Anthropology 1002 (Fall 2016)
Sociocultural Anthropology
Prof. Roy Richard Grinker
M-W, 12:45 PM – 2:00 PM in 1957 E Street #213
My Contact Info: rgrink@gwu.edu
Office: #501J, 1957 E Street #501J
My Office Hours: Tuesday 1-3, Drop-by, or by appointment

Teaching Assistants:

Teaching Assistant Office:
Lower level, 2110 G St., NW

Books Required:

Articles: Available on Blackboard through the primary class link.

Grading                      | Due Date
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Short Paper 20%               | September 21
Field notes project 10%       | October 3
Mid-Term Exam 20%             | October 17
Class/Section Participation 25% | Various
  10% section activities
  10% attendance;
  5% participation
Final Exam 25%                 | TBD

Sections: Attendance and participation in sections comprises a substantial part of your overall course grade. If for any reason you cannot attend section you must notify your teaching assistant prior to the section you miss. In addition, 10% of your grade derives from activities carried out in section (such as debates or projects), in which you will be asked to apply your knowledge in creative ways.

Learning Goals (specific):
By the end of this class, students will be able to:
- understand the human capacity to create culture and social organization.
- show how different aspects of social life, such as economy, religion, and politics, are related to each other in specific cultures (e.g., the Azande, the Lele, the Bedouin).
- use broad anthropological concepts such as culture, society, structure, function, and process to interpret social categories such as race, gender, and class.
• use anthropological concepts to understand their own social worlds and cultural biases.

Learning Goals (general): Critical Thinking and Cross-Cultural Perspectives
This course will contribute to student mastery of:
• critical thinking skills, where critical thinking is defined as analyzing and engaging with the concepts that underlie an argument.
• the ability to demonstrate critical thinking through written communication skills, which will be evaluated in the short paper, quiz, and exams; oral communication skills will be evaluated through “class participation,” though oral communication skills will not necessarily be a primary focus.
• cross-cultural perspectives, through which students critically analyze cultural difference as a fundamental aspect of human nature.

Academic Integrity
All students must practice academic integrity. This means doing your own work, and when you use the words and ideas of others in any written work, you must: 1) identify direct quotations with quotation marks; and 2) indicate the source of ideas that are not your own by using social sciences notation form. If you have any questions at all about what this means, you should speak to the instructor. Plagiarism, and all breaches of academic integrity (for example, the sale of lecture notes from this class, or the use of content from the internet as though it was your own), will be severely dealt with in accordance with the University’s policies and procedures. For more information on The George Washington University’s policies on academic integrity, consult: http://www.gwu.edu/~integrity/code.html

The policy on academic integrity in this course is that if you commit a breach of academic integrity in any assignment or exam, you will receive a zero for that assignment or exam. This infraction will be reported to the University’s Academic Integrity Council. You will be clearly notified by the instructor in person OR by email before the Council is informed.

Special Needs
Please let me or your TA know right away if you have any special needs with respect to how this course will be conducted. Don’t wait to do this. If you need extra time for exams, you must register with DSS; please let us know if you need to do this, and don’t wait. The web site for Disability Support Services is as follows: http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/

Course Schedule:

Week 1: The Contours of the Discipline
Monday, 8/29: Introduction
Reading due:
None. Introduction

Wednesday, 8/31: Fieldwork
Reading due:
Excerpts from Bestor, Bourgois, Biehl, Evans-Pritchard, Geertz, Malinowski, Nader (BB)
Week 2: The Origins of Modern Anthropology in French Sociology
Monday, 9/5: LABOR DAY (NO CLASS)!

Wednesday, 9/7: What is Society?
Reading due:
Durkheim, E. 1895. “What is a Social Fact?” (BB)

Week 3: Reciprocity
Monday, 9/12:
Reading due:
Mauss pp. 46-83.
Film: “Kawelka.”

Wednesday, 9/14: Structuralism
Reading due:

Week 4:
Monday, 9/19: Functionalism and Structural-Functionalism
Reading due:
Turner, V. 1967. “Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites de Passage.

FIRST SECTION ASSIGNMENT

Wednesday, 9/21: Ritual and Rationality
Reading due:
Radcliffe-Brown, A.R. “Joking Relationships.”

