

General Anthropology

Anthropology / Sociology 103

General Anthropology

Spring -- 2002

CLASS PERIOD-- 9:10-10:10 M,W,F
PROFESSOR-- Susan Kus
OFFICE-- 105 Clough

Classroom-- 102 Clough
Office Hours -- M, F 1-1:45; Tu 8:30-10
or by appointment

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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 to be found lived next door when society sees "race"¹, 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 to be 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

¹ Here "race" is understood as a social category and not as a scientific category.

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 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 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 a grade penalty.

Failure to adequately complete any assignment or to take any exam will result in a failing grade for the course. Unexcused absences and/or failure to participate in class can lower your grade. In the case of a significant number (3 or more) of unexcused absences a failing grade may be assigned 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: Schultz, E. & R. Lavenda, Cultural Anthropology: A Perspective on the Human Condition, (5th ed.)

Podolefsky, A. & P. Brown, Applying Anthropology" An Introductory Reader, (6th ed.)

Wormsley, W. The White Man Will Eat You!

Farrer, Claire 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>DATE</u>	<u>LECTURE TOPIC</u>	<u>READING</u>
Jan 9	Introductory remarks	
11	Becoming human	P&B (Chapters 1, 9, 31)

P&B= Podolefsy & Brown
TXT = Schultz and Lavenda

Jan	14	Homo sapiens sapiens or “playing with a full deck”	*P&B(5, 6, 7, 18) Begin Wormsley
	16	A world of symbols	TXT (Chapter 1), P&B (24) TXT (8 pp. 153-161)
	18	“The Shock of the Other”	TXT (3)
Jan	21	MLK Day	
	23	Human “nature”?	P&B (19, 29)
	25	Learning about the other	TXT (4), P&B (43)
Essay #4 assigned (due April 12th)			
Jan	28	Fieldwork & Class discussion of Chapters 1-10 of Wormsley Essay #1 assigned	
	30	Language	TXT (5), P&B (25, 26, 44)
Feb	1	A concept of culture	TXT (2)
Feb	4	An Ecology of earth and mind	TXT (10 pp. 207-210). P&B(15)
	6	Living on sacred land	P&B (36), *Snyder
	8	Class discussion of Chapters 11-20 of Wormsley Essay #2 assigned	
Feb	11	The consequences of agriculture	P&B (10, 12, 14)
	13	Family, friend and foe	TXT (11), P&B (41)
	15	Social relations	TXT (12, 13), *Raharijaona Begin Farrer
Feb	18	Gender	P&B (2, 11)
	20	Gender (cont.)	P&B (39, 40)
	22	MIDTERM EXAM	
Feb	25	The giving of gifts & Class discussion of Chapters 1-3 of Farrer	TXT (10), *Kus
	27	Is money the root of all evil?	TXT (15) P&B (34, 35)
Mar	1	“A poor man shames us all”	
Mar	4	RECESS	
	6	RECESS	
	8	RECESS	
Mar	11	Power and prestige in non-Western societies	TXT (14), P&B (46)
	13	“The Tightrope of Power”	

	15	Power and prestige (cont.)	TXT (9), P&B (32)
Mar	18	Psychological Anthropology	TXT (6)
	20	Class discussion of Chapters 4-8 of Farrer	
		Essay #3 assigned	
	22	"Songs of the 4th world"	
Mar	25	Psychological anthropology	P&B (33)
	27	Social being determines consciousness	TXT (7)
	29	EASTER BREAK	
April	1	A world of meaning	TXT (8), Begin Kehoe
	3	A world of meaning (cont.)	P&B (48, 49)
	5	A world of meaning (cont.)	P&B (27, 28, 50)
April	8	Culture contact	P&B (45, 53)
	10	Film - "Faithkeeper"	
	12	Fighting for meaning and dignity	P&B (51, 54)
		Essay #4 due	
April	15	Film -- "Wiping the Tears of the Seventh Generation"	
	17	Discussion of Kehoe and film	
	19	Fighting for meaning and dignity	P&B (22)
April	22	Anthropology in Our World	TXT (16), P&B (8, 17)
	24	Anthropology in Our World	P&B (23, 42)
	26	Concluding remarks	Individual reading from <u>Distant Mirrors</u>