

ANTH 202: Concepts & Methods in Cultural Anthropology
4:20-6:00pm Mondays & Wednesdays
Spring 2014 • 04A1 / 5325

Instructor: Dr. Alicia DeNicola,
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Good training in theory, and acquaintance with its latest results, is not identical with being burdened with "preconceived ideas." If a man sets out on an expedition, determined to prove certain hypotheses, if he is incapable of changing his views constantly and casting them all ungrudgingly under the pressure of evidence, needless to say his work will be worthless. But the more problems he brings with him into the field, the more he is in the habit of moulding his theories according to facts, and of seeing facts in their bearing upon theory, the better he is equipped for the work. Preconceived ideas are pernicious in any scientific work, but foreshadowed problems are the main endowment of a scientific thinker, and these problems are first revealed to the observer by his theoretical studies.

--Bronislaw Malinowski, Argonauts of the Western Pacific, 1922 (p. 8-9)

SUMMARY:

This course is required for all anthropology majors and minors and Anthropology 101 is required as a prerequisite. Concepts and Methods in Social Anthropology explores some of the most influential theories and methods in anthropology from the 19th century to the present. This course is a Theory, Practice, Service, Learning course (TPSL). As such, students are required to contribute at least 18 hours of service-learning outside of class. We use this experience both in the sense of service and in the sense of research. We will *practice* the methods we learn in the field and we will consider our service learning research through the lens of the theory we read. Students written assessments and final paper project will be grounded in their fieldwork at the same time that their research will be informed by course materials.

It is useful to keep in mind that cultural anthropology in the 21st century is often a deconstructive discipline. A goal of this class is to understand what this means and how the historical practice of anthropology influenced its present. Practicing anthropology in this class includes more than simply an understanding of particular methods and how to use them. It is also about understanding the importance of such methodology within the context of anthropological theory as well as exploring what happens when such methods are decontextualized from disciplinary theory and historical insight. In other words, we are working to understand why, of all the methodologies that social scientists could choose, some methods have become particularly important to anthropology and why the link between theory and practice is critical to anthropologists. By the end of the course, students should have an intimate sense of these paradigms, approaches and major critiques and be able to use such paradigms as analytical tools. Students should also leave this class with key insights into some of the fundamental history and perennial issues in anthropology.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION:

- 10% Focus Papers & Comments (half page)
- 10% First (possible collaborative) paper (5-7 pages)
- 10% Leading In-Class Discussion
- 15% Exam (multiple choice and short answer)
- 15% Final Presentations
- 10% Final Draft (7-9 pages)
- 15% Write up of Final Project (7-9 pages) includes draft
- 15% Class participation (includes bringing readings to class)

100% (see grade monitoring sheet attached)

REQUIRED TEXTS (available at the book store) These books ARE required and you must bring the week's reading to class each day, whether we are working with books or printouts. You will lose class participation points if you do not bring your readings to class.

- Boellstorff, Tom; Nardi, Bonnie; Pearce, Celia T. L.; Taylor, T.L.; Marcus, George E. 2012. *Ethnography and Virtual Worlds: A Handbook of Method*
- Crane, Julia G., and Michael V. Angrosino. 1992. *Field Projects in Anthropology: A Student Handbook*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, Inc.
- McGee, R. *Anthropological theory: an introductory history*. 5th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Moore, Jerry D. 2012. *Visions of Culture: An Introduction to Anthropological Theories and Theorists*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira.

All writing assignments are subject to the following reading/writing criteria, which can be found on blackboard or online:

- American Anthropological Association, ed. 2009. "AAA Style Guide". American Anthropological Association. http://www.aaanet.org/publications/style_guide.pdf.
- Edwards, Paul N. n/a. "How to Read a Book, v5.0". University of Michigan School of Information. pne.people.si.umich.edu/PDF/howtoread.pdf.
- Lahiri, Smita, Lilith Mahmud, and James Herron, ed. 2010. *A Student's Guide to Reading and Writing in Social Anthropology*. Department of Anthropology, Harvard University. http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~anthro/undergrad_materials/anthropology_writing_guide_2010.pdf.
- Rosenwasser, David, and Jill Stephen. 2005. *Writing Analytically*. Belmont: Heinle.

