A slide show on my fieldwork in Senegal (West Africa)

Assignment(s): Post due Tuesday, midnight
Film guide due Friday

Week 3: September 13, 15, 17

- Topics: Subsistence: hunting & gathering
Subsistence: horticulturalism
- Readings: Barnes & Boddy e-reserve (required for class exercise but not for posting)
Reed (a) e-reserve
Lassiter, chapter 4
Schlegel book: chapters 3 & 4
- 🎬Film: “!Nai: The Story of a !Kung Woman” - Media Theater, W & R 7:00 PM
- Assignment(s): Post due Tuesday, midnight
Film guide due Friday

Week 4: September 20, 22, 24

- Topics: Subsistence: pastoralism
Subsistence: agriculture
- Readings: McCabe & Ellis e-reserve
Diamond e-reserve
Scheper-Hughes e-reserve
Schlegel book: chapters 5-8
- Assignment(s): **Paper #1 due Monday** (see hand-out for topic)
Post due Thursday, midnight

Week 5: September 27, 29 & October 1

- Topics: Focus on *Wisdom from a Rainforest*
- Readings: Lassiter book: Chapter 5
Schlegel book: chapters 9-18 & epilogue (finish)
- Assignment(s): Film guide due Friday

Week 6: October 6, 8

- Topics: Gender
- Readings: Lassiter book: Chapter 6
Davison e-reserve
Meekers & Franklin e-reserve
- 🎬Film: “Guardians of the Flutes” - Media Theater, W & R 7:00 PM
- Assignment(s): **Paper #2 due Wednesday (on Schlegel book)**
Post due Thursday, midnight
Film guide due Friday

Week 7: October 11, 13, 15

- Topics: Marriage & family, continued
- Readings: Oboler e-reserve
Yuan & Mitchell e-reserve
Goldstein e-reserve
Weiner book, introduction & chapter 1

🎬Film: "A World without Fathers or Husbands" (Wednesday)

Assignment(s): Post due Tuesday, midnight
Film guide due Friday

Week 8: October 18, 20, 22

Topics: Kinship & descent systems

Readings: Weiner book: Intro & chapters 2-4

Assignment(s): **MIDTERM EXAM on Monday**

Week 9: October 25, 27, 29

Topics: Focus on *The Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea*

Readings: Weiner book: chapters 5-10 (finish)

Assignment(s): none

Week 10: November 1, 3, 5

Topics: Knowledge, Belief, & Disbelief: Religion, magic, & witchcraft

Readings: Lassiter book: Chapter 7
Gmelch e-reserve
Freed e-reserve

Assignment(s): **Paper #3 due Monday** (on Weiner book)
Post due Thursday, midnight

Week 11: November 8, 10, 12

Topics: Social inequality
Exchange systems: reciprocity versus markets

Readings: Counts e-reserve
Reed (b) e-reserve
Gokhale e-reserve

🎬Film: "Caste at Birth" - Media Theater, T 8:00 & W 9:00 PM

Assignment(s): Post due Tuesday, midnight
Film guide due Friday

Week 12: November 15, 17, 19

Topics: Social Control
Conflict Resolution

Readings: Turnbull e-reserve
Gibbs e-reserve
Fadiman book: read up to page 59

🎬Film: "Trinkets & Beads" (Friday)

Assignment(s): Post due Tuesday, midnight

Week 13: November 22

Topics: Tradition & Change: heterogeneity versus homogeneity

Readings: Fadiman book: read up to page 154

Assignment(s): Film guide due Monday

Week 14: November 29 & December 1, 3

Topics: Focus on *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*
Cross-Cultural Communication

Readings: Fadiman book: read up to page 209 (this is as far as we will read)
Bohannon e-reserve
Thomson e-reserve

Film: "Between Two Worlds: The Hmong Shaman in America"

Assignment(s): Post due Tuesday, midnight
Film guide due Wednesday (to be completed in class)

Week 15: December 6, 8, 10

Topics: Linguistic anthropology

Readings: Schildkrout & Kaeppler e-reserve
Abu-Lughod e-reserve
Basso e-reserve
Crystal e-reserve

Film: "A World of Differences" & "Body Art" - Media Theater, M 7:00 & T 8:00 PM

Assignment(s): **Paper #4 due Monday** (on Fadiman book)
Post due Thursday, midnight

LIST OF E-RESERVE ARTICLES & EXCERPTS

Abu-Lughod, Lila

1987 Bedoin Blues. Poignant Lyric Poems Punctuate the Intimate Conversations of the Awlad 'Ali. *Natural History* 96(7):24-33.

Barnes, Virginia Lee, and Janice Patricia Boddy

1994 Chapter 5 *In Aman: The Story of a Somali Girl*. Virginia Lee Barnes and Janice Patricia Boddy, Pp. 52-60. New York: Vintage Books.