SHORT PAPER DUE

Week 5:
Monday, 9/26: Economic Anthropology
Reading due:
Douglas, Mary. 1962. “Lele Economy Compared with the Bushong.”

Wednesday, 9/28: The Interpretive Framework

SECOND SECTION ASSIGNMENT: FIELD NOTES PROJECT DUE

Week 6:
Monday, 10/3: Culture as Text
Reading due: Geertz, C. “Notes from a Balinese Cockfight.”
Wednesday, 10/5: Language and Ideology

Film: “Dadi’s Family.”

**Week 7:**
Monday, 10/10: Honor and Modesty

*Reading due:*
Abu-Lughod, chapters 3-4.

**THIRD SECTION ASSIGNMENT DUE**

**Wednesday, 10/12:**

*Reading due:*
Finish Abu-Lughod.

**Week 8:**
Monday, 10/17:

*MID-TERM EXAM*

**Wednesday, 10/19:**

*Reading due:*
Halperin, D. 1985. “100 Years of Homosexuality.”
Kulick, D. 2009. “Soccer, Sex and Scandal in Brazil.”

**Week 9:**
Monday, 10/24: Psychiatric Anthropology

*Reading due:*

**FALL BREAK (NO CLASS)!**

**Wednesday, 10/26: Autism**

*Reading due:*

**Week 10:**
Monday, 10/31: Autism

*Reading due:*

**FOURTH SECTION ASSIGNMENT DUE**

**Wednesday, 11/2: Structural Violence**

*Reading due:*

**Week 11:**
**Monday, 11/7:** *Anthropology of Contemporary Social Problems*
*Reading due:*

**Wednesday, 11/9:** *Anthropology of Contemporary Social Problems*
*Reading due:*
Bourgois, Chapters 5-9.

**Week 12:**
**Monday, 11/14:** *Commodities*
*Reading due:*
Marx, Karl. Selection from *Capital.*

**Wednesday, 11/16:** *Capitalism*
*Reading due:*
Ho, K. 2005. "Situating Global Capitalisms"
Mitchell, Timothy. "Fixing the Economy."

**Week 13:**
**Monday, 11/21:** *Identity and Ethnicity*
*Reading due:*
Clifford, J. 1988. "Identity at Mashpee" (Part One)

**Wednesday, 11/23:** HAPPY THANKSGIVING (NO CLASS)!

**Week 14:**
**Monday, 11/28:** *Identity and Ethnicity*
*Reading due:*
Clifford, J. 1988. "Identity at Mashpee" (Part Two)

**Wednesday, 11/30:** *Globalization*
*Reading due:*
Appadurai, A. 1990. "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy."

**Week 15:**
**Monday, 12/5:** *Anthropology and Public Policy*
*Reading due:*
Wedel, Janine et al. "Toward an Anthropology of Public Policy."
Lakoff, Andrew. "Preparing for the Next Emergency."
Woolard, Kathryn. "Sentences in the Language Prison: The Rhetorical Structuring of an American Language Policy"

**Wednesday, 12/7:** *Review*
*Reading due: Note.*
Monday, 12/12: **NO CLASS.** Office hours for student questions.

**FIFTH SECTION ASSIGNMENT DUE**

**FINAL EXAM DATE AND TIME: TBA**

**Exam Explanation**

The mid-term and final exam are designed to test the extent to which you are meeting the course goals stated on the first page of the syllabus.

The exams therefore test three domains:

1. Your knowledge of how humans create culture and cultural difference.
2. Your ability to think critically from a cross-cultural perspective.
3. Your ability to communicate critical thinking effectively through writing.

The exams consist of "**Concepts, Processes, and People**" questions that you must complete in the allotted time.

