

**Intro to Cultural Anthropology**  
ANT 2410x2447 :: Spring 2014  
Turlington L011 :: MWF :: Period 7 (1:55pm – 2:45pm)

Instructor: Ryan Morini  
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**Required Texts:**

*Social and Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction*  
Peter Just  
Oxford University Press, 2000  
ISBN: 0192853465

*Investigating Culture: An Experiential Introduction to Anthropology*  
Carol DeLaney and Deborah Kaspin  
Wiley-Blackwell, 2011 (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)  
ISBN: 1405154241

\*Note: you will be expected to use the editions specified above.

**Suggested/Additional Texts:**

*Yanomami: The Fierce Controversy and What We Can Learn From It*  
Rob Borofsky  
University of California Press, 2005  
ISBN: 0520244044

*The Trashing of Margaret Mead: Anatomy of an Anthropological Controversy*  
Paul Shankman  
University of Wisconsin Press, 2009

*Skull Wars: Kennewick Man, Archaeology, and the Battle for Native American Identity*  
David Hurst Thomas  
Basic, 2001  
ISBN: 046509225X

*Ethics and the Profession of Anthropology: A Dialogue for Ethically-Conscious Practice* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)  
Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban, ed, with contributors.  
State Altamira, 2003  
ISBN: 0759103380

Additional required reading materials will be downloadable from the “Resources” folder on the course website on Sakai (<http://lss.at.ufl.edu>).

### **Course Description:**

This course is an introduction to the field of cultural anthropology, which is one of the four subfields of anthropology more broadly (the others are archaeology, linguistic anthropology, and biological anthropology). Our primary focus will be on the American tradition of anthropology, though other anthropological traditions have arisen all over the globe. At risk of oversimplification, American cultural anthropology arose through two basic efforts: the first was a U.S governmental interest in gathering information about the natives of the Americas and elsewhere; the second was a scholarly interest in understanding and identifying the realities of human nature. The tensions within and between these two efforts have left anthropology with a legacy of being both scientific and humanistic, quantitative and qualitative, a force for liberation and a tool for oppression.

This course thus has to try to divide itself between three objectives.

- 1) A survey describing the immense human cultural diversity across the globe
- 2) A survey of the methods and theories used by anthropologists to study #1
- 3) A reflection on the political and ethical implications of #2

To help students to understand these objectives, each week we will spend some time analyzing the University of Florida through the lenses that we are using to describe peoples and cultural practices from elsewhere in the world. It is an oft-repeated mantra in anthropology that if it cannot describe human activity everywhere, then it cannot describe human activity anywhere. In the process, students will hopefully come to new understandings of the university system in which they are enrolled.

My intention in the course design is to help students learn about framing questions and analyzing situations. The idea is to help you to understand key concepts. If you additionally learn pleasant trivia about Trobriand Islanders’ penchant for the game of cricket, or that the language of the ancient Aztecs is called *nahuatl*, then so be it, but such learning is ultimately meaningless without a framework of understanding. The purpose of this course is to enable each student to develop an understanding that they can continually challenge and refashion throughout the remainder of their lives.

### **Course Objectives:**

In taking this course, students are expected to develop:

- A basic knowledge of the foundations of cultural anthropology
- A deeper understanding of human cultural diversity and the historical, political, ethical, and social challenges facing human societies across the globe
- Critical faculties for applying anthropology to their daily lives and surroundings

### **Mutual Respect:**

This course does not promote or denigrate any particular religious belief, practice, or person, though it will promote critical thinking toward each and all of these. All religious practices will be regarded as forms of social and cultural expression. Open discussion is

encouraged and everyone's opinion is valid as we strive to understand the topic in a spirit of free inquiry and critical thinking. Students should leave any preconceived notions and prejudices behind when they enter the classroom and at all times be respectful of others' opinions.

### **Readings and Other Assigned Resources:**

The readings or other assigned resources for each week will be posted on Sakai in Reading Guides that describe the main points that students should consider while reading or viewing them. They may also offer supplementary materials for students who wish to explore topics from that week in greater depth.

Students will be expected to read the readings for a given week *before* the lectures for that week. The readings have been chosen to be as simple and useful as possible, so you will be expected to have consulted them. The instructor will always be happy to answer meaningful questions that you have about the readings in class, during office hours, or by email.

### **Grading:**

- **Exams:** There will be **2** exams worth **50** points each, 100 points total (33.3% of the final grade.) Exams will be non-cumulative, and will be taken on Sakai--but be advised that concepts from earlier units may be integral to later ones. The exams may consist of multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and/or short essay questions.
- **Ethnographic Essays:** There will be **4** short writing assignments worth **25** points each, 100 points total (33.3% of the final grade). Instructions for each essay will be provided on Sakai at least two weeks before they are due. The purpose of these assignments is to help students to engage with the main ideas and methods of cultural anthropology. Grades will be based largely on critical thinking, creativity, and engagement with concepts and methods covered in the course; grammar, spelling, and flow will factor in on a more minor level. In other words, you will win few points for simply reciting things that you jotted down from lecture slides, but far more points for showing that you're thinking about and exploring the main ideas that we've discussed in class.
- **Participation:** Participation is worth **100** points (33.3% of the final grade). It will be assessed via ten in-class assignments. These assignments will usually be based off of topics from assigned readings or videos, or from lectures. This section will be subject to modification if attendance becomes a problem (see Attendance policy). Participation assignments will be collected each week from Week 1 to Week 15 (excepting Week 9, which is spring break). The lowest four grades will be dropped. Because of this policy, make-up assignments for participation will only be offered under exceptional circumstances. Regular excused absences will not usually be considered "exceptional" circumstances under this policy.
- **Extra credit:** At least two extra credit opportunities will be offered in the course. Details will be made more explicit in lecture and through instructions posted on Sakai. However, there will be *no* extra credit offered to individual students on any

