Introduction to Cultural and Social Anthropology

Course Description

Anthropology 104 provides the basic introduction to the discipline of anthropology and its major sub-fields: social/cultural anthropology, physical/biological anthropology, linguistic anthropology and archaeology. The course emphasizes the human physical and cultural evolution from human origins to the rise of complex societies. Through an overview of the fossil record of our hominid ancestors, we will cover the basic principles of evolutionary theory, and the interpretation of paleontological and archaeological evidence. We will proceed with the agricultural Neolithic revolution as an important stage in socio-cultural evolution. We will then examine the development and increase in complexity of human institutions including kinship, marriage, economic exchange and religion, the rise of capitalism and its consequences - colonialism, racism, exploitation, ecological degradation and the politics of world poverty and the urban underclass.

This course will also critically question some of the more common assumptions we may hold, as individuals, as social and economic beings, or as members of various groups of belonging such as ethnicity, class, religion, etc. Readings, films and lectures are designed in order to provide students with knowledge and an understanding of the diversity of human culture and society in the world. The complex and variant forces underlying human interaction and social life are going to be revealed through the eyes of different anthropologists doing research in and writing about the customs and ways of life in such remote and yet so familiar places, as the Kalahari desert, the Amazonian rain forest, Taiwan, US and the Caribbean. Class participants will familiarize themselves with the standard theoretical and methodological approaches adopted by anthropologists and the exceptional descriptions they provide about the evolution of humans as a biological species and as social beings. Throughout the semester, we will address issues of family and kinship organization, politics and economics, as well as individual and social adaptations as they occurred in different places around the world in response to the world economic system and colonization. In this way, course participants might gain new and helpful conceptual tools to re-interpret human kind by themselves and understand how our actions may influence those culturally different people with whom we share the resources of this earth.
**Course Requirements**

Attendance is necessary to gain mastery over the material and will be expected of all students. Assigned readings for each session must be completed prior to class. Students should be prepared to raise questions and participate in discussion during our meetings. A premium will be placed on active class participation. A mid-term examination, an oral final examination and a research paper are required. Details about the research paper will be handed out in class.

Final grades will be calculated on the following basis:

- Class participation 20%
- Short paper 10%
- Mid-term 40%
- Final research paper 30%

**Required texts**

The following books have been ordered for this course and can be found in the College Bookstore. The rest of the readings will be posted on e-reserve.

Bourgois, Phillipe *In Search of Respect*
Mintz, Sydney *Sweetness and Power*
Murphy, Robert and Yolanda Murphy *Women of the Forest*
Wolf, Marjorie *The House of Lim*

**Class schedule**

**Monday, January 28**
*Introducing Anthropology*
**Film:** *First Contact*

**Thursday, January 31**
*Practicing anthropology in the age of modernity: Ethnographic methods and theories*
**Read:**
Malinowski, Bronislaw “Introduction” *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (e-reserve)

**Recommended readings**
Geertz, Clifford, “Under the Mosquito Net” (1967) *The New York review of*
Monday, February 4
Humans, nature and culture
Read:
Darwin, Charles “Struggle for Existence” (e-reserve)
Geertz, Clifford “The impact of the concept of culture on the concept of man”
IN The Interpretation of Cultures (e-reserve)

Thursday, February 7
Anthropology job candidate: Adam Van Arsdale
Genes, race and identity.
Read:
Duster, T (2005) "Race and reification in science." Science 307:1050-1051 (e-reserve)

Monday, February 11
Anthropology job candidate: Linda Rehbun
Emotions and romance
Read:

Thursday, February 14
Culture and the individual
Read:
Lesser, Alexander ‘Franz Boas’ (e-reserve)
Mead, Margaret Coming of Age in Samoa (e-reserve)
Monday, February 18
No class, President’s Day

Thursday, February 21
Anthropology job candidate: Nicholas Degenova
"Dialogue and the Possibility of Ethnographic Knowledge"
Read:
Clifford Geertz, “‘From the Native’s Point of View’: On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding” (1971)

Monday, February 25
Anthropology job candidate: Jean-Philippe Belleau
Forest ethnographers and adaptations
Read:
Murphy and Murphy *Women of the Forest*, Chapters 1,2,3
This text is a bit difficult. Students can focus on the ethnographic experience of the author (pp. 285-294 and pp.303-312) and may disregard the theoretical part (pp. 294-303).

On the Munduruku:
http://www.socioambiental.org/pib/epienglish/munduruku/munduruku.shtm
(Please read the nine (9) different pages of this site, from ‘Name and Language’ to ‘Indigenous Organizations’)

Thursday, February 28
Anthropology job candidate: Erich Fox Tree
Read:
Geoffrey Pullum "The Great Eskimo Vocabulary Hoax" (e-reserve)
Whorf "Relation of Habitual Though and Behavior to Language" (from the edited volume *Language, Thought, and Reality*) (e-reserve)
Monday, March 3
Anthropology job candidate: Stephanie Rupp
"China and Africa: Ethnographies of Engagement."
Read:

Thursday, March 6
Continue on Forest peoples
Read:
Murphy and Murphy, Women of the Forest Chapters 4,5,6,7,8,9

Monday, March 10
Farming the earth and family organization
Read:
Algaze, Guillermo “Initial social complexity in Southwestern Asia: The Mesopotamian advantage.” Current Anthropology, 2001 (e-reserve)
Wolf, Marjorie The House of Lim, Chapters 1,2,3,4

Thursday, March 13
Continue on farming and family organization
Read:
Wolf, Marjorie The House of Lim Chapters 5,6,7,8

Monday, March 17
mid-term

Thursday, March 20
Film: Small Happiness

Monday, March 24, no class, spring break

Thursday, March 27, no class, spring break
Monday, March 31
Continue on farming and social organization
Read:
Wolf, Marjorie The House of Lim, Chapters 9,10,11,12

Thursday, April 3
Colonizing Territories, bodies, and souls
Read:
Mintz, Sydney Sweetness and Power, Introduction and Chapter 1

Monday, April 7
Continue on Colonialism
Read:
Mintz, Sydney Sweetness and Power, Chapters 2 and 3

Thursday, April 10
Continue on Colonialism
Read:
Mintz, Sydney Sweetness and Power, Chapter 4

Monday, April 14
Ordering the world nationally: nationalism in a post-colonial world
Read:
Geertz, Clifford “After the Revolution (e-reserve)
Geertz, Clifford “The integrative revolution” (e-reserve)

Thursday, April 17
Continue on nationalism
Read:
Gellner, Ernest Nations and Nationalism

Monday, April 21, no class, Marathon day

Tuesday, April 22
Situating anthropology in a post-modern world
Read:
Philippe Bourgois In Search of Respect, Chapters 1,2,3
Thursday, April 24
Continue on Bourgois In Search of Respect, Chapters 4,5,6

Monday, April 28
Continue on Bourgois In Search of Respect, Chapters 7,8,9

Thursday, May 1 student presentations
Monday, May 5, student presentations

Final papers due Monday, May 19 by 4:30pm
Have a nice summer