

# Introduction to Anthropology

Anthropology/Sociology 103  
FALL 2003

CLASS PERIOD—Section 1 T, Th 8-9:30

CLASSROOM-- 102 Clough

PROFESSOR-- Susan Kus

OFFICE-- 105 Clough

Office Hours – M, W 9:10-10:30, or by appointment

## **COURSE STATEMENT**

### **THE "WONDERS" BEYOND RHODES**

We enter the world with the marvelous capacity to live any one of a thousand different kinds of lives, as the anthropologist, Geertz, says. Nevertheless once we begin to live that life that is to become ours, we often live it with the amazing conviction that it is the best and possibly only way to live. Those other lives that could possibly have been ours are also lived with equal conviction. Many of those thousand different kinds of lives are lived next door when society sees "race"<sup>1</sup>, gender, age, religious conviction, wealth, etc. as differences that make a difference in the life you are allowed to live. Yet many of those lives are also found spread across six continents and thousands of islands on this planet.

### **CHALLENGE TO OUR LIMITED [CULTURAL] IMAGINATIONS**

There is a significant challenge that faces us in attempting to understand any of those thousand different kinds of lives that could have been ours. If we attempt to imagine our way into alternative realities while firmly rooted in a parochial stance (both literally and figuratively), the exercise risks futility. With our lives as sole cultural reference we exercise a limited imagination of comparison, most often conceiving of the other in terms of "absences" rather than "alternatives." Sometimes we imagine individuals, who through the absences of technology and literacy, are pre-, proto- or primitive versions of ourselves. Or through the absences of modern dilemmas such as time pressures and consumerism, we imagine the "other" as our Edenic alter ego.

### **OUR ENGAGEMENT IN THE WORLD BEYOND RHODES**

A rich and enriching appreciation of those thousand of other kinds of lives cannot be acquired simply nor exclusively through pursuits of "the mind." Engagement in a culture through participation and dialogue are critical in our attempts to understand the diversity of thought and behavior that is this most astonishing of characteristics of humans. Such engagement allows us to go beyond naïve bewilderment and shock at difference to a more informed sense of wonder at human and cultural diversity.

Perhaps "living intimately with strangers" is not the form of engagement suitable for all individuals. Nevertheless, among our community we are in need of those who will undertake this challenge to their "creature" comforts and scholastic complacency. We need individuals such as anthropologists to help us gain a healthy respect for the intensity and integrity of other lives as negotiated from day to day and a solid respect for the philosophical and intellectual products of other cultures. We need such individuals because each day many of these thousands of different lives of individuals and many different cultures are not only endangered but are lost through disease, attrition, acculturation and genocide. Lives are lost and this is a tragedy of immense proportion. But it is tragic also that we are

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<sup>1</sup> Here "race" is understood as a social category and not as a scientific category.

loosing cultural alternatives, loosing the diversity that is critical to the survival of any species. If we limit our cultural imaginations, either through loss of diversity or through experiential timidity, or worse, through indifference, then we become impoverished as a species and as individuals. We will not be able to imagine our way out of the limits of our current world and we risk becoming convinced of the inevitability and immutability of our particular alternative reality, ultimately a form of surrender to social and cultural and even intellectual lethargy.

## ***COURSE REQUIREMENTS***

Class attendance and class participation are very important if you wish to take an active interest in your education and move along the path to enlightenment. Besides lectures and assigned readings, this course requires class participation, completing 4 short essay assignments (4-5 pages), a mid-term and a final exam, and viewing a film outside regular class time. Exams will include short answer and essay questions. Essays are normally due one week after they are assigned.

The essays will be in the style of a journal entry or a short exploratory piece. Late papers and assignments will not be accepted, except in the case of very extenuating circumstances. In such a case, permission to turn in an assignment late must be obtained from the instructor **before** the assignment due date. Such late submissions carry an automatic grade penalty.

**Failure to adequately complete any assignment or to take any exam will result in a failing grade for the course.** Absences and/or failure to participate in class can lower your grade. In the case of a 3 absences your final grade will be lowered by 1/3 to 1/2 (e.g., a grade of A will become an A-; a grade of C+ will become a C). 4 absences will result in lowering of the final grade by a full letter grade (e.g., a B+ will become a C+). 5 absences will result in a failing grade for the course. You are asked to self-report on absences. Upon returning to class after an absence, you should sign the attendance notebook with the date of the absence(s) and the reason for the absence.

Incompletes are not normally given in this class. In the rare case where an incomplete may be in order, the student must obtain permission from the instructor and complete all paper work for the Registrar **before** the final day of the course.

