

Introduction to Anthropology: ANT 101

Oxford College of Emory University

Spring 2006

Dr Valerie Singer

Office: 214 C Seney Hall

Office Hours: Mondays 10:30-11:30, Tuesdays 3-4, Thursdays 10-11,
Fridays 10:30-11:30

and by appointment (any changes to office hours will be posted on class conference)

Email: vsinger@learnlink.emory.edu

Office Phone: x 4614

Home Phone: 678 342-8659

(Feel free to call me at home, however I ask that you don't call after 9 PM.)

Course Description

Anthropology is the study of humankind, across both time and space – from our earliest beginnings to our most current dilemmas and from the most urban ‘modern’ settings to the most rural ‘backwoods’ locales. It is thus an extremely broad discipline. An introductory course such as this one necessarily only brushes the surface of many topics. Yet it is the goal of this course to provide students with an overall understanding of anthropological concepts, particularly the holistic approach to studying humanity. We will touch on each of anthropology’s four sub-disciplines: cultural anthropology, biological anthropology, archaeology, and linguistics. To illustrate these sub-disciplines, the course will focus on the issue of race as it has been understood anthropologically. We will be looking at how American anthropology has grown as a discipline through studying American Indians, and how American Indians have viewed “the whiteman” and the anthropologist over time. We will examine Brazilian understandings of race and racism in comparison to US understandings. We will explore the relationship of religion and worldview to culture change and continuity in Papua New Guinea. We will look at how cultural images of “the other” are formed, and what these images say about those who create them.

Course Objectives:

By the end of this course students will:

- Be familiar with basic anthropological terms and concepts
- Understand the basic methods and challenges of ethnographic fieldwork
- Understand why race has no biological meaning, but significant, varying historical and cultural meanings
- Be familiar with the principals of human evolution and modern human variation
- Be familiar with basic traits shared by all primates, and their relevance to evolution
- Be able to discuss the interrelationship of cultural change and continuity in long term anthropological studies

- Understand the significance and meaning of cultural relativism
- Understand basic anthropological approaches to religion, conversion, and ritual
- Understand basic anthropological approaches to family, kinship, and marriage
- Be able to think holistically about human traits – biological or cultural

Required texts

- Blessed Anastacia, Women, Race, and Popular Christianity in Brazil by John Burdick
- Thunder Rides a Black Horse: Mescalero Apaches and the Mythic Present by Claire Farrer
- The Gebusi: Lives Transformed in a Rainforest World by Bruce Knauft
- Numerous articles on e-reserve (listed with an R on course schedule)

Course Grade Breakdown

Exam One:	15%
Exam Two:	20%
Final Exam:	25%
Quizzes	10%
Papers (2 @ 7.5% each)	15%
Attendance and Participation:	15%
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Total	100%

Academic Honesty:

Both Oxford College and I take the matter of academic honesty very seriously. I would like to remind you that you are required to follow the Honor Code. Any suspected breaches to the Honor Code will be referred to the Honor Council for review and possible disciplinary action. This includes acts of plagiarism. I have found in the past that many college students do not understand what does and does not constitute plagiarism. We will be discussing what constitutes plagiarism and proper citation methods later in the semester.

Attendance:

I will be taking attendance each day. Each student is allowed TWO absences during the semester. This is to allow for the occasional illness, personal matter, or accidental nap. **Each additional absence will result in a 1 point lose to your attendance and participation grade (out of 15 points).** There are only two exceptions to this policy: 1) absences for religious holidays *if you notify me ahead of time that you will be absent*, and 2) extreme unexpected situations (extended illnesses, death in the family, etc.). If you have an extreme situation that prevents you from attending class, please notify me as soon as possible, and be prepared to show documentation of the situation. If you do not notify me in a timely manner, I reserve the right NOT to excuse your absence. Please be aware that students with perfect attendance who remain silent all semester in the classroom will NOT received 15 points on their attendance and participation grade.

Participation:

Your active participation is a vital part of this course. You are expected to have carefully read the assigned materials *before* each class session, and come prepared for discussion. I believe strongly that you can each learn a great deal in the classroom from your fellow students, not just from your professor. We are all both learners and teachers. You share with me the responsibility of creating a classroom atmosphere in which all of your classmates feel comfortable expressing their individual questions, ideas, and opinions.

I will be setting up a class conference for us on Learn Link. **As part of your participation grade, you need to contribute to the class conference at least once a week.** Your contributions may include comments on the readings or in-class lectures, discussions, or films. I also encourage you to write “discussion questions” for the rest of the class to respond to or comment on. I envision this conference as being a way to create more dialogue between students and help connected anthropology to our daily lives.

Exams

There will be three exams over the course of the semester. The third, final exam will be cumulative. The first exam will be multiple choice and short answer. The second and third exams will be multiple choice, short answer, and essay. I will provide you with a review sheet for each exam, although we may not have specified review sessions before each exam.

Quizzes

You will be quizzed weekly on the readings. These reading quizzes will ask questions which are obvious and simple to answer if you have done the readings, and otherwise impossible. The day of the week of the quizzes will vary, so there is a ‘pop’ nature to them.

Papers

You will write two short papers (3-4 pages each) on the ethnographies Blessed Anastacia and The Gebusi. These papers will analyze these books in relationship to the broader topics we have been discussing in anthropology. I will give you a handout detailing the questions you are to address in each paper at least one week before it is due. We will also be discussing anthropological techniques of paper citation and how to avoid plagiarism. Late papers will be graded down a FULL LETTER grade for each day late – INCLUDING Saturday and Sunday. Outside research is not required for these papers.

Grading

Please note that I WILL be grading using the plus-minus system.

