

**ANTH 202: Concepts & Methods in Cultural Anthropology**  
**Spring 2012 • Oxford College**  
**Email: [adenico@emory.edu](mailto:adenico@emory.edu)**

**Instructor:** Alicia DeNicola

**Office:** Language Hall 101

**Phone:** 4-4614 (it's better to EMAIL)

**Class room:** Humanities Hall 201

**Meeting times:** MoWeFr, 11:45am – 12:35 pm

**Office Hours:** Tu & Th by appointment

*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 covers some of the most influential theories and methods in anthropology from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present. The class is split into two distinct sections. The first half of the class is spent on familiarizing ourselves with a number of important theoretical paradigms coupled with concrete ethnographic examples, often from US culture. In the second half of the class, we will *practice* anthropological methods with an important focus on the connections between method and theory. By the end of the course, students should have an intimate sense of these paradigms, approaches and major critiques into using such paradigms as analytical tools, as well as insights into associated fundamental, perennial issues in anthropology.

It is useful to keep in mind that cultural anthropology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is often a deconstructive discipline. A goal of this class is to understand what this means, how anthropology got to where it is today, and how the historical and political contexts of particular times influenced both theory and method. Practicing anthropology in this class includes more than simply an understanding of particular methods and how to practice them. It is also about understanding the importance of such methodology within the context of anthropological theory and 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 methodology 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.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- Become familiar with dominant theories in cultural anthropology
- Become familiar with basic ethnographic methods
- Gain experience as ethnographic fieldworker, and begin developing skills of participant-observation, interviewing, taking fieldnotes
- Develop skills in reading and analyzing theoretical texts
- Develop a richer understanding of the connections between theory and methods in anthropology and the tensions and challenges they pose
- Improve analytic writing skills

**GRADE DISTRIBUTION:**

Essay #1 (3 pages/collaboration possible)	.....	10%
Midterm Exam (multiple choice and short answer)	.....	15%
Final project prospectus (Collaboration possible)	.....	10%
Write up of Final Project	.....	15%
Focus Papers & Comments (~1 page)	.....	10%
Leading In-Class Discussion	.....	10%
Group Presentation	.....	10%
Pop quizzes	.....	10%
Class participation	.....	10%

**REQUIRED TEXTS** (available at the book store or try [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com)): 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 may lose participation AND quiz points if you do not have your books or electronic readings with you. Electronic readings can be found on blackboard.

- Abu-Lughod, Lila. 2008. *Writing women's worlds: Bedouin stories*. 15th ed. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Boellstorff, Tom. 2010. *Coming of age in second life: an anthropologist explores the virtually human*. Princeton N.J.; Woodstock: Princeton University Press.
- 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. 1997. *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 online on blackboard:**

- 1) How to Read by Paul N. Edward
- 2) The AAA Citation Guide (examples begin on page 7)
- 3) Dr. DeNicola's writing Rubric "How I Grade"
- 4) "Chapter 1: Seeing" FROM *Writing Analytically* by Rosenwasser and Stephen

**WRITTEN WORK AND ASSIGNMENTS:** All papers 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. Perhaps most importantly, 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- on the first day, a C+ on the second, etc.). Any paper turned in more than 15 minutes after the start of class will be considered a day late. I never accept late *final* papers. Plan for this.

Essays will need to be turned into me electronically, via email ([adenico@emory.edu](mailto:adenico@emory.edu)) as an attached .pdf file and the subject line must contain the word CONMETH. It is your responsibility to make sure I receive your paper. The chances that I will not receive it increase if you do not include the heading CONMETH. ALL essays brought to class for peer review must be

STAPLED neatly. ALL written material MUST include a full bibliography and in-text citations that include the author's last name, date of publication and page number. For instance: (Durkheim 1984: 35). Papers turned in unstapled or without citations and a bibliography will not be graded (and will be graded down for every additional day they are late). Carry one of those small staplers you can buy for \$1, but staple your papers!

Essay papers are double-spaced, in 12 pt. times or times roman type with one-inch margins. One double spaced page equals approximately 300 words. Topics will be handed out at least 1 week before the essays are due (due dates are specified in the syllabus). Written work submitted after the due date and time will be lowered by one third of a grade for each day (or fraction of a day) late, except in cases of *documented* illness or emergency. Work submitted 15 minutes beyond the start of class will be considered one day late. There will be no unexcused incompletes.

**READING RESPONSES:** Careful and analytic reading in this class is critical. To help you to think substantially through your readings before class, and to help you to be prepared to discuss the readings beyond the superficial, you will be required to turn in one-page (300 word) responses for each class reading. You may miss two responses without recourse. However, you will lose corresponding points for each response you miss after two. Grades for responses will work as follows: I will count responses to make sure you have done the prerequisite number of responses (worth two points each). I will also choose 8 of the responses randomly and grade them individually (worth 5 points each). You may choose up to two of your best responses, if you like, and ask me to grade those as two of my random selection.

**CLASS PARTICIPATION:** Includes timely completion of reading assignments (by the class in which the material is to be discussed), and regular and thoughtful contribution to class and group discussions. Not having your assignment in class (in hard copy) will significantly affect your class participation grade.

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 field site and source of data. Thus learning from and LISTENING RESPECTFULLY to your classmates provides both valuable information and an exercise in listening (a very important skill for an anthropologist 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 your learning experience as are the ideas of the instructor and the experts in the field. Learn to listen and use your classmates' ideas as data. *In addition, each of you will be responsible for class presentations on various readings.*

**POP QUIZES:** I give occasional "pop" quizzes. Quizzes are designed to encourage timely reading. They will be short, generally one-word answers about the reading due for that day. You are responsible for knowing the author and date of the reading, having read the epigrams, titles and subtitles, and for having made any connections between authors and other readings. As part of your "participation" grade these assignments cannot be made up. If you are late to class and miss the quiz, they cannot be made up.

**ATTENDANCE & BEING ON TIME:** One of the major premises of this class is that we are here to help one another learn. If you're not in class you can't 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 OF A GRADE FOR EACH CLASS THAT YOU MISS AFTER YOUR SECOND ABSENCE. Absences are only excused if ALL absences (including the first two) are excused. If you are late to class more than three times it will be counted as an absence. Much of this class is focused on in-class discussion

and activities that you will not be able to make up. This will affect your grade. If *you* miss class, *everyone* suffers.

**COMPUTERS, CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES:** Note taking in this class is critical, but you should not need to rely on a computer. My experience with computers in the classroom is that they provide more of a distraction than assistance, and I ask that they remain put away during class time unless they are being used for presentation or group work purposes. Cell phones should be turned OFF (not on vibrate or silent) in the classroom and kept in your backpack (NOT on the top of your desk). Leaving in the middle of class to have a phone conversation is not only obvious, but I (and the majority of your classmates) also consider it rude and unacceptable. The same goes for texting underneath the table during class. Other electronic devices should be turned off and put away unless they are being shared with the class in a presentation/demonstration context.

#### **THE SMALL PRINT:**

*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).*