

# **ANT 2410**

## **Introduction to Cultural Anthropology**

### **Spring 2009**

Section 7942  
Tuesdays 8-9<sup>th</sup> periods  
Thursdays 9<sup>th</sup> period  
CSE A101

Instructor:

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## **Introduction**

This course is an introduction to Cultural Anthropology, a subdiscipline of Anthropology that focuses on the study human cultural systems. Although Cultural Anthropology is a social science and therefore similar to the other social sciences (psychology, sociology, political science, and economics, among others), cultural anthropology is significantly different from the other social sciences both in terms of the scope of what cultural anthropology studies and in terms of how cultural anthropologists go about doing it. During this semester, we will explore the unique approach cultural anthropologists use to study their subject while also examining how and why societies around the world differ in such important and fascinating ways. Additionally, we will focus on how globalization and world systems threaten and undermine cultural systems (including our own), why globalization is a significant problem for humanity, and how anthropological approaches can help solve contemporary global problems.

## **Textbooks and Reading Requirements**

There are two textbooks for this course: *Cultural Anthropology (12th ed)*, by Ember, Ember, and Peregrine, and *Conformity and Conflict (13th ed)*, by Spradley and McMurdy. Both are required. Ember et al. is our basic introduction to cultural anthropology, and so pays attention to anthropological concepts as they apply to the study of culture. Spradley and McMurdy is a reader that provides case studies and examples of the concepts covered in the primary text.

Used copies of these texts can be had at significant savings. However, while Ember et al.'s 12th edition may not be significantly different from previous editions, Spradley and McMurdy does change in content; earlier editions may include significantly different chapters or organization. You will also see variations on the text offered at the bookstores. In most cases, you should find the text all by itself, but you will also see brand-new textbooks packaged as a "course pack". In some cases, Ember et al. & Spradley are packaged together – my understanding is that if you are purchasing new textbooks, they will cost less when bundled.

All that is required for this course is the textbook. Some of you may find it helpful to purchase a copy of Ember et al. with additional materials, but the additional expense is significant. You do not need the "my anthro kit" business that is packaged with Ember et al.

You are expected to complete reading assignments prior to the class day for which they were assigned; lectures often focus on material in the textbooks and, while this is not rocket science *per se*, understanding bifurcate merging kinship systems will be much easier if you have read the material beforehand.

## Exams and Grading

### *Exams*

There will be three “in-class” exams based on lecture material, the main textbooks, and the reserve readings. These exams will consist of a combination of multiple choice and true/false questions. Exams will be administered via the Elearning portal. Details will be explained in class, but the essence of the process is that on exam days, the exam will be open midnight-midnight, so you can log in and take the exam at any point during the day. You are expected to take exams on the days that they are scheduled.

Exams are timed (75 minutes for a 60-question exam), which invariably leads to all kinds of requests, complaints, and other assorted problems. In short, the exam times are not negotiable, 75 minutes is the maximum time one will have to complete the exam.

Elearning is reasonably stable, and in my experience running exams online is better for both you and me. That said, there are occasional problems, among them: *Were my answers saved? Elearning froze on me in the middle of the exam! I ran out of time!*, and *my computer had a virus and the hard drive crashed during the exam!* Many of these problems are easily ironed out – a quick email or phone call to me to document the problem is often sufficient, and the mess can be cleaned up following the exam.

That said – if you are taking the exam on your own laptop through an ISP other than the university, then you’d better make sure ahead of time that the internet connection is stable and reliable, and that your computer is working properly. *My hard drive crashed* is the new *my dog ate my homework*, and neither will work as an excuse for not taking or completing an assignment. If you are worried, take the exam in one of the labs on campus. Having a virus, a crashing hard drive, forgetting to take the assessment, or being stuck in traffic will generate no sympathy, I’m afraid.

Finally, these are not meant to be open book exams, though I know everyone sits with the text and notes in their lap while they try and take the exam or employ other strategies that are outright cheating. If you do sit and thumb through the readings to find answers, you will run out of time. Far better to actually study before taking the exam.

The final exam is not cumulative. I will post study guides before each exam. Note the day and time of the final exam (listed below) before making arrangements to leave town for winter break.

### *Quizzes*

In addition to the exams, we will also administer 8 quizzes. These 10-question quizzes will also be on Elearning. Their purpose is to assess your comprehension of the material that we are currently covering in class and to encourage you to keep up with the reading assignments. The schedule will be TBA, but we’re shooting for about 1 every other week (mostly), open for a 24 hour period. Makeups on quizzes are not granted.

