

Anthropology 210
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY
Fall Semester 2009
Section 501 – Dr. Werner
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:55-5:10 pm
Francis Hall, Room 202

Professor:

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"I'm getting too old to hunt. Let's contact that professor who wanted to study us and eat the students he sends to do the research."

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Social and cultural differences make life as a human being both interesting and intimidating. On the one hand, culture is something that can unite people. Everybody belongs to a cultural group, and many of us belong to multiple social and cultural groups. Our languages, family values, religious beliefs, political values, and hobbies all provide

our lives with meaning, and we tend to identify with other people who share the same experiences and values. On the other hand, culture can be something that divides people into different groups. In order to simplify the complexities of our lives, we are constantly creating and revising categories in our minds. Many of these mental categories or “cognitive schema” help us distinguish between “Us” and the “Other.” The “Other” might be different from “Us” in terms of sex/gender, race/ethnicity, class, etc. Sometimes, the “Other” live in faraway places and distant times, but often they live much closer to home. For example, you might distinguish between those who buy their clothes at Wal-Mart and those who shop at Macy's, or between those who regularly attend church and those who are strongly opposed to organized forms of religion. Not only do we find certain criteria to distinguish the “Other” from “Us,” but we also make many general assumptions about who *they* are, how *they* live and how *they* think. Many of the deepest conflicts in today's world stem from cultural identities and cultural boundaries.

This course provides a basic introduction to the subfield of anthropology known as cultural (or social) anthropology. Cultural anthropology asks the following questions: “Why are we different from each other? How can we better understand people who are different from us?” Unlike other social science disciplines, anthropology does not single out one aspect of human life as the most important (such as political science, psychology, and economics). Instead, anthropologists take a “holistic” approach, striving to understand human beings and human experience in all of its complexity.

An anthropological approach critically challenges the assumptions we make about other cultures and societies. Cultural anthropologists use a unique method called “ethnographic fieldwork.” Anthropologists typically live among the “Other” for lengthy periods of time in order to understand the world from another perspective. During the course of fieldwork, anthropologists frequently discover that the assumptions we have of the “Other” often have little correspondence with how the “Other” view themselves and their social reality. For example, many Americans view Muslim women who wear veils as victims of oppression, while many Muslim women alternatively view the veil as a symbol of modesty, piety, liberation and/or anti-imperialism.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the semester, you will become familiar with the basic concepts and methods used by cultural anthropologists. Second, you will be able to identify which aspects of human social life are universally shared and which are culturally specific. Third, you will be able to apply an anthropological perspective to better understand cultural diversity. Fourth, you will learn how cultures are constantly changing and being actively reconstructed in response to global changes and “modernity.”

COURSE STRUCTURE

It is my hope that everybody in the class will be actively engaged with the material in this course. This will be accomplished in a variety of ways. First, we have structured the course in a way that acknowledges that students have different learning styles. Some students learn by listening, so each class will have some time devoted to lecture. Some students learn visually, so we will often watch short films. Some students learn best by

interacting with others, so we will spend some time having in-class discussions. Second, we have structured the course in a way that allows for more active learning and more interaction with the instructor and other students in the class. For example, during class, you will often be asked to respond to questions by using a “clicker.” And, finally, we strongly encourage you to take the materials for this course as a starting point for learning more on your own.

TEXTBOOKS, READINGS AND CLASS TECHNOLOGY

- **Textbook.** The primary text for this class is Barbara Miller’s *Cultural Anthropology in a Globalizing World*. The textbook introduces some of the key concepts and theories in cultural anthropology, in addition to providing short case studies on different cultures, critical thinking questions, and stories about real anthropologists. The material in the textbook provides the “big picture” while the articles, films and class discussions tend to focus on particular issues and case studies.
- **Additional Reading Materials.** The textbook will be supplemented by a number of short articles. All of the readings will be available for download at no additional cost. All of these readings will be available as electronic files posted on the elearning.tamu.edu site for this course. Alternatively, you can purchase a complete set of the readings in a spiral binder from Notes-n-Quotes. Notes-n-Quotes is located at 701 W. University Drive. All of the articles are required reading, but the purchase of the reader is optional.
- **CPS Responder (“Clicker”).** We will be frequently use “clickers” in this class. The purpose of the clicker is to allow students to be more active learners and to let instructors know whether or not students understand the material. The clicker gives you an opportunity to participate actively during each class meeting rather than to just sit passively through a 75-minute lecture.

