
ANTHROPOLOGY 4300/7300

COMPARATIVE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION



About this course

This course explores the variance in social organization as studied by anthropologists. As part of this course, students will explore topics including kinship, marriage, family, decent and residence patterns, social networks, inequality, and the evolutionary approaches to understanding these topics. In the first part of the course, we will explore major important concepts of kinship, decent, and residence, and marriage. The second part of the course will survey major patterns of social organization from both regional, developmental, and topical perspectives. As part of this course students will read and analyze ethnographic descriptions of various populations, watch documentaries, and engage in discussions of course topics. By the end of the course students will have an understanding of how gender and kinship shape social structures and institutions cross-culturally.

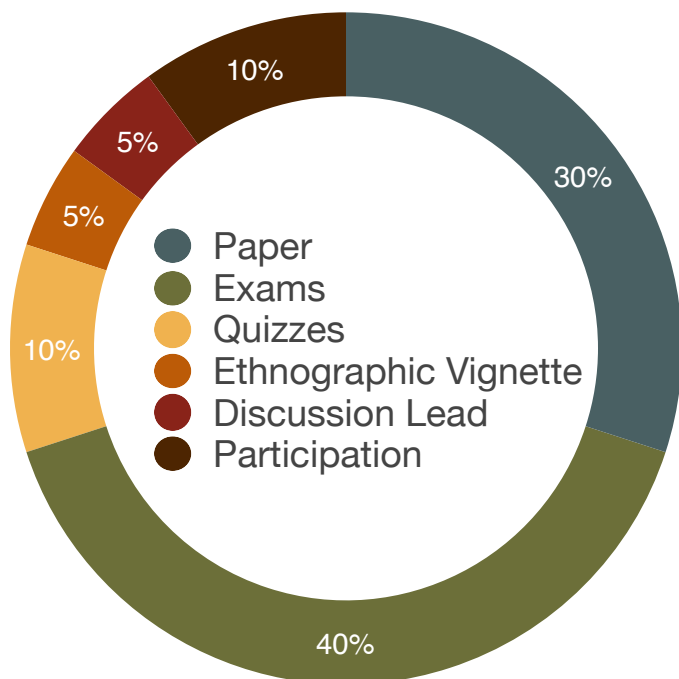
Details

Spring Semester 2021, Mon Wed Fri 10:00 AM - 10:50 PM in Swallow Hall 210

Instructor is Dr. Sean Prall. My office is in Swallow Hall 224, and my office hours are MW from 1:00PM to 2:00 PM. You may contact me via email at sprall@missouri.edu

“Kinship and marriage are about the basic facts of life. They are about ‘birth, and copulation, and death,’ the eternal round that seemed to depress the poet but which excites, amongst others, the anthropologist.”

-ROBIN FOX



Textbooks and readings

The following texts are required as part of this course:

- Stone L and King DE. 2019. ***Kinship and Gender: An Introduction*** (6th Edition). Routledge Press: New York. ISBN: 978-0-8133-5094-3.
- Stockard JE. 2002. ***Marriage in Culture: Practice and meaning across diverse societies***. Wadsworth: Belmont. ISBN: 978-0-15-506368-0.

Other reads will be shared as PDFs via Canvas.

Assignments and grading

Grading for this class will be broken down into the following requirements and assignments as represented in the graph.

Class Participation - Students will be expected to be present in class, to come prepared having read the assigned readings for that day, and participate in thoughtful discussion.

Quizzes - At the discretion of the instructor, students will complete a series of short and unannounced quizzes at the beginning of class sessions. Quizzes may be in any format, but will concentrate on assigned reading materials, and subject matter covered since the previous quiz.

Leading Discussion - During one class session, each student will act as discussion lead (undergraduates 1x, graduate students 2x), and come prepared to ask questions and lead the class through the assigned readings and topics for that day.

Ethnographic Vignette – During one class session (undergraduates 1x, graduate students 2x) students will present a brief ethnographic vignette relevant to the course topics for that day. Ethnographic vignettes should consist of a brief description of an appropriate population, with particular emphasis made to the daily topic. Students will turn in a short (minimum 2 pg) summary within one week of presentation



Paper Breakdown

- Topic Proposal - 2%
- Short bibliography - 4%
- Short early draft - 4%
- Final Paper - 80%
- Presentation - 10%

Exams - Students will complete two exams during the semester, a midterm and a final. Exams will be composed of a mix of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.

