

**Introduction to Sociocultural Anthropology**  
**Anth1002 – Section 11**

Fall 2015

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:35 – 10:50

2020 K Street NW, 20

Professor Erica C. Wortham

email: ewortham@mac.com and ewortham@gwu.edu

Office Hours: Wednesday, 12:30-2 pm and Friday, 9:30 – 11 am, 201B (HAH)

Office Phone: 202-994-0390 (during office hours only)

**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**

Participation	20%	
Paper 1	15%	Due Thurs, 10/1
Mid-Term Examination	20%	Thurs, 10/29
Paper 2	15%	Due Thurs, 11/24
Final Examination	30%	TBD

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 amount of field research or a short interview. Late papers will be graded accordingly.

### III Books and Readings

Abu-Lughod, Lila

1999 Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetry in Bedouin Society Berkeley: University of California Press

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

Robbins, Richard H.

2013 Cultural Anthropology: A Problem Based Approach. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Wadsworth/Cengage Learning

Roth, Joshua H.

2001 Brokered Homeland: Japanese Brazilian Migrants in Japan. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

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>.

*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/>

## 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"

Th Sept 10 Émile Durkheim, "What is a Social Fact?" in The Rules of Sociological Method (New York: Free Press, 1982 [1895]), 50-58.

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

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

Week 3

T Sept 15 Edward Tylor, "The Science of Culture," in Primitive Culture (London: Murray, 1920), 1-25.

Adam Kuper, "The Idea of Primitive Society," in The Invention of Primitive Society: The Transformation of an Illusion (New York: Routledge, 1988), 1-14.

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

Edward Said, "Introduction," Orientalism, 1-28

Prins, Harald, "Visual Media and the Primitivist Perplex: Colonial Fantasies, Indigenous Imagination and Advocacy in North America"

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

**Fieldwork Paradigms**

Week 4

\*T Sept 22 Malinowski, "Foreword," "Introduction," in Argonauts of the Western Pacific (New York: Dutton, 1950 [1922]), xv-xviii, 1-25

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

T Sept 29 Marcel Mauss, The Gift, Ch. 1-2

Robbins, Ch. 6, "The Cultural Construction of Identity"

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

**\*FIRST PAPER DUE\***

Week 6

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

Th Oct 8 Annette Weiner, Introduction, Inalienable Possessions: The Paradox of Keeping\_ While Giving

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

Victor Turner, "Social Dramas and Ritual Metaphors," Ritual, Play and Performance, 97-120

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

T Nov 3 Lila Abu-Lughod, Veiled Sentiments, Chapters 1-2

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

T Nov 17 Joshua Roth, Brokered Homeland: Japanese Brazilian Migrants in Japan, Ch. 1-2

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

Debra Spitulnik, "Mobile Machines and Fluid Audiences: Rethinking Reception through Zambian Radio Culture," *Media Worlds: Anthropology on New Terrain*, 337-354.

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