Anthropology 104:  
Introduction to Cultural and Social Anthropology

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 10:30-11:30 AM; Thursdays, 12:30-1:30 PM  
Course Number: ANTH 104  
Course Location: PNE 349, MTH 11:10-12:20 PM

Course Description:

This course introduces students to anthropological ways of thinking about human behavior and society. It explores the biological and cultural origins of modern humans and human society as well as the range of variation in contemporary societies. Students will learn basic core concepts in anthropology including culture, society, fieldwork, difference, exchange, kinship, ritual and cosmology, material production and transnational processes. Course readings will draw from vastly different locations around the globe in order to introduce students to both 1) the great diversity and complexity of cultures and cultural change and 2) anthropological uses of cross-cultural comparison and cultural critique. Ultimately, this course will familiarize students not only with what anthropologists study but also with how we conduct our research and (re)present our analyses, in both written and visual ethnographic genres.

Course Objectives:

1. Heighten student appreciation of cultural diversity and the complexity of social problems in divergent as well as interconnected parts of the world.

2. Broaden student knowledge of what anthropologists study, how they approach their subjects and how they analyze and represent their findings.

3. Develop students’ understanding and mastery of foundational concepts and analytical frameworks in social and cultural anthropology.

4. Sharpen students’ critical listening, reading and writing skills, particularly their ability to grasp, articulate, synthesize and challenge key arguments in course readings, lectures and discussions.

5. Hone students’ ability to apply anthropological knowledge and analytical skills to issues of contemporary relevance.
Prerequisites:

There are no prerequisites for this course. Students do not need any background in anthropology to do well in this course. I will provide basic historical and social context for all topics we address in class sessions. However, while students do not need any specialized background to excel in this course, they are expected to keep up with current events (e.g. reading major news sources like the *New York Times*) during the semester as well as look reflexively at their own personal histories and surroundings in order to enrich class discussions and assignments. Intellectual curiosity and critical thinking are valued and will be rewarded.

Required Readings: All books are available for purchase at the Wellesley College Bookstore. They are also on reserve at the Knapp Center in Clapp Library.

- Jonathan Marks, *What It Means To Be 98% Chimpanzee*
- Annette Weiner, *The Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea*
- Barbara Myerhoff, *Number Our Days*
- Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*
- Paul Farmer, *AIDS and Accusations*
- Selected Articles on E-Reserve and in Firstclass subconference, “ANTH 104-Online Links.”

**NOTE on this course’s online conference:** All students enrolled will automatically have “ANTH 104” as a Firstclass conference on their desktop. You must regularly check this online conference for weekly readings, key terms, course notices and assignments.

Course Requirements:

This course will consist of both lecture and discussion with the expectation that students come to class ready with questions and comments about the assigned readings and key concepts for each week. Students also need to be prepared to draw on course materials to critically discuss in-class screenings of films and presentations of cultural artifacts as well as for small group work, which will be a recurring feature of this course. For this reason, class attendance and participation are essential. You will have one permissible skip day (no questions asked) and beyond that, each unexcused absence will cost you 1 point from your final total of 100. Excessive tardiness (10 minutes or more late to class) will also cost you 1/2 a point from your final grade. As far as participation, you will be expected not only to contribute comments and questions in class but also to post additional thoughts and concerns online via our Firstclass course conference. Particularly, I encourage you to share your reactions and questions about weekly readings prior to our discussions of them in our Monday and Thursday sessions. Evaluation of participation
will be based on how engaged you are both in our class sessions and online in our Firstclass course conference.

Besides active engagement, there will be four writing assignments during the semester:

1) A short take-home exam concerning key concepts in Section I of this course;
2) A short paper (5-7 pages) applying anthropological analysis to a contemporary case study on “race” (materials will be provided by instructor) in Week 8;
3) An ethnographic exercise in which students examine a ritual event (e.g. Thanksgiving) and write up their analysis (5-7 pages) at the end of Week 13;
4) For the final exam, students will be asked to demonstrate their grasp of course material by writing a research proposal (8-12 pages) for studying a specific contemporary problem from an anthropologist’s perspective. Students will be given a choice of assigned topics for this exercise or they may choose a current topic of their own with the approval of the instructor.

More details on all assignments will be posted to the Firstclass subconference, ANTH 104-Assignments, as deadlines for each assignment approaches. I will also post a specific guide to grading standards for this course online in ANTH 104-Syllabus/Policies.