FOCUS PAPERS:

Before the beginning of each class you are required to upload a 1/2-page (approximately 150 words) reflection paper on that class's readings. The purpose of these papers is to 1) Focus on thinking about the readings and their relationships to each other and previous readings 2) Share your insights with others 3) Provide yourself with a record of your thoughts about the readings and 4) Practice your anthropological (textually and empirically *evidence* based) thinking skills. I will randomly grade 6 of the 15 focus papers. You will be able to choose your two best papers and ask me to grade those as part of the six graded focus papers. I will be looking for the following.

- A clear, *thoughtful thesis* (beyond what is obvious or written in the text). Do not tell me what the text says. Tell me how it relates to the issues we are discussing. See Rosenwasser and Stephen chapter listed above).
- A focus on *evidence* from the text (rather than opinion or common knowledge).
- Insight that will contribute to class discussion by asking questions or making connections that will help us more deeply understand anthropology, the texts, and how we might see the world differently through such concepts and methods as preferred by anthropologists

SHORT ESSAY (First paper—collaboration acceptable)

This paper is designed to help you begin thinking of how you may begin to look at your TPSL experiences through the theoretical lens of anthropology. You will need to apply the theories you are learning to your experiences for this paper. Both for this essay and your final project I will allow (if you LIKE – this is not required) you to work together with a partner as collaborators. Writing a paper with a partner provides you with the opportunity to bounce ideas off of another

thinker who has the same interests as you, and thus to write a more analytic and thought provoking paper than you might write on your own. You do not have to write with a partner, but may choose to do so. IF you choose this method, you also need to include a separate and individual half page that lays out how you collaborated, what each of you contributed to the final product and what you think each of your grades should be for the paper.

Due dates for the short essay appear in your schedule of assignments. They must be at least 1500-2100 words (that is approximately 5-7 double-spaced pages in Times font with 1" margins). All papers must have a bibliography (lack of a bibliography will result in the automatic loss of one full grade – i.e. an A- will automatically become a B-), and the focus, regardless of topic must be anthropological and analytic (as opposed to purely descriptive, rhetorical or informative). Since ethnography (in the form of producing a written description of research and fieldwork) is a critical part of anthropology, I take grammar and writing style quite seriously. I urge you to have your essays edited by someone you trust who writes well. Edit for grammar, meaning (make sure each paragraph makes sense where it is and adds to your thesis), and voice (use an academic voice). They all matter. These essays may be useful to your final project. So you may adjust your topic to correspond to a theory you may want to pursue in your final project. The purpose of this smaller paper is three-fold: 1) To assist you in practicing and enhancing your *analytic* and *anthropological* writing and thinking skills 2) To help you to plan your final project over time and give you the ability to use classroom explorations in your writing and 3) to provide a structure where you must think and re-think about the ideas that you are working with, thus providing you with a final paper that has more depth and more layers of analysis than would otherwise be possible (say if you researched it the week before finals and wrote it during an all-nighter the night before it was due).

IN CLASS DISCUSSIONS

This is a seminar class. That means the class consists of in-class discussions. Participation is required and graded heavily. In addition to regular participation in discussion you will, in a small group, be asked over the course of the semester, to be in charge of leading in-class discussions. One of the important goals of this class is to guide you in: identifying important issues within a field; becoming familiar with key ways of reading and understanding; and being able to focus and analyse key questions or tensions within a reading as a precursor to asking more difficult and subtle questions. One way of honing those skills is to think about how you would teach them to others—or better yet, how you would lead others to discover for themselves the important aspects of a reading and how the ideas presented can help them see the world differently. Your job, as a group, in these instances is to discuss the day's readings with your group members so that you are intimately familiar with them. Then you will come up with a set of questions, conversations, or activities that will help your classmates also move beyond the obvious issues discussed in the readings and relate them to the larger issues in anthropology and the class.

FINAL PROJECT ESSAY

The final essay is designed to allow you to understand your TPSL experiences through the lens of anthropological theory and practice. You must demonstrate that you are using the tools and theories of the class in this paper. It must be 2100-3,000 words (that's about 7-10 double-spaced pages in times font with 1" margins). The grade for your final essay will include an abstract, an annotated bibliography, and an outline of the project and a rough draft which will be due several weeks prior to the last day of class – the due date for each of these will be in your schedule of assignments. The paper will be judged on completeness, academic presentation, clear writing, and analysis. You will receive the prompt for your final project essay following the midterm.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

