

# ***Introduction to Anthropology: ANT 101***

Oxford College of Emory University

Spring 2010

Dr. Valerie Singer

Office: 101 Language Hall

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 1:30-2:30 or by appointment. (Making an appointment is the BEST way to meet with me in person. Please email me for an appointment or for any other concern.

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## **Course Description**

Anthropology is the study of humankind, across both time and space – from our earliest beginnings to our most current dilemmas and from the most urban ‘modern’ settings to the most rural ‘backwoods’ locales. It is thus an extremely broad discipline. An introductory course such as this one necessarily only brushes the surface of many topics. Yet it is the goal of this course to provide students with an overall understanding of anthropological concepts, particularly the holistic approach to studying humanity. We will touch on each of anthropology’s four sub-disciplines: cultural anthropology, biological anthropology, archaeology, and linguistics, tying each of these subfields to a bio-cultural perspective. We will look at how cultural images of “the other” are formed, and what these images say about those who create them. We will pay close attention to how ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and religion shape and are shaped by culture.

## **Course Objectives:**

By the end of this course students will:

- Be familiar with basic anthropological terms and concepts
- Understand the basic methods and challenges of ethnographic fieldwork
- Understand why race has no biological meaning, but significant, varying, historical and cultural meanings
- Be familiar with the principals of human evolution and modern human variation
- Be familiar with basic traits shared by all primates, and their relevance to evolution
- Be able to discuss the interrelationship of cultural change and continuity
- Understand the significance and meaning of cultural relativism
- Understand basic anthropological approaches to family, kinship, and marriage
- Be able to think holistically about human traits – biological or cultural

## **Required texts**

- The Gebusi: Lives Transformed in a Rainforest World by Bruce Knauft
- Hip Hop Underground, The Integrity and Ethics of Racial Identification by Anthony Kwame Harrison
- Numerous articles on e-reserve (listed with an R on course schedule)

### **Course Grade Breakdown**

Exam One:	15%
Exam Two:	20%
Final Exam:	25%
Quizzes:	10%
Term Paper:	15%
(rough 5% final 10%)	
Attendance and Participation:	15%
Total	100%

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### **Academic Honesty:**

Both Oxford College and I take the matter of academic honesty very seriously. I would like to remind you that you are required to follow the Honor Code. Any suspected breaches to the Honor Code will be referred to the Honor Council for review and possible disciplinary action. This includes acts of plagiarism. I have found in the past that many college students do not understand what does and does not constitute plagiarism. Student papers must be written without the help or collaboration of other anthropology students, though you are welcome to get writing help at the writing center. We will be discussing what constitutes plagiarism and proper citation methods later in the semester.

### **Attendance:**

I will be taking attendance each day. Each student is allowed THREE absences during the semester. This is to allow for the occasional illness, personal matter, or accidental nap. **Each additional absence will result in a 1 point lose to your attendance and participation grade (out of 15 points).** There are only two exceptions to this policy: 1) absences for religious holidays *if you notify me at least one day in advance that you will be absent*, and 2) extreme unexpected situations (extended illnesses, death in the family, etc.). If you have an extreme situation that prevents you from attending class, please notify me as soon as possible, and be prepared to show documentation of the situation. If you do not notify me in a timely manner, I reserve the right NOT to excuse your absence. Please be aware that students with perfect attendance who rarely participate in the classroom will NOT received 15 points on their attendance and participation grade.

### **Participation:**

Your active participation is a vital part of this course. You are expected to have carefully read the assigned materials *before* each class session, and come prepared for discussion. I believe strongly that you can each learn a great deal in the classroom from your fellow students, not just from your professor. We are all both learners and teachers. You share with me the responsibility of creating a classroom atmosphere in which all of your classmates feel comfortable expressing their individual questions, ideas, and opinions.

### **Exams**

There will be three exams over the course of the semester. The third, final exam will be cumulative and given during the final exam period. The exams will all be a combination of definitions, short answer, and essay. I will provide you with a review sheet for each exam, although we may not have specified review sessions before each exam.

**Please note:** if you miss an exam due to unexpected circumstances, you **MUST** contact me within 24 hours of the exam period, or you will not be able to make up the exam. Missed exams can only be made up in extreme situations, i.e. hospitalization or death of a family member. If you are ill at a scheduled exam period, you are expected to take the exam anyway. If you are severely ill, you must contact me **BEFORE** the exam for permission to reschedule.