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<tr>
<th>Course Evaluation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation and engaged class participation – 10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment #1: Identifying Key Concepts – 20%</td>
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<td>Assignment #2: Case Study on Race – 20%</td>
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<td>Assignment #3: Ethnographic Exercise – 20%</td>
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<td>Final Assignment: Anthropological Research Proposal – 30%</td>
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Course Policies and Protocol:

All students are expected to abide by the Wellesley Honor Code. While students are encouraged to work collaboratively with each other, you are expected to develop original arguments in your written assignments and cite properly when drawing on the ideas of others (including from class lectures and discussions). A more detailed guide on proper citations for this course will be posted online as assignment deadlines approach. **Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any incident of dishonest work will be immediately reported to your class dean and advisor.**

Unless you have prior permission and verifiable reasons for missing deadlines for assignments, late work will be docked half a grade per day past the formal deadline. For instance, if you are one day late, your maximum grade will be A- for that assignment. After two days, the maximum grade will be B+ and so forth.
The process for discussing or contesting a grade for a particular assignment is as follows:

1. Students must wait at least 24 hours to reflect and review their assignment and the instructor’s comments before coming to discuss a grade.
2. After 24 hours, if the student still wants to contest a grade, they must write and submit a one-page explanation of why they deserve a different mark on their assignment.
3. The instructor will then meet with the student to discuss possible options for working towards a better grade in the course.

Regarding general class protocol—students are expected to come to class on time and engage in open and respectful discussion with each other and the instructor. Make sure you turn off your cell phones and other disruptive electronic devices before the start of class.

**Course Schedule by Topic:**

**I. Introduction: Studying Selves & Others**
Session 1: Thursday, 9/8/05

**II. Take One: “Culture” as Analytic Lens**
Session 2: Monday, 9/12/05

Session 3: Thursday, 9/15/05
- Clifford Geertz, “Thick Description,” pp. 531-552

**III. Take Two: The “Social” as Structure and Function**
Session 4: Monday, 9/19/05
- Emile Durkheim, “Rules for the Explanation of Social Facts,” pp. 238-245 (skim the rest)

Session 5: Thursday, 9/22/05
- Bronislaw Malinowski, “The Subject, Method and Scope of This Inquiry,” in *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, pp. 4-13, 17-25

**IV. From Armchair to Fieldwork**
Session 6: Monday, 9/26/05
• Paul Rabinow, “Ali: An Insider’s Outsider,” in Reflections on Fieldwork in Morrocco, pp. 31-49

Session 7: Thursday, 9/29/05
• Roger Sanjek, “A Vocabulary for Fieldnotes,” pp. 92-121

NOTE: Short paper assignment #1 (key concepts) will be distributed online this week and must be posted in the ANTH 104 online drop box by next Thursday, 10 AM, 10/06/05.

V. Theorizing Difference: Anthropological Interventions on “Race”

Part One: Human/Non-Human Boundaries
Session 8: Monday, 10/3/05
• Begin reading Jonathan Marks, What it Means to be 98% Chimpanzee, Ch. 1-3, pp. 7-71

Session 9: Thursday, 10/6/05
• Continue reading Marks

Part Two: Making Nature, Making Culture
No class on Monday, 10/10/05 (Fall Break)
• Continue reading Marks, Ch. 4 and 7, pp. 72-99, 159-179

Session 10: Thursday, 10/13/05
• Hugh Raffles, “In the Flow of Becoming,” in In Amazonia: A Natural History, pp. 44-74
• In-Class Screening: Race: The Power of An Illusion, part 1 (California Newsreel, 2003)

NOTE: Short paper assignment #2 (Case Study on “Race”) will be distributed online this week and must be posted in the ANTH 104 online drop box by Monday, 10 AM, 10/24/05.

VI. Exchange, Value and Material Culture
Part One: Against Homo Economicus? The Gift, the Kula and the Potlatch
Session 11: Monday, 10/17/05
• Marcel Mauss—“Gifts and Return Gifts” in High Points in Anthropology, pp. 266-271
• Claude Levi-Strauss—“The Writing Lesson” in Tristes Tropiques, pp. 294-304
• Begin reading Annette Weiner—The Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea, Ch. 1-2 (skim)
Session 12: Thursday, 10/20/05
- Continue reading Weiner, Ch. 2 and 9, pp. 33-50, 139-158
- In-Class Screening: *Trobriander Cricket* (excerpt)

Part Two: Cultures of Consumption
Session 13: Monday, 10/24/05
- Daniel Miller—“Making Love in Supermarkets” in *A Theory of Shopping*
- Robin Nagle—“Why We Love to Hate San Men”
- In-Class Screening: *In and Out of Africa*

