

Cultural Anthropology (ANT 302) — Fall 2018

Lecture — Monday & Wednesday 3-4 pm, GAR 0.102

Instructor: James Slotta

Email: jslotta@utexas.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays 2-4 pm or by appointment

Discussion — All discussion sections are held in SAC 4.118

31510 - Friday 8-9 am

31530 - Thursday 3:30-4:30 pm

31515 - Friday 10-11 am

31520 - Friday 12-1 pm

31525 - Tuesday 3:30-4:30 pm

31535 - Monday 4-5 pm

University Course Description

The concept of culture; social and political organization; language; the supernatural; elementary cultural theory. May be counted toward the cultural diversity flag requirement. Meets core curriculum requirement for Social & Behavioral Science (I).

Detailed Course Description

This course provides an introduction to cultural anthropology, the inductive study of the human condition insofar as it is shaped by our social surround. Accordingly, anthropologists investigate humanity in all of its variety, developing methods of data collection and analysis, conceptual frameworks, and modes of presentation that are, ideally, adequate to capturing what it means to be human. In the process, cultural anthropology highlights the variability of humanity and, as a consequence, it forces us to rethink the nature of the human. What may appear to be natural or fundamental characteristics of humans come to appear cultural and contingent once we start looking beyond our own social worlds.

In this course, we look at a wide range of cultural beliefs, values, and identities to understand: 1) how such cultural intangibles are produced and sustained in the course of people's social lives and yet 2) how these cultural intangibles appear to be grounded in the very nature of reality for those enculturated to them. We focus on ritual in particular as a locus where beliefs and values palpably materialize in social life, connecting people in the mundane here-and-now to seemingly more primordial realms of reality.

Where the first half of the course seeks to situate cultural intangibles in social life, the second half looks at how social life is rooted in these very values and beliefs. We consider social and political arrangements both familiar (the nation, class stratification) and unfamiliar (the patrilineal segmentary lineage, the matricentric virilocal residence group) to see how they are sustained and transformed in concert with cultural beliefs and values. We consider (Lockean) possessive individualism in particular as a cultural model of humans-in-society that increasingly shapes social, political, and economic arrangements around the world.

Ultimately, we aim to be able to bring anthropological methods to bear on our own lives to consider how

we are embedded in and influenced by social, political, historical and cultural environments in ways that we often do not realize. We challenge our own beliefs about the nature of humanity and society, about the moral and immoral, about the valuable and valueless through careful attention to the wide diversity of ways in which humans live. How do humans' construct their socio-cultural environment? What becomes striking about our own social lives when set alongside the social lives of others? What aspects of our socio-cultural surround are particularly potent in shaping the way we live?

More particularly, the course aims 1) to develop students' ability to approach social life as "ethnographers"—that is, to empathize with people through careful attention to their social and cultural surround, and to recognize ourselves as part of particular social and cultural worlds; and 2) to develop the ability to read non-fiction prose—and anthropological writing, in particular—so as to be able to follow and critically appraise arguments, to evaluate and draw conclusions from evidence, and to empathetically engage with diverse forms of humanity through the written word.

Course schedule (subject to revision)

At the start of each week the thematic headings listed below most likely will not mean much to you. That's okay. By the end of each week, the thematic headings for the week's classes should be clear to you. That means you should be able to discuss how the readings relate to the issues mentioned in the thematic headings and how those issues relate to others we have discussed previously in class. If you find at the end of the week that you cannot do so, you should share your questions in class or make an appointment with me or your TA to discuss them during office hours.

Discussion sections will begin on Thursday, September 6 and end on Friday, December 7. There will be NO discussion sections October 18-19 and November 19-20.

Deductive & Inductive Studies of Humanity

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| Aug 29 | Anthropology & Critique, Critique & (Our) Cultural Practices |
| Sept 3 | Labor Day — No Class |
| Sept 5 | A Philosophical View of Anthropolos: Human Nature, Human Rights & the Remaking of the Human
- Locke: The Second Treatise of Government (paragraphs 4-21, 87-131) |
| Sept 10 | The Anthropological Critique of the Human Sciences & the Paradox of Anthropological Induction
- Benedict: <i>Patterns of Culture</i> (Chapter 1: pp 1-7 & Chapter 2)
- New York Times: Why Teenagers Act Crazy |

Relativism, Rights, and Human Nature

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| Sept 12 | Human Rights vs. Anthropological Understanding: Virginity Testing, Relativism, and Ethnocentrism
- Delaney: Seeds of Honor, Fields of Shame (start on p. 37 'The Locale' and read the introduction last)
- New York Times: Turks Clash Over Defense of Virginity Tests |
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Sept 17 | Anything Goes?: Sexual Promiscuity, Cultural Relativism, and Amoralism

- Valeri: Kingship & Sacrifice (pp. 154-161)
- Sahlins: Supplement to the Voyage of Cook (pp. 1-4, 9-26)

Anthropological Understanding in a Relative World: the Ethnographic Method

Sept 19 | The Natives' Point of View: Ethnography & Anthropological Induction

- Malinowski: The Subject, Method, and Scope of this Inquiry (pp. 4-25)
- Descola: *The Spears of Twilight* (Chapters 1 & 2)

Where is the Natives' Point of View?

