

SOA U101: Peoples and Cultures (Honors)

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

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Course Description:

This course is an introduction to 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 examine “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:

- 1) Podolefsky, Aaron, Peter J. Brown and Scott Lacy. 2008. *Applying Cultural Anthropology: An Introductory Reader*. 8th edition. Boston: McGraw Hill.
(Referred to as ACA in Course Schedule)
- 2) Kroeber, Theodora. 2004. *Ishi in Two Worlds: A Biography of the Last Wild Indian in North America*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- 3) Fernea, Elizabeth Warnock. 1995. *Guests of the Sheik: An Ethnography of an Iraqi Village*. Anchor.
- 4) Mintz, Sidney. 1986. *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. New York: Penguin Books.
- 5) Nordstrom, Carolyn. 2004. *Shadows of War: Violence, Power, and International Profiteering in the Twenty-First Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- 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.

Stocking, George W. 1966. "Franz Boas and the Culture Concept in Historical Perspective." *American Anthropologist* 68(4): 867-882.

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

Kroeber, Theodora. 2004. *Ishi in Two Worlds*. Prologue and Chapters 1-4.

Week 3 Doing Cultural Anthropology: Ethnographic Methods and Ethics

Tues 1/20 Kroeber, Theodora. 2004. *Ishi in Two Worlds*. Chapters 5-7.

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.

Fri 1/23 Kroeber, Theodora. 2004. *Ishi in Two Worlds*. Chapters 8-Epilogue.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 2001. "Ishi's Brain, Ishi's Ashes: Anthropology and Genocide." *Anthropology Today* 17(1):12-18.

Rohde, David. "Army Enlists Anthropology in War Zones." Pg. 189-191 in ACA.

Week 4 Language and Communication

Tues 1/27 Steckley, John L. 2008. "Fifty-two Words for Snow." Pg. 51-76 in *White Lies about the Inuit*. Ontario: Broadview Press.

Crystal, David. 2008. Excerpt from *Txtng: The Gr8 Db8*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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

Maltz, Daniel M. and Ruth A. Borker. "A Cultural Approach to Male-Female Miscommunication." Pg. 37-47 in *ACA*.

Hill, Jane. 1998. "Language, Race, and White Public Space." *American Anthropologist* 100(3):680-689.

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*.

Nanda, Serena. 2000. "Arranging a Marriage in India." Pp. 196-204 in *Stumbling Toward Truth: Anthropologists at Work*, edited by Philip R. Devita. Waveland Press.

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*.

Fri 2/13 Becker, Gay. 2000. "Rewriting the Family." Pg. 218-235 in *The Elusive Embryo: How Women and Men Approach New Reproductive Technologies*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 1985. "Culture, Scarcity, and Maternal Thinking: Maternal Detachment and Infant Survival in a Brazilian Shantytown." *Ethos* 13(4):291-317.

Week 7 Gender

Tues 2/17 **Short Exercise: Kinship Chart Due**

Roscoe, Will. "Strange Country This." Pg. 118-125 in ACA.

Fernea, Elizabeth Warnock. 1995. *Guests of the Sheik*. Part I: Pg. 3-102.

Fri 2/20 Fernea, Elizabeth Warnock. 1995. *Guests of the Sheik*. Part II: Pg. 105-170.

Abu-Lughod, Lila. "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?" Pg. 126-132 in ACA.

Week 8 Religion and Ritual

Tues 2/24 **Short Exercise: Gender Roles Due**

Evans-Pritchard, E.E. 1976. "Witchcraft is an Organic and Hereditary Phenomenon" and "The Notion of Witchcraft Explains Unfortunate Events." Pp. 1-32 in *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic Among the Azande*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Fernea, Elizabeth Warnock. 1995. *Guests of the Sheik*. Parts III-IV: Pg. 173-266.

Fri 2/27 Fernea, Elizabeth Warnock. 1995. *Guests of the Sheik*. Parts V-VI: Pg. 269-333.

Daugherty, Mary Lee. 1976. "Serpent-Handling as Sacrament." *Theology Today* 33(3): 232-43.

Atran, Scott, Robert Axelrod and Richard Davis. "Sacred Barriers to Conflict Resolution." Pg. 192-194 in ACA.

Week 9 SPRING BREAK

Week 10 Subsistence Strategies

Tues 3/10 **IN-CLASS EXAM II**

Fri 3/13 Lee, Richard B. 1993. "Subsistence: Foraging for a Living." Pg. 39-60 in *The Dobe Ju/'hoansi*. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace.

Diamond, Jared. "The Worst Mistake in the History of the Human Race." Pg. 48-51 in ACA.

Bodley, John H. "The Price of Progress." Pg. 273-281 in ACA.

Mintz, Sidney. 1985. *Sweetness and Power*. Pg. xv-18.

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.

Smith, Julia. "The Search for Sustainable Markets." Pg. 223-232 in ACA.

Mintz, Sidney. 1985. *Sweetness and Power*. Pg. 19-73.

Fri 3/20 Mintz, Sidney. 1985. *Sweetness and Power*. Pg. 74-150.

Week 12 Power, Politics, and Control

Tues 3/24 **Short Exercise: Reciprocity Due**

Mintz, Sidney. 1985. *Sweetness and Power*. Pg. 151-214.

Fri 3/27 Gibbs, James L., Jr. "The Kpelle Moot." Pg. 172-179 in ACA.

Nader, Laura. 2002. "Hegemonic Processes in Law: Colonial to Contemporary." Pg. 117-167 in *The Life of the Law: Anthropological Projects*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Nordstrom, Carolyn. 2004. *Shadows of War*. Pg. 1-40.

Week 13 Conflict and Violence

Tues 3/31 Podolefsky, Aaron. "Contemporary Warfare in the New Guinea Highlands." Pg. 180-188 in ACA.

Nordstrom, Carolyn. 2004. *Shadows of War*. Pg. 41-138.

Fri 4/3 Nordstrom, Carolyn. 2004. *Shadows of War*. Pg. 139-204.

Week 14 Development, Globalization, and Change

Tues 4/7 Nordstrom, Carolyn. 2004. *Shadows of War*. Pg. 205-250.

Fri 4/10 Smith, Daniel Gordon. "Cell Phones, Sharing, and Social Status in an African Society." Pg. 254-260 in ACA.

Bruner, Edward M. and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett. 1994. "Maasai on the Lawn: Tourist Realism in East Africa." *Cultural Anthropology* 9(4): 435-470.

Week 15 Wrap-Up and Review

Tues 4/14 **MINI-ETHNOGRAPHY DUE IN CLASS**