### **Quizzes**

You will be quizzed weekly on the readings. These reading quizzes will ask questions which are obvious and simple to answer if you have done the readings, and otherwise impossible. They will all be ten questions each, usually 5 multiple choice and 5 true/false. The day of the week of the quizzes will vary, so there is a 'pop' nature to them. Your first quiz will be on the syllabus itself! At the end of the semester, I will count your 10 highest quiz grades. If you are absent from or LATE to class, you will not be able to make up the day's quiz. Usually there are twelve to thirteen quizzes given over the course of the semester.

### **Final Paper**

You will write a 5-6 page paper for this course, further examining the Gebusi and our other course readings in relationship to one aspect of culture: religion, family, gender, or sexuality. I will give you a handout detailing the questions you are to address in the paper at least two weeks before it is due. We will also be discussing anthropological techniques of paper citation and how to avoid plagiarism. Again – do not work with other anthropology students as you write this paper. **Late papers will be graded down a FULL LETTER grade for each day late – INCLUDING Saturday and Sunday.**

### **Grading**

Many students worry about professors' subjectivity in grading. Please remember: I NEVER *give* grades, students *earn* their grades, irrespective of how I feel about them as individual people. The key to an A in this course is hard work, participation, and comprehension of anthropology, not the 'correct opinion' or being buddies with Dr Singer. Please note that I WILL be grading using the plus-minus system.

100-93% = A	79-77% = C+
92-90% = A-	76-73% = C
89-87% = B+	72-70% = C-
86-83% = B	69-60% = D
82-80% = B-	59% and below = F

That being said, I hope you all enjoy this class, as I believe learning should be fun. And anthropology in particular is a fascinating subject which hopefully will have you pondering new aspects of human history and culture long beyond the end of this course! If you find yourself struggling with the material – *please* come see me for help!

### **Making Sense of Anthropology**

Anthropology is the study of humanity, past and present. As such, it is an extremely broad field. The traditional four-field approach of American Anthropology, which this course follows, is particularly holistic. A holistic approach is one that investigates the

interrelated and multifaceted dynamics between seemingly separate parts of a system. Therefore, we can discuss the relationship between orangutans, our grasping thumbs, our depth perception, and the structure of our shoulder sockets. Or we can discuss connections between the local Temples to the gods in Bali, Balinese rice harvests, ducks, and Green Revolution pesticide treatments. Students have sometimes felt that my lectures go on ‘tangents’ in that I do not appear to stay on one subject. Your challenge as a student in this class is to learn how to draw connections between these multiple subjects – i.e. to think holistically and anthropologically. This will be especially challenging without a textbook for you to follow. Therefore it is **IMPERATIVE** to your success in this course that you keep up with the course materials, learn to make holistic connections, and bring it to my attention whenever you may start to feel lost. I am here to help you understand and recognize these connections, both within and outside the classroom.

### **Class Structure**

From day to day our class will be structured in a variety of ways. About once a week I will give you a traditional lecture, with or without power-point. Other days will be focused on discussion, and I will lead or facilitate your conversation with your classmates about the material at hand. Most often, however, I try to blend segments of lecture and segments of discussion in one class. Occasionally you will work in small groups or watch films. I **NEVER** use films as a ‘filler’ or easy day. Ethnographic films serve as an important medium in anthropology to help bring cultures alive in your minds; each film I show I consider valuable. Indeed I have a long list of films I *wish* we had time to watch, and I may ask you to watch a couple films outside of class as part of your homework. At various points in the course I will give you vocabulary lists of important terms, but I do not give students my power point presentations. All this is to say that it is essential for you to take notes everyday in class – even on discussion or film days.

### **Email policy**

I have several guidelines regarding use of email.

First: Please do not use anything but black ink in emails addressed to me or our class conference. Reading colored inks eventually gives me a migraine.

Second: Please address me as “Dr. Singer”, not Ms, not Hey, not Crazy Anthro Lady.

Third: Email is a form of professional communication in the context of this class. Please do not send out emails that are sloppy, choppy, or full of IM language.

Fourth: Please feel free to email me with questions, but not if the question could be easily answered by reading your syllabus!

### **Course Schedule**

(I reserve the right to make additions or changes to this schedule. All changes will be posted on the class conference.

