

# Introduction to Anthropology: Real, Radical Alternatives

Anthropology/Sociology 103  
Spring 2006

CLASS PERIOD – T, Th 8-9:15 AM      CLASSROOM--102 Clough  
PROFESSOR -- Susan Kus                OFFICE -- 105 Clough  
Office Hours – T, Th 1-2 PM; W 1-2 PM; or by appointment

## **COURSE STATEMENT**

Anthropology is not the study of “bizarre” human behavior; anthropology is rather the study of the range of normal human behavior. This course will explore this range.

## **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 the 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 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 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. Anthropology is not about documenting “bizarre” human customs; anthropology is about exploring the range of normal human behavior.

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

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<sup>1</sup> 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 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, cultural and intellectual lethargy.

***COURSE REQUIREMENTS***

Class attendance and 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, a mid-term and a final exam, and viewing of several films outside regular class time. Papers should be turned in **both** as a hard copy handed to the instructor and also as a word document placed in the instructor’s In-Box in the Academic Volume.

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. Permission to turn in an assignment late must be obtained **in person** from the instructor **before** the assignment due date. Such late submissions can 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, perennial lateness, and/or failure to participate in class can lower your grade. In the case of 3 absences a grade of “C” will be assigned for class participation, 4 absences a grade of “D” will be assigned for class participation, 5 absences will result in a grade of “F for class participation. In the case of 6 or more absences, a failing grade as a rule will 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 Texts:** Rosman, A. & P. Rubel, The Tapestry of Culture, (8<sup>th</sup> ed.)

Podolefsky, A. & P. Brown, Applying Anthropology: An Introductory Reader, (7<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.

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

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LECTURE TOPIC</u>	<u>READING</u>
Jan 12	Introductory remarks-What makes us human?	
P&B= Podolefsy & Brown TXT = Rosman & Rubel		
Jan 17	Becoming human & being human	P&B (Chapters 1, 31, 9, 32, 6)
Jan 19	A World of symbols "Shock of the Other" Film viewing (TBA)	TXT (Chapter 5), (P&B 24, 28) <b>Begin Wormsley</b>
Jan 24	Human Nature?	TXT (1 pp. 1-15), P&B (19, 7, 30)
Jan 26	Learning about the other Class discussion of Wormsley Chapters 1-10 Essay #1 assigned (due Feb 9th) Essay #4 assigned (due April 11th)	TXT (2), P&B (34)
Jan 31	Language: A concept of culture	TXT (3), P&B (25, 26, 27)
Feb 2	Culture (cont.); An ecology of earth and mind (The example of the !Kung)	P&B (8)
Feb 7	Living on sacred land; Consequences of Agriculture	*Snyder, P&B (11, 13, 15) TXT (8 pp. 179-197)
Feb 9	Class discussion of Chapters 11-20 of Wormsley Essay #1 due Essay #2 assigned (due Feb 21 <sup>st</sup> )	
Feb 14	Family, friend and foe	TXT (6), P&B (43, 45, 4)
Feb 16	Social relations	*Raharjaona, <b>Begin Farrer</b>
Feb 21	Gender Essay #2 due	TXT (7) P&B (2, 12, 44)
<b>END OF MATERIALS COVERED IN MIDTERM</b>		
Feb 23	The giving of gifts "A Poor Man Shames Us All" Film viewing (TBA)	TXT (8 pp. 197-end), *Kus
Feb 28	<b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>	
Mar 2	Is money the root of all evil? Class discussion of Chapters 1-3 of Farrer	P&B (35, 36)
Mar 7	Power and prestige in non-Western societies "The Tightrope of Power" Film viewing (TBA)	TXT (9 pp. 225-251), P&B (47)
Mar 9	Power and prestige (cont.) Psychological Anthropology	P&B (33); TXT (4), P&B (42)
Mar 14	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	
Mar 16	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	
Mar 21	Social being determines consciousness	<b>Begin Kehoe</b>