## ***GRADING***

Class participation .....	10%
4 essay assignments @ 10% each .....	40%
Mid-term exam.....	20%
Final exam.....	30%

## ***REQUIRED READING***

- Basic Text:     Rosman, A. & P. Rubel, The Tapestry of Culture, (8<sup>th</sup> ed.)  
                     Podolefsky, A. & P. Brown, Applying Anthropology: An Introductory Reader, (6<sup>th</sup> ed.)  
                     Wormsley, W. The White Man Will Eat You!  
                     Farrer, C. Thunder Rides a Black Horse  
                     Kehoe, A. The Ghost Dance

### Reserve Readings

Snyder, G. "Re-inhabitation," in The Old Ways, San Francisco: City

Lights, 1977.

Raharijaona, V “Mihatsara Ivelan-tshihy: Taking time to properly lay out the mats.” Academie Malgache, Fianarantsoa, June 2, 1995.

Kus, S. “Desires of the Heart and Laws of the Market Place.” Smart Breakfast Talk, Rhodes College, November 1, 1995.

Individual articles from

DeVita, P and J. Armstrong Distant Mirrors: America as a Foreign Culture, Wadsworth, 1998.

## **COURSE TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS**

(readings are to be completed on or before the assigned days)

<u><b>DATE</b></u>	<u><b>LECTURE TOPIC</b></u>	<u><b>READING</b></u>
Aug 28	Introductory remarks	
<div style="background-color: #444; color: white; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> P&amp;B= Podolefsy &amp; Brown  TXT = Rosman &amp; Rubel </div>		
Sep 2	Becoming human	P&B (Chapters 1, 6, 7, 30) <b>Begin Wormsley</b>
Sep 4	World of symbols	TXT (Chapter 5), P&P (31, 24, 28)
Sep 9	“Shock of the Other;” Human Nature?	TXT (1), P&B (19, 29)
Sep 11	Learning about the other <b>Class discussion</b> of Wormsley Chapters 1-10 <b>Essay #1 assigned (due Sep 25<sup>th</sup>)</b> <b>Essay #4 assigned (due Nov 25<sup>th</sup>)</b>	TXT (2), P&B (43)
Sep 16	Language; A concept of culture	TXT (3), P&B (26, 44)
Sep 18	Culture (cont.); An ecology of earth and mind (The example of the !Kung)	P&B (15, 36)
Sep 23	Living on sacred land; Consequences of agriculture	*Snyder, P&B (10, 12, 14)
Sep 25	<b>Class discussion</b> of Chapters 11-20 of Wormsley <b>Essay #2 assigned (due Oct 7<sup>th</sup>)</b>	
Sep 30	Family, friend and foe	TXT (6), P&B (41)
Oct 2	Social relations	*Raharijaona, <b>Begin Farrer</b>
Oct 7	Gender	TXT (7) P&B (2, 11, 39,40)
<b>END OF MATERIALS COVERED IN MIDTERM</b>		
Oct 9	The giving of gifts	TXT (8), *Kus
Oct 14	<b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>	
Oct 16	Is money the root of all evil? <b>Class discussion</b> of Chapters 1-3 of Farrer	P&B (34, 35)
Oct 21	<b>FALL RECESS</b>	
Oct 23	Power and prestige in non-Western societies	TXT (9), P&B (46)
Oct 28	Power and prestige (cont.)	P&B (47, 32)

Oct 30	"The Tightrope of Power" Psychological Anthropology	TXT (4), P&B (39)
Nov 4	"Hopi: Songs of the 4th world"	<b>Begin Kehoe</b>
Nov 6	Social being determines consciousness Class discussion of Chapters 4-8 of Farrer <b>Essay #3 assigned (due Nov 18<sup>th</sup>)</b>	
Nov 11	"Faithkeeper"	TXT (10) P&B (48)
Nov 13	A world of meaning	TXT (11), P&B (27)
Nov 18	A world of meaning (cont.); Culture Contact	TXT (12) P&B (49, 53)
Nov 20	Fighting for meaning and dignity Class discussion of Chapter 1-6 of Kehoe	TXT (13)
Nov 25	"Wiping the Tears of the Seventh Generation" <b>Essay # 4 due</b>	
Nov 27	<b>THANKSGIVING RECESS</b>	
Dec 2	Anthropology in Our World	TXT (14), P&B (5, 22, 51)
Dec 4	Anthropology in Our World (cont.)	TXT (15), P&B (45, 52)
Dec 9	Concluding remarks	P& B (54), Individual readings from <u>Distant Mirrors</u>

**FINAL EXAM**

**Monday, December 15 8:30 – 11 A.M.**