

Introduction to Anthropology: ANT 101

Oxford College of Emory University

Fall 2006

Dr. Valerie Singer

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and by appointment (any changes to office hours will be posted on class conference)

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(Feel free to call me at home, however I ask that you don't call after 9 PM.)

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. 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 religion, conversion, and ritual
- Understand basic anthropological approaches to family, kinship, and marriage
- Be able to think holistically about human traits – biological or cultural

Required texts

- Blessed Anastacia, Women, Race, and Popular Christianity in Brazil by John Burdick
- The Gebusi: Lives Transformed in a Rainforest World by Bruce Knauff
- Guest of the Sheik, An Ethnography of An Iraqi Village by Elizabeth Fernea
- 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%
Final Paper:	15%
Attendance and Participation:	15%
Total	100%

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 TWO 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 ahead of time 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 remain silent all semester 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 multiple choice, 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.

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 multiple choice or one sentence short answer questions. 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!

Final Paper

You will write a 6-8 page final paper as a mini ethnological paper. In the paper you will analyze one aspect of culture as it appears within Papua New Guinean, Brazilian, and Iraqi according to the ethnographies we have read. You may choose between the topics of religion, gender, ethnicity, or 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 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 in some semesters I have required students to watch extra films outside of class. (Not this semester.) 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.

Anthropology Club

Several anthropology students are re-invigorating the anthropology club this year. Together, the club and I hope to plan several fun and educational events. If you are interested in the anthropology club, please talk to me and/or email this year’s club president, Bilal Sarwari.

Course Schedule

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

August 30 Introductions

September 1 What is Anthropology?
Reading: *Thinking Holistically* (on e-reserve)

September 4 **Labor Day**, no class

September 6 ***Understanding Evolution***
Chapter 3: Evolution by Scupin and DeCorse (e-reserve)

September 8 ***Non-Human Primates***
Primate Characteristics and Social Dynamics
These are Real Swinging Primates (R)
What Are Friends For? (R)

September 11 Chimpanzees
Chimpanzee Hunting Behavior and Human Evolution by Stanford (R)
Got Culture? by Stanford (R)
Dim Forest, Bright Chimps by Boesch and Boesch-Achermann (R)
Film: Among the Wild Chimpanzees

September 13 ***Hominid Evolution***
Bi-pedalism and other developments
The Evolution of Human Birth by Rosenberg (R)

September 15 Early Hominids
Food For Thought (R)
Once We Were Not Alone (R)

September 18 Recent Hominids
Who Were the Neandertals? (R)
Hard Times Among the Neandertals (R)
Erectus (R)

September 20 The Neandertal Debate
Multiregional Theory of Evolution (R)
The Recent African Genesis of Humans (R)
Film: Neandertals on Trial

September 22 On Discovering the “Hobbit”
The Littlest Human (R)

September 25 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)

September 27 **Exam One**

Cultural Anthropology

September 29 Ethnographic Fieldwork: The Bakairi, the Yanomamo, and the Nacirema
Doing Fieldwork Among the Yanomamo by Chagnon (R)
Lessons in Introductory Anthropology from the Bakairi by Picchi (R)

October 2 Anthropological Ethics and Cultural Relativism
Thinking Ethically in Anthropology (R)
Collecting your Fossils Alive from Skull Wars (R)
Film: Ishi
Yom Kippur (please see attendance for my policy on religious holidays)

October 4 Linguistic Anthropology
Reading Shakespeare in the Bush (R)
To Give Up on Words, Silence Among the Mescalero Apache (R)
Portrait of the Whiteman (R)

Families, Kinship, and Marriage

October 6 Marriage and Kinship in Anthropology
How Many Fathers are Best for a Child? (R)
African Polygyny, Family Values and Contemporary Changes (R)
When Brothers Share a Wife (R)

October 9 FALL BREAK

October 11 Families and Gender
Andean Mestizos: Growing Up Female and Male by McKee (R)

October 13 Gender and Sexuality
When Debbie Met Chris (R)
Multiple Genders Among North American Indians by Nanda (R)

October 16 Anthropology of Religion
Healing the Body, Healing the Soul by Hattari (R)
Manuel, Apprentice Yatiri by Kuznar (R)

Archaeology in Brief

October 18 Archaeological Methods
Archaeology: an introduction by Fagan (R)
New Women of the Ice Age(R)

- October 20 Historical Archaeology
 In Small Things Forgotten by Deetz (R)
 Uncommon Ground by Ferguson (R)
 Movie clip: *Digging for Slaves*
- October 23 Foraging vs Agriculture
 Were Early Agriculturalists Less Healthy Than Food Collectors? (R)
 Life Without Chiefs (R)
 Potlatching (R)
- October 25 Reciprocity and Exchange
 Eating Christmas in the Kalahari by Lee (R)
 Too Many Bananas (R)
- October 27 ***Cultural Change in Papua New Guinea***
 Gebusi intro-chapter 2
- October 30 Sorcery and other challenges to cultural relativism
 Gebusi chapters 3-4
- November 1 Gender and sexuality revisited
 Gebusi chapters 5-6
- November 3 Cultural continuity and change
 Gebusi chapters 7-8
- November 6 Development and progress (?)
 Gebusi chapters 9-10
- November 8 Gebusi chapters 11-12
- November 10 **Exam 2**
- November 13 **Religion, Race, and Culture in Brazil**
 Brazil's racial spectrum (white men and black women)
 Blessed Anastacia Introduction and Chap 1
- November 15 The Cultural Construction of Race
 Blessed Anastacia chapters 2 & 3
- November 17 Brazil's religious spectrum
 Blessed Anastacia Chapters 4 & 5
- November 20 Blessed Anastacia Chapter 6 and Conclusion

November 22-24 THANKSGIVING BREAK

Iraqi Women's Culture

- November 27 Participant-Observation and its challenges
Guests of the Sheik Chapters 1-4
- November 29 History and the Ethnographic Moment
Guests of the Sheik Chapters 5-8
- December 1 The world of women
Guests of the Sheik Chapters 9-13
- December 4 One Wife or Four
Guests of the Sheik Chapters 14-17
- December 6 Guests of the Sheik Chapters 18-21
- December 8 They never envied me: through the eyes of the other
Guests of the Sheik Chapters 22-Post Script
- December 11 Last day of class
Final Paper Due

Final Exam :

For the 9:35 MWF section: Thursday December 14th, 9-12 AM

For the 10:40 MWF section: Tuesday December 19th, 9-12 AM

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 or Dean Linville in Academic Affairs. They are very strict in this matter.