Basso, Keith H.

1970 "To Give Up on Words": Silence in Western Apache Culture. *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 26(3):213-30.

Bohannon, Laura

1966 Shakespeare in the Bush. *Natural History*:28-33.

Counts, David

1990 Too Many Bananas, Not Enough Pineapples, and No Watermelon at All: Three Object Lessons in Living With Reciprocity. *In The Humbled Anthropologist: Tales From the Pacific*. P. R. DeVita, ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Crystal, David

1997 Vanishing Languages. *Civilization* 4(1):40-45.

Davison, Jean

1996 Wamutira: the First Wife. *In Voices From Mutira: Change in the Lives of Rural Gikuyu Women, 1910-1995*, 2nd Ed. Jean Davison, Pp. 75-107. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Diamond, Jared

2003 The Worst Mistake in This History of the Human Race. *In Applying Cultural Anthropology: An Introductory Reader*. Aaron Podolefsky and Peter J. Brown, eds. Pp. 95-98. New York: McGraw Hill.

Freed, Stanley A., and Ruth S. Freed

1990 Taraka's Ghost. *Natural History* 99(10):84-88.

- Gibbs, James L. Jr.
 1982 The Kpelle Moot: A Therapeutic Model for the Informal Settlement of Disputes. *In Anthropology for the Eighties: Introductory Readings*. Johnnetta B. Cole, ed. Pp. 340-352. New York and London: Free Press and Collier Macmillan.
- Gmelch, George
 1992 Baseball Magic. *Elysian Fields Quarterly* 11(3):25-35.
- Gokhale, Jayashree B.
 1986 Cataways of Caste. *Natural History* 95(10):31-36.
- Goldstein, Melvyn
 1987 When Brothers Share a Wife. *Natural History* March:39-48.
- Kaeppler, Adrienne L.
 2001 Tatood Beauty: A Pacific Case Study. *AnthroNotes* 22(2)
- Kurin, Richard
 1980 Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief. *Natural History* 89(11):6-24.
- Lee, Richard Borshay
 1969 Eating Christmas in the Kalahari. *Natural History* 78(10):14-22+.
- McCabe, J. Terrence, and James E. Ellis
 1987 Beating the Odds in Arid Africa. *Natural History* 96(1):32-41.
- Meekers, Dominique, and Nadra Franklin
 1995 Women's Perceptions of Polygyny Among the Kaguru of Tanzania. *Ethnology* 34(4):315-29.
- Miner, Horace M.
 1956 Body Ritual Among the Nacirema. *American Anthropologist* 58:503-7.
- Nanda, Serena
 1992 Arranging a Marriage in India. *In The Naked Anthropologist: Tales From Around the World*. Philip R. De Vita, Pp. 34-35. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Oboler, Regina Smith
 1980 Is the Female Husband a Man? Woman/Woman Marriage Among the Nandi of Kenya. *Ethnology* 19(1):69-88.
- Raybeck, Douglas
 1996 The Midday Sun and Other Hazards. *In Mad Dogs, Englishmen, and the Errant Anthropologist: Fieldwork in Malaysia*. Douglas Raybeck, Pp. 69-88. Waveland.
- Reed, Richard K.
 1997 Guaraní Economics. *In Forest Dwellers, Forest Protectors: Indigenous Models for International Development (Part of the Cultural Survival Studies in Ethnicity and Change Series)*. Richard K. Reed, Pp. 41-47. Boston : Allyn and Bacon.
- 1997 Guaraní Production. *In Forest Dwellers, Forest Protectors: Indigenous Models for International Development (Part of the Cultural Survival Studies in Ethnicity and Change Series)*. Richard K. Reed, Pp. 49-75. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Scheper-Hughes, Nancy
 1989 Death Without Weeping. *Natural History* 98(10):8-12.
- Schildkrout, Enid
 2001 Body Art As Visual Language. *AnthroNotes* 22(2)
- Shostak, Marjorie
 1983 Excerpt. *In Nisa: The Life and Words of a !Kung Woman*. Marjorie Shostak, Pp. 1-17; 45-78. New York: Vintage Books.
- Stafford, Amy
 N.d. The Whorf Hypothesis Examined. accessed May 13, 2003.
- Thomson, David
 1997 The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis: Worlds Shaped by Words. *In Conformity and Conflict*. James McCurdy David Spradley, eds. Pp. 80-92. U.S.: Longman.
- Turnbull, Colin
 1962 The Crime of Cephu, the Bad Hunter; and The Giver of the Law. *In The Forest People*. Colin Turnbull, Pp. 94-125. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Yuan, Lu, and Sam Mitchell
 2000 Land of the Walking Marriage. *Natural History* 109(9):58-65.