

# ANTH 2301 INTRODUCTION TO CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

## Spring 2014

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**Description:** This class explores the basic concepts, theories, and methods of cultural anthropology. It explores variations in cultural values, social practices, religion, rules of law, and worldview in different cultures around the world. Focuses on understanding the forces that shape cultures and societies, and how they adapt to a rapidly changing world.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES AND PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

**Learning Outcome 1:** Students will be able to recognize and contribute to a culturally diverse world.

**Performance Objective 1:** Students will distinguish the major figures in cultural anthropology (Boas, Malinowski, Mead, Radcliffe-Brown, Geertz) and identify anthropology's contribution in documenting worldwide cultural diversity.

**Performance Objective 2:** Students will have an in-depth familiarity with at least one ethnography of a non-Western culture.

**Learning Outcome 2:** Students will be able to utilize the comparative perspective to better understand both their own culture and other cultures.

**Performance Objective 1:** Students will describe the various kinds of subsistence strategies used around the world.

**Performance Objective 2:** Students can distinguish the many different kinship structures that exist and the role of kinship in culture.

**Performance Objective 3:** Students will compare and contrast the different forms of political organization that have been documented by anthropologists.

**Learning Outcome 3:** Students will be able to think critically about contemporary social issues and apply anthropological concepts to their everyday lives.

**Performance Objective 1:** Students can explain the different anthropological perspectives on race and ethnicity (instrumentalism and primordialism).

**Performance Objective 2:** Students will recognize the importance of gender and class in contemporary anthropological work.

**Performance Objective 3:** Students will utilize anthropological concepts (participant observation, cross-cultural perspective, etc) and interpret a component of their own lives (family, job, neighborhood) using these concepts.

## **Required Texts:**

Podelefsky, A., P. Brown, and S. Lacy  
2012 *Applying Anthropology: An Introductory Reader*. McGraw Hill: New York, NY. **[this book will be referred to as *Reader* in the syllabus]**

Toth, Jennifer  
1995 *The Mole People: Life in the Tunnels Beneath New York City*  
Chicago Review Press: Chicago, IL

Andreatta, Susan and Gary Ferraro  
2013 *Ellements of Culture*. Wadsworth, Inc.

**Disability Accommodations:** Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first contact Ms. Rebecca Marin, Coordinator, Services for Students with Disabilities (214-768-4557) to verify the disability and establish eligibility for accommodations. They should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements. (See University Policy No. 2.4.).

**Religious Observance:** Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence. (See University Policy No. 1.9.).

**Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities:** Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work. (University Undergraduate Catalogue).

## **Attendance**

Students are expected to attend all class sessions. If you will not be able to attend a specific session, you must make arrangements with another student to get copies of notes, etc. Because of the nature of Summer Sessions, only two (2) absences for any reason will be excused before a student is dropped from the course. Assignments must be turned in on time; for each 24-hour period an assignment is late, one full grade will be deducted (e.g., an “A” paper will become a “B” paper). Appropriate medical and family excuses will be accepted, with proof, in order to establish new dates for assignments.

## **Course Assignments:**

**Attendance/Discussion Participation (10%):** Participation will be defined as actively engaging in the class project at all stages, from its initial planning, research, development, and presentation.

Index Card Quizzes (20%): A quick 5 minute quiz on an Index Card will be given first thing every day to verify that you have done the readings from the night before. You are allowed to skip one (1) of them or throw out your lowest score.

Midterm Exam (35%): The writing assignments are due every week at the beginning of class. The assignment due each day is the one from **the previous day's** syllabus. For every 24 hours it is late, you will receive one grade less than earned by its content (an A becomes a B, a B becomes a C, etc).

Final Exam (35%): The final exam shall consist of watching a 2 hour movie in class during which you are welcome to take notes. You'll be given a take home exam asking you to demonstrate your understanding of the basic concepts of anthropology taught in this class by recognizing them in and explain them through the film. **Only hard copies of the exams will be accepted and must be received no later than the beginning of our scheduled time for the Final Exam. For every hour it is late, you will receive one grade less than earned by its content. No exceptions that have not been granted before the week of the final exam.**

### **Course Format**

Each class will begin with a quick 5 minute Index Card quiz based on the previous week's readings followed by a Power Point lecture, short teaching film, and discussion groups. Homework for the night will be discussed before dismissal.

**The readings listed under each date should be read the night BEFORE you come to class.**

### **CLASS SCHEDULE**

#### **Tuesday, January 21: What is Anthropology?**

Go over syllabus, course outcomes,

**Film:** *Careers in Anthropology*

#### **Tuesday, January 28: How Do Anthropologists Perceive the Concept of Culture?**

**Have Read before class:** *Reader:* Article 29, Body Ritual among the Nacirema pg. 200 and The Mole People Introduction and chapter 1

**Film:** *Them and Us: Cultural Awareness*

**Notebook question:** The Mole People chapter 1 & 5- Define culture and sub-culture. How has American culture influenced the sub-culture in the tunnels? What types of cultural adjustments do you think you would face if you had to move into the tunnels? What are the immediate differences you see between "us" and "them."

