Introduction to Sociocultural Anthropology
Anth 1002 – Section 11
Fall 2015
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:35 – 10:50
2020 K Street NW, 20

Professor Erica C. Wortham
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Office Hours: Wednesday, 12:30-2 pm and Friday, 9:30 – 11 am, 201B (HAH)
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I Course Description:
This course is an introduction to socio-cultural anthropology. One of the four fields of anthropology in the US, sociocultural anthropology offers ways of understanding the human experience generally – what we share in common across cultures, how we make meaning – as well as ways to critically appreciate human diversity and social inequalities. Sociocultural anthropology is a humanistic social science, in the sense that its cross-cultural approach lays a foundation for tolerance and deep understanding among different societies.

What does it mean to think anthropologically? To practice anthropology? We will consider some of the foundational ideas and frameworks of anthropology, how they have changed over the course of the discipline’s development, and how anthropologists produce and circulate knowledge through field research, writing (ethnography) and film/video making. Our goals are to better understand changing notions of the “culture concept;” how anthropology developed with a particular emphasis on “primitive” or simple societies, and now effectively tackles complex modern worlds and globalization itself in dialogue with many interlocutors from the humanities and social sciences. You will learn to use broad anthropological concepts such as culture, society, structure, function, and process to interpret social categories such as race, gender, and class and use anthropological concepts to understand your own social worlds and cultural biases.

II Course Requirements and Grading

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<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper 1</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Thurs, 10/1</td>
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<td>Mid-Term Examination</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Thurs, 10/29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper 2</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Due Thurs, 11/24</td>
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<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>30%</td>
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1. Attendance, active preparation and participation for class discussion is essential (20% of grade). For each class meeting, two students will prepare and present a 2-3 paragraph response to include 3 discussion questions on the assigned readings. Names will be drawn randomly and response papers will be emailed to me the night before class.

2. Exams will be in class and consist of short answer and short essay questions (3-4 paragraphs).
3. There are **two short papers** (approximately 3 double-spaced pages) assigned in first and third quarters of this course (15% of grade each). These are designed to push you to interact more deeply with a reading or series of readings (or films) of your choice and to refine your thinking and writing skills. Paper topics must relate directly to a question or issue discussed in the readings and films. **See me/email me for pre-approval before settling on your topics.** I encourage you to base your second paper on a limited about of field research or a short interview. Late papers will be graded accordingly.

### III Books and Readings

Abu-Lughod, Lila  

Mauss, Marcel  

Myerhoff, Barbara  

Robbins, Richard H.  

Roth, Joshua H.  

Additional readings are on Blackboard. Please complete the readings by the day they are listed.

### IV 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](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.

### V Special Needs
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. The web site for Disability Support Services is as follows: [http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/](http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/)

**VI Schedule**

**Introduction: Definitions, Problems and Key Concepts**

**Week 1**

**T Sept 1** Introductions; syllabus review

**Th Sept 3** The Culture Concept
Raymond Williams, “Culture,” in *Keywords* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 87-93.

**Week 2**

**T Sept 8** Clifford Geertz, Ch. 1, “Thick Description,” 3-30.
Robbins, Ch. 1, “Culture and Meaning”

Robbins, Ch. 4, “The Social and Cultural Construction of Reality”

**The Role of the Primitive, Constructs of Time and Difference**

**Week 3**


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

**Th Sept 17** Johannes Fabian, Chapter 1, 1-36, from *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*


Screening: *The Kayapo II: Out of the Forest* (Terrance Turner, 1989, 53 min), second half
**Fieldwork Paradigms**

**Week 4**


Robbins, Ch. 2 “The Meaning of Progress and Development”

*FIRST PAPER TOPIC DUE*

Th Sept 24  Ruth Benedict, Ch. 1-3, in *Patterns of Culture*, 1-56

Robert Emerson et al. Ch. 1, Writing Ethnographic Field Notes, 1-20

**Economies, Exchange and Material Culture**

**Week 5**


Robbins, Ch. 6, “The Cultural Construction of Identity”

*FIRST PAPER TOPIC DUE*

*Th Oct 1  Marcel Mauss, *The Gift*, Ch. 3-4

**Week 6**

T Oct 6  Arjun Appadurai, Ch. 1 “Introduction: commodities and the politics of value,” *The Social Life of Things*, 3-63

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

**Symbols and Ritual**

**Week 7**

T Oct 13  Barbara Myerhoff, *Number Our Days*, 1-78


Th Oct 15  Barbara Myerhoff, *Number Our Days*, 79-152

**Week 8**

T Oct 20  Barbara Myerhoff, *Number Our Days*, 153-231
Th Oct 22  Barbara Myerhoff, *Number Our Days*, 232-281

Screening: *Number Our Days* (1976, 28 min) David Littman

Week 9
T Oct 27  REVIEW

*Th Oct 29  IN-CLASS MID TERM EXAM

**Family, Kinship and Gender**

Week 10

Robbins, Ch. 5, “Patterns of Family Relations”

Th Nov 5  Lila Abu-Lughod, *Veiled Sentiments*, Chapters 3-4

Week 11
T Nov 10  Lila Abu-Lughod, *Veiled Sentiments*, Chapters 5-6

Abu-Lughod, “Do Muslim Women Need Saving?”

*Th Nov 12  Lila Abu-Lughod, *Veiled Sentiments*, Chapters 7-8

*SECOND PAPER TOPIC DUE*

**Nation, Migration and the State**

Week 12

Robbins, Ch. 3 “Globalization, Neoliberalism, and the Nation-State”

Th Nov 19  Joshua Roth, *Brokered Homeland*, Ch. 3-4

Week 13
*T Nov 24  Joshua Roth, *Brokered Homeland*, Ch. 5-7

Screening: TBA

*SECOND PAPER DUE*

Th Nov 26  NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING
Media, Technology and Representation

Week 14
T Dec 1  Erica Wortham, *Indigenous Media in Mexico*, Introduction, Ch. 1-2


Th Dec 3  Erica Wortham, Indigenous Media in Mexico, Ch. 4-6

Screening: *Sweet Gathering/Dulce Convivencia* (2004;18 min), Filoteo Martinez Gómez (Mixe, Ayuük), Mexico

Week 15
T Dec 8  Miller, Daniel *Tales from Facebook*, ix-27

FINAL EXAM
Friday, Dec 18  10:20 am -12:20 pm  2020 K, Room 20