Sept 24 | Ritual: The Manifestation of Cultural Values and Social Identities in Space & Time

- Barthes: The World of Wrestling

Sept 26 | Ritual Action: the Life of the Nation through an American Cult of the Dead

- Warner: An American Sacred Ceremony

Oct 1 | Ritual Action: Cockfighting and the Restoration of Cosmic Order in Bali

- Bateson: Bali - The Value System of a Steady State (pp. 112-121 only)
- Geertz: Deep Play - Notes on the Balinese Cockfight

Oct 3 | The Ritual Significance of Semen: Homosexuality or the Makings of Men in Papua New Guinea?

- Elliston: Erotic Anthropology: "Ritualized Homosexuality" in Melanesia and beyond (First read the paragraph on p. 853 under the heading: "the Sambia: 'ritualized homosexuality' template." Then, read pp. 848-850, 852-863)

Oct 8 | The Ritual Significance of Sex: Sex Roles & Gender Identities among Travesti

- Kulick: *Travesti* (Introduction, Chapter 1-3)

Oct 10 | The Ritual Significance of Sex: Sex Roles & Gender Identities among Travesti

- Kulick: *Travesti* (Chapters 4-5)

Oct 15 | Midterm Review

*Oct 17 | Midterm

No discussion sections Oct 18-19

Gender, Identity, Kinship: Biological Nature or Social Role?

- Oct 22 Kinship Relations and Gender Identities Decomposed: Rights, Obligations, and Social Roles
 - Oboler: Is the Female Husband a Man?
- Oct 24 Kinship Relations and Gender Identities Composed: Mythical & Sociological Realities
 - Film: Masai Women

Society Without the State: Kinship, Descent, and Polity

- Oct 29 The Segmentary Lineage as a Solution to the Lockean Problem
 - Evans-Pritchard: The Nuer of the Southern Sudan
- Oct 31 Cultural Principles & Social Conflict: the Tensions of Matrilineal Systems
 - Turner: *Schism & Continuity* (Chapter 3)

Society without the State: Gifts & Commodities

- Nov 5 The Market & Gift-exchange: Other Solutions to the Lockean Problem
 - Mauss: *The Gift* (pp. 3-14, 33-46, 71-78)
- Nov 7 Gifts, Status, and the Creation of Social Ties in Papua New Guinea
 - Film: *Ongka's Big Moka*
- Nov 12 From Gifts to Commodities: Bridewealth, Prostitution & the Lockean Individual
 - Wardlow: *Wayward Women* (Chapters 1-3)
- Nov 14 From Gifts to Commodities: Bridewealth, Prostitution & the Lockean Individual
 - Wardlow: *Wayward Women* (Chapters 4-5)

Inequality: Economic Value & Cultural Values

- Nov 19 The Changing Values of Money
 - Hutchinson: The Cattle of Money and the Cattle of Girls among the Nuer, 1930-83

No discussion sections November 19-20

- Nov 21 Thanksgiving Holiday — No Class
- Nov 26 You Are What You Eat: The Value(s) of Things & the Value(s) of People
 - Sahlins: *La Pensée Bourgeoise* (pp. 170-176, 179-185)

Mythical Realities: Cultural Beliefs & Social Realities

Nov 28	Mythical Identities and Colonial Inequalities - Memmi: <i>The Colonizer & The Colonized</i> (Part 2)
Dec 3	Myth Made Reality: Self-Evident Mystifications in a Racial Caste System - Film: OJ - Made in America - Bourgois: Crack in Spanish Harlem
Dec 5	Final Review
Dec 10	Anthropological Research Showcase
*Dec 18	Final Exam (2-5 pm)

Course requirements and general policies

Required Materials. There are two books you will need to purchase at the bookstore:

Kulick, Don. *Travesti: Sex, Gender, and Culture among Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Wardlow, Holly. *Wayward Women: Sexuality and Agency in a New Guinea Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

All other readings are available electronically through Canvas at: <https://utexas.instructure.com/>

An Advisory about the Readings. Both of the books and several of the articles we will be reading this semester contain explicit accounts of sexual practices and sexual assaults. We will be approaching these materials—as with all of the materials discussed in this class—in an anthropological fashion. That means we work to empathize with the experiences of others and we discuss them in a respectful fashion. If you have concerns about the readings and the issues discussed in them, please speak with the instructor or a TA as soon as possible.