#### **Tuesday, February 4: What Do Anthropologists Gather Their Data?**

**Have Read before class:** *Blackboard:* Methods for learning About Culture and The Mole People, Chapter 8 & 17

**Film:** *How Cultures Are Studied (30 min)*

**Activity:** Mapping the Block

**Notebook question:** The Mole People, Chapter 8 & 17 -What were some of the things Jennifer Toth did in order to establish an “in or good relationship with her research population? Did you find those methods ethical? Why or why not? What are some of the risks and rewards of her methodology?

**Tuesday, February 11: How Do People Make A Living?**

**Have Read before class:** *Blackboard: The Massai Adapt* and The Mole People, Chapter 5 and 10

**Film:** *With These Hands* (33 min)

**Notebook question:** The Mole People, Chapter 10 - How do the Mole People make a living? Discuss at least two different food getting strategies used by the people in the tunnel? How do they obtain other things that they need for survival? How do they obtain other things that they need?

**Tuesday, February 18: What Role Does Food Play in Culture?**

Lecture: *Text: Hand out – Food in a Social Context,*

**Have Read before class** *Reader: Article 31 “Eating Christmas in the Kalahari” pg 210* and The Mole People, Chapter 12, 13

**Homework Due:** Notebook questions 3

**Film:** *A World of Food: Tastes and Taboos in Different Cultures* (34 min)

**Notebook Question**

**Tuesday, March 4: How Are Goods Distributed and Exchanged?**

**Have Read before class:** *Blackboard: The Potlatch* and The Mole People, Chapter 6

**Film:** *Onka’s Big Moka*

**Notebook question:** The Mole People chapter 6- How do economic activities define the Mole People? What is the relationship between the unpredictability of resources for the tunnel people and the level of sharing in their society? How is their system a good fit for their environment? How do they obtain the things they need?

**Tuesday, March 11: Spring Break**

Read The Mole People, Chapter 3 and 23

**Tuesday, March 18: Why Do People Get Married and Have Families?**

**Have Read before class** *Reader: Article 34 – “When Brothers Share a Wife” pg 226* and The Mole People Chapter 9 & 14 & 2

**Film:** *Taboo: Blood Bonds*

**Notebook question:** The Mole People chapter 9 & 14 & 2- What are the different ways the tunnel people define family? Support your answer with detailed examples. How is this different or the same as the way you define family?

**Midterm Exam**

**Tuesday, March 25: Mid Term**

**Tuesday, April 1: How are Culture and Power Connected?**

**Have Read before class** *Reader: Article 46- "The Kpelle Moot" pg 349 and The Mole People Chapter 11 & 20*

**Film:** *Taboo: Justice*

**Notebook question:** The Mole People chapter 11 & 20- How do the Mole People organize themselves politically and for what purposes? What are some of the means of social control used in the tunnels? Who are they used by and for what purposes (what are they trying to control)?

**Tuesday, April 8: What Can Anthropology Tell Us about Religion and Worldview?**

**Have Read before class:** *Reader: Article 49 "Do Muslim Women Rally Need Saving" pg 368 and The Mole People Chapter 21 & 16*

**Film:** *Paper Gods*

**Notebook question:** The Mole People chapter 21 & 16 - The Mole People are not a people without faith. Describe at least 2 examples of the Mole People having a supernatural belief. What are some of the social and psychological functions of their religions?

**Tuesday, April 15: What is Human Language?**

**Have Read before class:** *Reader: Article 27 "Lost in Translation" pg. 187 and The Mole People Chapter 24*

**Film:** *American Tongues*

**Notebook question:** The Mole People chapter 24- The Mole people seem to be reluctant to talk to those inside and outside the tunnels but effectively use various forms of communication within the tunnels. Discuss at least 5 words or terms the Mole people have created for their culture – what do these words/terms mean? How is the vocabulary of the mole people's language affected or influenced by its sub-culture? Give at least two different examples of non-verbal communication used by the Mole People within the tunnels? What do they mean? Why were those particular forms of communication chosen, how are they a "fit" for their sub-culture?

**Tuesday, April 22: What Can Anthropology Tell Us about Social Inequality?**

**Have Read before class** *Blackboard: Inequalities and The Mole People Chapter 4*

**Film:** *People Like Us: Social Class in America*

**Notebook question:** The Mole People chapter 4- Is there any social stratification in the tunnels? Qualify your answer with details. What factors determine social ranking in this sub-culture? Compare the Mole people with Tammy and her family in the film. How does clinging to the bottom rung of the socioeconomic ladder effect people's chances of "making it"? What impact do you think government policies (for example, regarding child care or the availability of public housing) have on Tammy's and the Mole People's ability to achieve success in life? How do you think global policies, or lack thereof (for example, regarding international aid, labor laws, or environmental laws) effect the world's poor and their chances of success in life? Support your answer with specific theories, terminology, and examples that you have been exposed to through the lectures, readings, and class film.

**Tuesday, April 29: What Can Anthropology Tell Us about Globalization and Culture Change?**

**Have Read before class:** *Reader: Article 50- The Price of Progress pg. 375 and The Mole People Chapter 19*

**Film:** *Advertising Missionaries*

**Notebook question:** The Mole People chapter 19- How has globalization affected some of the citizens of New York so that they eventually ended up in the tunnels? Do you think that continued globalization will eventually force more people into the tunnels? Qualify your answers. Who are the most vulnerable and why?

**Tuesday, May 6: No Class - Reading Day {Finish The Mole People}**

**Tuesday, May 13: Final Exam**