

ANTH 1a
Introduction to the Comparative Study of Human Societies
Brandeis University, Summer Term II, 2009
Mondays, Tuesdays & Thursdays 11:25AM-1:45PM, classroom

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Office hours: By appointment
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Course Overview:

Anthropology is a wide-ranging social and biological science that deals with most facets of human existence. Cultural Anthropology is a subfield of Anthropology that studies contemporary human societies by focusing on culture or the particular behaviors, values and knowledge shared by a group of people. In this course we will cover a wide range of topics that are fundamental to Anthropology by exploring the experiences of people living all over the world. In addition to investigating the diversity of cultures and the work that anthropologists do, we will also focus on ritual behavior and rites of passage, the social construction of gender and race and the concept of American individualism in order to gain a better understanding of how Anthropology illuminates our own life experiences. We will also investigate the ways in which human beings in different parts of the world interact with their environment to survive, how they create meaningful cultural patterns to guide their interactions and how they structure their societies and institutions to maintain order and distribute resources. Course readings include an ethnography of an Iraqi village, a book on McDonald's restaurants in East Asia and excerpts on parenting styles in the United States, the Central African Republic and Brazil.

This course serves as a core requirement for majors in Anthropology and in International and Global Studies. It satisfies the University Studies requirements for the School of Social Sciences and Non-Western and Comparative Studies.

Required Texts:

Spradley, James and David McCurdy. 2009. Conformity and Conflict: Readings in Cultural Anthropology. Thirteenth Edition. Needham Heights: Allyn & Bacon. (CC)

Fernea, Elizabeth Warnock. [1969] 1990. Guests of the Sheik: An Ethnography of an Iraqi Village. New York: Knopf Publishing Group. (GOS)

Kusserow, Adrie. 2004. American Individualisms: Child Rearing and Social Class in Three Neighborhoods. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. (AI)

Watson, James L. (ed.). 2006. Golden Arches East: McDonald's in East Asia. Second Edition. Stanford: Stanford University Press. (GAE)

All books are available at the campus bookstore. Other required readings, marked with an (R) in the syllabus, will be available via Latte.

Requirements and Assessment:

Course Participation (15%): Attendance and active participation are expected at all class meetings. Exceptions can be made only in the case of emergency or illness. If possible, please contact me by email if you are going to be absent. Too many unexcused absences will result in points deducted from the final grade.

Presentation (5%): At the beginning of the semester each student will sign up to prepare a brief presentation of one day's readings and write up questions for class discussion. Students should be prepared to pose their questions to the class and facilitate a thoughtful and challenging debate and/or discussion of the day's material.

Writing assignments (40%): Two 5-7 page written assignments, each worth 20% of the overall grade, will be due during the semester. Assignments must be passed in at class meetings. Please note: emailed assignments will not be accepted. Unexcused late essays will be reduced by one third of a grade for each day the assignment is late (for example: a B+ becomes a B).

Tests (40%): There will be two in-class tests, each worth 20% of the overall grade. A study guide will be handed out to students to facilitate a review of the material before each test.

Disability Statement:

If you are a student who needs academic accommodations because of a documented disability you should contact me, and present your letter of accommodation, as soon as possible. If you have questions about documenting a disability or requesting academic accommodations you should contact Beth Rodgers-Kay in Academic Services at 6-3470. Letters of accommodations should be presented at the start of the semester to ensure provision of accommodations. Accommodations cannot be granted retroactively.

Statement of Plagiarism:

Plagiarism: Any attempt by an individual to represent the work of another as his or her own.

Plagiarism includes each of the following: copying the answers of another student on an examination, copying or substantially restating the work of another person or persons in any oral or written work without citing the appropriate source, and collaboration with someone else in an academic endeavor without acknowledging his or her contribution. Students should bear in mind that resources and information obtained from the Internet must be cited in every case.