Reading as an Anthropological Practice. Though anthropologists typically spend some period of time doing research “in the field,” we gain access to other social and cultural environments largely through reading the accounts of other anthropologists. This course will be no different; we will glimpse other social worlds through careful reading.

And as anthropologists, we are often confused by what we encounter in the field. In this course, we simulate that confusion by grappling with challenging data presented in articles and books written by anthropologists for other trained anthropologists. This course has no textbook. Our goal—through reading, lecture, and discussion—is to come up with anthropological interpretations of this data and to understand the larger anthropological issues and concepts raised by the data and its interpretation. You should treat the reading as a challenge, working to come to grips with the material presented with the help of our authors, the questions I provide to guide your reading, the lectures, and your discussion in sections. The aim is not just to help you become savvy readers of anthropological arguments, but to help you to become better readers more generally, closely tracking arguments that marshal evidence and reasons in support of contestable, surprising claims.

To that end, pay close attention to the evidence we are presented with, the interpretation of that evidence, and the claims the evidence is used to support. Reading is not a passive activity, it is an argument that we are taking part in. We should train ourselves to constantly be outlining the argument of the readings and assessing

the evidence and reasons supporting the argument. What is the main claim of the reading? What position is the author arguing against? What is surprising in the author's account? Why did it surprise you? What evidence does the author supply to support this claim? Is it possible to interpret the evidence in a different way? What additional evidence would it be useful to have? As you do the readings, keep these questions in mind.

Preparation for Class. To assist your reading for each lecture, questions for each reading will be posted on the Canvas website. You should use these questions to guide your reading; they point out the particular issues and data that you need ultimately to take away from the reading. I recommend that you do your best to answer these questions as you do the reading before class. You are welcome to work with classmates to develop your answers to these questions. Then, bring your answers along with the reading to the lecture, where the reading will be discussed further. Following the lecture, you should be comfortable answering the questions on the reading. Again, I encourage you to speak with your classmates about the answers to these questions before and after the lecture. If you are uncertain how to answer some of the questions, you will have the chance to ask questions during your discussion section. Section leaders are not there to provide answers to these questions, though they will facilitate discussion and ask questions that help you to answer the reading questions.

At the end of your discussion section, you will have a quiz that consists of one of the questions on the previous week's readings. At this point, if you have done the reading, attended lecture, worked with classmates to develop answers to the questions, raised any residual questions during your discussion section...at this point, it should prove easy to answer any of the questions from the previous week's readings. Some of the reading questions will also appear on midterms and finals, so you are encouraged to retain your answers to these questions to review in preparation for these exams.

Student Evaluation. Your grade consists of four components:

One-question quizzes	35%
Midterm	25%
Final	30%
Participation	10%

One-question quizzes. There will be 12 quizzes over the course of the semester and your lowest quiz grade will be dropped before calculating your final grade. Your 11 best quiz grades compose 35% of your final grade. These quizzes will consist of one reading question selected from the questions on the two (occasionally, three) most recent sets of assigned readings. Different sections will not necessarily have the same question. Quizzes are closed book. You are allowed—encouraged, in fact—to discuss the questions ahead of time with classmates. Quizzes will be graded with a letter grade (no pluses or minuses):

Excellent (A)	responses that are clear, thorough, and particularly thoughtful, drawing connections to other readings or larger themes discussed in class
Good (B)	responses that offer an accurate answer to the question based on the reading and lecture
Acceptable (C)	responses that show some familiarity with the reading but do not thoroughly answer the question
Unacceptable (0)	missed quizzes and responses that show no familiarity with the reading will receive a zero

Midterm & Final Exams. There will be midterm and final exams. The midterm will be given in class and the final will be given during the assigned final slot for our class. You should not book tickets or make travel plans before finding out when our final exam will be held (see <http://registrar.utexas.edu/students/exams>). The midterm and final will consist of multiple choice, fill in the blank, definition, short answer, long answer, and mapping questions. The questions you are given with the reading for each class will form the basis of some exam questions as will the material covered in lectures. You are also responsible for being able to locate on a world map the country discussed in each of the readings. We will have review classes for both exams that will go over material from

lectures that you should be prepared to answer questions on. The best preparation for exams is to: 1) work through the reading questions in the way described above and be able to identify on a world map the country discussed in the reading; 2) attend lectures and take notes, paying attention not only to answering the reading questions, but to other materials introduced in lectures that are not in the readings; 3) review your lecture notes and discuss them with classmates; 4) raise any questions you have about lectures during discussion section; 5) if questions remain after discussion section, raise your questions in office hours with me or your TA; and 6) attend the review sessions for the exams held during the lecture period prior to the exam. The midterm comprises 25% and the final 30% of your final grade.