The clicker is an individual hand-held device – similar to a remote control – that allows each student to respond to questions that the instructor asks during class. The clicker is battery-powered and transmits a radio frequency. Our classroom is equipped with a receiver that will collect everybody’s clicker responses, and instantly display graphs of the answers. Throughout the semester, we will use the clickers in a variety of ways: to measure attitudes and opinions, to test your understanding of concepts, to measure comprehension of reading and lecture materials, to apply principles to real life situations, and to initiate classroom discussions. The clickers also ensure that you are attending class and paying attention, but that is not their primary purpose! It is my hope that the use of clickers will increase your interest in the subject and your enjoyment of this class.

Your clicker responses will be recorded as your class participation grade for this course (which is 20% of the final grade). You are expected to participate in every class, and it is **essential that you bring your clicker to class every day**. You should also carry a spare set of batteries. Please note that using another student’s

clicker in this course is a violation of academic integrity and will be handled accordingly.

Registering your Clicker. If you don't already have a clicker from a previous TAMU course, you can purchase a new one at a local bookstore for \$24. After you buy the Clicker, you need to register your clicker and pay an access fee so that it can be used with this course. The access fee is \$13 per semester. To do this, you go to Blackboard VISTA website (elearning.tamu.edu), click on the link for this class (ANTH210), and then click "Register Clicker." At this point, you will have to enter payment information in order to register the clicker. You need to purchase and register your clicker before class on Tuesday, September 8th. You should bring your clicker to class on that day prepared to participate. We will spend some time that day practicing how to use the clickers.

- **MyAnthroLab.** Your textbook purchase comes with a subscription to MyAnthroLab, an interactive online resource that is intended to supplement the textbook. MyAnthroLab combines an electronic copy of the textbook, practice tests, video supplements, additional readings, information on careers in anthropology, links to helpful websites, and more. Some aspects of MyAnthroLab will be required for this course (especially for the alternative assignments), while others are optional. This is a great resource for students interested in anthropology, and you are encouraged to explore the content further on your own.
- **eLearning.** Elearning.com is an additional resource for this course. Important course materials (including a copy of the syllabus and all study guides) and grades will be posted on this site. In addition, the site will provide a venue for electronic discussions on course topics.

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"Anthropologists! Anthropologists!"

ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMS

- ***Exams (60% of final grade; 20% per exam).*** This course will have two midterm exams and a final. Each exam will be identical in format and be equally weighted at 20% of your course grade. The exams will use standardized exam questions, such as multiple-choice, true-false, and matching questions. The exam questions will cover all material presented in the readings, films, lectures and class discussions. The exam questions will not be limited to factual recall questions; for many questions, you will be asked to think critically about the material. The material covered for each exam will be limited to “new” material that has not yet been covered on an exam. In other words, the final exam is not a comprehensive exam. For each exam, you will need to bring your own scantron form (Form O-101607) to class.

Alternative Class Assignments (20%). You will be asked to complete two short assignments for this class. Most of these assignments will be a 2-3 page written paper, a five minute class presentation, a poster presentation, or the equivalent. The term “alternative class assignment” is used in recognition of the fact that students learn in different ways. We encourage you to be creative! If you do decide on a more interactive or creative option as a means of delivering your work, please advise Dr. Werner or Catharina in advance so that they can schedule time in class to showcase your efforts. Due to the number of students in this class, the deadlines for these assignments will be staggered. By the end of the second week of class, you will be asked to commit to two deadlines (one during the first half of the semester, and one during the second half of the semester). All written papers will be turned in through WebCt/elearning.com.

For each assignment, you will have a choice of (a) assignment type; (b) assignment format; and (c) assignment deadline. A detailed assignment information sheet is available on WebCT.

- ***Participation and Attendance (20%).*** Participation and attendance is an important part of this class. The participation/attendance component of your grade will be assessed through the use of your clicker. The clicker will be used at least once during every class meeting (beginning on September 8th). In some cases, you will receive full credit for participation regardless of your answer, but in some cases, the questions will serve as quizzes and you will only receive partial credit for a wrong answer. If you forget your clicker or you are unable to attend a class meeting, you will not receive any participation credit for that particular day. However, this will not count against you if it only happens a few times, as the clicker-based participation grade will be adjusted in a way that allows each student to miss up to three class meetings without any penalty. (If you have excused absences for more than a total of three days, please contact the instructor.) If you attend all classes, your lowest three scores will be dropped.

