

ANTHRO2A TA Section

Winter 2026
James Egan
Eric Gu

Tuesdays 5-5:50 and 6-6:50 PM

About Me

- 2nd Year PhD Student in Anthropology
- Studying the concept of debate and political social media influencers
 - Previous work: Qanon conspiracy theorists, Eastern Orthodox converts, shamans on the Chinese-North Korean border
 - What does this have anything to do with anthropology? Hopefully you will get a sense by the end of this course...
- Hobbies: Cooking, mushroom foraging, TTRPGs (DnD),
- Recently playing: Mahjong Soul, Roblox



TA Sections

- Overview of tricky terms from this week
- Practice writing an essay
- Answer questions
- Other logistical assistance
- Office hours (email beforehand)
- www.ecgu.github.io
 - Slides from these TA sections will be uploaded here

Office hours

- One-on-one questions about the course
- And more!
 - Study tips
 - Note-taking, test taking, essay writing, etc
 - Advice on navigating college
 - Financial, logistical, housing, academic issues etc
 - But keep in mind: I am a mandated reporter
 - Grad school/professional tips
 - Resume building
 - Advice when interacting with professors
 - You are a student at a large, successful public university: take advantage of the resources you have!

Quiz Questions

- 30 multiple choice questions
- ONLY topics listed in the study guide
- Based around definitions of terms like “culture” or “race” and key arguments/figures around these terms
 - Listening to lectures is key: Why are Osage Indians relevant to arguments about IQ? What was the relationship between Robert Bean and Paul Brocca?

Quiz Questions Example

- Which of the following is one of the four subfields of anthropology?
 - Genetic Anthropology
 - Archaeology
 - Economic Anthropology
 - Psychology
 - None of the Above

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Quiz Questions Common Mistakes

- Read the question carefully: is or is NOT?
- Remember exact terms (biological versus genetic anthropology)
- Remember how terms fit with each other (economic anthropology is a subfield, but not of the big four)
- Be wary of “all/none of the above”
- Don’t waste too much time: you have 80 minutes total
 - Eliminate answers through common sense

Essays

- Essays are graded by rubric
 - NOT looking for your opinion or thoughts, but what Egan has laid out as definitions for terms
 - Don't worry too much about grammar and spelling
- One prompt chosen randomly from the guide
- You MUST explicitly state certain phrases
- Scantron: make sure to write ONLY within the box

Essay Prompts

- Discuss and critique the theory of scientific racism. What is “race” and how is it used to account for social and cultural as well as biological difference in human beings? What criticisms have anthropologists made of race and its use as a unit of analysis for gaining insights into human sociocultural and biological variation? What alternative concepts do anthropologists use to analyze human biological variation?
- Discuss the concept of “social race”. How do cultural anthropologists approach the race concept today, and how does this differ from scientific racism? Discuss some examples of how race is culturally constructed in different times and places.
- Discuss the field of craniometry and related uses of anatomical measures in racial arguments. What criticisms have Stephen Jay Gould and anthropologists made of these arguments? What logical and empirical errors are made? Give and discuss specific examples to make your points.
- Discuss the theory of unilinear social evolutionism. What are its core assumptions, and how does it represent sociocultural diversity? What criticisms have anthropologists made of unilinear social evolutionism?
- What do anthropologists mean by culture? What common elements can one expect to find in anthropological conceptions of culture? What do anthropologists mean when they speak of culture as super-organic – more than biological and not merely psychological? What does it mean to say that culture has the power to naturalize?
- What is “ethnocentrism” and what problems does it pose for anthropological investigation of sociocultural diversity? How does cultural relativism offer a solution to these problems? Are there limits to cultural relativism?
- According to Shalini Shankar, how do general market advertising agencies in the United States represent diversity in their advertisements? What does she say are the implications of representing diversity in this way?
- What does Shalini Shankar mean when she argues that multicultural advertising agencies both reflect and create ethnoracial categories through their advertising practices, and how does this happen? Give some examples.

AI?

- Learning to read, write, note-take, pay attention in 1+ hour lectures are skills that take practice that will be crucial in the future after college
- How you make things easier with AI is up to you, but be wary of what you're sacrificing: can you draft an email, articulate an argument, or write a report that is grammatically correct and distinct to your own voice?
- Make sure that whatever AI tells you aligns with Egan's lectures and the course materials; definitions and approaches may differ!

Going forward

- What would help you the most?
 - Mock exams (jeopardy)?
 - Mini lectures?
 - Essay practice?
 - Group discussion?
 - Something else?
 - Feel free to email me if ideas come up later