

Anthropology 151
HUMAN CULTURES
Fall 2016
DePauw University

Professor R.L. Upton, Ph.D., M.P.H.
T/TH 12:40 – 2:10pm
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The last thing a fish would notice would be the water ~ Ralph Linton

Course Description:

Several years ago someone said to me “anthropology is really just the pursuit of the exotic by the eccentric”. In this class we will evaluate just what that means and whether it represents an accurate picture of the anthropological endeavour. For example, are we looking for the “exotic”? Who do we consider exotic and what do we think of as “normal”? What do anthropologists *do* anyway and how do they think about what they are doing? All of us take for granted certain aspects of everyday life and culture and the point of this class is to explore just what those assumptions might be and what they look like. We want to consider cultural norms that are seemingly different from our own---this can mean---female husbands in parts of Africa, a third gender in India, infertility and HIV as caused by witchcraft and women in other parts of the world, epilepsy as a result of slammed doors and spirit catchers and more. When we learn about these aspects of life elsewhere we begin to understand and reflect on our own assumptions about our everyday lives. ***We want to be the fish that notice the water!***

Course Expectations:

I expect this course will be a fun challenge. It will be a challenge in the sense that it will suggest to you alternative ways of being and knowing. All of which I will stress to you are equally as “valid” (*talk to anyone who has taken this class before, you will be really tired of hearing me say that...guaranteed*). It will offer the opportunity to explore what we and other people think is “normal” and how that is valid, interesting and the means through which we can investigate those ideas. That is, engaging with many of these ideas, the challenges they present at times will be intriguing, unsettling and eye-opening. That process should be enjoyable (even though I know it won’t always be!) even if what you are learning sounds completely bizarre. I expect you to learn to be critical. That does not mean “critical” in the negative sense, but rather, I expect that by the end of the semester you are able to look for and uncover the assumptions in any argument and can evaluate data from other contexts in culturally relative terms.

All knowledge is equally as “truthful” – an often difficult perspective. You can expect that I am personally committed to teaching that philosophy and will provide opportunities, materials and my own theoretical and practical data to that end. Basically, I like to talk about how we tend to naturalize things in the US and how truths really vary world-wide. I welcome your own perspectives in various formats. Other things I expect and you are required to do:

- you will attend class - I expect you to attend and be engaged in relevant discussions and demonstrate knowledge of the materials
- you will attend prepared (see above) – participation does not mean simply showing up and sitting in a seat, it means showing up prepared and willing to contribute
- you will feel free to come and see me if you are having any difficulties or just want to talk more about the class, anthropology or whatever else you need
- you will hand in all assignments on time-I will accept a late paper but will penalize it accordingly in order to be fair to others
- you must complete all of the assignments in the course in order to pass the course, no matter what your accumulated total number of points
- **you will feel free to voice your insights and simultaneously respect the freedoms of others to voice theirs (this one is tremendously important in a class where we think and learn about other cultures, ways of doing things and belief systems!) keep an open mind above all.**

Course Evaluation:

Everyone probably tells you this, but let's be clear: according to the DePauw University handbook the grading system is as follows:

- A, A- grades reflect “achievement of exceptionally high merit”
- B+, B, B- grades reflect “achievement at a level **superior** to the basic level”
- C+, C, C- grades reflect “basic achievement”
- D+, D, D- grades reflect “achievement which falls short of satisfying the quantitative and qualitative requirements yet warrants credit”

What this means for this class is that work that satisfies instruction and basic material will receive grades which reflect that basic achievement-C grades. In order to receive B grades, your work must demonstrate superior work in terms of your own critical insight, synthesis and communication skills. **This is really very important because many of us are used to getting the “A” grade and view “B”s as poor grades...Please don't believe that. Getting a B in this course, and in any good course at DePauw is reflective of really very GOOD work.** A grades reflect exceptionally high levels of achievement and reflect a high degree of intellectual rigor and carefully considered work. **Throughout the semester remember that you are accumulating points – your final grade is a total out of 300 possible points – while you will be busy calculating and keeping track of your points/grades along the way, please keep in mind that you are working toward that final goal and therefore your calculations along the way are estimations.**

While I will subtract points for errors or deficiencies I will happily add points for carefully written, imaginative thinking and communication. Please let me know throughout the semester if you have any questions or if any aspect of your grade is unclear. This is a dialectical enterprise-a discussion between us and the whole point is that we *all* get something out of it. One last thing- your grade is based upon your own mastery of the material-it is not based on how you compared with others in the class.

*I urge you to **do two things this semester:** take advantage of the **Writing Center** – learning to craft a well written essay and communicate ideas in a persuasive manner are cornerstones of anthropology, your education at DePauw and life itself – they are here to help, use the center. Secondly, make certain that you understand the **Academic Integrity Policy** here at the

University. If you are at all uncertain about what counts as *plagiarism* please ask – what we learn is grounded in the work of others but learning to interpret and communicate new ideas based upon that knowledge and in our own manner is essential. Do not plagiarize. Even cutting and pasting things from the web is mosaic plagiarism. Penalties for this practice are severe and not worth finding out about – just do not do it and if you are worried, ask. The only bad/silly/ridiculous questions are those that are never asked.