It is important to note here that the quizzes are not merely a form of academic torture: the questions on the quizzes are excellent indicators of the kinds of questions you will see on the exams.

### *Grades*

Final grades are based on points accumulated during the semester. Points will be awarded as follows:

Exams:	60 pts. (180)
Quizzes (8 total)	10 pts each (80 total)
<b>Total:</b>	<b>260 pts</b>

Final grades will be assigned based on points accumulated as compared to the class average. This means that I will not assign grades until the end of the semester, when I apply a curve to the entire class. For reference purposes, students who want to earn an A for the course will likely need 234 points, (which is 90% of 260). I may lower this bar, but I will never raise it.

### ***Posting Grades***

Grades will be posted via Elearning: you can simply check your grades under the “my grades” tab, and see your scores on assignments. You’ll have access to questions and answers for assignments as well, once the grades and the assignment are released.

Grades on quizzes and exams will not be posted immediately. I know, a large chunk of the student body needs instant gratification. But get used to the delay. The reason for delays in posting grades is due to the simple fact that there are going to be a few students who, because of technical issues, are still taking the quiz or exam in question. I’d prefer that questions (and answers) not circulate until after everyone is finished with the assignment.

**There is no extra credit offered for this course.**

## **Ground Rules**

### ***Elearning***

We will be using Elearning to manage the course. This means that all important materials can be viewed online using Elearning, including a copy of the syllabus, exam study guides, copies of quizzes, and grades.

While Elearning is a useful tool for managing this course, it is important to remember that this is not an online course. Lecture notes will not be posted. Indeed, you’ll find that my Keynote slides make very little sense unless you’re actually listening to the class discussion.

If you have never used Elearning before, all you require is your gatorlink and password to log on and begin. We will hand out specifics next week.

### ***Reading assignments & Attendance Policy***

Students are expected to complete the assigned readings before class. Although attendance is not compulsory, lectures and class discussion will incorporate information not available in the assigned textbooks. Indeed, class lectures generally provide material in addition to the material found in the textbook. Obviously, given the size of the class and the format of instruction, taking attendance for purposes of assigning a grade would be an inefficient use of our time. This is a university, and you are all grown-ups.

But there are consequences to your actions. Class attendance is highly correlated with performance on exams, and thus the final grade in the course. I’m not inclined to do any favors for students who are

borderline if they have shown a half-hearted commitment to being in class. University policy is that students are expected to attend all class meetings.

**Lecture notes and Keynote slides will not be posted online.**

### *Classroom Behavior*

I recognize that UF students are, for the most part, conscientious and hard-working, but that there are a few (or more) in every crowd. For those few, I would remind you that being in class is an indication that you are here to learn something about anthropology. I expect that cell phones will be turned off during the lecture, that you will pay attention in class, and that you will remain seated during class. Passing notes, chatting with your neighbors, reading the newspaper, doing your math homework, playing World of Warcraft, surfing Facebook, getting up to get a drink of water, running to the potty, or leaving early are distracting to and disrespectful of everyone in the class. If you do need to leave early, please sit in a location where your movement will cause the least disruption. If you need to chat with your neighbor, please wait until after class. And if you can't stay away from checking email, logging onto Facebook, or playing an online game for an entire class period, you really need to seek professional help.

### *How to Succeed in this Course*

Some keys to success in this course include attending class regularly and taking good notes during lecture. Make sure that you read the chapter before class; that way, the lecture will not seem completely foreign, and the tricky terminology from the textbooks will make more sense. Begin studying at least a week before the exam. One night of cramming will not help you do your best. If you are in doubt about anything, *do not hesitate to seek help*. Our office hours are listed here, and you are welcome to drop by and see us if you have questions about specific issues. We can only help you, however, if you see us before an exam.

**Your grade for this course is your responsibility.** If you attend class regularly, read the assigned material carefully, and take advantage of all of the opportunities to earn points by doing well on the quizzes and exams, then you will likely do well. You will only get out of this class what you put into it.

### *Communication*

As indicated above, I don't bite. Don't be shy about contacting me. However, please use the email function in Elearning to contact either me. This is a large class, and it is best if your emails stay within the portal. However, if you do try and contact me using my "usual" email addresses, please be sure to include the phrase ANT3260 in the message subject line. I receive huge amounts of email, much of it junk, much of it relating to research, and you run the risk of having your message tossed in the trash, unread, unless you alert me that you are writing about class.

