OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE:
This course provides a perspective from cultural anthropology on risk and security. Throughout the semester, we will explore what “risk,” and “security” mean to people cross-culturally and how they are interrelated by looking at a range of topical issues. Following normal practice in anthropology (be forewarned), any universal definition of "risk" and "security" will be difficult to pin down, but that's the value of local, close-up studies of real people and their views and values. Most of the course focuses on the research of cultural anthropologists who study real people in their everyday lives, up close and personal. Some publications by researchers in other disciplines who use ethnographic methods are included.

The potential subject matter is vast—ranging from environmental pollution and political violence to hand-washing, domestic violence, and unemployment. To demonstrate the breadth of the possible subject matter, consider that the book, World at Risk: A Global Issues Sourcebook (2002), contains 30 chapters: on AIDS, Arms Control, Biodiversity, Cultural Preservation, Deforestation, Development Aid, Energy, Epidemics, Ethnic and Regional Conflict, Fragile Ecosystems, Freshwater, Genocide, Global Warming, Health, Human Rights, Hunger and Food Security, Income Inequality, International Criminal Justice, International Law, Labor and Employment, Literacy and Educational Access, Peacemaking and Peacebuilding, Pollution, Population, Refugees, Terrorism, Urbanization, War Crimes, Women, and World Trade. Even this large volume and its 30 chapters overlook many important topics such as Children, Drugs/Alcohol, Religion, Rites of Passage, Body Modification, Marriage, Sex, and Technology (just to name a few).

Student library research on these and other topics of their choice allows for individual in-depth exploration; frequent class discussions about the projects will also broaden our knowledge as a group.

Students will gain an understanding of how cultural anthropologists do research and the findings they produce. Beyond that, as a group, we will pay attention to the relevance of their work for policy design, programs, and projects that seek to reduce risk and increase security. This course also emphasizes improvement of skills such as critical thinking, critical reading and research, thoughtful and useful oral commentary, and crisp, analytical writing.

REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS:
♦ Attendance at all class sessions (exception: everyone has one “Get Out of Jail Free” card, to be discussed in class).
   → Please take notes during class about “who said what about what” and review them before each class.
♦ Completion of all reading assignments.
♦ Meaningful participation in class discussion. 20% of the final grade (includes attendance).
♦ Take-home midterm exam. 30% of the final grade.
♦ Ongoing participation in the Annotated Bibliography project (as noted in the week-by-week schedule; some details on the last page of the syllabus and more to be discussed in class). 40% of the final grade.
♦ Final class: each student will give a brief oral presentation (probably 5 minutes, depending on class size) of his/her major insights from their individual research (10 percent of the final grade). Students are expected to contribute to discussing other students’ contributions; attendance is mandatory: no one can use a “Get Out of Jail Free Card” for the last class.
READINGS:
Assigned readings include books, articles/chapters, and some miscellaneous pieces. The books are available for purchase at the GW Bookstore. Most articles and chapters will be posted on Blackboard (marked with an asterisk in the week-by-week listing of topics below).

Books:


I: INTRODUCTION TO CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY, RISK AND SECURITY

Week 1. January 13: Introduction to the Course and Cultural Anthropology
Familiarize yourself with GW library resources including computerized databases.
Do reading for Week 3 including handouts.

Week 2. January 20: Presidential Inauguration NO CLASS
Think about your bibliography topic!

Week 3. January 27: Environment
* Peter Phillimore and Patricia Bell, Trust and Risk in a German Chemical Town, Ethnos 70(3):311-334. 2005.
Week 4. February 3. The Role of Social Capital in Risk and Security
And one of the following:

BIBLIOGRAPHY SCOPE NOTE DUE in class, hard copy, by 4:10pm. Description on last page of the syllabus.

