Introduction to Cultural/Social Anthropology  
ANTH 104/Fall 2011/ Mon. & Thurs. 11:10-12:20 pm /PNE 339

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COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course will introduce you to socio-cultural anthropology. We begin by considering some of the historical foundations of the discipline and then follow several important strands of its attempts to understand culture. We will explore ethnography, the research method and genre of writing that defines the discipline. Reading several ethnographic monographs, we will not only analyze what they have to tell us about cultural diversity, but also to critically assess the ethics of their production, their claims to authority, and their theoretical innovations. We will apply similar analyses to the non-fiction films which we will view in class. While we identify the workings of culture not only in distant locations, but also right here at home, we will also consider the limits and problems of the “culture concept”. I hope that this course inspires many of you to become anthropology majors, and grants each of you an anthropological perspective on your own life.

COURSE TEXTS
These texts are available for purchase in the bookstore. One copy of each is also on reserve at Clapp Library. In addition to these books, required readings marked with an R in the Course Schedule below are available for download on the course’s Sakai website under the ‘Resources’ tab. See https://sakai.wellesley.edu.


REQUIREMENTS
(1) Class Participation: (10% of your grade). This is an intensive course that requires full participation from every student. You are required to read all the assigned material before class, and to demonstrate thoughtful consideration of the readings in class discussions. You must actively participate in class activities and discussions, helping to foster an intellectual and respectful classroom atmosphere. If not explained by a doctor’s note or a notification of a legitimate religious observance or family emergency, each absence will result in a 2-point reduction in your participation grade.

(2) Reading Responses: (15% of your final grade). Post one thoughtful, eloquently written, 2-4 paragraph reading response to the Discussion Forum on the course’s Sakai web site by 10:00 p.m. the night before each class meeting (except for days for which no readings are assigned, exam days, and days when papers are due, when no reading responses
are due). These responses have two parts: I. In 1-2 paragraphs, articulate the key point(s) of the reading(s) in your own words. II. In 1-2 paragraphs, assess whether/how these points resonate with your own experiences. This is the place in which to connect anthropological theory and/or ethnography of foreign cultures to your life. Always come to class with a printout of your reading response, and prepared to discuss it.

(3) **Two Exams:** The exams will include material covered in class, readings, and films. The Midterm Exam (20% of your final grade) will be given in class on Mon. Oct. 24. The Final Exam (25% of your final grade) will be take-home. It will be handed out Mon. Dec. 5 and **due before 5:00 Friday Dec. 9.**

(4) **Two Papers:** More detail on each of these assignments will be conveyed later.

1. (10% of your final grade **Due Mon. Oct. 3.** A 3-4 paged review of *Trobriand Cricket,* assessing the film in relation to Annette Weiner’s ethnography of the Trobrianders.)


**Guidelines/Regulations**

• Laptops, iPads/Pods, cell phones, and other electronic devices may NOT be used in the classroom. All electronic devices must be switched off for the duration of class (not just silenced).

• If dissatisfied with your grade on one of the two papers, you may rewrite it, as long as you hand in the revised paper no more than two weeks after the original graded paper has been returned to you. You may only rewrite one paper (not both). The grade for the revised paper will be your final grade for the assignment; that is, even if the revised paper is of inferior quality to the original, its grade will count rather than the original grade.

• If not explained by a doctor’s note or a notification of a legitimate religious observance or family emergency, each absence will result in a 2-point reduction in your participation grade.

• Late work will not be accepted, nor will I grant extensions or incompletes; there is no January Option for this course.

• Students must abide by the Wellesley Honor Code. Plagiarism will be adjudicated by the Wellesley Honor Code Council. Please be aware that improper citation can constitute plagiarism. Take care to learn and follow the proper citation practices. See Wellesley’s Citation 101 at [www.wellesley.edu/GeneralJudiciary/citation101.html](http://www.wellesley.edu/GeneralJudiciary/citation101.html)

• Papers will be graded according to the Wellesley College Writing Program’s standards.

• Students with disabilities who require disability-related accommodations are encouraged to work with Jim Wice, the Director of Disability Services. Find Jim on the third floor of Clapp Library. If you have a disability, including a learning disability, that is undocumented, Jim will arrange for you to be tested, and for appropriate accommodations to be made.
Course Schedule

Definitions, Problematics

2. Wed Sept. 7  The Classic Culture Concept
Readings:
Raymond Williams, “Culture,” in *Keywords* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 87-93. R

The Anglo-American Tradition: Polygenism, Primitivism, and “Cultures”

3. Thurs. Sept. 8  Readings:


4. Mon. Sept. 12  Readings:


Recommended:
Claudia Roth Pierpont, “The Measures of America”, *New Yorker* March 8, 2004 R

Fieldwork Paradigms

5. Thurs. Sept. 15  Reading:


6. Mon. Sept. 19  Reading:
7. Thurs. Sept. 22  
Readings:  
Annette Weiner, *The Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea*, chs. 4, 5, 7

8. Mon. Sept. 26  
Readings:  


Screening:  
*Trobriand Cricket*, dir. Gary Kildea, 1975, 52 min.

Critiques: Writing and Writing Against Culture

9. Thurs Sept. 29  
Readings:  


Language, Culture and Change

10. Mon. Oct. 3  
**Review of *Trobriand Cricket* due.**

Reading:  

Recommended Reading  

11. Thurs. Oct. 6  
Readings:  


Readings:  
Nancy Ries, *Russian Talk: Culture and Conversation during Perestroika*, chapters 1, 2 and 3.
**Reading:**  
Nancy Ries, *Russian Talk: Culture and Conversation during Perestroika*, ch. 4-end.  

**Screening:**  
*My Perestroika*, 88 min., Robin Hessman, 2010

Finish *My Perestroika*  
Midterm Review

**In-Class Midterm**

16. Thurs. Oct. 27  
**Readings:**  


17. Mon. Oct. 31  
**Readings:**  
American Anthropological Association (AAA) statement on ‘race’  
[http://www.aaanet.org/stmts/racepp.htm](http://www.aaanet.org/stmts/racepp.htm)


**Screening:**  

18. Thurs. Nov. 3  
**Reading:**  

19. Mon. Nov. 7  
**Reading:**  

20. Thurs. Nov. 10  
**Reading:**

**Kinship and Reproduction Reconsidered**


*Recommended:*


*Screening:*
Nicole Opper, dir., *Off and Running: An American Coming of Age Story*, 75 min., 2009.

**Globalization**

23. Mon. Nov. 21 *Reading:*


**Thurs. Nov. 24** *NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING BREAK*

**The Return of the “Culture Concept”**

24. Mon. Nov. 28 *Readings:*


26. Mon. Dec. 5  Wrap Up/Review
  **Take-home Finals handed out at end of class.

Friday Dec. 9  **Take-home Finals due before 5:00.