HUMAN CULTURES ANTH 151

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Semester: Spring 2014
Location: Asbury Hall 222
Time: 10-11:30 am Tuesday and Thursdays
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The purpose of anthropology is to make the world safe for human differences.
Ruth Benedict

Course Description:

In this introductory course, we will address the methods of inquiry characteristic of cultural anthropology. Focusing on both so-called "exotic" cultures and our own, we will also explore the great diversity existing in human culture, while at the same time searching for cultural universals—the similarities that make all humans fundamentally alike.

Cultural anthropologists have developed a set of ideas and practical activities that help them learn about people through interaction and observation. These anthropological methods and practices provide a lens through which trained individuals can learn about others while simultaneously learning about themselves. Anthropologists pay close attention to the way people act, talk, and think about their culture, themselves, and their world. During the course of the class we will be addressing a number of new perspectives to appreciate the diversity in our world and society while we try to better understand our place within them.

This course has four main goals: 1) to introduce students to the essential concepts and intellectual methods that typify cultural anthropology, 2) to expose students to the great variety existing in human cultures so that they can place their own particular life in a cross-cultural perspective, 3) to provide students with a base for interpreting and understanding key anthropological concepts concerning such topics as culture, ethnicity, religion, race, and gender, and 4) to enable students the opportunity to engage in some of the key methodological practices associated with cultural anthropology such as participant observation.

Required Readings:

Cheyney, Melissa. *Born at Home, The Biological, Cultural and Political Dimensions of Maternity Care in the United States.* Belmont: Wadsworth, 2011.

Melissa Cheyney presents a personal yet professional picture of the often-described taboo world of homebirth culture. This work goes beyond that of observer and researcher by describing how the work of anthropologists has implications for public/applied anthropology in the form of advocacy and community action.

Dettwyler, Katherine. *Dancing Skeletons: Life and Death in West Africa*. Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, 1994.

This personal account by a biocultural anthropologist highlights the more sobering aspects of conducting fieldwork among malnourished children in West Africa. With nutritional anthropology at its core, this book presents informal, engaging and oftentimes dramatic stories from the field that relate the author's experiences conducting research on infant feeding and health in Mali.

Fadiman, Anne. *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*. New York: The Noonday

Press, 1997.
Anne Fadiman tells the story of a Hmong family's experience with the American health care system and highlights many of the weaknesses of what some describe as the best health care system in the world. Fadiman writes beautifully and weaves the story of the Lees, their doctors, and the social and political history of the Hmong people and their unwilling immigration to the United States.

Ferraro, Gary. ed. *Classic Readings in Cultural Anthropology*. 3rd edition. Wadsworth: Cengage Learning, 2011.
This reader presents historical and contemporary works that define the main areas of anthropological study. These include chapters on the culture concept, language, family, gender and culture change.

Goldstein, Donna. *Laughter Out of Place: Race, Class, Violence, and Sexuality in a Rio Shantytown*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.
Working in an urban shantytown or favela, Goldstein uncovers the truth behind black-humor storytelling practices used in the face of trauma and tragedy. She works closely with everyday women in these urban centers to provide a more holistic interpretation of the "culture of poverty" in Brazil.

Note: There are also articles assigned as required reading. These articles are noted in your syllabus with an asterisk (*). Be sure to bring either a copy of the article <u>and/or</u> your notes to class.

Course Format:
Methods used to cover class material include lectures, films, music, slides, guest lecturers and most importantly class discussion. The lectures will be used to introduce key concepts during each week's topic and are expected to be very participatory. Films will also be used as texts to enhance the course material. Periodically we will split-up into smaller discussion groups to review and analyze material more thoroughly. Students will occasionally be asked to reflect on films, classroom discussions, and readings in the form of in-class response papers. In order to achieve this cooperative learning experience, readings must be done as assigned and texts as well as notes brought to class.

Grading:

1. **EXAMS**: There will be two essay exams, which will combine short and long essay questions. One test will be given mid-way through the course (25%) and the other at the end of the semester (25%).

2. **FIELD PROJECT:** A mini-ethnographic assignment that asks you to incorporate anthropological research skills in your daily life (20%).

