

Introduction to Sociocultural Anthropology Anth1002 – Section 11

Mondays and Wednesdays, 12:45 – 2 pm

MPA, B07

Professor Erica C. Wortham

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Office Hours: Wednesday, 10 – 11:30 am and by appointment, 201B HAH

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Course Description

This course is an introduction to sociocultural anthropology. One of the four fields of anthropology in the US, sociocultural anthropology offers ways of understanding the diversity of human cultural practices. Designed to teach you to “think like an anthropologist,” this course will cover basic anthropological research methods and survey some of the central ideas and developments in the field over the last century with a particular emphasis on recent attention to globalization. Please note that this syllabus is subject to change! Revisions will be announced in class and on blackboard.

Course Requirements and Grading

Participation	25%	
Field Notes/Research Report	10%	Due W 10/3
Mid-Term Examination	20%	W 10/26
Short Paper/Book Project	20%	Due M 11/28
Final Examination	25%	TBD

1. This class will be run as lecture–discussion. Attendance and participation are essential and comprise a substantial part of your overall grade. For each class meeting, several students will prepare and present a 2-3 paragraph response paper to the assigned reading and include 3 discussion questions. Each student must do two response papers during the term.

2. Exams will be in class and consist of short answer and short essay questions.

3. There are two related writing assignments in first and third quarters of this course. The first is a field notes or research report based on a topic of interest to you, and the second is an original, polished short paper or book project based on the same topic. Topics are to be approved by me by midterm. Book projects will be shepherded in part by Kerry McAleer-Keeler, Professor of Art and Design at the Corcoran School of Art and Design. Details will be discussed in class and uploaded to Blackboard announcements.

Technology in the classroom

I have a strong preference for NO laptops or cellphone use in the classroom. Hand-writing notes is far more productive for learning and makes for a more engaging classroom with less distractions. Please see me for exceptions.

Required Readings and Screenings

Coates, Ta-Nehisi

2015 Between the World and Me, Melbourne: The Text Publishing Company

Guest, Kenneth J.

2016 Essentials of Cultural Anthropology New York: W.W. Norton & Company

Mauss, Marcel

2000 (1950) The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies New York: Norton

Myerhoff, Barbara

1978 Number Our Days: Culture and Community Among Elderly Jews in an American Ghetto New York: Simon and Schuster

A Bridge Over the River/Un Puente Sobre El Río (2009, 30 min) Rigoberto Jimenéz

HAFU (90 min, 2015) Megumi Nishikura and Lara Pérez Takagi

The Kayapo II: Out of the Forest (1989, 53 min) Terrance Turner

Ongka's Big Moka: The Kawelka of Papua New Guinea (1976; 60 min) Granada Television, Disappearing Worlds Series

Number Our Days (1976, 28 min) David Littman

Additional readings are on Blackboard or available on line via a URL provided here. Please complete the readings by the day they are listed. Films screened in class are required course material.

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 papers 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.

Learning Goals (specific)

By the end of this class, students will be able to:

- understand the human capacity to create culture and social organization.

- use broad anthropological concepts such as culture, society, structure, social construction and ritual to understand social processes in their own and other societies
- have some familiarity with the major anthropological figures of the last century and their contributions to the discipline

Academic Integrity

All students must practice academic integrity. Do your own work, quote and carefully site the work of others. If you have any questions about how to do this, please speak to me. 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 handled in accordance with the University's policies and procedures:

<http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html>.

*Following departmental guidelines, 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.*

Support

Please let me 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.*

Disability Support Services (DSS)

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Rome Hall, Suite 102, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: gwired.gwu.edu/dss/

Mental Health Services 202-994-5300

The University's Mental Health Services offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include: crisis and emergency mental health consultations confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals. For additional information please refer to: counselingcenter.gwu.edu/

University Policy on Religious Holidays

1. Students should notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance.
2. Faculty should extend to these students the courtesy of absence without penalty on such occasions, including permission to make up examinations.
3. Faculty who intend to observe a religious holiday should arrange at the beginning of the semester to reschedule missed classes or to make other provisions for their course-related activities.

Average minimum amount of independent, out-of-class, learning expected per week:

In a 15 week semester, including exam week, students are expected to spend a minimum of 100 minutes of out-of-class work for every 50 minutes of direct instruction, for a minimum total of 2.5 hours a week. A 3-credit course should include 2.5 hours of direct instruction and a minimum of 5 hours of independent learning or 7.5 hours per week.

Emergency Response Handbook

Please familiarize yourself with the handbook and keep important numbers accessible:

https://campusadvisories.gwu.edu/sites/campusadvisories.gwu.edu/files/GW_Emergency_Response_Handbook_2015_2016.pdf.

Schedule

Week 1

M Aug 29 **Introductions;** syllabus reviewW Aug 31 **Anthropology in a Global Perspective**

Guest, Chapter 1, Anthropology in a Global Age

Jason De León, "Undocumented migration, use wear, and the materiality of habitual suffering in the Sonoran Desert," *Journal of Material Culture*, Winter 2013, pp. 1-25 available at

<http://undocumentedmigrationproject.com/wpcontent/uploads/2013/08/DeLeon-2013-material-culture.pdf>

Week 2

M Sept 5 LABOR DAY; NO CLASS

W Sept 7 **The Culture Concept**

Clifford Geertz, Ch. 1, "Thick Description," 3-30, Bb.

Guest, Chapter 2, Culture

Week 3

M Sept 12 Émile Durkheim, "What is a Social Fact?" in *The Rules of Sociological Method* (New York: Free Press, 1982 [1895]), 50-58, Bb.

