

Introductory Anthropology

T & R || 11am – 12:15pm

Instructor:

Office:

Office Hours: W 10am – 12pm

Required Text:

- *Essentials of Cultural Anthropology: A Toolkit for a Global Age, 3E* by Kenneth Guest
- All additional readings or media will be made available or under “Course Files” and will be linked in “Modules” on Canvas.

Course Description:

This course is designed to provide an overview of major concepts in the study of anthropology. Through readings, discussions, and films or other visual media, we will examine how anthropological concepts and methods can be used to understand human similarities and differences. Awareness of the anthropological perspective means challenging our own assumptions and cultural preconceptions about ourselves, other peoples, and the world around us. Using ethnographic case studies of cultures from around the world and in the U.S., the class will examine some critical areas of anthropological knowledge, including social inequality, gender, race, ethnicity, and nationalism. The goal is to reveal our own cultural biases and explore other ways of living and knowing practiced by peoples here and around the world. In the past, anthropologists usually studied distant and “foreign” peoples, the more different from “us” the better. We will look at this “we/they” dichotomy in the context of today’s increasingly interconnected world and explore what happens when anthropological tools are used not only to look at the “other,” but in the analysis of our own complex, diverse society.

Course Objectives:

The principal goal of this course is to enable students to develop the ability to think critically about the world around them while also learning to appreciate and understand cultural difference. While providing an overview of key topics and debates in cultural anthropology, the course aims to help students develop the abilities to understand the complex variety of factors – including culture, history, power, politics, and social inequality – that influence and impact the lives of humans around the world.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. Understand how anthropology is used to investigate the human condition; and to formulate basic questions about the nature of social organization and institutions.
2. Develop analytical skills to abstract from their daily lives through the lens of anthropological concepts.
3. Understand the role played by factors such as race, language, art, gender, ethnicity, economic status, kinship, marriage, and globalization in influencing human social interaction in the past and the present.

There will be several small activities throughout the semester, such as taking and uploading a picture, posting questions on Canvas, or filling out surveys. Completion of these assignments will count toward your participation grade.

Exams. Exams will not be cumulative, be open-book, and administered on Canvas. They will be available for periods of 24-40 hours. We will always have room for review in discussion boards on Canvas.

Attendance and Participation. I am sensitive to each of us having different levels of comfort sharing thoughts, questions, and opinions in a group. This class involves discussion, and a successful learning environment does hinge on everyone's participation in the classroom. While I ask that everyone speak, this also means that I may ask voices heard more often to give room to those heard less often. Participation can include attending office hours. See attendance policy above.

Course Schedule

8/26 Welcome and introductions

Welcome survey, **Assignment #1 due by 8/29 at 11:59pm**

Culture and Anthropology

8/31 What is anthropology?

Read: Miner, H. "Body Ritual among the Nacirema." (CANVAS)

Guest, Chapter 1 (CANVAS)

9/2 What is culture? contd...

Read: Guest, Chapter 2 (CANVAS)

Watch: Richard Kish clip (CANVAS)

9/7 What is culture?

Read: Abu-Lughod, L. "Do Muslim Women Need Saving?" (CANVAS)

9/9 What methods do anthropologists use to study people?

Read: Guest, Chapter 3 (CANVAS)