What does it mean to be human? How do we adapt to, interpret, and transform our physical, social and spiritual environments? How do these processes differ among other peoples and societies? Anthropology has been characterized as the discipline that makes the familiar exotic and the exotic familiar. By studying the central issues and approaches of anthropology, in this course you will develop your critical understanding of Homo sapiens sapiens, the culture-bearing creature. While this course will introduce you to the major sub-fields of anthropology, we will focus primarily on cultural anthropology, that is, the study of how peoples and societies create and utilize their own unique cultural systems in the mediation of their physical, social and spiritual environments.

In addition to studying the central concepts in cultural anthropology, we will focus on ethnography, the research approach and writing genre specific to cultural anthropology. Through our reading of ethnography and your own ethnographic project, you will actively engage in “doing” cultural anthropology.

Course Requirements

Readings:
All the readings listed on the syllabus are required. You are responsible for completing the readings before coming to class on the day for which they are assigned.

Short exercises, in-class writings, etc.:
There are several short assignments that you will complete outside of class. Additionally, you occasionally will be asked to write some in-class response papers to readings, class discussions or films. Such assignments are designed to actively engage in the concepts from our studies and hone your skills in a way that will enhance your own understandings and your on-going work on your ethnographic project.

Class Participation:
You will be expected to actively participate in class discussions. Discussions will provide the opportunity to “unpack” the readings, clarify and critically debate the issues that we are studying. Thus, it is important to complete the assigned readings before class and be ready to talk about them by the time you get to class.

Ethnographic Project:
Students will develop an ethnographic project in the course of the first several weeks that relates to performance. An ethnographic project is the critical study of a social phenomenon. The “social phenomena” might be defined by some combination of identifying/able group, circumscribed social space, or activity whose discrete characteristics are observable and socially meaningful. Gathering information for an ethnographic project generally comes from observation and participation. This is followed up by critical analyses of observations, making use of the theoretical approaches discussed in the readings and in class.

Your project may involve work in which you are already engaged or, alternatively, it may provide you with an excuse to involve yourself in a topic, group or setting that you find compelling and have wanted to find out more about. Past successful ethnographies have included the culture of volunteering, performative interactions between residents on the edges of radically different adjacent neighborhoods, the scene at a local hangout, the use of religious belief in study habits, symbolic meaning at hockey events, the cultural process of “coming out,” poetry readings as ritual activities, the use of storytelling in everyday interaction, a comparison of how men and women college students daydream about future, ritual process and the cotillion, the effects of afterschool jobs on highschool students’ worldviews, the followers of a local band, ballroom dancing…. The possibilities are endless. There are three basic restrictions. It must be legal, you must have open access to it on a regular basis during the semester, and it may not focus on a fraternity or sorority – although it may involve outwardly-focused activities in which these groups involve themselves.

This project is meant to actively develop your critical understanding of culture – both your own and others.’ The key is for you to design a project that you are genuinely interested in and that will be amenable to analyses. You will receive guidance and feedback along the way both from me and your ethnographic workgroup.

Grading:
Class Participation 15%
Exercises 20%
Midterm Exam  15%
Final Exam        20%
Ethnographic Project  30%
Total 100%

You must complete all assignments to pass the course. Late assignments will not be accepted without prior permission. If you must reschedule for religious or personal reasons, you must make arrangements with me in advance. Please note: attendance and participation in discussion counts for 15% of your grade. Thus, without regularly participating in discussion, the very highest grade you can earn is a “B”.

Textbooks


Coursepack Readings

Robert Root-Bernstein and Donald L. McEachron

Bohannan, Paul J.
Diamond, Norma

Feld, Steven
The Boy Who Became a Muni Bird, Chapter 1, from Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and song in Kaluli Expression by Steven Feld, 1982, pp.20-43.

Geertz, Clifford
The Interpretation of Cultures, Chapter 1, 1973, pp. 3-30.

Isaac, Glynn

Limón, José E.
Carne, Carnales, and the Carnavalesque, Chapter six, from Dancing with the Devil: Society and Cultural Poetics in Mexican-American South Texas, by José E. Limón, 1994, pp. 123-140.

Marks, Jonathan
Black, White, Other, from Natural History, December, 1994, pp. 32-35.

Robertson, Jennifer

Sahlins, Marshall D.

Stone, Linda

Turner, Victor
Liminality and Communitas: Form and Attributes of Rites of Passage, Chapter 3, from The Ritual Process by Victor Turner, 1969, pp. 94-130.

