

**SOC 113**  
**Cultural Anthropology**

Dr. Suzanne Schneider  
Office hours: 11am-12 pm Mon.-Thurs.  
Office: 318 PPHAC  
Tel. 610-625-7015

Fall semester 2006  
Course meetings: 7:30-8:40am Tues. & Thur.  
Course location: 218 Comenius Hall  
E-mail: sschneider@moravian.edu

**Course overview:** This course is designed to explore the diversity of cultural systems. We will examine major theoretical perspectives on the study of culture, read ethnographic texts that depict the variety of human life, and learn to critically analyze the problems facing human societies today. Throughout the course, we will gain insight into the global interconnectedness of human cultures. We will reflect on our own preconceptions about the “other” and examine our society from an “etic” or outsiders perspective. As we learn about diverse cultural systems, beliefs, and practices of people living throughout the world (including our own country), we will consider the many challenges that emerge from studying and generalizing about other cultures.

**Required texts:**

Abu-Lughod, Lila. 1993. *Writing Women’s Worlds: Bedouin Stories*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Fadiman, Anne. 1997. *The Spirit Catches you and you Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Lee, Richard. 2003. *The Dobe Ju’hoansi, Third Edition*. Toronto, Ontario: Wadsworth.

Selected articles are on reserve at Reeves library.

**Course requirements:**

**Exams (60%):** There will be three exams during the semester, each worth 20% of your grade. Each exam will consist of two essays and will cover course materials for roughly 1/3 of the class. You will be provided with three exam questions to take home one week before the exams. Two of those questions will appear on the exam. The essays will challenge you to synthesize and analyze course materials including readings, lectures, films, and discussion.

**Assignments (20%):**

*Mini-ethnography (10%).* This assignment is designed to serve as an introductory experience to anthropological fieldwork and participant observation. You will conduct a minimum of three hours of participant observation with a subject group of your choice. You will write up your observations and address a series of questions in a 5-6 page paper. This assignment is due on September 19.

*Ethnographic interview (10%).* This assignment entails conducting an interview with someone who immigrated to the U.S. after the age 15 and writing a synthesis of what you have learned

about both cultures (ours and the native culture of the interviewee). You will be provided with a series of question to address in a 5-6 page paper. This assignment is due on November 21.

**Attendance, participation, and group work (20%):** The course will entail discussion, short lectures, and group activities. Your regular class attendance and active participation in discussion and group work are required. You will be required to write a short summary of your assigned readings for every class period (1-2 paragraphs plus at least one question that you derive from your assignments). These summaries will be periodically collected. Furthermore, short in-class and take-home written assignments will be given periodically and graded on a check (✓) system. Specific assignments might involve writing on personal experiences, responses to course material, writing film reviews, and/or conducting internet research outside of class time. The combination of your attendance, participation, group work, and writing assignments will amount to 20% of your grade. Multiple absences from class will negatively affect your grade.

**Grading:**

Three essay exams	60% (20% each)
Two writing projects	20% (10% each)
Class participation	20%

**Academic Honesty**

Plagiarism is passing off others' work as your own. It can involve directly quoting passages from a text, the web, or any other document. It can also involve having a student write a paper for you or purchasing a paper from a writing service. If plagiarism is suspected, I will request drafts and notes of the written work. Plagiarism will be handled in accordance with the college policy on academic honesty.

**Course schedule**

**Module 1: Anthropology, Culture and Cultural Diversity**

Aug. 29: Introduction to the course: What is anthropology?  
Handout: Miner, Body Ritual among the Nacirema

Aug. 31: What is Culture?  
Kottak, Culture, pp. 20-36  
Gmelch, Lessons from the field, pp. 46-56

Sept. 5: Ethnography and cultural diversity  
Spradley, Ethnography and culture, pp. 7-14  
Kottak, Exploring cultural diversity, pp. 1-19

**Module 2: Social Organization and Culture Change**

Sept. 7: Introduction to the people of the Dobe area  
Lee, The Dobe Ju/'hoansi, Chapters 1-3 (pp. 1-36)

Sept. 12: Subsistence strategies

Lee, *The Dobe Ju/'hoansi*, Chapter 4 (pp. 37-58)

Kottak, *Making a living*, pp. 189-202

Sept. 14: Family and kinship

Lee, *The Dobe Ju/'hoansi*, Chapters 5 & 6 (pp. 59-89)

Sept. 19: Politics and local world view

Lee, *The Dobe Ju/'hoansi*, Chapters 8 & 9 (pp. 109-137)

Kottak, *Political systems*, pp. 134- 158

*Mini-ethnography due in class*

Sept. 21: Ethnicity and acculturation

Lee, *The Dobe Ju/'hoansi*, Chapters 10 & 11 (pp. 141-162)

Sept. 26: Consequences of the spread of the industrial world system

Lee, *The Dobe Ju/'hoansi*, Chapter 12 (pp. 167-190)

Bodley, *The price of progress*, pp. 369-378

*Essay questions distributed for exam 1*

Sept. 28: Development and globalization

Oct. 3: Exam #1

### **Module 3: Gender, Religion and Kinship**

Oct. 5: Writing against culture

Abu-Lughod, *Writing Women's Worlds*, Preface and Intro (pp. 1-42)

Oct. 10 – no class, fall recess

Oct. 12: Patrilineality

Abu-Lughod, *Writing Women's Worlds*, Chapter 1 (pp. 45-85)

Kottak, *Families, kinship and marriage; Families and descent sections*, pp. 109-118

Oct. 17: Polygyny

Abu-Lughod, *Writing Women's Worlds*, Chapter 2 (pp. 87-125)

Kottak, *Families, kinship and marriage; Marriage section*, pp. 118-129

Oct. 19: Reproduction

Abu-Lughod, *Writing Women's Worlds*, Chapter 3 (pp. 127-165)

Oct. 24: Patrilineal Parallel-Cousin Marriage

Abu-Lughod, *Writing Women's Worlds*, Chapter 4 (pp. 167-202)

Film: *Small Happiness*

Oct. 26: Honor and Shame  
Abu-Lughod, *Writing Women's Worlds*, Chapter 5 (pp. 205-242)  
*Essay questions distributed for exam 2*

Oct. 31: Exam #2

Nov. 2: Reflections on gender and culture  
Guest speaker: Dr. Jennifer Creamer

#### **Module 4: Culture, ethnicity and health**

Nov. 7: Introduction to medical anthropology  
Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You*, Preface and Chapters 1-4 (pp. 1-37)  
Film: *Being Hmong Means Being Free*

Nov. 9: Cultural barriers in health care and the role of the state  
Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You*, Chapters 5-7 (pp. 38-92)

Nov. 14: The Hmong in America and Laos  
Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You*, Chapters 8-10 (p. 93-139)

Nov. 16: The consequences of cultural difference  
Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You*, Chapters 11-13 (pp. 140-180)

Nov. 21: Immigration  
Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You*, Chapters 14 & 15 (pp. 181-224)  
*Assignment #2 due in class*

Nov. 23- NO CLASS – HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

Nov. 28 (Tues.) Explanatory models  
Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You*, Chapters 16 & 17, pp. 225-261

Nov. 30: Cross cultural understanding  
Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You*, Chapters 18 & 19 (pp. 262-288)  
Film: *Between Two Worlds: The Hmong Shaman in America*

Dec. 5: Film: *Becoming American: The Odyssey of a Refugee Family*

Dec. 7 – Review and wrap-up  
*Essay questions distributed for final exam*

Final exam date TBA