Paper - Students will complete a final paper on a topic of their choice. Paper topics will be chosen in advance with help from the instructor, and students will be asked to submit several item as described above in order to provide accountability and ensure progress on the papers throughout the semester. Students will present papers in the form of a powerpoint to the class at the end of the semester, and this presentation will be calculated into the paper grade as described here. Undergraduate papers should be 10-12 pages, while graduate papers should be 15-20 pages (double-spaced, 12 pt font). A rubric will be provided to the students prior to handing in papers.

Course Schedule

Week	Day	Date	Daily Topic
Week 1	Wednesday	1/20	Intro to the course
	Friday	1/22	The Kinship code
Week 2	Monday	1/25	Kinship code continued
	Wednesday	1/27	Evolution of Kinship: kin recognition
	Friday	1/29	Evolution of Kinship: pair bonding
Week 3	Monday	2/1	Marriage: types and implications
	Wednesday	2/3	Marriage: !Kung and traditional Chinese marriage
	Friday	2/5	Marriage: Perspectives on polygyny
Week 4	Monday	2/8	Marriage: Divorce, Parent-offspring conflict in the Kung
	Wednesday	2/10	Marriage: Historical Iroquois and Nyinba marriage
	Friday	2/12	Descent and Lineage: Patriline I - Nuer
Week 5	Monday	2/15	Descent and Lineage: Patriline II - Brahmins/Lineal Masculinity
	Wednesday	2/17	Descent and Lineage: Matriline I
	Friday	2/19	Descent and Lineage: Matriline II
Week 6	Monday	2/22	Descent and Lineage: Other Types
	Wednesday	2/24	Individual meetings to discuss paper topics
	Friday	2/26	Family: How many children?
Week 7	Monday	3/1	Family: Alloparenting
	Wednesday	3/3	Family: multiple paternity
	Friday	3/5	Exam 1
Week 8	Monday	3/8	Family: Gender and social roles
	Wednesday	3/10	Family: Parental Investment
	Friday	3/12	Band-level societies: Background

Week	Day	Date	Daily Topic
Week 9	Monday	3/15	Band-level societies: Case-studies
	Wednesday	3/17	Family: Raising children
	Friday	3/19	Band-level societies: Cooperation
Week 10	Monday	3/22	Local group level organization
	Wednesday	3/24	African social organization
	Friday	3/26	Local groups: ethnographies in pastoralism
Week 11	Monday	4/5	Local groups: warfare
	Wednesday	4/7	Evolution of social inequality
	Friday	4/9	Local "big man" groups and the Northwest Coast
Week 12	Monday	4/12	Regional polities and Chiefdoms
	Wednesday	4/14	Oceanic Societies
	Friday	4/16	Complex Societies
Week 13	Monday	4/19	Complex Societies
	Wednesday	4/21	Euro-American Kinship
	Friday	4/23	Euro-American Kinship
Week 14	Monday	4/26	Modern Family processes
	Wednesday	4/28	"Harmful" cultural practices
	Friday	4/30	Exam 2
Week 15	Monday	5/3	Student Presentations
	Wednesday	5/5	Student Presentations
Finals			Final Paper Due

Arts and Sciences Diversity Requirement

This course satisfies the DI requirement for students in the College of Arts and Sciences by focusing on cross-cultural perspectives in identity, kinship, gender, and reproduction. In particular this class explores (1) how sex and gender are perceived cross-culturally and the diversity of ways in which gender is enacted, (2) how female autonomy and gender inequality are shaped through subsistence and inheritance practices, social institutions, and the evolution of cultural norms, including the evolution of sexual double standards as a result of inheritance practices and Christianity in Euroamerican societies, (3) the diversity of marital and reproductive systems, their socio-ecological underpinnings and implications for variation in social structures and institutions, (4) the evolution of persistent institutionalized inequality as it pertains to material wealth transmission, economic defensibility, and population and resource pressures. As part of these goals, students will explore cultural diversity, from traditional foragers and pastoralists to emerging market economies. Students will learn about these diverse groups with vastly different norms and patterns of behavior, and expected to think critically about these groups within changing environmental and social contexts. Students will also be asked to explore a related topic of their choosing as part of a final paper, as well as lead discussions on the course topics listed in the schedule.

Course Policies and Expectations

Attendance

Students are expected to be present for class (until otherwise notified). Attendance will not be taken, but students who fail to attend may miss pop quizzes and valuable in-class learning opportunities. Students who have a *legitimate* reason to miss class must alert the instructor BEFORE class (and ideally at least 24 hours in advance). Students who miss class without legitimate reasons and advance warning may not make up missed quizzes, exams, or hand in materials late.

Students who have legitimate reasons not to attend class in person may attend digitally. It is the student's responsibility to be contact with the instructor regarding access to these materials. Every effort will be made to give students unable to attend in-person fair and equitable access to lectures and other course materials.