Week 5. February 12: States, "Neoliberalism," Global Trade
ANNOTATIONS #1 DUE on Blackboard by 4:10pm and hard copy in class (between 4-6 references)

Week 6. February 17. Sexuality and Health
ANNOTATIONS #2 DUE on Blackboard by 4:10pm and hard copy in class (between 5-10 more references)

Week 7. February 24: Race and Environmental Risk: Case Study in Georgia, the US
Melissa Checker, Polluted Promises
TAKE-HOME MIDTERM DISTRIBUTED: covers readings Weeks 1-7 (including Checker) and class discussion
Week 8. March 3: Race, Ethnicity, Age, and Climate: Case Study of the Chicago Heat Wave
Klinenberg, *Heat Wave*

*TAKE-HOME MIDTERM DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS, hard copy only (4:10pm)*

Week 9. March 10: Gender, Risk and Security: Case Study in Brazil
Hautzinger, *Violence in the City of Women: Police and Batterers in Bahia, Brazil*

*REVISED AND MERGED ANNOTATIONS (1 AND 2) posted on Blackboard by 4:10pm and hard copy in class*

☺ *SPRING BREAK*: Time for more reading and research!!! ☺

Week 10. March 24:
*ANNOTATIONS #3 DUE on Blackboard by 4:10pm and hard copy in class*

Week 11. March 31: Genocide, Fear and Insecurity: Case Study of the Maya
Beatriz Manz, *Paradise in Ashes*

*Students should post one article/chapter from their project on Blackboard for class discussion on March April 14*

Week 12, April 7: How War Creates Insecurity for Most and Money for Some: "New Ethnography"
Carolyn Nordstrom, *Shadows of War*

*MERGED ANNOTATIONS, revised from 1, 2 & 3 (and any additional) and DRAFT OVERVIEW; due on Blackboard by 4:10pm and hard copy in class*

Week 13, April 14: Taking Stock of the Projects
Student-posted readings: students should be prepared to discuss three articles; skim all
Discussion of the Bibliography project thus far


*Adam Brian et al. Formative Research for Hygiene Promotion in Kyrgyzstan. Oxford University Press and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, 2005.*


Week 15. April 28: Oral Presentations and Final Discussion
Each student will discuss his/her bibliographic research project. Questions from the class and discussion among members are
expected.

© FINAL VERSION OF BIBLIOGRAPHY and OVERVIEW PAPER due; posted on BB by 4:10pm and hard copy in class

THE ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY PROJECT

This project allows each student to choose and pursue library/Internet research on a topic related to culture, risk and security. Instead of producing the typical term paper, though, students will all compile an annotated bibliography of around 18-20 references (mostly by anthropologists) and write a brief overview (700-750 words) of major themes and gaps in the sources and relevance to the study of culture, risk, and security.

During the semester, we will discuss format, length of annotations, and writing style. Students will receive a copy of the professor’s “20+” Writing Tips” (also posted on Blackboard) and we will go through the tips in class. Students should follow the advice carefully.

The project has several stages:
1) Scope Note: At the top of the page you should provide your name and a topically informative title for your annotated sources. Then, in about 40-50 words, describe the topic of choice and make clear how it relates to culture in the anthropological sense. Include 2-3 references.

NOTE: It is possible that your topic may shift somewhat as you continue to conduct research and reorient your thinking. That is fine. If the focus changes substantially, however, from that described in your Scope Note, please talk to the professor sooner rather than later.

2) Partial bibliographies.
3) The merged bibliographies with additions and revisions.
4) Draft overview statement.
5) The final, revised version of your annotated bibliography and final overview paper.
6) Oral presentation.

GENERAL NOTES ON THE BIBLIOGRAPHY PROJECT

► Citations should follow the AAA format (guidelines on www.aaanet.org).
► Proofread all entries in the bibliography with care.
► Examples of past projects will be posted on Blackboard; for others go the "Resources" pages of the CIGA website in the Elliott School. Your bibliographies will generally follow this format, but my expectations in Spring 2009 are for a somewhat longer bibliography and cover essay. One stylistic note: please use complete sentences in your annotations.
► Plan your time in order to avoid missing the several deadlines. Only serious health/personal problems are acceptable for lateness, and documentation in writing by a certified professional is required.
► Problems with computers are never a valid excuse for lateness. The penalty for late submission of written work (mid-term, partial bibliographies, final bibliography, overview paper) is one fraction of a grade for every day (24 hours) late. For example, a submission that is one day late will receive an “A-“ instead of an “A.”