

Human Cultures

Anth 151A, Fall 2017

Department of Sociology & Anthropology

AH 117, TR, 2.20-3.50 pm

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Office Hours: T,Th: 10.00-11.00 am or by appointment

Why do people across cultures differ in their habits, mores, and lifestyles? Why is homosexuality common among Sambians, but invites the ire of religious and political groups in other countries? Why does a woman in Malaysia or Bangladesh work for only \$3 a day for GE and Nike compared to her counterparts in more “developed” countries?

While it is easy to say that norms, attitudes, and values differ across cultures, we will investigate in depth what we mean by this statement. We will question our understanding(s) of the term culture and analyze the contexts in which it appears? In particular, we will read how anthropologists use the term culture and the questions they ask. What are the methods that anthropologists employ to study/understand cultures? And, most importantly, *why* do anthropologists study culture(s)? What is the need? What are the concerns? How can anthropological insights contribute to a deeper understanding of current global concerns such as racism, inequality, ethnic strife, globalization, and religious wars?

Required Books

Knauff, Bruce. 2005. *The Gebusi: Lives Transformed in a Rainforest World*. McGraw Hills: Columbus.

Hartmann, Betsy & James Boyce. 1979. *Needless hunger: Voices from a Bangladeshi village*. Food First. Food First Books.

Requirements

Participation and Reading

Students are **required** to come to class having read all the assigned readings. Since the success of the class relies on class participation and discussion, you **must** read prior to class.

Letters

In addition to a paper and three in-class exams, I expect you to write three letters addressed to me in which you must raise questions and concerns related to the readings and class discussions. If you'd like to talk about your personal experiences, feel free to do that as well. However, you must attempt to integrate your experiences with our class readings and discussions. As you will see, most things that you read might connect with some aspects of your life and you should be able to frame your experiences in relation to ideas and insights from this class. Due dates for

these letters are listed on your syllabus. You can use the advanced assignment function on Moodle to turn in your letters by 12.00 am on the due date. You must write two letters to earn full-credit on the assignment. Your letters should be at least two full page single-spaced and a maximum of three pages single-spaced. The total grade for your letters will depend on whether or not you turn in all your letters on time and whether your letters are of appropriate length.

Disagreements and Alternative Viewpoints

If you do not understand an issue or disagree with me, feel free to share your point of view with the entire class. Please remember and learn to respect alternative viewpoints since this is a significant aspect of your intellectual growth. More importantly, I do **not** want you to replicate my arguments in your papers and/or exams. I will not penalize you for disagreeing with my viewpoints. However, what I want in your papers is a careful explication and analysis of your arguments.

Laptop Use

If you write notes on your laptop, make sure that you are **only** writing your notes and not surfing the net. I trust you to follow this rule. If, however, I notice you using your laptops for responding to emails or writing in your face books, I will have to ask you to stop bringing your laptops to class. And, please turn off your cell phones for the duration of the class.

Attendance and Punctuality

Attendance is an important component of your participation grade. I will mark your attendance everyday. Please notify me (in writing) at least two weeks in advance of your plans to observe any religious holiday. You are allotted one unexcused absence from class; after that, there will be a five-point deduction from your final numerical grade for each class absence. Bring me a doctor's note in case you are sick and have to miss class.

I expect students to come to class on time. Every ten-minute delay will cost you a point. I must receive your assignments on the due dates. If you submit your assignment a day after the deadline, I will deduct three points from your overall numerical grade. After this, each day will cost you five points. I **will not** accept your assignments a week after the due date.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Academic honesty will be upheld in accordance with the DePauw policy on academic integrity, as discussed in the student handbook. I understand that at times you might have difficulties. If such a situation arises and you find yourself confused about how to consult and cite scholarly and non scholarly resources, meet me after class or during my office hours. Don't wait to see me after you submit the assignment! If you cannot make it to my office hours, feel free to let me know and we can pick another time slot.

Grading

Letters:	5%
Exam 1:	25%
Exam 2:	25%
Final Exam:	25%
Participation:	10%
Presentation:	10%

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%-

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.

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.

Important Due Dates:

9/5: Letter One

9/19: Exam One

9/28: Letter Two

11/7: Exam Two

11/2: Letter Three

8/24: *Introduction*

Topic One: Social Darwinism and Cultural Evolution

8/29: Ancient Society by Morgan, Lewis Henry, pp 3-18

Film: Cannibal Tours (watch on your own)

Here's the link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUQ_8wl93HM

Topic Two: Ethnocentrism, Historical Particularism and Cultural Relativism

8/31: Body ritual among the Nacirema

Shakespeare in the Bush

Letter # 1 due on 5th in class.

9/5: Should anthropologists work to eliminate the practice of female circumcision

Female Genital Mutilation in the West: Traditional Circumcision versus
Genital Cosmetic Surgery

Topic Three: Social Construction of Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Family.

9/7: Watch: Race: The Power of an Illusion

9/12: Tricking and Tripping: Fieldwork on Prostitution in the Era of AIDS

The Gebusi, pp 11-38

9/14: Race without Color

Mixed Blood

9/19: **Exam 1**

9/21: Ritualized Homosexuality in a Nacirema Subculture

Erotics and the Study of Culture

9/26: Introduction *Hijras*: Institutionalized Third Gender in India

Ambiguous Sex or Ambivalent Medicine

Fausto-Sterling, Five Sexes

Letter # 2 due on 28th on Moodle.

- 9/28: Is Gay Marriage Natural?
When Brothers Share a Wife

Topic Four: Language and Communication

- 10/3: The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis: Worlds Shaped by Words.
10/5: Suite for Ebony and Phonics
10/10: Conversation Styles

Topic Five: Colonialism, Social Change, and Development

- 10/12: Watch T-Shirt Travels
10//24: The Gebusi, pp 95-119.
10/26: **Conference**
10/31: Needless Hunger

Letter # 3 due on 11/2

- 11/2: **Conference**

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- 11/7: **Exam 2**

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- 11/9: Min(d)ing the Body: On the Train of Organ-Stealing Rumors
11/14: How Nike Figured out China
11/16: Cocaine and the Economic Deterioration of Bolivia
11/21: Around the World with the Multinational Corporations
Men's Pleasure, Women's Labor: Tourism For Sex

Thanksgiving Break: 22nd to 26th November

Presentations:

- 11/28: Group Presentations
- 11/30: **Conference**
- 12/5: Group Presentations
- 12/7: Group Presentations

Appendix A:

What does it mean to participate in class?

An important component of this class is discussion. There are different kinds of contributions you can make to discussion, all of which you are expected to work on over the course of the semester. None of these are possible without coming to class each session having read the assigned readings:

1. Attentively listening to your colleagues, in order to build on what has already been said;
2. Asking colleagues to clarify unclear contributions;
3. Summarizing key ideas that have emerged during the discussion;
4. Articulating an answer to a posed question;
5. Raising questions that help advance discussion;
6. Offering an original idea related to the topic of discussion;
7. Drawing on evidence (social scientific data, personal experience, popular culture) to either support or challenge ideas;
8. Constructively critiquing an idea offered in the readings or by a class member (including me);
9. Pointing out how various comments complement each other or are at odds;
10. Playing “devil’s advocate.” (Adapted from Prof. Bordt’s FYS).