VII. Gender, Kinship and Relatedness
Session 14: Thursday, 10/27/05
- Continue reading Weiner, Ch. 3-5, pp. 51-96

Session 15: Monday, 10/31/05
- Continue reading Weiner, Ch. 6-8, pp. 97-138
- Kath Weston—“Exiles from Kinship” in *Families We Choose*, pp. 21-41

VIII. Cosmology and Ritual Life
Session 16: Thursday, 11/3/05
- Continue reading Weiner, Ch. 10, pp. 159-168
- **Begin reading Barbara Myerhoff, *Number Our Days*, Ch. 1-2, pp. 1-78**

Session 17: Monday, 11/7/05
- Continue reading Myerhoff, Ch. 3-4, pp. 79-152

Session 18: Thursday, 11/10/05
- Continue reading Myerhoff, Ch. 5-6, pp. 153-231

Session 19: Monday, 11/14/05
- Continue reading Myerhoff, Ch. 7, Epilogue and Afterword, pp. 232-282
- In-Class Screening: *Number Our Days* and *In Her Own Time*

IX. Space, Time and the Organization of Power
Session 20: Thursday, 11/17/05
- **Begin reading Sidney Mintz—*Sweetness and Power*, Ch. 1-2, pp. 3-73, skim Introduction (xv-xxx)**

**NOTE:** Assignment #3 (ethnographic analysis) will be distributed online this week and must be posted in the ANTH 104 online drop box by Thursday, 10 AM, 12/1/05.

Session 21: Monday, 11/21/05
- Continue reading Mintz, Ch. 3, pp. 74-150

No class on Thursday, 11/24/05 (Thanksgiving)
• Continue reading Mintz, Ch. 4, pp. 151-186, skim Ch. 5, pp. 187-214

Session 22: Monday, 11/28/05
• Michael Taussig, “Culture of Terror—Space of Death: Roger Casement’s Putomayo Report and the Explanation of Torture,” in Colonialism and Culture, pp. 241-279
• In-Class Screening: Women on the Global Assembly Line

X. Transgressing Boundaries: Haiti and the Globalization of AIDS
Session 23: Thursday, 12/1/05

NOTE: Final Paper Assignment (research proposal) will be distributed online this week and must be posted in the ANTH 104 online drop box by the end of the exam period on Thursday, 4:30 PM, 12/22/05.

Session 24: Monday, 12/5/05
• Continue reading Farmer, Part II, pp. 59-120

Session 25: Thursday, 12/8/05
• Continue reading Farmer, Part III, pp. 121-150, Ch. 17, pp. 177-190

NOTE: Students who want to choose their own topics for the Final Paper must have the instructor’s approval by this class session.

Session 26: Monday, 12/12/05
• Finish Farmer, Part V, pp. 193-264
• Final thoughts on course

Remember that Final Papers are due at the end of the exam period at 4:30 PM on Thursday, 12/22/05!
WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS FOR ANTH 104:

WEEK 1:
Read for Session 1

WEEK 2:
Read for Sessions 2 and 3

WEEK 3:
Read for Sessions 4 and 5

WEEK 4:
Read for Sessions 6 and 7
Instructions for Assignment #1 (key concepts) will be distributed online.

WEEK 5:
Read for Sessions 8 and 9
Assignment #1 is due by 10 AM on Thursday, 10/6/05.

WEEK 6:
Read over Fall Break and for Session 10
Instructions for Assignment #2 (case study on “race”) will be distributed online.

WEEK 7:
Read for Sessions 11 and 12

WEEK 8:
Read for Sessions 13 and 14
Assignment #2 is due by 10 AM on Monday, 10/24/05.

WEEK 9:
Read for Sessions 15 and 16

WEEK 10:
Read for Sessions 17 and 18

WEEK 11:
Read for Sessions 19 and 20
Instructions for Assignment #3 (ethnographic analysis) will be distributed online.

WEEK 12:
Read for Sessions 21 and over Thanksgiving Break

WEEK 13:
Read for Sessions 22 and 23
Instructions for Final Paper (research proposal) will be distributed online.
Assignment #3 is due by 10 AM on Thursday, 12/1/05.

WEEK 14:
Read for Sessions 24 and 25
Students choosing their own topics for the final paper must have instructor’s approval by Thursday, 12/8/05.

WEEK 15:
Read for Session 26
Final Paper is due at 4:30 PM on Thursday, 12/22/05.