Weston, Kath
## Schedule of Events

Note below that readings from the coursepack are preceded by an asterix (*) and that Spradley and McCurdy's *Conformity and Conflict* is abbreviated "S & M.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 26</td>
<td>Becoming Human</td>
<td>*Root-Bernstein &amp; McEachern *Marks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug 28</td>
<td>Culture and Biology</td>
<td>*Root-Bernstein &amp; McEachern *Marks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug 31</td>
<td>Culture concept</td>
<td>*Geertz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 2</td>
<td>Cultural relativism</td>
<td>Read S &amp; M, Ch. 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 4</td>
<td>Ethnographic fieldwork</td>
<td>Read S &amp; M, Ch. 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 7</td>
<td>No Class – Labor Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 9</td>
<td>Environment and culture</td>
<td>Read S &amp; M, Ch. 11 &amp; 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 11</td>
<td>Environment, cont.</td>
<td>Read Nisa (Shostak) pp. 1-126</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Armchair ethnography exercise</td>
<td>due Today!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 14</td>
<td>Environment, cont.</td>
<td>Read Nisa, pp. 127-236</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 16</td>
<td>Discussion of Nisa</td>
<td>Read Nisa, pp. 237-342</td>
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<td>Sept 18</td>
<td>Families and kinship</td>
<td>Read Nisa, Epilogue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 21</td>
<td>Film – “N!ai, the Story of a</td>
<td>*Stone *Weston</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Kung Woman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 23</td>
<td>Families and kinship</td>
<td>Read Veiled Sentiments, Kinship ethnography exercise due today.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 25</td>
<td>Families and kinship</td>
<td>Read Veiled Sentiments, Kinship ethnography exercise due today.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 28</td>
<td>Sex/gender systems</td>
<td>Read Veiled Sentiments, pp. 118-170</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 2</td>
<td>Communication and language</td>
<td>Read Veiled Sentiments, pp. 171-222</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 5</td>
<td>Discuss Veiled Sentiments</td>
<td>Read Veiled Sentiments, pp. 223-255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 7</td>
<td>Inequality and Hierarchy</td>
<td>*Sahlins, S &amp; M, Ch. 23 (Cohen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 9</td>
<td>Exchange Systems</td>
<td>Read S &amp; M, Ch. 14, *Bohannan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Oct 12       EXAM I
14 Ritual, Religion & Belief  Read *Turner, S & M, Ch. 31 *Feld
  Ethnographic Work Groups begin Today.
16 Film “Holy Ghost People” Begin Fluid Signs, pp. 1-59

Oct 19       No Class – Fall Recess
21 Ritual, Religion & Belief  Read Fluid Signs, pp. 61-162
23 Ritual, Religion & Belief  Read Fluid Signs, pp. 163-232

Oct 26       Discuss Fluid Signs  Read Fluid Signs, pp. 233-301
28 Ethnography in America  Read *Limon
30 Cultural Geography  Begin Space on the Side of the Road, 3-40

Nov 2        Narrating Experience  Read Space on the Side of the Road, 41-89
  4 Symbolic Anthropology  Read Space/ Side of Road, 90-139, Optional reading: *Feld
  6 Discuss Space/ Side of Road  Read Space/ Side of the Road, 140-end.

Nov 9        Colonialism/ Culture Change  Read S & M, Ch. 34
  Film: First Contact
11 Framing the “Other”  Read * Diamond, Reading Nat’l Geo, 1-46
13 Framing the “Other”  Read Reading Nat’l Geo., 47-117
  Abstract for your ethnographic workgroup Today.

Nov 16       Colonization of Culture  Read Reading Nat’l Geo., 119-185
  Film: Trobriand Cricket
  Critical reviews of workgroup member Abstracts due Today.
18 Critical Reflections on “West”  Read Reading Nat’l Geo., 187-258
20 The “West,” cont.  Read Reading Nat’l Geo., 259-283 (end)
  Film: Imagining Indians
  Hand in Abstract of Ethnography for class.

Nov 23       Discuss Reading Nat’l Geo
25 - 27 No Class - Thanks giving Recess

Nov 30       In-class Ethnography presentations and critiques
Dec 2        In-class Ethnography presentations and critiques
  4 In-class Ethnography presentations and critiques
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dec 7</td>
<td>In-class Ethnography presentations and critiques</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 9</td>
<td>Final Day Wrap-up and Review</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ethnographies Due Today at the beginning of Class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 11</td>
<td>9:30-11am, FINAL EXAM</td>
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