

ANTHROPOLOGY 222: Culture, Risk and Security

Spring 2009

Professor: Barbara Miller

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drop-in office hours Th 3:00-5:00pm; otherwise by appointment

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:

Checker, Melissa. *Polluted Promises: Environmental Racism and the Search for Justice in a Southern Town*. New York: New York University Press. 2005.

Field, John. *Social Capital*. New York: Routledge. 2003.

Hautzinger, Sarah J. *Violence in the City of Women: Police and Batterers in Bahia, Brazil*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 2007.

Klinenberg, Eric. *Heat Wave: A Social Autopsy of Disaster in Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2002

Manz, Beatriz. *Paradise in Ashes: A Guatemalan Journey of Courage, Terror, and Hope*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 2005

Nordstrom, Carolyn. *Shadows of War: Violence, Power, and International Profiteering in the Twentieth-First Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 2004

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.
- *Geoffrey Habron, Melanie Barbier, and Ronald Kinnunen, Local Understanding of Fish Consumption Advisory Risks in Michigan's Upper Peninsula: The Role of Structure, Culture, and Agency. *Rural Sociology* 73(2):275-299.
- * Judith Bush, Peter Phillimore, Tanja Pless-Mullooli and Christine Thompson, Carcass Disposal and Siting Controversy: Risk, Dialogue and Confrontation in the 2001 Foot-and-Mouth Outbreak. *Local Environment* 10(6):649-664. 2004.
- *Neeraj Vedwan, Pesticides in Coca-Cola and Pepsi: Consumerism, Brand-Image, and Public Interest in a Globalizing India. *Cultural Anthropology* 22:659-684, 2007.
- *Amber Wutich and Kathleen Ragsdale, Water Insecurity and Emotional Distress: Coping with Supply, Access, and Seasonal Variability of Water in a Bolivian Squatter Settlement. *Social Science and Medicine* 67:2116-2125, 2008.

Week 4. February 3. The Role of Social Capital in Risk and Security

John Field, *Social Capital* (entire book).

And one of the following:

- *C. Campbell, B. Williams and D. Gilgen. Is Social Capital a Useful Conceptual Tool for Exploring Community Level Influences on HIV Infection? An Exploratory Case Study from South Africa. *AIDS Care* 14(1):41-54.
- *Achim Schlüter, Peter Phillimore and Suzanne Moffatt, Enough is Enough: Emerging "Self-Help" Environmentalism in a Petrochemical Town. *Environmental Politics* 13(4):715-733. 2004
- *Thomas Perreault, Why *Chacras* (Swidden Gardens) Persist: Agrobiodiversity, Food Security, and Cultural Identity in the Ecuadorian Amazon. *Human Organization* 64(4):327-339, 2005.
- *Hongmei Wang, mark Schlesinger, Hong Wang, and William C. Hsiao. The Flip-Side of Social Capital: The Distinctive Influences of Trust and Mistrust on Health in China. *Social Science and Medicine* 68:133-142, 2009.

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

- * Daniel M. Goldstein, Neoliberal Violence and "Self Help" Security in Boliva. *Critique of Anthropology* 25:389-411.
- *Elana Shever, Neoliberal Associations: Property, Company, and Family in the Argentine Oil Fields. *American Ethnologist* 35(4):701-716.
- *Peter Benson, "Good Clean Tobacco: Philip Morris, Biocapitalism, and the Social Course of Stigma in North Carolina. *American Ethnologist* 35(3):357-379.
- *Nancy Scheper-Hughes, Parts Unknown: Undercover Ethnography of the Organs-Trafficking Underworld. *Ethnography* 5(1):29-73.

ANNOTATIONS #1 DUE on Blackboard by 4:10pm and hard copy in class (between 4-6 references)

Week 6. February 17. Sexuality and Health

- *Pardis Madhavi, Passionate Uprisings: Young People, Sexuality and Politics in Post-Revolutionary Iran. *Culture, Health, and Sexuality* 9:445-457, 2007.
- *Ernestina Coast, Wasting Semen: Context and Condom Use among the Maasai. *Culture, Health, and Sexuality* 9:387-401, 2007.
- *Michael Graydon, Don't Bother to Wrap It: Online Giftgiver and Bugchaser Newsgroups, the Social Impact of Gift Exchanges and the 'Carnavalesque.' *Culture, Health, and Sexuality* 9:277-292, 2007.
- *Christy E. Newman, et al., 'Everything is Okay': The Influence of Neoliberal Discourse on the Reported Experiences of Aboriginal People in Western Australia Who Are HIV-Positive. *Culture, Health, Sexuality* 9(6):571-584, 207.
- *Sherine F. Hamdy, When the State and Your Kidneys Fail: Political Etiologies in an Egyptian Dialysis Ward. *American Ethnologist* 35(4): 553-569, 2008.
- *Chiang-Hsing Yang et al., Belief in Ghost Month Can Help Prevent Drowning Deaths: A Natural Experiment on the Effects of Cultural Beliefs on Risky Behaviors. *Social Science and Medicine* 66: 1990-1998, 2008.

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

Week 14. April 21, Program and Policy Relevance, Advocacy, "Talking Up"

*Beth E. Scott, David W. Lawson, and Val Curtis. Hard to Handle: Understanding Mothers' Handwashing Behavior in Ghana. *Health Policy and Planning* 22:216-224, 2007.

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

*Barbara Miller, Female-Selective Abortion in Asia: Patterns, Policies, and Debates. *American Anthropologist* 103:1083-1095, 2001.

Clifford E. Trafzer, Willard Sakiestewa Gilbert, and Anthony Madrigal. Integrating Native Science into a Tribal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). *American Behavioral Scientist* 51:1844-1866, 2008.

*Stuart Kirsch, Anthropology and Advocacy: A Case Study of the Campaign against the Ok Tedi Mine. *Critique of Anthropology* 22(2):175-200, 2002.

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."