

Introduction to Anthropology

Anthropology/Sociology 103-02
SPRING 2004

CLASS PERIOD—Section 1 T, Th 8-9:30 Section 2 T, Th 1-2:30

CLASSROOM-- 102 Clough

PROFESSOR-- Susan Kus

OFFICE-- 105 Clough Office Hours – M 1-2:30, T, Th 2:30-3:30, 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 life, 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 the only “reasonable”, way to live. Those other lives that could 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”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 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 these individuals, through the absences of technology and literacy, to be 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. Both of these “imaginings” are impoverished.

OUR ENGAGEMENT IN THE WORLD BEYOND RHODES

A rich and enriching appreciation of those thousand of other kinds of life cannot be acquired simply nor exclusively through pursuits of “the mind,” no matter how imaginative. Engagement in a culture through participation and dialogue are critical in our attempts to understand the diversity of thought and behavior that is the most astonishing of human characteristics. 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

¹ Here “race” is understood as a social category and not as a scientific category. We will have occasion to study this point during the semester

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 losing cultural alternatives, losing 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, cultural and 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 possibly 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 **in person** 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 significant number (3 or more) of absences, a failing grade will as a rule 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 **in person** 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, (8th ed.)

Podolefsky, A. & P. Brown, Applying Anthropology: An Introductory Reader, (7th 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>DATE</u>	<u>LECTURE TOPIC</u>	<u>READING</u>
Jan 15	Introductory remarks-What makes us human?	
P&B= Podolefsy & Brown TXT = Rosman & Rubel		
Jan 20	Becoming human & being human	P&B (Chapters 1, 5, 31, 9, 6) Begin Wormsley
Jan 22	A World of symbols	TXT (Chapter 5), (P&P 32, 24, 28,29)
Jan 27	“Shock of the Other”; Human Nature?	TXT (1), P&B (19, 7, 30)
Jan 29	Learning about the other	TXT (2), P&B (34)
Class discussion of Wormsley Chapters 1-10 Essay #1 assigned (due February 12th) Essay #4 assigned (due April 20th)		
Feb 3	Language; A concept of culture	TXT (3), P&B (25, 26, 27)
Feb 5	Culture (cont.); An ecology of earth and mind (The example of the !Kung)	P&B (18, 8)
Feb 10	Living on sacred land; Consequences of Agriculture	*Snyder, P&B (11, 13, 15)
Feb 12	Class discussion of Chapters 11-20 of Wormsley Essay #1 due Essay #2 assigned (due Feb 24th)	
Feb 17	Family, friend and foe	TXT (6), P&B (43, 45,4)
Feb 19	Social relations	*Raharijaona, Begin Farrer
Feb 24	Gender	TXT (7) P&B (2, 12, 40, 44)
Essay #2 due END OF MATERIALS COVERED IN MIDTERM		
Feb 26	The giving of gifts	TXT (8), *Kus
March 2	MIDTERM EXAM	
March 4	Is money the root of all evil?	P&B (35, 36)
Class discussion of Chapters 1-3 of Farrer		
March 9	SPRING BREAK	
March 11	SPRING BREAK	

March 16	Power and prestige in non-Western societies	TXT (9), P&B (47)
March 18	Power and prestige (cont.) "The Tightrope of Power"	P&B (48, 33)
March 23	Psychological Anthropology	TXT (4), P&B (42)
March 25	"Hopi: Songs of the 4th world"	Begin Kehoe
March 30	Social being determines consciousness Class discussion of Chapters 4-8 of Farrer Essay #3 assigned (due April 13th)	
April 1	"Faithkeeper"	TXT (10), (P&B 10, 50)
April 6	A world of meaning	TXT (11), P&B (49)
April 8	EASTER RECESS	
April 13	A world of meaning (cont.); Culture Contact	TXT (12) P&B (53)
April 15	Essay #3 due Fighting for meaning and dignity Class discussion of Chapter 1-6 of Kehoe	
April 20	"Wiping the Tears of the Seventh Generation" Class discussion of final chapters of Kehoe Essay # 4 due	
April 22	Anthropology in Our World	TXT (13) P&B (21, 51, 55)
April 27	Anthropology in Our World (cont.)	TXT (14), P&B (38, 52, 54)
April 29	Concluding remarks	Individual readings from <u>Distant Mirrors</u>

FINAL EXAM	Section 1	Monday, May 3rd 1 – 3:30 PM
	Section 2	Friday, May 7th 1 – 3:30 PM