These questions ask you to describe and state the significance of important material from the course. You are required to:

a. Select the most important details about the person, process, or concept. This requires both **description** and **judgment** on your part. You must be able to decide what is important about a given thing, and what is unimportant. I require a great deal of detail, but it must be detail that is important to the arguments of the course. You will be given 16 points out of 25 for description.

b. Then, you must be able to say why those details are **significant**. Why do they matter, and why have you selected them? You might choose to say how a given ethnographer, such as Evans-Pritchard, provided new ways of thinking about culture that other anthropologists might use, or you might explain how a given concept will lead to future concepts. You might also say how this person’s ideas are related to the broader course goals and themes. You will be given 9 points out of 25 for significance.

c. In both sections of your answer, you must demonstrate a close reading of the assigned texts. If the answer does not convey your knowledge of the specific text and draws instead only on lecture or materials you read outside the course assignments. Note: most answers will be much stronger if they contain references to multiple readings from the course.

**EXAMPLE:** What **not to write:** "The significance of Sigmund Freud’s argument that religion is ‘an illusion’ is that it helps him persuade the reader that religious beliefs are products of the mind.

**EXAMPLE:** What **to write:** "The significance of Sigmund’s Freud’s argument that religion is ‘an illusion’ is that it stimulated anthropologists to redefine culture in psychological and symbolic terms. As Freud wrote in the second to last chapter *The Future of an Illusion* (1927), in which he alludes to both Aristotle and Columbus, illusions are not necessarily false or at odds with reality; to
say something is an illusion is just to say that the beliefs are motivated in large part by unconscious drives and are unconsciously shaped to reflect the believers’ social structure."

It is important for you to realize is that this is not just a test of your ability to master information – though I do require a high level of detail. Rather, this is a test of your ability to select the most important information, tell my why it is important, and then communicate all of this quickly and clearly.

**How to Study**

Use your lecture notes, the outlines I hand out in class, and your class/section discussions as a guide for going back over your readings. I will NOT ask you something obscure from the readings. These questions will be derived from concepts, people, and processes that recur, usually in both the readings AND the lectures and discussions.

What this means is that I will ask you only about topics that are important for the unfolding of the course and its core ideas. I will not ask you trivial details about what happened on a particular page of a reading.

This doesn’t mean that details aren’t important. As you’ll see in the sample answer below, details are tremendously important. But the details that count are to be marshaled in the service of an overall argument about why something is important to the course.

**Example**

*Evans-Pritchard:* A British cultural anthropologist, most active between 1930-1960, who conducted fieldwork among several societies, including the Nuer and the Azande of Sudan. Unlike most of his colleagues, who studied political organizations with obvious structures and hierarchies (e.g., kingships, chieftoms), Evans-Pritchard was interested in how societies without any obvious political structure could be coherent. He showed that the “acephalous” Nuer political system was organized according to kinship and political alliances that changed depending on context. The Nuer’s “segmentary lineage system” was defined by complementary and opposition: your friend in one particular conflict might be your foe in another one. His essential notion was, not unlike Radcliffe-Brown’s, “structural-functionalist,” meaning that all societies are structures which function through the complex interrelationships of its parts. His work with the Azande explored the logic of witchcraft beliefs. Whereas most scholars thought witchcraft was irrational, Evans-Pritchard showed that Azande thought makes sense in the context of Azande culture. In trying to adopt Zande thinking for himself, he suggests that Zande thought can be reasonable even for the scientifically trained European. He does not think witches really exist, but he understands completely why the Zande believe they exist. (16 pts. for definition)

*Significance:* Despite the fact that Evans-Pritchard was studying only one specific semi-nomadic group, the Nuer, he showed anthropologists that most African societies were organized politically in terms of descent and lineage, and this focus on kinship influenced all subsequent anthropology on the continent. The Nuer, he showed, held a model of society in their minds that organized and made sense of concepts of time, space, and social distance. One of the theoretical outcomes of his work on the Nuer was to move anthropology away
from strict empiricism and toward the study of more abstract organizing principles. In his work on the Azande, he helped anthropologists understand the problem of representing the modes of thought and action of other societies in a scholarly language. He also humbled scientists, showing them that the assumption that only science is "rational" is faulty. If we understand the cultural premises and social contexts of people’s thoughts, beliefs about supernatural causation no longer seem irrational. Evans-Pritchard’s work gave the belief systems of non-western societies more integrity than they had ever had in the eyes of European scholars, and also launched an important debate in philosophy on the nature of rationality. (9 pts. for significance)