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|------------|--|
| January 13 | Introductions<br>What is Anthropology?   |
| January 15 | Four Field Anthropology<br>Reading: <i>Thinking Holistically</i> (on e-reserve)  |
| January 18 | No Class MLK day   |
| January 20 | The Four Mechanisms of Evolution<br><i>Chapter 3: Evolution</i> by Scupin and Decourse (R)   |
| January 22 | Primate Characteristics and Social Dynamics<br><i>These are Real Swinging Primates</i> (R)<br><i>What Are Friends For?</i> (R)                               |
| January 25 | Understanding Our Cousins<br><i>Chimpanzee Cultures</i> by Whitten and Boesch (R)<br><i>Got Culture?</i> by Stanford (R)<br>Film: Among the Wild Chimpanzees |
| January 27 | <i>Bonobo Sex and Society</i> by Frans deWaal(R)<br>Film Clip: The Uncommon Chimpanzee   |
|            | <b><i>Hominid Evolution</i></b>  |
| January 29 | Bi-pedalism and other developments<br><i>The Evolution of Human Birth</i> by Rosenberg (R)<br><i>Lucy's Baby</i>   |
| February 1 | Early Hominids<br><i>Food For Thought</i> (R)  |
| February 3 | Recent Hominids  |

- Stranger in a New Land* (R)  
*The Littlest Human* (R)
- February 5    The Neandertal Debate  
*Multiregional Theory of Evolution* (R)  
*The Recent African Genesis of Humans* (R)  
 Film: Neandertals on Trial
- February 8    *Who Were the Neandertals?* (R)  
*Hard Times Among the Neandertals* (R)
- February 10   Why There is No Such Thing as Biological Race  
*A Short History of Scientific Racism in America* (R)  
*The Perilous Idea of Race* (R)  
*Skin Deep* (R)
- February 12   **Exam One**
- February 15   ***Cultural Anthropology***  
 Ethnographic Fieldwork: The Bakairi and the Yanomamo  
*Doing Fieldwork Among the Yanomamo* by Chagnon (R)  
*Lessons in Introductory Anthropology from the Bakairi* by Picchi (R)
- February 17   Anthropological Ethics and Cultural Relativism  
*Thinking Ethically in Anthropology* (R)  
*Collecting your Fossils Alive* from Skull Wars (R)  
 Film: Ishi
- February 19   Linguistic Anthropology  
*Reading Shakespeare in the Bush* (R)  
*To Give Up on Words, Silence Among the Mescalero Apache* (R)
- February 22   ***Families, Kinship, and Marriage***  
 Marriage and Kinship in Anthropology  
*How Many Fathers are Best for a Child?* (R)  
*When Brothers Share a Wife* (R)
- February 24   Families and Gender  
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*Arranging a Marriage in India* (R)  
 (additional reading TBA)
- February 26   Gender and Sexuality  
*Multiple Genders Among North American Indians* (R)  
*Neither Man nor Woman* (R)
- March 1       Reciprocity and Exchange

	<i>Eating Christmas in the Kalahari</i> by Lee (R)
March 3 **	Families and Reciprocity Claire Farrer from <i>Thunder Rides a Black Horse</i>
March 5	<i>Potlatching</i> (R)
March 8-12	SPRING BREAK <b><i>THERE WILL BE NO WORK ASSIGNED OVER SPRING BREAK. I WANT ALL STUDENTS TO TAKE A BREAK FROM THIS COURSE, AND COME BACK REFRESHED AND READY TO WORK HARD FOR SEVEN MORE WEEKS</i></b>
March 15	<b><i>Religion</i></b> <b><i>Candomble and Dr Singer's fieldwork</i></b> (no assigned reading)
March 17	Religion and Liminality Victor Turner: <i>Betwixt and Between</i> (R)
March 19	Children, Death, and Spirituality <i>I Can Only Move My Feet Towards Mizuko Kuyo</i> (R)
March 22	<b><u>Exam 2</u></b>
March 24	Gebusi intro-chapter 2
March 26	Sorcery and other challenges to cultural relativism Gebusi chapters 3-4
March 29	Gender and sexuality revisited Gebusi chapters 5-6
March 31	Cultural continuity and change Gebusi chapters 7-8
April 2	Development and progress (?) Gebusi chapters 9-10
April 5	Gebusi chapters 11-12
April 7	<b><i>A Glimpse at Medical Anthropology</i></b> Dancing Skeletons chapters
April 9	Monique and the Mango Rains Intro-Chapter 2

**Paper Rough draft due**

April 12	Langwick
April 14	<u>Hip Hop</u> Introduction and chapter 1
April 16	<u>Hip Hop</u> chapter 2 <b>Paper final draft due in class</b>
April 19	<u>Hip Hop</u> chapter 3
April 21	<u>Hip Hop</u> chapter 4
April 23	<u>Hip Hop</u> chapter 5
April 26	Last Day of Class

**Final Exam :**

Tuesday May 4<sup>th</sup> 2-5 PM

**PLEASE NOTE:** I do not have the ability to let you take your final exam at any time other than the scheduled time for your section. If you wish to take the exam at any other time, you must get permission from Dean Anderson in Academic Affairs. They are very strict in this matter.