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 examination 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 a study of a community of contemporary foragers of the Kalahari Desert, as well as with an examination of 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. Three short quizzes and a final research paper are required. Details about the research paper will be handed out in class.

Final grades will be calculated on the following basis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two short quizzes</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final research paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
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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*
Klein, Richard and Edgar Blake *The Dawn of Human Culture*
Lee, Richard *The Dobe Ju/'Hoansi*
Mintz, Sydney *Sweetness and Power*
Murphy, Robert and Yolanda Murphy *Women of the Forest*
Wolf, Marjorie *The House of Lim*

Tuesday, January 31
Introducing Anthropology
Film: *First Contact*

Friday, February 3
Practicing anthropology in the age of modernity: Ethnographic methods and theories
Read:
Malinowski, Bronislaw “Introduction” *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (e-reserve)
Film: *Bronislaw Malinowski: Off the Veranda*

Tuesday, February 7
Discovering missing links
Read:
Klein and Edgar, *The Dawn on Human Culture*, Chapters 1,2,

Friday, February 10
Continue on human evolution
Read:
Klein and Edgar, *The Dawn of Human Culture*, Chapters 3,4

Tuesday, February 14
Continue on human evolution
Read:
Klein and Edgar, *The Dawn of Human Culture*, Chapters 5,6
Culotta, Elizabeth and Brooks Hanson “First Words” *Science*, 2005 (e-reserve)

Friday, February 17
Continue on human evolution
Read:
Klein and Edgar, *The Dawn of Human Culture*, Chapters 7,8
Tuesday, February 21
First short quiz

Friday, February 24
Foraging and hunting
Read:
Lee, Richard The Dobe Ju/'hoansi, Chapters 1,2,3,4

Tuesday, February 28
Continue on foragers and hunters
Read:
Lee, Richard, The Dobe Ju/'hoansi Chapters 5,6,7,8

Friday, March 3
Continue on foragers and hunters
Read:
Lee, Richard, The Dobe Ju/'hoansi Chapters 9,10,11,12
Film: Naya: The story of a !Kung woman

Tuesday, March 7
Adapting in the Forest
Read:
Murphy and Murphy Women of the Forest, Chapters 1,2,3

Friday, March 10 No class Greater Boston Anthropology Consortium Conference

Tuesday, March 14
 Continue on Forest adaptation
Read:
Murphy and Murphy, Women of the Forest Chapters 4,5,6

Friday, March 17
Continue on Forest adaptation
Read:
Murphy and Murphy, Women of the Forest Chapters 7,8,9
Film: The Feast

Tuesday, March 21 No class, spring break
Friday, March 24 No class, spring break
Tuesday, March 28
Farming the earth
Read:
Algaze, Guillermo “Initial social complexity in Southwestern Asia: The Mesopotamian advantage.” Current Anthropology, 2001
Wolf, Marjorie The House of Lim, Chapters 1,2,3,4

Friday, March 31
Continue on farming
Read:
Wolf, Marjorie The House of Lim Chapters 5,6,7,8

Tuesday April 4
Continue on farming
Read:
Wolf, Marjorie The House of Lim, Chapters 9,10,11,12
Film: Small Happiness

Friday, April 7
Colonizing Territories, bodies, and souls
Read:
Mintz, Sydney Sweetness and Power, Introduction and Chapter 1

Tuesday, April 11
Continue on Colonialism
Read:
Mintz, Sydney Sweetness and Power, Chapters 2 and 3

Friday, April 14
Continue on Colonialism
Read:
Mintz, Sydney Sweetness and Power, Chapter 4

Tuesday, April 18 No class, Monday schedule

Friday, April 21
Second short quiz
Tuesday, April 25
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)

Friday, April 28
Situating anthropology in a post-modern world
Read:
Philippe Bourgois In Search of Respect, Chapters 1,2,3

Tuesday, May 2
Read:
Continue on Bourgois In Search of Respect, Chapters 4,5,6

Friday, May 5
Read:
Continue on Bourgois In Search of Respect, Chapters 7,8,9

Tuesday, May 9
Student presentations

Final papers due Friday, May 19 by 4:00pm