

Sociology 113: Cultural Anthropology
Department of Sociology, Moravian College
Instructor: Dr. Akbar Keshodkar
Fall 2014

Office Hours: Tuesdays, Thursday 10:30 am – 12 pm, or by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Cultural anthropology is the study of the diversity of human social life, past and present. This course will introduce students to the field of cultural anthropology and methods of research, with specific focus on the structure and dynamics of human culture and social institutions that give rise to different meanings and discourses. Students will explore how people in different societies meet universal human needs in culturally distinctive ways. We will examine how individuals and societies respond to issues such as symbols, religion, rituals, arts, kinship, marriage, gender, social difference, power and status, inter and intra group relations and the influence of social, economic and political institutions on individual experience. This course will also consider how anthropological perspectives examine issues of colonial expansion, demographic transition, industrialization, globalization and cultural change. We will apply these insights through discussions of social and cultural change, questions of inequality and diversity around the globe, and our roles as cultural agents in these events. The course will consist of lectures, discussions, ethnographic films/documentaries, group-based activities and weekly reading assignments that must be completed beforehand for class discussions.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the course, students should have improved their ability in:

- Developing a better understanding of the diversity of cultures around the world and challenge and understand the significance of distinct ways of life in different societies.
- Finding, evaluating and using appropriate information from multiple sources.
- Demonstrating competences in understanding, evaluating, and using qualitative information to explore issues, solve problems, and develop informed opinions.
- Understanding and valuing their own and other cultures, perceiving and reacting to differences from an informed and socially responsible point of view.
- Undertaking leadership roles and responsibilities, interacting effectively with others to accomplish shared goals.
- Acquiring an overview of basic concepts and principles utilized in the discipline of anthropology

TEXT:

Required reading:

The following book is available for purchase at the college bookstore:

Eriksen, Thomas Hylland. *Small Places, Large Issues: An Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology*. New York: Pluto Press, 2010. ISBN: 978 0 7453 3049 5

Additional articles required for the course can be accessed through the college library electronic journal database or will be posted on blackboard.

Supplementary Reading:

Anderson, B. 2006. *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso

Becker, A. 1995. *Beyond Translation*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press

Barnard, A and J. Spencer. 2002. *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology*. London: Routledge.

Douglas, M. 1966. *Purity and Danger*. London: Routledge

Geertz, C. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books

Hobsbawm, E and T. Ranger (eds.). 1983. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

James, W. 2003. *The Ceremonial Animal: A New Portrait of Anthropology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Monaghan, J and P. Just. 2000. *Social and Cultural Anthropology: A very short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Turner, V. 1967. *The Forest of Symbols*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press

Websites:

American Anthropological Association: <http://www.aaanet.org/>

UN Library of World's Knowledge: <http://www.wdl.org/en/>

COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS:

1. *Attendance and Participation:* Students will be required to *attend* class regularly and *participate* in discussions. Questions, feedback, and student interaction are an integral part of the learning process, and will supplement lectures and films. Students should come prepared, having read the assigned materials prior to coming to class. Chronic absences, tardiness and leaving early will adversely affect your grade. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class on random days and tardiness or absences on those occasions will result in a deduction of 5 points per infraction from the class participation grade. Absences due to illness or emergencies must be communicated to the instructor prior to the class.
2. *Basic classroom rules:* While in class, students are expected to use appropriate language with the instructor as well with each other, have their cell phones on silent and not be involved in personal conversations with each other or any activities which would disrupt the classroom environment. Infraction of these rules will result in a deduction of 20

points from the class participation grade and the student being asked to leave the classroom.

3. *Plagiarism:* I take plagiarism, copying someone else's work and representing it as your own, very seriously. This applies to all work submitted for the course. Students will be required to submitted all work done outside of the classroom on Safe Assign, through Blackboard. Plagiarism, academic dishonesty, or cheating will result in an automatic grade of F for the course. If a student's work is suspected of plagiarism, it will be their responsibility to demonstrate evidence reflecting the originality of the work, such as all notes and other materials utilized in developing the submitted work. Students should refer to the college's academic handbook for more information about plagiarism.
4. *Blackboard:* All assignments, additional reading materials, announcements and information related to the course will be posted on Blackboard. It is the students' responsibility to check Blackboard and their Moravian College email on a regular basis throughout the semester.
5. *Accommodating disabilities:* Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability must contact Ms. Elaine Mara, assistant director of academic support services for academic and disability support, at the lower level of Monocacy Hall, or by calling [610-861-1401](tel:610-861-1401). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.
6. *Quizzes/tests:* There will be three quizzes/tests on reading materials over the course of the semester. The assessments will commence at the beginning of the class. Students should note that no makeup will be offered and those arriving late will not receive extra time to complete the assessments.
7. *Group Presentations:* In the second part of the semester, after the midterm, students will make presentations, in groups of 3, on relevance and significance of major topics discussed in the course. A sign up sheet will be posted outside my office after week 3. Guidelines and a rubric for the presentations will be posted on blackboard in the coming weeks. The presentation will account for 10% of the grade for the course.
8. *Reflection Paper:* Over the course of the semester, students will submit two reflection papers, which will provide an analysis of and response to materials covered in course. These reaction papers should critically evaluate the issues discussed in class and further incorporate personal opinions on the materials covered in class and should engage course materials. Each reflection paper should be a minimum of two pages in length.
9. *Midterm and Final Exam:* The midterm and final exam will cover material from lectures, discussions, films, and reading, consisting of objective questions (e.g. short answer questions), primary source documents and/or essay questions. Questions will be primarily based on the assigned readings and supplementary materials. Make-up exams will be given only in emergency situations, and you should contact me before the scheduled exam if possible.