Weather Policy

As a university policy change for spring of 2021, severe inclement weather will no longer result in class cancelation. In the event face-to-face classes cannot be held due to weather, class will be held on Zoom unless otherwise notified. Students will receive an email with instructions and a link. Do not assume class will be moving to Zoom until you receive announcement on canvas or hear an official announcement from the university that classes will not be held on campus



Grading scale

97 - 100% = A+

93 - 96% = A

90 - 92% = A-

87 - 89% = B+

83 - 86% = B

80 - 82% = B-

77 - 79% = C+

73 - 76% = C

70 - 72% = C-

67 - 69% = D+

63 - 66% = D

60 - 62% = D-

Under 60% = F

Decreasing the Risk of COVID-19 in Classrooms and Labs

MU cares about the health and safety of its students, faculty, and staff. To provide safe, high-quality education amid COVID-19, we will follow several specific campus policies in accordance with the advice of the Center for Disease Control and Boone County health authorities. This statement will be updated as information changes.

- If you are experiencing any COVID-related symptoms, or are otherwise feeling unwell, do not attend in-person classes and contact your health care provider and/or student health immediately. COVID symptoms include: fever greater than 100.4 or chills; cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing; fatigue; unexplained muscle or body aches; headache; new loss of taste or smell; sore throat; congestion or runny nose; nausea or vomiting; diarrhea.
- We will all wear face coverings while in the classroom, unless you have a documented exemption due to a disability or medical condition.
- We will maintain a 6-foot distance from each other at all times (except in specific lab/studio courses with other specific guidelines for social distancing).
- We will enter the classroom and fill the room starting at the front, filling all the way across a row. When class ends, we will exit the row nearest to the door first; the instructor or TA will give the signal for the next row to exit, in the same manner.
- In any small section or lab class that requires them, additional measures will be listed in the syllabus and be mandatory for class participation.
- Online office hours will be available for all students.
- This course may be recorded for the sole purpose of sharing the recording with students who can't attend class. The instructor will take care not to disclose personally identifiable information from the student education records during the recorded lesson.

Compliance with these guidelines is required for all; anyone who fails to comply will be subject to the accountability process, as stated in the University's Collected Rules and Regulations, Chapter 200 Student Code of Conduct.

If an instructor has concerns about how a student is following COVID-19 policies and protocols, please report those concerns to the Office of the Dean of Students. You can fill out a COVID Safety Measures Reporting Form here: https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofMissouriSystem&layout_id=38

By taking the above measures, we are supporting your health and that of the whole Mizzou community. Thank you in advance for joining me and your peers in adhering to these safety measures.

Academic integrity is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards breaches of the academic integrity rules as extremely serious matters. Sanctions for such a breach may include academic sanctions from the instructor, including failing the course for any violation, to disciplinary sanctions ranging from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, collaboration, or any other form of cheating, consult the course instructor.

If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need to make arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please let me know as soon as possible.

If **disability related accommodations** are necessary (for example, a note taker, extended time on exams, captioning), please establish an accommodation plan with the MU Disability Center, S5 Memorial Union, 573-882-4696, and then notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. For other MU resources for persons with disabilities, click on "Disability Resources" on the MU homepage.

The University community welcomes **intellectual diversity and respects student rights**. Students who have questions or concerns regarding the atmosphere in this class (including respect for diverse opinions) may contact the departmental chair or divisional director; the director of the Office of Students Rights and Responsibilities; the MU Equity Office, or equity@missouri.edu.

All students will have the opportunity to submit an anonymous evaluation of the instructor(s) at the end of the course.

University of Missouri System Executive Order No. 38 lays out principles regarding the sanctity of classroom discussions at the university. The policy is described fully in section 200.015 of the Collected Rules and Regulations. In this class, students may not make audio or video recordings of course activity, except students permitted to record as an accommodation under section 240.040 of the Collected Rules. All other students who record and/or distribute audio or video recordings of class activity are subject to discipline in accordance with provisions of section 200.020 of the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri pertaining to student conduct matters.

Those students who are permitted to record are not permitted to redistribute audio or video recordings of statements or comments from the course to individuals who are not students in the course without the express permission of the faculty member and of any students who are recorded. Students found to have violated this policy are subject to discipline in accordance with provisions of section 200.020 of the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri pertaining to student conduct matters.

Please note that course schedule and any deadlines listed are subject to change. Instructor may change course content, assignments, grading, and reading at his discretion. Students will be notified of updates to this syllabus as they occur.