Now, for the caveat: I have a very full life at both work and at home. Teaching this class is but one of the many facets of my job as a professor. In addition, my activity patterns are quite different from that of the average college student. All this is to say that when you email me, you are not likely to get an immediate response. I don't live for email, don't own a cell phone, don't update my life on Facebook hourly. But be patient. I will get back to you.

### *Accommodations for Students with Disabilities*

Students who have a disability that requires special accommodations for participating in this course should see us ASAP to make necessary arrangements for setting up exams and quizzes, and, if necessary,

arranging for a note-taker.

## Policy on Cheating

As a UF student you are expected to display exemplary behavior with regard to all academic endeavors. This means you are not allowed to cheat, lie, steal, or write bad checks. Aside from cheating being bad for your karma, students caught cheating will fail the course, and the incident will be forwarded to Student Judicial Affairs for further disciplinary action. What constitutes cheating? We suspect you already know that copying from another on a test, passing another's work as your own, having a proxy take exams or quizzes for you, or using unapproved external materials to help you on an exam are examples of cheating. If you are unaware of what actually constitutes plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty, Judicial Affairs also maintains the academic honesty guidelines on the web: [www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/honestybrochure.htm](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/honestybrochure.htm). If you are unsure whether your activities are legitimate regarding paper writing and exam taking, please do not hesitate to ask me.

## Course Outline

The following course outline is approximate. We may spend more or less time on specific topics as class interest dictates. Exams will occur as scheduled and are not subject to change. I will post study guides before each exam, and we will schedule a study session before each exam. The third exam is taken during the final exam period but will cover only the last unit of the course.

<b>Week and Dates</b>	<b>Topic and Reading Assignment</b>
Week One (Jan 6-8)	<i>Introduction.</i> Anthropology & The Culture Concept Readings: Ember Ch. 1, Spradley Ch. 1, 2, 33
Week Two (Jan 13-15)	The Culture Concept (continued) Readings: Ember 1, 2; Spradley 3, 4
Week Three (Jan 20-22)	<i>Method and Theory.</i> Anthropology and Social Science Readings: Ember 3, 4; Spradley 5
Week Four (Jan 27-29)	<i>Communication:</i> Language and Culture Readings: Ember 5; Spradley 6, 7, 8, 9
Week Five (Feb 3-5)	<i>Sex and Gender:</i> The intersection of biology and culture Readings: Ember 9; Spradley 22, 23, 24, 25
<b>February 10</b>	<b>First Exam Open 12 am - 11:59 pm</b>
Week Six (Feb 12)	<i>Economic Anthropology:</i> How people make a living Readings: Ember 6, 7; Spradley 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16
Week Seven (Feb 19-19)	<i>Social Organization I:</i> Marriage, Family, Kinship Readings: Ember 10, 11; Spradley 18, 19,
Week Eight (Feb 24-26)	<i>Social Organization II:</i> Kinship, Descent, Association Readings: Ember 11, 12; Spradley 20, 21

Week Nine (Mar 3-5) *Politics and Social Order I: Evolution of Political Society*  
Readings: Ember 13; Spradley 26, 27, 28, 29

**Spring Break 3/10-3/15**

Week Ten (Mar 17) *Politics and Social Order II: Class, Ethnicity, Race*  
Readings: Ember 8; Spradley

**March 19** **Second Exam Open 12 am - 11:59 pm**

Week Eleven (Mar 24-26) *Psychological Anthropology: Individual and Society*  
Readings: Ember 14; Spradley 31

Week Twelve (Mar 31/Apr 2) *Belief Systems: Myth and Ritual, Comparative Religion*  
Readings: Ember 15, 16; Spradley 30, 32

Week Thirteen (Apr 7-9) *Change and Globalization I: World Systems and Culture Contact*  
Readings: Ember 17, Spradley 15, 17

Week Fourteen (Apr 14-16) *Applied Anthropology: Solving Contemporary Problems*  
Readings: 18, 19; Spradley 34, 35, 36

Week Fifteen (Apr 21) *Change and Globalization II: Contemporary Global Issues*  
Readings: 20; Spradley 37,38, 39, 40

**April 30** **Final Exam Open 12 am - 11:59 pm**