3. **PARTICIPATION**: Participation is an integral part of this course. There are numerous ways you can participate in class, but to start you must first have a punctual attendance record. Engaging in class activities (group discussions, debates, reflection/response papers) and attentive listening are also key to class participation as is contributing insightful comments that link class material to your experiences or your classmates' contributions.

   <u>Current event:</u> Students will contribute a current event that connects with course readings (2 at 10% each).

   <u>Co-curricular:</u> Each student is required to attend one Anthropology-related event, write a one page single-spaced response paper demonstrating your integration of class material with the

event, and share this experience with the class. **Do not simply summarize the event—instead your response paper should reflect on the event as it relates to anthropological ideas/concepts covered in class.** I encourage you to begin looking for an activity to attend as soon as possible and to write-up your response and turn it in no more than one week after your attendance at the event. While I will announce event ideas periodically during class, it is your responsibility to find an event that you are interested in and able to attend—the campus calendar on-line is a good source for possible events. The last day to turn in this assignment is April 29th (10%).

Your final grade for the course will be based on the following:

- Participation…….……30%
- One (1) field project...…..…….20%
- Two (2) in-class exams…….50%

TOTAL 100%

Grading Scale:

A 94%+	A- 90-93%	
B+ 87-89%	B 84-86%	B- 80-83%
C+ 77-79%	C 74-76%	C- 70-73%
D+ 67-69%	D 64-66%	D- 60-63%
F 59%-		

A note on graded materials—you must wait at least 24 hours (but no more than 1 week) before coming to see me about a grade you received on any class material. I am available for consultation regarding any graded assignment only after you have taken sufficient time to read through both your original work and my comments. Keep in mind that reviewing graded material means a possible increase OR decrease in the original grade, so be sure to look over your work carefully before bringing it to my attention for a second time.

The following information will help you better understand the criteria for graded material:

A= **exceptionally thought-provoking**, original, creative in both content and manner of presentation, and a skillful use of concepts and/or materials which are fully supported with examples from class material.

B= presents a **solid understanding** of the subject matter and an ability to handle the issues and materials encountered in the subject with only minor errors.

C= demonstrates an **adequate understanding** of the subject matter with central ideas present, but too general, repetitious and not clearly supported or integrated with evidence and details.

D= a **minimally acceptable** performance with a confusing central idea and lacking details. Parts of the assignment are missing and/or incomplete.

F= shows lack of effort and **minimal comprehension** of material with major mechanical errors, no thesis, and misuse of key concepts.

Attendance:

Regular attendance and active class participation is required. Late arrivals will not be tolerated. Class attendance will be taken at the beginning of the period, and it is your responsibility to make sure you receive

credit for your attendance if you arrive after attendance is taken. Irregular attendance and repeated late arrivals will result in the lowering of the final course grade. Also note that you should be both physically and mentally present—this means demonstrating active listening skills, participating and refraining from causing class distractions (ie. Leaving during class—unless for an emergency).

Class Preparation:
Your class preparation is essential to your required active participation in the course. You must complete assigned readings **before** the class period for which they are assigned. You must come to class with prepared questions and comments regarding the assigned readings (see participation in course requirements). This will help ensure your active participation in class. **Things to think about regarding the readings:** What was the author's main point/thesis? How does this relate to the class topic? What connection can you make between the reading and your own life?

Assignment Policy:
It is important that students pay close attention to the details on assignments, which will be provided in handouts. Hard copy assignments must be turned in **NUMBERED AND STAPLED** (electronic copies must also have page numbers—also it is the student's responsibility to make sure their assignment is properly attached to the email). **Assignments due as hard copies in class will not be accepted via email (ie. Due to printer problems—it is your responsible to make sure you have time to print your assignment).** All assignments are due at the beginning of the class session, unless otherwise noted. Late assignments will not be accepted without a medical excuse or otherwise documented emergency. The instructor retains the right to lower the grade on any late assignment accepted. If you must miss class on the day an assignment is due, it is your responsibility to turn the assignment in early.