100-93% = A	79-77% = C+
92-90% = A-	76-73% = C
89-87% = B+	72-70% = C-
86-83% = B	69-67% = D+
82-80% = B-	66-60% = D
	59% and below = F

Making Sense of Anthropology

Anthropology is the study of humanity, past and present. As such, it is an extremely broad field. The traditional four-field approach of American Anthropology, which this course follows, is particularly holistic. A holistic approach is one that investigates the interrelated and multifaceted dynamics between seemingly separate parts of a system. Therefore, we can discuss the relationship between orangutans, our grasping thumbs, our depth perception, and the structure of our shoulder sockets. Or we can discuss connections between the local Temples to the gods in Bali, Balinese rice harvests, ducks, and Green Revolution pesticide treatments. Students have sometimes felt that my lectures go on ‘tangents’ in that I do not appear to stay on one subject. Your challenge as a student in this class is to learn how to draw connections between these multiple subjects – i.e. to think holistically and anthropologically. This will be especially challenging without a textbook for you to follow. Therefore it is **IMPERATIVE** to your success in this course that you keep up with the course materials, learn to make holistic connections, and bring it to my attention whenever you may start to feel lost. I am here to help you understand and recognize these connections, both within and outside the classroom.

Course Schedule

(I reserve the right to make additions or changes to this schedule. All changes will be posted on the class conference.)

- January 18 Introductions
- January 20 What is Anthropology?
Reading: *Thinking Holistically* (on e-reserve)
- January 23 **Understanding Evolution**
Chapter 3: Evolution from S and DeCorse Anthropology (e-reserve)
- January 25 Methods in Biological and Archaeological Anthropology
Thinking About Change (on e-reserve)
- January 27 **Non-Human Primates**
Characteristics of Primates
These are Real Swinging Primates (R)
- January 30 Film: Among the Wild Chimpanzees
Got Culture? by Stanford (R)
Dim Forest, Bright Chimps by Boesch and Boesch-Achermann (R)
- February 1 Primate Social Dynamics
What Are Friends For? (R)

Hominid Evolution

- February 3 Bi-pedalism and other developments
The Evolution of Human Birth (R)
- February 6 Early Hominids
Food For Thought (R)
Once We Were Not Alone (R)
- February 8 Recent Hominids
Who Were the Neandertals? (R)
Hard Times Among the Neandertals (R)
- February 10 The Neandertal Debate
Multiregional Theory of Evolution (R)
The Recent African Genesis of Humans (R)
Film: Neandertals on Trial
- February 13 On Discovering the “Hobbit”
The Littlest Human (R)
- February 15 Why There is No Such Thing as Biological Race
A Short History of Scientific Racism in America (R)
The Perilous Idea of Race (R)
Skin Deep (R)
- February 17 **Exam One**
- February 20 Ethnographic Fieldwork: The Bakairi, the Yanomamo, and the Nacirema
Doing Fieldwork Among the Yanomamo by Chagnon (R)
Lessons in Introductory Anthropology from the Bakairi Indians (R)
- February 22 Anthropological Ethics and Dilemmas
Thinking Ethically in Anthropology (R)
Spin Doctoring the Yanomamo (R)
- February 24 Film: Ishi
Collecting your Fossils Alive from Skull Wars (R)
Exam 1 returned to you

Families, Kinship, and Marriage

- February 27 Family and Kinship in Anthropology
How Many Fathers are Best for a Child? (R)
African Polygyny, Family Values and Contemporary Changes (R)
When Brothers Share a Wife (R)

March 1 Gender
When Debbie Met Chris (R)
Chapter from Families We Choose by Kath Weston (R)

March 3 Thunder Rides a Black Horse chapters 1 & 2

March 6 Anthropology of Religion
Serpent Handling as Sacrament by M. Daugherty
Taraka's Ghost by Freed and Freed

March 8 Understanding Rites of Passage
Thunder Rides a Black Horse chapters 3 & 4

March 10 Thunder Rides a Black Horse chapters 5-8

March 13-17 SRPING BREAK

Religion, Race, and Culture in Brazil

March 20 Blessed Anastacia Introduction and Chapter 1

March 22 Blessed Anastacia Chapter 2

March 24 Blessed Anastacia Chapter 3
Candomble: Dr Singer's research in Brazil

March 27 Blessed Anastacia Chapters 4 & 5

March 29 Blessed Anastacia Chapter 6 and Conclusion
Paper 1 Due

Mandatory Oxford Studies Event:

**Dr John Burdick: Rap and Gospel in the Black Movement of Sao Paulo
7 PM Williams Hall**

March 31 Linguistic Anthropology
Reading Shakespeare in the Bush (R)
To Give Up on Words, Silence Among the Mescalero Apache (R)

April 3 **Exam 2**

April 5 Subsistence, Exchange, and Reciprocity
Eating Christmas in the Kalahari (R)
Too Many Bananas.....(R)

- April 7 Archaeology and the Rise of Agriculture
- April 10 Historical Archaeology
Selection from Uncommon Ground by Leland Ferguson (R)
Film: The Archaeology of Slavery
Exam 2 returned to you
- April 12 Foragers, Leadership, and Stratification
Life Without Chiefs (R)
Potlatching (R)
- April 14 The Gebusi Intro-Chapter 2
- April 17 The Gebusi Chapters 3-4
- April 19 The Gebusi Chapters 5-6
- April 21 Change and Continuity in Anthropology
The Gebusi Chapters 7-8
- April 24 The Gebusi Chapters 9-10
- April 26 The Gebusi Chapters 11-12, Conclusion and Farwell
- April 28 **Paper Two Due**
- May 1 Last day of class

Final Exam : Wednesday May 10 2-5 PM

Please note: We have the LAST exam slot. It is NOT in my power to allow you to take the exam early for any reason. All requests for an earlier exam must be approved by Dean Linville, and are usually only granted for medical emergencies.