

ANTH 103 (Introduction to Cultural Anthropology)
Spring 2009
MWF 8:00-8:50, Glat 001
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Anthropology is the study of humankind. It 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 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 studying globalization and social change.

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 students 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 unfamiliar social practices and to encourage among them an analytical approach whereby they endeavor to understand the local logics of such non-native 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 ethnographies and will be asked questions about them on the midterm and final exams.

To assist you in reading the ethnographies I will post reading guides on Angel. 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 Angel under the button “Content.” Articles are organized in folders according to the week in which they will be read. I will give an in-class demonstration on how to access the articles. Students are required to **print up** all articles and read them according to the schedule 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 eight of the class’s 16 weeks, you will choose one article to comment on; these comments will be posted to the class’s electronic discussion board (see below). You will also be asked questions about the articles on the midterm and final exams. To see a complete list of articles and their full references (which includes page length), go to the end of this syllabus.

FILMS

To give students a visual introduction to other cultures, I will show a number of ethnographic films. A total of eight films will be shown on designated evenings in Glatfelter Hall (see schedule below and on Angel for specific times and room numbers). Students are expected to attend all films, and are responsible for completing six film guides that they will hand in for credit. The film guides will be handed out at each film viewing. These film guides summarize the film and ask relevant questions—they can be filled out in about fifteen minutes by hand, preferably during or immediately after viewing the film, when one’s memory and impressions are still fresh. Film guides are a good resource when studying for the mid-term and final exams.

If you are unable to watch a film due to a scheduling conflict, illness, or emergency, you may contact me *no later than the day that the film is to be shown* (and preferably earlier) to arrange an individual viewing of the film. I will provide students who have a valid excuse with an extension. The films we will view, in the order in which we view them, are:

- “N!ai: The Story of a !Kung Woman” (60 min)
- “People of the Wind” (108 min)
- “A World without Fathers or Husbands” (52 min)
- “Trobriand Cricket” (50 min)
- “Witches in Exile” (79 min)
- “Trinkets & Beads” (52 min)
- “Between Two Worlds: A Hmong Shaman in America” (30 min)
- “A World of Differences” (34 min)
- “Body Art” (20 min)

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 will introduce new concepts. Because we are not using a lengthy textbook, I will often provide key definitions, outlines, and theories during class time. Therefore, 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 Angel under "Assignments."

GRADING

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

- ◆ Dates: Posts are due once a week for 11 out of the 16 weeks of this semester (see schedule below). You may opt out of 3 posts for a total of eight posts. Posts are generally due on Tuesday by midnight. The exceptions are when papers are due on Monday. In these cases, the post is due Thursday by midnight.
- ◆ A post is a 1-2 paragraph commentary on one article (**Not** the book! **Not** all articles for that week!) assigned during the week. You make your post on the class's threaded discussion group on Angel. See the handout (available on Angel) for a full explanation.
 - *Note that during weeks when there are no articles assigned you will not do posts.
 - *Note that you must make your post the week it is due, not earlier or later.
 - *Note that you can always check how many posts you have done by going to Angel and looking at your gradebook.
- ◆ Late policy: I will not accept late posts. Use your opt-out privilege if you cannot get a post in by the due date
- ◆ OPT-OUT PRIVILEGE: You may opt out of 3 posts without incurring a penalty. There is no need to tell me when you opt out. You must make a total of 8 posts.

B. Mid-term Exam 16%

- ◆ Date: Wednesday, March 4th
- ◆ 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 *that you can document and about which you have contacted me before the exam.*

C. Final Exam 16%

- ◆ Date: Tuesday, May 5th at 8:30 AM
- ◆ 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 *that you can document and about which you have contacted me before the exam.*

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

- ◆ four mini-papers will be assigned; you can opt out of one for a total of three
- ◆ Dates: 2/2, 2/23, 3/23 & 4/27 (all Mondays)
- ◆ Topics: Mini-papers are intended to help you think through important anthropological themes that are presented in the assigned books. The exception is mini-paper #1, which will consist of an original anthropological analysis (see hand-out). A suggested topic for each mini-paper will be made available on Angel ten days before the paper is due. However,

with the exception of mini-paper #1, I encourage students to write on original topics that address themes in the book and that explore an anthropological concept or question.

- ◆ Formatting: Mini-papers should be a minimum of three 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 without incurring a penalty, for a total of 3 mini-papers.

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

9%

- ◆ Dates: see schedule below
- ◆ Film guides will be handed out at the viewing
- ◆ You *must* hand in the colored film guide, not a piece of paper on which you have typed or written answers
- ◆ You should take about fifteen minutes to fill in your film guide by hand, either during or immediately after the film (while memory and impressions are still fresh). 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, vapid, and excessively short answers.
- ◆ Completed film guides will be due the next class meeting. Please fill these out honestly and sign the honor code.
- ◆ 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 guide.
- ◆ Late policy: no late film guides will be accepted.
- ◆ OPT-OUT PRIVILEGE: You may opt out of 2 film guides (there are 8 scheduled) 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 or other take-home assignment. It is considered plagiarism when you:

- Submit the words, sentences, ideas, conclusions, and/or examples from a source (a book or 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/about/offices/provost/advising/honor_code/

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: January 16

Topics: Introduction to the class

Readings: Lassiter book: Intro and chapter 1

Week 2: January 19, 21 & 23

Topics: Anthropology, racism, and social evolutionism
Culture: a core concept
The holistic approach in anthropology