10. *Explanation and Breakdown of Grades:* Grades for the class will be given with the A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D, F system

Attendance and Class Participation	10%
Group Presentations	10%
Quizzes	25%
Reflection papers	10%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	20%

11. *Withdrawals/Incompletes:* Under no circumstances will a student receive an academic incomplete if they are failing the course or if they have done little or no work. In circumstances that an Incomplete is given, it will be the responsibility of the student to ensure that the work is submitted on time and meets the requirements of the course. If work is not submitted by the deadline given, the student will automatically receive an "F".

COURSE OUTLINE/SCHEDULE

The course will meet on Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:10 pm – 2:20 pm. Students are required to come prepared for each class, having completed the reading assignments beforehand. Unless indicated, all the required readings listed below are from the Thomas Eriksen book (TE). Other required reading materials will be posted on Blackboard and can also be accessed through the college library's electronic Journal collection (BB).

Week 1:

- 25 Aug 2014 Introduction to the course
- 27 Aug 2014 Ch. 1 – Anthropology: Comparison and Context (TE, p. 1-9)
Miner, Horace. "Body Rituals among the Nacirema," in American Anthropologist, 58(3), 1956. (BB)
<https://www.msu.edu/~jdowell/miner.html>

Week 2:

- 1 Sept 2014 Geertz, Clifford. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in The Interpretation of Culture: Selected Essays. New York: Basic books, p. 3-30 (BB)
http://www.sociosite.net/topics/texts/Geertz_Thick_Description.php
- 3 Sept 2014 Ch. 3 – Fieldwork and Ethnography (TE, p. 27-43)

Week 3:

- 8 Sept 2014 **Quiz on materials from week 1 and 2**
Ch. 2 – A Brief History of Anthropology (TE, p. 10-26)
- 10 Sept 2014 Ch. 4 – The Social Person (TE, p. 44-61)

Week 4:

- 15 Sept 2014 Ch. 6 – Person and Society (TE, p. 79-99)
- 17 Sept 2014 Ch. 5 – Local Organization (TE, p. 62-78)

Week 5:

- 22 Sept 2014 **Quiz on materials from weeks 3 and 4**
Ch. 9 – Gender and Age (TE, 132-149)
- 24 Sept 2014 Ortner, Sherry. "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" in Feminist Studies 1(2): 5-31, 1972 (BB)
<http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/3177638?uid=3739864&uid=2129&uid=2&uid=70&uid=4&uid=3739256&sid=21104073106101>

Week 6:

- 29 Sept 2014 Ch. 7 – Kinship as Descent (TE, 100-115)

1 Oct 2014	Ch. 8 – Marriage and Relatedness (TE, 116-131)
<u>Week 7:</u> 6 Oct 2014	Review for Midterm Exam
8 Oct 2014	Midterm Exam
<u>Week 8:</u> 13 Oct 2014:	NO CLASS (Fall Recess)
15 Oct 2014:	Ch. 15 – Language and Cognition (TE, p. 239-256)
<u>Week 9:</u> 20 Oct 2014	Ch. 11 – Politics and Power (TE, p. 165-183)
22 Oct 2014	Ch. 10 – Caste and Class (TE, 150-164)
<u>Week 10:</u> 27 Oct 2014	Ch. 12 – Exchange and Consumption (TE, 184-202)
29 Oct 2014	Ch. 13 – Production, Nature and Technology (TE, 203-219) Documentary: The Koyas https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aByEyeZZIVY
<u>Week 11:</u> 3 Nov 2014	Quiz on materials from weeks 8 - 10 Ch. 14 – Religion and Ritual (TE, 220-238)
5 Nov 2014	Turner, Victor. “Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rite de Passage,” (BB) http://hiebertglobalcenter.org/blog/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Reading-20-Victor-Turner-Betwixt-and-Between.pdf
<u>Week 12:</u> 10 Nov 2014	Ch. 17 – Ethnicity (TE, 275-288) American Anthropological Association Statement on Race (BB) http://www.aaanet.org/stmts/racepp.htm
12 Nov 2014	Jenkins, Richard. “Rethinking Ethnicity: Identity, Categorization and Power,” in Ethnic and Racial Studies, 17(2): 197-223, 1994 (BB)
<u>Week 13:</u> 17 Nov 2014	Ch. 18 - Nationalism and Minorities (TE, 289-306)
19 Nov 2014	Ch. 16 – Complexity and Change (TE, 257-274) Documentary: Shooting Freetown https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2hRf_zsbwZ0

Week 14:

24 Nov 2014

Appadurai, Arjun. "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," in *Theory, Culture, Society*. 7: 295-310, 1990 (BB)
http://www.unc.edu/~jbecks/comps/pdf/appadurai_disjuncture.pdf

26 Nov 2014:

NO CLASS (Thanksgiving break)

Week 15:

1 Dec 2014

Ch. 19 – Anthropology and the Paradoxes of Globalization (TE, 307-326)

3 Dec 2014

Review for Final Exam

FINAL EXAM:

Wednesday, 10 Dec. 2014, 8:30AM