GRADES

Graded Item	Date	Percentage of Grade
Midterm Exam One	October 1st	20%
Midterm Exam Two	November 5th	20%
Final Exam	December 15 th (1-3 pm)	20%
Alternative Assignment One	Varies; you need to sign up for assignment deadline	10%
Alternative Assignment Two	Varies; you need to sign up for assignment deadline	10%
Participation/Attendance	Almost every class meeting	20%
	TOTAL	100%

Final grades will be based on the following scale:

- A = 89.5 – 100
- B = 79.5 - 89.4
- C = 69.5 – 79.4
- D = 64.5 – 69.4
- F = 64.4 and below

COURSE POLICIES

- **Academic Dishonesty.** All cases of plagiarism and cheating will be handled according to university policies. Using another student's CPS Responder in an attempt to earn points for that student or allowing another student to use your CPS Responder in an attempt to earn points for you is considered cheating. If you are caught plagiarizing or cheating, you will automatically receive a zero for the assignment (no makeups) and you may receive an F for the class. As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one's own ideas, words, writings, etc., which belong to another. In accordance with the definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you should have the permission of the person. Plagiarism is one of the worst academic sins, for the plagiarist destroys trust among colleagues without which research cannot be safely communicated. If you have any questions regarding plagiarism, please consult the latest issue of the Texas A&M University Student Rules, under the section "Scholastic Dishonesty."
- **Absences and Makeup Work.** If you miss class, it is your responsibility to catch up with the notes and announcements. Please note that I do not provide students with copies of the class notes or the Powerpoint slides. The participation/attendance grade allows for up to three absences, so there is no need to inform the instructor that you will not be able to attend a regular class meeting. If you do have university-excused absences for more than three class meetings, please inform the instructor or the teaching assistant.
- **Makeup Exams.** If you have a university-excused absence for an exam, you may

schedule a makeup. Makeup exams should be arranged in advance if at all possible. All makeup exams will consist of several short essay questions.

- **Late Papers.** For the alternative assignments, you are committed to the due dates that you sign up for. All papers should be submitted to Turnitin.com by midnight on the due date. Late papers will be penalized two points for each weekday late. If the paper is more than 25 days late, you may receive up to half the total points for the assignment.
- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities are guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. Special accommodations can be made for students with disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation, please contact the Office of Support Services for Students with Disabilities (Room 126, Student Services Building, 845-1637).

Ground Rules (aka Classroom Etiquette). This is a large class. We ask that you take the following steps to show respect for others in the class. First, throughout the course, you are likely to encounter new ideas through the course materials, and you will learn to look at old ideas in new ways. We will be reading and discussing material that may challenge the way you think about things, both academically and personally. We need to remain open-minded and listen to one another; above all, it is crucial to maintain respect in all classroom interactions. Second, it is important that you show respect to others by arriving to class on time and by turning off all cellphones, pagers, ipods and other communication devices. You have my permission to use a voice recorder or a laptop to take notes, but you will lose this right if you use a laptop to browse the internet during class.

AND A LITTLE ADVICE

- **Be Prepared.** To be successful, you need to read assigned materials carefully before each class meeting, pay attention and take notes during class, and contribute to class discussions.
- **Taking Notes During Class.** You should take notes during each class meeting. Learning to be a critical thinker includes learning how to take effective notes. Don't just write down what is said in class and what is presented on a Powerpoint slide. Consider writing down your thoughts on the subject as well as any questions that you have about the material.
- **Take Advantage of Supplementary Study Materials.** MyAnthroLab contains a variety of supplementary materials for this course. These materials include flashcards and quizzes that you can use to learn the basic concepts; supplementary

videos and articles; etc. You are encouraged to use these materials to enhance your learning experience.

- ***Learning to Think Critically.*** In this class, you are encouraged to think critically about the course materials. In other words, think about what you are reading and learning in class and learn to ask the following questions:
 - ❖ *What is being said?* What is the argument being put forward?
 - ❖ *Who is conveying the message?* What is their cultural position and background?
 - ❖ *When was it written?* Is the argument shaped by a particular historical moment? How would the argument differ if written during a different time?
 - ❖ *Why is the message being conveyed?* Does the author have an agenda? If so, what is it?
 - ❖ *What is the evidence?* What kinds of evidence and data is used to make an argument? Does the evidence support the argument? Is the evidence sufficient?
 - ❖ *Is the argument sound?*

- ***Utilize Office Hours.*** Office hours provide a regular time when you can expect us to be available for discussion of individual concerns. Our office hours are listed above. Meetings by appointment may also be arranged. If you are having problems understanding the material or you would like to talk about the course assignments, you may talk to either myself or Catharina. If you have questions about the technology used in this course, you should talk to Catharina.

