

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

Oxford College of Emory University

Spring 2009

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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
- Guest of the Sheik, An Ethnography of An Iraqi Village by Elizabeth Fernea
- Negras in Brazil, Re-envisioning Black Women, Citizenship, and the Politics of Identity by Kia Lilly Caldwell
- 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%
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.

I will be setting up a class conference for us on Learn Link. **As part of your participation grade, you need to contribute to the class conference regularly.** Your contributions may include comments on the readings or in-class lectures, discussions, or films. I also encourage you to write “discussion questions” for the rest of the class to

respond to or comment on. I envision this conference as being a way to create more dialogue between students and help connected anthropology to our daily lives.

### **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 final paper as a mini ethnological paper. In the paper you will analyze one aspect of culture as it appears within Papua New Guinea and Iraq according to the ethnographies we have read. You may choose between the topics of religion, gender, sexuality, or marriage and family. Consider how each anthropologist approaches the topic and what we can learn from a cross-cultural analysis. 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.** Outside research is not required for these papers.

### **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.

### **Student Instructor**

Our student instructor, Julie Margolis, will be conducting weekly supplemental instruction sessions. Julie is an anthropology major, and was one of the strongest students in this course last semester. I **STRONGLY** encourage students to meet with Julie for help, tutoring, and guidance with anthropology. Please do not wait until the night before the first exam to seek her help. I will be posting the schedule of her SI hours in the first weeks of the semester.

### **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: Personal or private email should be addressed directly to me. Any questions that you believe maybe relevant to other students as well can be sent to the class conference.

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

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

### 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 14 | Introductions<br>What is Anthropology?   |
| January 16 | Four Field Anthropology<br>Reading: <i>Thinking Holistically</i> (on e-reserve)  |
| January 21 | The Four Mechanisms of Evolution<br><i>Chapter 3: Evolution</i> by Scupin and Decourse (R)   |
| January 23 | Primate Characteristics and Social Dynamics<br><i>These are Real Swinging Primates</i> (R)<br><i>What Are Friends For?</i> (R)                               |
| January 26 | 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 28 | <i>Bonobo Sex and Society</i> by F deWaal(R)<br>Film Clip: The Uncommon Chimpanzee   |
|            | <b><i>Hominid Evolution</i></b>  |
| January 30 | Bi-pedalism and other developments<br><i>The Evolution of Human Birth</i> by Rosenberg (R)<br><i>Lucy's Baby</i>   |
| February 2 | Early Hominids<br><i>Food For Thought</i> (R)  |
| February 4 | Recent Hominids<br><i>Stranger in a New Land</i> (R)<br><i>The Littlest Human</i> (R)  |

- February 6     The Neandertal Debate  
*Multiregional Theory of Evolution* (R)  
*The Recent African Genesis of Humans* (R)  
 Film: Neandertals on Trial
- February 9     *Who Were the Neandertals?* (R)  
*Hard Times Among the Neandertals* (R)
- February 11    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 13    **Exam One**
- February 16    ***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 18    Anthropological Ethics and Cultural Relativism  
*Thinking Ethically in Anthropology* (R)  
*Collecting your Fossils Alive* from Skull Wars (R)  
 Film: Ishi
- February 20    Linguistic Anthropology  
*Reading Shakespeare in the Bush* (R)  
*To Give Up on Words, Silence Among the Mescalero Apache* (R)
- February 23    ***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 25    Families and Gender  
*The Meanings of Macho, Changing Mexican Male Identities* (R)  
*Arranging a Marriage in India* (R)
- February 27    Gender and Sexuality  
*Multiple Genders Among North American Indians* (R)  
*Neither Man nor Woman* (R)
- March 2        Anthropology of Religion  
*Centering, Lessons Learned from Mescalero Apaches* (R)  
*It Takes a Village Healer* (R)

March 4	Foraging vs Agriculture <i>Were Early Agriculturalists Less Healthy Than Food Collectors?</i> (R) <i>Disease and Death in Dr. Dickson's Mounds</i> (R)
March 6	Reciprocity and Exchange <i>Eating Christmas in the Kalahari</i> by Lee (R) <i>Potlatching</i> (R)
March 9-13	SPRING BREAK
March 16	<b><i>Cultural Change in Papua New Guinea</i></b> Gebusi intro-chapter 2
March 18	Sorcery and other challenges to cultural relativism Gebusi chapters 3-4
March 20	Gender and sexuality revisited Gebusi chapters 5-6
March 23	Cultural continuity and change Gebusi chapters 7-8
March 25	Development and progress (?) Gebusi chapters 9-10
March 27	Gebusi chapters 11-12
March 30	<b><u>Exam 2</u></b>
April 2	<b><i>Iraqi Women's Culture</i></b> Participant-Observation and its challenges Guests of the Sheik Chapters 1-4
April 4	History and the Ethnographic Moment Guests of the Sheik Chapters 5-8
April 7	One Wife or Four? Guests of the Sheik Chapters 14-17
April 9	The world of women Guests of the Sheik Chapters 9-13
April 11	Guests of the Sheik Chapters 18-21
April 14	They never envied me: through the eyes of the other

Guests of the Sheik Chapters 22-Post Script  
***Race, Gender, and Activism in Brazil***  
April 16 Term Paper Due  
Negras, Prologue and Introduction  
  
April 18 Negras, Chapter 1 and 2  
  
April 21 Negras, chapter 3  
*The Everyday Wounds of Color* by John Burdick (R)  
  
April 23 Negras chapters 4 and 5  
  
April 25 Negras chapters 6 and epilogue  
  
April 28 Last Day of Class

**Final Exam :**

Thursday April 30th 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.