You are expected to be familiar with and to follow the University's policies on academic integrity (see www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/sdc/rr/html/rr_section4.html). If you have any questions regarding what constitutes plagiarism, please contact the professor for guidance. Be careful and always cite your sources. Instances of alleged dishonesty will be forwarded to the Summer School Director for adjudication within the Student Judicial System. Potential sanctions include failure in the course, suspension from the University and permanent dismissal.

Monday, July 6. Introduction

Discussion What are Anthropology and culture; what are we talking about?

 Introductions and course overview. In-class reading and discussion of article.

Tuesday, July 7. “Being There”: Fieldwork and Representation

(CC) Section 1 Culture and Ethnography (Essays 1, 2 & 3) (32pp)

(GOS) Part I: Chapters 1 & 2 (40pp)

Film First Contact (1983). Bob Connolly and Robin Anderson. (54 min)

Thursday, July 9. Culture and Communication

(CC) Section 1 Culture and Ethnography (Essays 4 & 5) (12pp?)

Section 2 Language and Communication (Essays 7, 8 & 9) (40pp?)

(GOS) Part I: Chapters 3-8 (65pp)

Monday, July 13. Ecological Approaches to Understanding Human Behavior

(CC) Section 3 Ecology and Subsistence (all essays) (48pp)

(GOS) Parts II & III (145pp)

Tuesday, July 14. Economic Systems

(CC) Section 4 Economic Systems (Essays 14, 15 & 16) (40pp?)

(GOS) Part IV (18pp)

Film Chain of Love (Keten van Liefde) (2001). Directed by Marije Meerman.
(52min)

Thursday, July 16. Topical Focus: Kinship and Parenting

(CC) Section 5 Kinship and Family (Essay 18)

(R) “The Cultural Nexus of Aka Father-Infant Bonding.” Barry S. Hewlett. In Gender in Cross-Cultural Perspective. Second Edition. Edited by Caroline B. Brettell and Carolyn F. Sargent. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1997, pp. 42-53.

Due Writing Assignment #1

Monday, July 20. Topical Focus: Transnational Lives

(GOS) Parts V & VI (62pp)

Test #1 One hour test held in class.

Film Transnational Fiesta (1992). Wilton Martinez and Paul Gelles.

Tuesday, July 21. Globalization and Global Cultural Change

(CC) Section 9 Globalization (Essays 34 & 35) (31pp?)

(GAE) Preface, Introduction, Chapters 1 & 2 (109pp)

Thursday, July 23. Globalization and Identity

(GAE) Chapters 4 & 5 (47pp)

Film Monday’s Girls (1993) Directed by Ngozi Onwurah. (50min)

Monday, July 27. Topical Focus: Knowledge and Worldview
(CC) Section 8 Religion, Magic and Worldview (Essays 30, 31 & 32) (34pp)
(R) Excerpt from Evans-Pritchard (30pp?)
(AI) Introduction, Chapters 1-2 (43pp)

Film Misterios (2005). Directed by Giovanni Savino. (55 minutes)

Tuesday, July 28. Embodiment, Practice and Identity
(CC) Section 7 Law and Politics (Essay 26) (9pp)
(AI) Chapters 3 & 4 (46pp)

Thursday, July 30. Topical Focus: Individualism
(CC) Section 6 Identity, Roles, and Groups (Essay 23) (12pp)
(AI) Chapters 5-7 (70pp)

Monday, August 3. Class and Identity
(AI) Chapter 8, Conclusion (38pp)

Test #2 One hour test held in class.

Film Caste at Birth (1990). Directed by Mira Hamermesh. (52mins)

Tuesday, August 4. Investigating Race, Caste and Class in the United States
(CC) Section 5 Kinship and Family (Essay 19) (16pp)
Section 6 Identity, Roles, and Groups (Essay 25) (11pp)

Thursday, August 6. Concluding Reflections
(CC) Section 6 Identity, Roles, and Groups (Essay 22) (10pp?)
(R) American Anthropological Association Statement on "Race" (1998)

Due Writing Assignment #2

Course Evaluations.