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTORS

- ***Cynthia Werner.*** After finishing high school in The Woodlands, Texas, Professor Werner received her B.A. (1989) in Political Science from Texas Christian University, and M.A. (1993) and Ph.D. (1997) in Anthropology from Indiana University. Professor Werner is a cultural anthropologist who specializes in the region of Central Asia. Most of her research has been conducted in post-Soviet Kazakhstan, where she has studied rural survival strategies, gift exchange, bazaar merchants, bride kidnapping, the impact of nuclear testing, and international tourism development. Most recently, she has been conducting research in western Mongolia on the transnational migration of Mongolian Kazakhs to Kazakhstan.

- ***Catharina Laporte.*** After many years travelling the world with a backpack and minimal funds, and a successful, but personally unrewarding, career in the offshore industry as an IT manager, Catharina returned to school to find her passion; that passion she discovered is people and their cultures. Catharina is currently a Cultural Anthropology Ph.D. Student with specific interests in Evolutionary Anthropology, Anthropology of Religion and teaching best practices.

COURSE OUTLINE

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC & ASSIGNMENTS	READINGS
Week 1	9/1	Introduction to the Course	
	9/3	Defining Culture and Cultural Anthropology	Miller, p. 1-16 Kluckhohn article Miner article
Week 2	9/8	Anthropology and Cultural Relativism	Miller, p. 16-25 Fluehr-Lobban article Lee article
	9/10	What Do Cultural Anthropologists Do? Slides: Fieldwork in Kazakhstan & Mongolia	Miller, p. 27-47 Gmelch article
Week 3	9/15	Religion	Miller, pp. 225-230, and 235-246 Audio (NPR program on 'After Tsunami')
	9/17	Ritual & Divination	Miller, pp. 231-235 Moore article
Week 4	9/22	Modes of Production	Miller, p. 49-61 Lee article Diamond article
	9/24	Consumption & Exchange	Miller, p. 62-71 Harris article Counts article
Week 5	9/29	Globalization	Miller, p. 71-77 Smith article Bestor article
	10/1	MIDTERM EXAM ONE	
Week 6	10/6	Reproduction, Culture & Fertility	Miller, p. 79-92 Scheper-Hughes article
	10/8	Life Cycle Transitions and the Aging Process	Miller, p. 92-103 Kratz article
Week 7	10/13	Disease, Illness, and Healing	Miller, p. 105-120 Finerman article
	10/15	Medical Anthropology	Miller, p. 120-127 Farmer & Kleinman article Berlin & Fowkes article

Week 8	10/20	Kinship and Domestic Life	Miller, p. 131-153 Goldstein article
	10/22	Marriage, Households & Families	Nanda article Kilbride article
Week 9	10/27	Social Construction of Gender	Shostak article Fernea & Fernea article
	10/29	Social Construction of Race	Miller, p. 164-175 Tatum article AAA Statement McIntosh article
Week 10	11/3	Race, Ethnicity & Nationalism	Miller, p. 187-195 Kakar article Oberschall article
	11/5	MIDTERM EXAM TWO	
Week 11	11/10	Expressive Culture	Miller, p. 250-258 Condry Article
	11/12	Leisure and Tourism	Miller, p. 258-267 Sweet article
Week 12	11/17	Migration	Miller, p. 271-280 Ehrenreich & Hochschild article
	11/19	Migration	Miller, p. 280-291 Shandy article
Week 13	11/24	Development	Miller, p. 293-305 Bodley article Brain article
	11/26	<i>Thanksgiving Holiday – No Class</i>	
Week 14	12/1	Development/Advocacy/Cultural Survival	Miller, p. 306-317 McIntosh & Maybury-Lewis article
	12/3	Communication	Miller, p. 200-223 Basso article Tannen article
Week 15	12/8	<i>Redefined Day - Last Day Class Meets</i> American Dialects; Film: <i>American Tongues</i> Careers in Anthropology	Omohundro article
	12/15	FINAL EXAM – 1-3 pm	