Laura Bohannon, "Shakespeare in the Bush," *Natural History*, August/September, 1966, pp. 1-12 available at

<http://www.naturalhistorymag.com/picks-from-the-past/12476/shakespeare-in-the-bush?page=4>

W Sept 14 **Fieldwork and Methods**

Malinowski, "Foreword," "Introduction," in *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (New York: Dutton, 1950 [1922]), xv-xviii, 1-25

Guest, Chapter 3, Fieldwork and Ethnography

American Anthropological Association Principles of Professional Responsibility, 2012 available at

<http://ethics.aaanet.org/category/statement/>

Week 4

M Sept 19 **Language**

Guy Deutscher, "Does Your Language Shape How You Think?" New York Times Magazine, August 26, 2010 available at http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/29/magazine/29language-t.html?_r=0

Guest, Chapter 4, Language

W Sept 21 **Race**

Guest, Chapter 5: Race and Racism

Ta-Nehisi Coates, Part I, Between the World and Me, pp. 1-71

Browse: Are we so Different? Touring Exhibit of American Anthropological Association available at <http://www.understandingrace.org/home.html>

*** OPENING OF NMAAHC – ATTEND! ***

<https://nmaahc.si.edu/visit/opening>

Friday, Sept 23 – Sunday, Sept 25

Week 5

M Sept 26 **Reciprocity and Material Culture: People and Things**

Guest Lecture, Kerry McAleer-Keeler, Professor of Art and Design, Corcoran School of Art and Design

Marcel Mauss, The Gift, pp. vii-46

W Sept 28 Marcel Mauss, The Gift, pp. 47-83

Arjun Appadurai, Ch. 1 "Introduction: commodities and the politics of value," The Social Life of Things, 3-63, Bb.

Week 6

M Oct 3 *** FIELD NOTES/RESEARCH REPORT PAPER DUE ***

Screening: Ongka's Big Moka: The Kawelka of Papua New Guinea (1976; 60 min) Granada Television, Disappearing Worlds Series

W Oct 5 **Ethnicity and Nationalism**

Guest, Chapter 6, Ethnicity and Nationalism

Week 7

M Oct 10 **Gender**

Lila Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving" American Anthropologist 104(3):783-90, 2002, available at <http://org.uib.no/smi/seminars/Pensum/Abu-Lughod.pdf>

Alissa J. Rubin, "Penalizing Women For Covering Too Little, And Then Too Much," New York Times, August 28, 2016, available at http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/28/world/europe/france-burkini-bikini-ban.html?_r=0

Guest, Chapter 7, Gender

W Oct 12 **Sexuality**

Emily Martin, "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles," *Signs* 16(13):485-501, 1991, available at <http://web.stanford.edu/~eckert/PDF/Martin1991.pdf>

Guest, Chapter 8, Sexuality

Week 8

M Oct 17 **Families**

Guest, Chapter 9, Kinship, Family and Marriage

Screening: HAFU (90 min, 2015) Megumi Nishikura and Lara Pérez Takagi

W Oct 19 **Visit GW's Special Collection Corcoran Artists' Books**

Class will meet at the Special Collections Research Center, Gelman Library, 7th Floor

Week 9

M Oct 24 FALL BREAK – NO CLASS

W Oct 26 **IN-CLASS MID TERM EXAMINATION**

Week 10

M Oct 31 **Religion, Ritual and Social Dramas**

Barbara Myerhoff, Number Our Days, pp. 1-78

Victor Turner, "Social Dramas and Ritual Metaphors," Ritual, Play and Performance, Preface and pp. 23-59, Bb.

W Nov 2 Barbara Myerhoff, Number Our Days, pp. 79-152

Week 11

M Nov 7 Barbara Myerhoff, Number Our Days, pp. 153-231

W Nov 9 Barbara Myerhoff, Number Our Days, pp. 232-281

- Screening: Number Our Days (1976, 28 min) David Littman
- Week 12
M Nov 14 Guest, Chapter 12, Religion
- W Nov 16 **Our in Globalized World**
- Guest, Chapter 10, Class and Inequality
- Chris Walley, "Deindustrializing Chicago: A Daughter's Story," In The Insecure American, Hugh Gusterson and Catherine Besteman, eds, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009, pp. 113-139, Bb.
- Week 13
M Nov 21 Guest, Chapter 11, The Global Economy
- Sebastiao Salgado, "The Silent Drama of Photography," TED Talk, 2013, available at https://www.ted.com/talks/sebastiao_salgado_the_silent_drama_of_photography?language=en
- W Nov 23 THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS
- Week 14
M Nov 28 * **SHORT PAPER / BOOK PROJECT DUE** *
- Sarah Blue, "Erosion of Racial Equality in the Context of Cuba's Dual Economy," *Latin American Politics and Society* 49(3): 35-68 2008 Bb
- A Bridge Over the River/Un Puente Sobre El Río Rigoberto Jimenez (2009, 30 min)
- W Nov 30 **Politics**
- Guest, Chapter 12, Politics and Power
- Screening: The Kayapo II: Out of the Forest (53 min, 1989) Terrance Turner
- Week 15
M Dec 5 **Health and Illness**
- Guest, Chapter 14, Health and Illness
- Paul Farmer, "On Suffering and Structural Violence: A View From Below," *Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Context* 3(1):11-28, 2009, Bb.

W Dec 7 Nancy Scheper-Hughes, Death Without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil, Introduction, Bb.

M Dec 12 REVIEW – LAST CLASS

FINAL EXAM

December 14 – 22, TBA