Readings: Lassiter book: chapter 2
Miner e-reserve
Schlegel book: prologue & chapters 1-3

Assignment(s): none

Week 3: January 26, 28, & 30

Topics: Anthropological fieldwork

Readings: choose 2 of the following 3:
Raybeck e-reserve
Lee e-reserve
Kurin e-reserve
Everyone reads:
Schlegel book: chapter 4
Lassiter book: chapters 2 & 3

Assignment(s): Post due Tuesday, midnight

Week 4: February 2, 4 & 6

Topics: Cultural relativism
Subsistence strategies: hunting and gathering
Subsistence strategies: horticulturalism

Readings: Lassiter book: Chapter 4
Barnes & Boddy e-reserve
Reed (a) e-reserve
Schlegel book: chapters 5-9

🎬 Film: "N!ai: The Story of a !Kung Woman" (60 min) – Wed & Thurs 6 PM

Assignment(s): Paper #1 due (see hand-out for details)
Post due Tuesday, midnight
Film guide due Friday

Week 5: February 9, 11 & 13

Topics: Subsistence strategies: pastoralism
Subsistence strategies: agriculturalism/industrialism
Focus on *Wisdom from a Rainforest*

🎬 Film: "People of the Wind" (108 min) – Mon & Tues 6 PM

Readings: McCabe & Ellis e-reserve
Diamond e-reserve
Schlegel book: 10-16

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

Week 6: February 16, 18 & 20

Topics: Focus on *Wisdom from a Rainforest*
Gender

Readings: Schlegel book: 17-18 & epilogue (finish)
Lassiter book: chapter 5
Nanda e-reserve
Davison e-reserve

Assignment(s): Post due Thursday, midnight

Week 7: February 23, 25, & 27

Topics: Gender, continued
Marriage

Readings: Lassiter book: chapter 6
Yuan & Mitchell e-reserve
Goldstein e-reserve
Oboler e-reserve

🕒 Film: "A World without Fathers or Husbands" (52 min) – Wed & Thurs 6 PM

Assignment(s): Paper #2 due Monday (on Schlegel book)
Film guide due Wednesday
Post due Thursday, midnight

Week 8: March 2, 4 & 6

Topics: Marriage, continued

Assignment(s): Mid-term Exam, Wednesday

Readings: Kinship tutorial (website)

Week 9: March 9, 11 & 13: SPRING RECESS

Readings: Weiner book: chapters 1-5

Week 10: March 16, 19 & 20

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

Readings: Weiner book: chapters 6-8 & Conclusion (finish)

🕒 Film: "Trobriand Cricket: An Ingenious Response to Colonialism" (55 min) – Mon & Tues 6 PM

Assignment(s): Film guide due Wednesday

Week 11: March 23, 25 & 27

Topics: Belief systems: religion, magic, & witchcraft

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

🕒 Film: "Witches in Exile" (?? min) – Mon & Tues 6 PM

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

Week 12: March 30, April 1 & 3

Topics: Social inequality: global & local

Readings: Gokhale e-reserve
Nurden e-reserve
Fadiman book: chapters 1-4

🕒 Film: "Trinkets & Beads" (52 min) – Wed & Thurs 6 PM

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

Week 13: April 6 & 8

Topics: Social control & conflict resolution
Exchange systems

Readings: Turnbull e-reserve
Gibbs e-reserve
Counts e-reserve
Fadiman book: chapters 5-7

Assignment(s): Post due Tuesday, midnight

Week 14: April 15 & 17

Topics: Exchange systems, continued
Modernity and social change

Readings: Reed (b) e-reserve
Scheper-Hughes e-reserve
Fadiman book: chapters 8-10

Assignment(s): Post due Tuesday, midnight

Week 15: April 20, 22 & 24

Topics: Focus on *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*
Language & culture (linguistic anthropology)

Readings: Fadiman book: chapters 11-14 & chapters 17-18 (note–this is all we will read)
Bohannan e-reserve
Thomson e-reserve

🕒 Film: "Between Two Worlds: A Hmong Shaman in America" (30 min) – Mon & Tues 6 PM

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

Week 16: April 27, 29, 30 & May 1 (Monday classes meet on Thursday)

Topics: Language & culture (linguistic anthropology), continued

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

🕒 Film: "A World of Differences" & "Body Art" (60 min) – Mon & Tues 6 PM

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

Final Exam: Tuesday, May 5th at 8:30 AM

LIST OF E-RESERVE ARTICLES & EXCERPTS

(All available on Angel)

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 Thie 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.

Gibbs, James L. Jr.

1982 The Kpelle Moot: A Therepeutic 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 Castaways of Caste. *Natural History* 95(10):31-36.

Goldstein, Melvyn

1987 When Brothers Share a Wife. *Natural History* March:39-48.

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.
- 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.
- Nurden, Robert
 2001 Baka Beyond. *Ecologist* 31(4):54-56.
- Oboler, Regina Smith
 1980 Is the Female Husband a Man? Woman/Woman Marriage Among the Nandi of Kenya. *Ethnology* 19(1):69-88.
- Peters-Golden, Holly
 2002 The Azande: Witchcraft and Oracles in Africa. *In Culture Sketches: Case Studies in Anthropology*, 3rd ed. Holly Peters-Golden, Pp. 1-16. Boston, etc.: McGraw Hill.
- Plotkin, Mark J.
 2000 Shamans. *In Medicine Quest.* Mark J. Plotkin, Pp. 178-202. Viking Penguin.
- 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)
- 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.