Includes attendance, timely completion of reading assignments (by the class in which the material is to be discussed), whether you come to see me during office hours (and whether our conversations find their way into your work), and whether I see you participating in groups and adding to class discussion. Pop quizzes, though they are counted elsewhere, also make up a subjective part of your participation grade. If I see that your reading improved over the course of the semester as evidenced by pop quiz grades, I may take that into account. The opposite is also a possibility. As part of your “participation” grade in-class assignments cannot be made up. One of the critical aims of this class is to learn about culture – both your own and others’. *I consider the classroom to be an important anthropological field site. I believe that learning from and LISTENING RESPECTFULLY to your classmates provides both valuable information and an exercise in listening (a very important skill for anthropologists to master). Not coming to class is disrespectful to your classmates, and it will hurt your grade. Other students’ ideas are just as much part of culture (and therefore the data of anthropological research) as are the ideas of your instructor or the experts in the field. Learn to LISTEN and USE your classmates’ ideas as data.*

ATTENDANCE AND BEING ON TIME:

One of the major premises of this class is that we are here to help one another learn. If you are not in class you cannot participate in this critical experience. You get two free absences, no questions asked. *But*, if you miss more than two classes, you should be aware that your FINAL grade will suffer by 1/3 grade for each class you miss after two. Thus if your final grade is a B and you miss three classes, the grade you receive will be a B-. If you miss four classes it will be a C+. Much of this class is focused on in-class discussion and activities that you will not be able to make up and will affect your grade. If you miss class, *everyone* suffers.

ASSIGNMENTS and LATE PAPER POLICY:

All papers and assignments must be turned in on time. Turning in a paper late causes significant problems both for me (in trying to keep track of individual papers and juggling assignments) and also for you, because you will then continue to be behind throughout the class. In addition, *turning in late papers is unfair to those who completed their papers on time*. It is up to my discretion whether I will accept a late paper. Generally, I will not. However, on those rare occasions when I do, the paper’s grade will fall by 1/3 grade for each day it is late (i.e. a B+ will become a B, or an A- will become a B+). Any paper turned in more than 15 minutes after the start of class will be considered a day late. If you plan to request an extension for a late paper be aware that I will NOT grant extensions because of unexcused absence, sports absences, undocumented illnesses or emergencies, overwork, or family vacations. If you have a medical, family or personal emergency you may request an extension ONLY if you have documentation from a doctor, parent or counselor. Again, this is a fairness issue for those students who do manage (despite their also busy lives) to turn papers in on time.

THE SMALL PRINT:

- **Student Honor Code:** As a student of Oxford College you are bound by the Student Honor Code and are responsible “for maintaining standards of unimpeachable honesty in all academic work....The Honor Code is based on the fundamental expectations that every person in Oxford College will conduct his or her life according to the dictates of the Honor Code and will refuse to tolerate actions in others which would violate the honor code” (http://oxford.emory.edu/audiences/current_students/Academic/academic-success/student-honor-code/).
- Student work submitted as part of this **course may be reviewed by Oxford College and Emory College faculty** and staff for the purposes of improving instruction and enhancing Emory education.
- One of the key benefits of a liberal arts education is the instructor’s ability to react to students’ needs, interests and abilities. In the spirit of providing you with an education that remains responsive to particular contexts, **this syllabus and schedule are subject to change.**

- **Disabilities:** *If you are a student with a documented disability on record and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class please make an appointment to see me in my office. If you need a note taker please see me immediately after class.*
- **Religious Holidays:** *If you must miss class for a religious holiday, please notify me, in writing, one week before class in order to be excused (assignments due on a particular day must still be turned in on or before the day specified).*

Weighted Grade worksheet

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Instructions: Your grade for the assignment goes into column A. Multiply across to get a total for column B. Add column B down to get your weighted total out of 100 for your final grade.

	A	B
Focus Papers	_____ x .10	= _____
Essay 1	_____ x .10	= _____
Leading Discussions	_____ x .10	= _____
Midterm Exam	_____ x .15	= _____
Final Presentations	_____ x .15	= _____
Final Draft	_____ x .10	= _____
Final Paper	_____ x .15	= _____
Class participation	_____ x .15	= _____
Weighted Total		= _____%

If you are only part way through the semester, you will have to do some additional calculations.
Run this equation and SOLVE FOR Z (your percentage thus far in the class):

$$x/y=z/100$$

(example: $45/65=z/100$ or $4500/65=z$)

x=your total percentages that you have earned so far
y=the total _possible_ percentage for assignments so far
z=your percentage grade at this point (not counting absences)