Academic Dishonesty:
All work must be **your own**. You must give credit to **any** information and/or ideas that you use that are not your own by citing it in your work. Failing to do so will be perceived as plagiarism resulting in a zero on the assignment and possible additional penalties to be decided by the instructor. If you are unfamiliar with proper citation procedures, you should ask your instructor or consult the W center.

Questions???
I encourage all of my students to take advantage of my office hours, either for questions, concerns, or just drop-in discussions. Please feel free to stop by Asbury Hall 219, and if the official hours are not convenient or you would like to ensure yourself a specific block of time, we can set up an appointment (office phone x4372 or email **acastaneda@depauw.edu**).

Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

WEEK 1 INTRODUCTION

January 28th

- Discussion of course, syllabus, and discipline of anthropology
- VIDEO: *Babies*

January 30th

- READ: Ferraro chapters 1 and 2

WEEK 2 ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODS

February 4th

- READ: Dettwyler Ch. 1-4 p. 1-48

February 6th

- READ: Dettwyler Ch. 5-7 p. 49-90

WEEK 3 FIELDWORK

February 11th

- READ: Dettwyler Ch. 8-14 p. 91-163

February 13th

- CURRENT EVENT—Dettwyler
- READ: Ferraro chapters 3 and 4
- VIDEO: *Brazil*

WEEK 4 RACE & ETHNICITY

February 18th

- READ: Fish, "Mixed Blood"* AND Goldstein's Introduction and chapter 1
- VIDEO: *Brazil in black and white*

February 20th

- READ: Goldstein chapter 2

WEEK 5 continued…

February 25th

- READ: Goldstein chapters 3 and 4
- VIDEO: *City of Men*

February 27th

- READ: Goldstein, chapter 5

WEEK 6 MIDTERM

March 4th

- READ: Goldstein, chapters 6 and 7
- VIDEO: *City of Men*

March 6th

- **MIDTERM EXAM**

WEEK 7 GENDER

March 11th

- READ: Ferraro chapters 7 and 8

March 13th

- READ: Ferraro chapter 9 AND Fernea's "Symbolizing Roles: Behind the Veil"*
- VIDEO: *The Beauty Academy of Kabul*

WEEK 8 FOOD

March 18th

- READ: Freeman, "Having It His Way: The Construction of Masculinity in Fast-Food TV Advertising"* (In *Food for Thought*) AND Allison, "Japanese Mothers and Obentos: The Lunch-Box as Ideological State Apparatus"*

March 20th

- READ: Popenoe, "Ideal"* AND Moore, "Raising the Bar: The Complicated Consumption of Chocolate"*

WEEK 9 SPRING BREAK

WEEK 10 RELIGION

April 1st

- READ: Ferraro chapters 13 and 14; Fadiman, Ch. 1-4

April 3rd

- READ: Fadiman, Ch. 5-8

WEEK 11 RITUAL

April 8th

- READ: Fadiman, Ch. 9-13
- VIDEO: *Enough*

April 10th

- READ: Fadiman, Ch. 14-19

CURRENT EVENT—Fadiman

WEEK 12 APPLIED ANTHROPOLOGY & CULTURE CHANGE

April 15th

- READ: Condry, "Japanese Hip-Hop and the Globalization of Popular Culture"* AND Bestor, "How Sushi Went Global"*
- VIDEO: *Nalini by day, Nancy by night*

April 17th

- READ: Ferraro chapters 15-16

WEEK 13 ANTHROPOLOGY BACK HOME: BIRTH in the U.S.

April 22nd

- READ: Cheyney, chapters 1-3
- VIDEO: *Laboring Under an Illusion*

April 24th

- READ: Cheyney, chapters 4-5

WEEK 14 BIRTH continued…

April 29th Last Day to turn in your co-curricular

- READ: Cheyney, chapter 6-7
- VIDEO: *The Business of Being Born*

May 1st

- Prepare for presentations

WEEK 15 CONCLUSIONS…where do we go from here?

May 6th AND May 8th **PRESENTATION OF FIELD PROJECTS**

FINAL EXAM: MONDAY MAY 14TH 1-4PM

NOTE: The instructor retains the right to change the syllabus for this class as necessary.