Points are assigned as follows:

Exam #1	40 points
Exam #2	60 points
Exam #3 (Final)	80 points
Fieldwork Forum (group)	20 points
Fieldwork Forum (individual)	25 points
Kinship Paper (individual)	30 points
Class participation	25 points
Letters to me	20 points

Total possible:	300 points

***Note on Participation:** You will notice that class participation is the equivalent to your other graded work. Participating in and attending class are very important-you cannot participate if you are not there and when you are there, active participation that both demonstrates thoughtful consideration of the readings/questions/topics at hand as well as moves the discussion forward are essential – we **all** benefit from an actively engaged class and I look forward to hearing what you think of the materials and ideas that we encounter together! If you are going to miss class, it is your responsibility to let me know in *advance* and your responsibility to get the information we covered. Acceptable reasons for an excused absence include family emergency, serious illness, religious holiday, and participation in college athletic competitions and are typically documented. Please note that excessive absences, *even when excused*, will negatively impact your participation grade and your final course grade at the professor’s discretion. Students with unexcused absences will receive no participation credit for the days they are absent. Typically, no more than two excused absences are permitted over the course of the semester. Per the DePauw University handbook, **you should all be aware that if you have more than four absences, you may be dropped from the course and may not be eligible to continue in the course whether these absences are excused or unexcused.**

ADA STATEMENT:

It is the policy and practice of DePauw University to provide reasonable accommodations for students with properly documented disabilities. Written notification from Student Disability Services is required. If you are eligible to receive an accommodation and would like to request it for this course, please contact Student Disability Services. Allow one week advance notice to ensure enough time for reasonable accommodations to be made. Otherwise, it is not guaranteed that the accommodation can be provided on a timely basis. Accommodations are not retroactive. Students who have questions about Student Disability Services or who have, or think they may have, a disability (psychiatric, attentional, learning, vision, hearing, physical, medical, etc.) are invited to contact Student Disability Services for a confidential discussion in Union Building Suite 200 or by phone at 658-6267.

Letters Due:

As part of your participation in this class you are asked to write to me. On five occasions throughout the semester (due dates marked in the syllabus, there are seven opportunities, you must do five, there is no credit for doing extra, just do five – **letters are due no later than the end of the Thursday class period the week that you have an opportunity to do them**) you will turn in to me, a typed OR handwritten letter in which you reflect on the readings, class, or whatever else you think relates to what is going on based upon what we are learning in class. THESE CANNOT BE EMAILED. You should spend some time thinking about and writing down your thoughts as they relate to class apart from normative email correspondence. These letters need not be long; they can be whatever length you think expresses what you are trying to think about. I am not giving these letters letter grades per se, but they do count, they equal points. To clarify: there are seven opportunities; **you must do FIVE** for a total of 20 points. Why you may ask, are these assigned? Because I think that at times we think and process our thoughts about what we hear or learn or connect throughout the day at different points other than in the classroom. Here is your opportunity to demonstrate your thoughtful, creative, reflective and intellectual ways of synthesizing your anthropological experience at DePauw and in Greencastle.

Fieldwork Forum:

In addition to an individual paper on kinship – you are responsible for individual research into a particular topic in one of five areas. You will work as a group of five, and each person within the group will research a particular facet of these issues. For example, if your group is researching Language, each person in the group will conduct research on a more narrow and specific aspect of language as it pertains to anthropology. One person might research how language acquisition has marked differences between human and non-human primates, another might investigate the gendered construction of language, another might research the act of code-switching as significant in the construction of ethnic identity. These are examples of how topics can be broken down into individual research projects although keep in mind that you will be both writing a paper about your individual topic as well as presenting as a panel together so that the individual papers should hang together and make sense as a kind of forum on the overall topic within anthropology.

So you will do several things:

- 1) Select your preferences for a particular topic (I will then organize groups) – select from Language, Identity/Gender/Race, Family, Health, Globalization)
- 2) Meet with your group to discuss how you will approach this overall topic
- 3) Meet with me as a group to discuss your overall topic and individual research projects
- 4) Present as a group on the designated date – each person has between 15 – 20 minutes to present (depending upon the size of the group – you have the entire class period and should allow some time for some questions and discussion), you will receive both a group and an individual grade for this presentation
- 5) Write an individual research paper on your individual research topic – these are due one week after your group presentation and should be between 5-7 pages (double spaced, typed, AAA style for citations (see Moodle for information on this) and your own original work – it does not need to reiterate the entire group research/findings, just your own).

