SOA U101: Peoples and Cultures (Honors)

Tuesday and Friday, 9:50am-11:30am
101 Churchill

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Office: 530 Holmes
Office Hours: Fridays, 2pm-4pm or by appt.

Course Description:

This course is an introduction the field of sociocultural anthropology. We will examine the diversity of human life around the world as well as the key concepts, questions, and methods that anthropologists have used in their attempts to make sense of cultural difference. We will not just examines “others,” but learn to see ourselves, as well, as the products of particular social, cultural, political, and historical processes. Topics covered include the “culture” concept and ethnography; language, family, and religion; social construction and stratification along lines of gender, class, and race; and contemporary economic, political, and global forces.

Assigned Texts:


6) Additional readings posted on the course Blackboard site.
Course Requirements:

1) **Attendance and Participation (10% of grade)**

   The two class sessions per week are a primary source of information for the course. You are expected to attend, and to have completed required readings ahead of time. Take notes during lectures and discussions, and be sure that you understand the main points that are covered, any examples that are used, and how they relate to assigned readings. This is a small class, and active participation is encouraged. Please come to class prepared with questions, comments, and thoughts for discussion. Changes to the class schedule may be made as necessary, but will be announced in advance.

   Several films will be shown during class sessions and are also required. Take notes during films just as you would during a lecture. Be sure that you can identify the groups and issues covered in each film, summarize its contents, and relate it to that week’s theme.

   All cell phones, iPods, and other electronic devices should be turned off and put away during class.

2) **Exams (45% of grade)**

   There will be three exams—two during class sessions and one during the final exam period. Make-up exams will be given only in extraordinary (and well documented) situations. If you are having any problems with the exam scheduling, please let me know before the exam.

3) **Short Exercises (20% of grade)**

   Five short (1-2 page) exercises will be required throughout the course. These exercises are designed to give you an opportunity to apply the concepts we are covering in class to your own life and the world around you.

   Each exercise will be worth 25 points, and your lowest score will be dropped (for a total of 100 points). Since you can drop your lowest score, **no make-up, late, or e-mailed exercises will be accepted**.

   Further details will be handed out in class and posted on the Blackboard site.

4) **Mini-Ethnography (25% of grade): Observation and analysis of a public place or event**

   For this paper, you will choose an unfamiliar public place or event where you can participate or discreetly conduct observations. The setting is up to you—it could be a store, a restaurant, a park, a cultural event, a tourist attraction, etc.
Design your research and turn in a 1-2 paragraph proposal describing the setting or group you propose to observe. This proposal is due by **Tuesday, February 10**. Conduct your participant-observation research and write fieldnotes either during your observation or shortly afterward.

Write an **8-10 page paper** (typed, 12pt, double-spaced, 1-inch margins) in which you report on your research and analyze your data. Your paper is due in class by **Tuesday, April 14**. You must turn in a hard copy—I cannot accept an electronic version. **Please respect deadlines.** Ten (10) points will be deducted for each day your paper is late. If you cannot turn in your paper on time due to extreme circumstances, you must discuss this with me **before** the due date.
Course Schedule and Required Readings:

Week 1  Introduction to the Course and to Anthropology

Tues 1/6  No readings.

Fri 1/9  “Introduction: Understanding Humans and Human Problems.” Pg. 1-4 in ACA.

Miner, Horace. “Body Ritual among the Nacirema.” Pg. 5-8 in ACA.

Bohannan, Laura. “Shakespeare in the Bush.” Pg. 21-26 in ACA.

Week 2  The Concept of Culture; Ethnocentrism and Cultural Relativism

Tues 1/13  Bower, Bruce. “Slumber’s Unexplored Landscape.” Pg. 9-12 in ACA.

Diamond, Jared. “Race without Color.” Pg. 75-80 in ACA.


Fri 1/16  Kratz, Corinne A. “Circumcision, Pluralism, and Dilemmas of Cultural Relativism.” Pg. 261-272 in ACA.


Week 3  Doing Cultural Anthropology: Ethnographic Methods and Ethics


Sterk, Claire E. “Tricking and Tripping: Fieldwork on Prostitution in the Era of AIDS.” Pg. 13-20 in ACA.

Hafner, Katie. “Coming of Age in Palo Alto.” Pg. 163-165 in ACA.


Rohde, David. “Army Enlists Anthropology in War Zones.” Pg. 189-191 in ACA.
Week 4  Language and Communication


Fri 1/30  Basso, Keith H. “‘To Give Up On Words’: Silence in Western Apache Culture.” Pg. 27-36 in ACA.


Week 5  Family, Marriage, and Kinship
Tues 2/3  IN-CLASS EXAM 1

Fri 2/6  Short Exercise: Everyday Talk Due

Goldstein, Melvyn C. “When Brothers Share a Wife.” Pg. 95-99 in ACA.


van Willigen, John and V.C. Channa. “Law, Custom, and Crimes against Women: The Problem of Dowry Death in India.” Pg. 100-110 in ACA.

Week 6  Kinship, continued
Tues 2/10  Mini-ethnography Proposal Due

Stone, Linda S. “Gay Marriage and Anthropology.” Pg. 115-117 in ACA.

Small, Meredith F. “How Many Fathers Are Best for a Child?” Pg. 111-114 in ACA.


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<th>Week 7</th>
<th>Gender</th>
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<td>Tues 2/17</td>
<td><strong>Short Exercise: Kinship Chart Due</strong></td>
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<td>Roscoe, Will. “Strange Country This.” Pg. 118-125 in ACA.</td>
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<td>Abu-Lughod, Lila. “Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?” Pg. 126-132 in ACA.</td>
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<th>Week 8</th>
<th>Religion and Ritual</th>
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<td>Tues 2/24</td>
<td><strong>Short Exercise: Gender Roles Due</strong></td>
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<td>Atran, Scott, Robert Axelrod and Richard Davis. “Sacred Barriers to Conflict Resolution.” Pg. 192-194 in ACA.</td>
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| Week 9 | **SPRING BREAK** |

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<th>Week 10</th>
<th>Subsistence Strategies</th>
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<td>Tues 3/10</td>
<td><strong>IN-CLASS EXAM II</strong></td>
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<td>Bodley, John H. “The Price of Progress.” Pg. 273-281 in ACA.</td>
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Week 11  Economics and Exchange
Tues 3/17  **Short Exercise: Religious Service Due**
Lee, Richard B. “Eating Christmas in the Kalahari.” Pg. 52-56 in ACA.

Week 12  Power, Politics, and Control
Tues 3/24  **Short Exercise: Reciprocity Due**

Week 13  Conflict and Violence

Week 14  Development, Globalization, and Change

Week 15  Wrap-Up and Review
Tues 4/14  **MINI-ETHNOGRAPHY DUE IN CLASS**