Participation. Participation in discussion sections accounts for 10% of your grade. Letter grades (no pluses or minuses) will given for your participation over the course of the semester:

Excellent (A)	regular, respectful, and thoughtful participation that is informed by the readings and lectures
Good (B)	occasional and respectful participation that shows familiarity with the readings and lectures
Acceptable (C)	rare participation, disrespectful participation, or participation that does not indicate familiarity with the readings and lectures
Unacceptable (F)	no participation or more than six absences will receive a failing grade

Grade Ranges. Grade ranges are as follows. Decimal values will not be rounded up when calculating final grades.

A	93-100 (96)	C	73-76 (76)
A-	90-92 (92)	C-	70-72 (72)
B+	87-89 (89)	D+	67-69 (69)
B	83-86 (86)	D	63-66 (66)
B-	80-82 (82)	D-	60-62 (62)
C+	77-79 (79)	F	Less than 60 (59)

Excused Absences & Make-ups. The only absences that will be considered excused are for religious holidays and for extenuating circumstances due to an emergency (with a note from a doctor, nurse, or university official documenting the emergency). If you plan to miss class due to observance of a religious holiday, you must notify the instructor at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of the religious holiday. You will be given an opportunity to complete missed work within a reasonable time after the absence. Otherwise, there will be no make-up quizzes or exams without a note from a doctor, nurse, or university official excusing your absence.

Inside & Outside the Classroom. Readings for the day's class should always be brought to class. I recommend that you print out readings available electronically on Canvas so that you are not dependent on electronic devices to do class readings. Computers, phones, and other electronic devices are allowed in class so long as they are not disruptive to others. If these devices become disruptive, I will ask that they not be brought into class. As long as these devices are not disruptive to others, you are solely responsible for how you use these devices in class. Your TA and I are not responsible for rehashing material that you miss because you are distracted by electronic devices or because you are absent (unless the absence is excused). If you miss a class, you should speak with your classmates to catch up on course announcements and notes. If you attend class and discussion section and still have questions about class materials, please see me or your TA during office hours. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are keeping up with all that is being done in class. Do not hesitate to ask questions in class or during office hours.

Academic Integrity. Each student in the course is expected to abide by the University of Texas Honor Code:

“As a student of The University of Texas at Austin, I shall abide by the core values of the University and uphold academic integrity.”

This means that work you produce on assignments, quizzes and exams is all your own work, unless it is assigned as group work. You are welcome to work with classmates to prepare for quizzes and exams, but you may not help each other in any way while taking quizzes and exams. All quizzes and exams are closed book. Copying answers from any source during quiz or exam periods is a serious offense and you will be subject to academic disciplinary action, including failure of the course. You are responsible for understanding UT's Academic Honesty Policy which can be found at the following web address: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php

Students with Disabilities. Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 512-471-6259, <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>

- Please request a meeting as soon as possible for us to discuss any accommodations
- Please notify me as soon as possible if the material being presented in class is not accessible
- Please notify me if any of the physical space is difficult for you

University Policies

Religious Holy Days. By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence

Q Drop Policy. If you want to drop a class after the 12th class day, you'll need to execute a Q drop before the Q-drop deadline, which typically occurs near the middle of the semester. Under Texas law, you are only allowed six Q drops while you are in college at any public Texas institution. For more information, see: <http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/csacc/academic/adddrop/qdrop>

University Resources for Students. The university has numerous resources for students to provide assistance and support for your learning. Use these to help you succeed in your classes.

- The Sanger Learning Center: For more information, please visit <http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/slc> or call 512-471-3614 (JES A332).
- The University Writing Center offers free, individualized, expert help with writing for any UT student, by appointment or on a drop-in basis. <http://uwc.utexas.edu/>
- The Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC) provides counseling, psychiatric, consultation, and prevention services that facilitate students' academic and life goals and enhance their personal growth and well-being. <http://cmhc.utexas.edu/>
- Student Emergency Services: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/>
- ITS: Need help with technology? <http://www.utexas.edu/its/>
- Libraries: Need help searching for information? <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/>
- Canvas help is available 24/7 at <https://utexas.instructure.com/courses/633028/pages/student-tutorials>