Required Readings:

- *All of the readings for the course are available at the Bookstore or Amazon.com
- * Course schedule is subject to change by the Professor, you are expected to read all assigned materials, whether they are discussed in class directly or not, you will be responsible for assigned material/content
- *Additional articles will be posted on **Moodle** or given to you in class and I will on occasion give you additional readings in class as I come across relevant materials. ***You all should feel free to suggest additional writings or cartoons that you come across and are of interest. Funny jokes always accepted...☺***

Dancing Skeletons, Kathryn Dettwyler
A Thrice Told Tale, Margery Wolf
Bravo for the Marshallese, Holly Barker
The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down, Anne Fadiman
Coming of Age in Second Life Tom Boellstorff

Course Schedule of Events:

Week 1:

[8/25] Introduction to the course & syllabus – **select preferences for Fieldwork Forum Topics**

Week 2:

[8/30 & 9/1] Read: “Shakespeare in the Bush”, Laura Bohannon, Read: “Body Ritual Among the Nacirema”, Horace Miner; “Village Walks: Tourism and Globalization among the Tharu of Nepal”, Arjun Guneratne and Kate Bjork

“Fieldwork on Prostitution in the Era of AIDS”, Claire Sterk; “Public Interest Ethnography: Women’s Prisons and Health Care in California”, Rachael Stryker; “Eating Christmas in the Kalahari”, Richard Lee

Week 3:

[9/6 & 9/8] Read: Dettwyler, Dancing Skeletons

[Letter Opportunity #1 – Thursday]

Week 4:

[9/13 & 9/15] Read: A Thrice Told Tale, Margery Wolf and look at the American Anthropological Association statement on ethics, found at: www.aaanet.org/committees/ethics/ethcode.htm

[Letter Opportunity # 2 - Thursday]

Week 5:

[9/20 & 9/22]

9/20 - FIELDWORK FORUM – LANGUAGE

Read: “Whorf Revisited: You are What you Speak”, Guy Deutscher; “Manipulating Meaning: The Military Name Game”, Sarah Boxer; “Conversation Style: Talking on the Job”, Deborah Tannen

Week 6:

[9/27 & 9/29]

Read: “Adopt a Daughter-in-law, Marry a Sister: A Chinese Solution to the Incest Taboo”, Arthur P. Wolf, “Arranging a Marriage in India”, Serena Nanda “Exiles From Kinship”, Kath Weston

[9/28 – Campus Wide Day of Inclusion & Dialogue]

Read: “Mummies and Babies” and Friends and Lovers in Lesotho”, Judith Gay; “Mother’s Love: Death Without Weeping”, Nancy Scheper-Hughes; “Polyandry: When Brothers Take a Wife”, Melvyn Goldstein

[Letter Opportunity # 3 – Thursday]

Week 7:

[10/4 & 10/6]

Exam # 1

10/6 FIELDWORK FORUM – KINSHIP/FAMILY

Week 8:

[10/11 & 10/13]

Read: www.aaanet.org/stmts/racepp.htm and “Mixed Blood”, Jeffery M. Fish; “Blood on the Steppes: Ethnicity, Power and Conflict”, Jack Weatherford

Read: “Warriors or Soldiers? Masculinity in the Liberian Civil War”, Mary H. Moran; “Hijras of India: Cultural and Individual Dimensions of an Institutionalized Third Gender Role” Serena Nanda

[Letter Opportunity # 4 - Thursday]

Week 9:

[10/15 & 10/23]

[Fall Break!] ☺

Week 10:

[10/25 & 10/27]

Read: The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down, Fadiman

Finish Fadiman and Read: “Fat Eggs”, R.L. Upton

10/28 - [FRIDAY] - **Kinship Paper Due by 5pm – electronic submission**

Week 11:

[11/1 & 11/3]

11/1 FIELDWORK FORUM – IDENTITY

Read: “Reciprocity and the Power of Giving”, Lee Cronk and additional reading on medical anthropology and health TBD

[Letter Opportunity # 5 – Thursday]

Week 12:

[11/8 & 11/10]

11/8 FIELDWORK FORUM - HEALTH

11/10 Exam # 2

Week 13:

[11/15 & 11/17]

Read: Bravo for the Marshallese, Holly Barker; “Malawi versus the World Bank”, Sonia Patten

NO CLASS 11/17 – Professor Upton at American Anthropological Association meetings

Week 14:

[11/22]

Read: “How Sushi Went Global”, Theodore Bestor, “Adaptive Failure: Easter’s End”, Jared Diamond, “Global Women in the New Economy”, Ehrenreich and Hochschild

[Letter Opportunity # 6 - Tuesday]

THANKSGIVING! ☺

Week 15:

[11/29 & 12/1]

Read: Boellstorff, Coming of Age in Second Life

12/1 FIELDWORK FORUM – GLOBALIZATION

Week 16:

[12/6 & 12/8]

Finish Boellstorff

Read: "Career Advice for Anthropology Undergraduates", John T. Omohundro; "Using Anthropology", David McCurdy

[Letter Opportunity # 7 - Tuesday]

Evaluation and Wrap Up Discussion

[12/8]

**Professor Upton in NYC for Fulbright Review Committee Meeting ~
Make-Up Assignment TBD**

Final Exam [Exam #3]: 1-4pm Tuesday December 13th