	"Hopi: Songs of the 4th world" <b>Film viewing TBA)</b>	
Mar 23	<b>Class discussion</b> of Chapters 4-8 of Farrer <b>Essay #3 assigned (April 4th)</b>	
Mar 28	"Faithkeeper"	TXT (10 pp. 270-275, 288-294), (P&B 10, 50)
Mar 30	A world of meaning	TXT (11)
Apr 4	A world of meaning (cont.); Culture Contact <b>Essay #3 due</b>	TXT (12 optional) P&B (53)
Apr 6	Fighting for meaning and dignity <b>Class discussion</b> of Chapter 1-6 of Kehoe	TXT (14 pp. 381-384) P&B (55)
Apr 11	"Wiping the Tears of the Seventh Generation" <b>Film viewing (TBA)</b> <b>Class discussion</b> of final chapters of Kehoe <b>Essay # 4 due</b>	
Apr 13	<b>EASTER RECESS</b>	
Apr 18	Anthropology in Our World	TXT (13) P&B (21, 51)
Apr 20	Anthropology in Our World (cont.)	TXT (14 & 15 are optional) P&B (38, 52, 54)
Apr 25	Individual readings from Distant Mirrors	
Apr 27	Concluding remarks	

<b>FINAL EXAM</b>	<b>Monday, May 1<sup>st</sup> 8:30 AM</b>
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Intro Anthro/5

**Dear tool-brandishing, symbol-wielding, culture-bearing animals,**

Throughout the semester you will be doing presentations concerning anthropological concerns in the news and the relevance of anthropological studies and arguments to contemporary U.S. society. The following are some guidelines for these assignments

Your participation in these presentations contributes to your grade in "class participation." Doing a reasonable job in these presentations and participating in all the presentations assigned to your group will guarantee you a baseline grade of "B-" for class participation (assuming there are no other extenuating factors). This grade can be augmented by the quality of your contributions to this exercise, by how effective you are in enticing other members of the class to join class discussion, as well as additional participation in class. This grade can be lowered by significant absences, cell phone ringing, etc.

## Indigenous Peoples and Anthropology Watch

15 minutes is not much time, as you will come to realize. It is thus advisable to coordinate group coverage of one or two media stories rather than each doing an individual story. The media stories should come **NOT FROM THE WEB** but from the following sources:

- New York Times newspaper from the week preceding the presentation
- The Commercial Appeal from the week preceding the presentation
- The most recent copies of magazines to which you regularly subscribe

While PowerPoints are not necessary, they can be useful occasionally to show maps, timelines, artifacts, environments, people, etc.

## What this means to me and the USAns

Again, 15 minutes is not much time. Thus it is also advisable in this case to coordinate group coverage of one or two issues from the readings that can be opened up for discussion. It is always useful to pursue a bit of additional research on the issues that go beyond the readings to help engage the class in discussing and applying what they have learned.

In each case, your job is to incite interest in your classmates and to bring your classmates into the discussion. Please try to keep me out of the discussion. You are free to direct questions to me, but I will try to keep my additional comments for the "wrapping up" of these short discussion sessions.

GROUP # \_\_\_\_\_

Members of your group

NAME	EMAIL	PHONE

**SCHEDULE for (1) Indigenous Peoples and Anthropology Watch (IPAW) and  
(2) "What does it all mean to me and to the USAn's?"**

DATE	IPAW (last 15 mins of class)	SO WHAT? (last 15 mins of class)
Jan 24	1	
Jan 26		2
Jan 31	3	
Feb 2		4
Feb 7	5	
Feb 9		6
Feb 14	2	
Feb 16		1
Feb 21	4	
Feb 23		3
Mar 7	6	
Mar 9		5
Mar 21	1	
Mar 23		2
Mar 28	3	
Mar 30		4
Apr 4	5	
Apr 6		6

## KEEPING TRACK OF YOUR GRADES AND ABSENCES

ESSAY #1	10%	
ESSAY #2	10%	
ESSAY #3	10%	
ESSAY #4	10%	
MID-TERM EXAM	20%	
FINAL EXAM	30%	
CLASS PARTICIPATION	10%	

DATE OF ABSENCE	EXPLANATION