case-by-case bases; all extra credit assignments have to be available to all students in a given course as per UF policy.

- **Total points:** There will be **300** total points available in the course, excluding the extra credit.

### Course Grading Scale (by %)

A 93-100	B 84-86.9	C 74 - 76.9	D 64-66.9
A- 90-92.9	B- 80-83.9	C- 70-73.9	D- 60-63.9
B+ 87-89.9	C+ 77-79.9	D+ 67-69.9	E 59.9 and below

### 48-Hour Grade Dispute Policy

Students who wish to discuss grades on assignments and exams should contact the instructor within 48 hours of posting to arrange a meeting time. Please do not wait until the end of the semester to question grades or request special consideration. Forty-eight hours after posting, all grades are final.

### Attendance

To be blunt, you need to show up to do well in the course. Some of the lecture materials will be on Sakai to aid in studying, but if you are not showing up to class and taking notes, you are likely to do poorly. If you are unable to make it to class, you are expected to consult the notes of one or more of your classmates. (Speaking as the instructor, I will not be able to supply you with notes, and much of what is said in class may be missing from the actual Powerpoint slides.)

Students are expected to attend class punctually--i.e. show up early rather than late. While attendance is not taken in class, the instructor reserves the right to institute pop quizzes, sign-in sheets, or other measures to enforce attendance if it becomes necessary to do so. If a student is absent during a quiz, the quiz may only be made up if there is sufficient documentation for an officially excusable absence.

### Academic Honesty

Academic honesty will not be tolerated. As a registered student in this course and at the University of Florida, you have agreed to the following statement: "I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University." If you are caught plagiarizing or cheating on exams you will receive an automatic zero and will be referred to University administration for disciplinary action. If you have any questions, please refer to the University's Honor Code which is available online at: <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html>

### Student Conduct

All students must comply with the Student Conduct Code which can be found at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentconductcode.php>. Any behavior that

interferes with either the instructor's ability to conduct class or the ability of other students to benefit from the instructional program will not be tolerated. Please turn off cell phones and all other electronic devices before class. Laptops may only be used to take notes. Disruptive students will be asked to leave. **Texting, talking on cell phones, or use of Facebook is not permitted during class.**

**Disability Accommodations:**

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting further accommodation. The Disability Resource Office can be found at 001 Reid Hall. Further information can be found at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drp>

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**Class Schedule:**

Note: Readings will be listed and contextualized in **Reading Guides** which will be posted on Sakai for **each week** individually. As stated elsewhere, you will be expected to finish the assigned readings **before** the week that they are due. In-class lecture will incorporate and engage the readings, but will not necessarily summarize them.

**Week One** (Jan 6-10)

Introduction to culture and American anthropology, and how the two are conjoined  
Brief survey of human cultural diversity, from a four-field approach

**Week Two** (Jan 13-17)

Definitions of "culture" and approaches to cultural relativism  
The contexts of American culture as culture and its relativism become popularized  
How can we study culture?

**Week Three** (Jan 20-24)

Biology and Culture  
Separating "race" and culture, "race" and biology  
Potential contradictions: a relativized world of universally human subjects

**Week Four** (Jan 27-31)

Controversies, I: Napoleon Chagnon's research with the Yanomamö  
Critiques, dismissals, reprisals of scientific approaches  
Questions of the exotic and the domestic, objects and subjects

**- Assignments -**

Reaction paper 1 due

**Week Five** (Feb 3-7)

Controversies, II: Margaret Mead and a “hoax”—or a hoax of a hoax?

Further questions of the exotic and the domestic

Adolescence, sexuality, and human nature—enduring debates

**Week Six** (Feb 10-14)

Materiality and culture

Space and place, landscapes, senses of “home”

Objects, artifacts, and the “stuff” of who we are

Matters of not starving or freezing

**Week Seven** (Feb 17-21)

Social Construction

Poiesis, autopoiesis, phronesis

Hard realities of intangible truths

**Week Eight** (Feb 24-28)

Controversies, III: Julian Steward

The politics of representation

Questions of the “objectivity” of research and its applications

• EXAM 1 •

- Assignments -

Reaction paper 2 due

**Week Nine** (Mar 3-7)

SPRING BREAK

**Week Ten** (Mar 10-14)

Controversies, IV: NAGPRA and cultural patrimony

Who owns heritage?

Kennewick Man, museum collections, etc.

**Week Eleven** (Mar 17-21)

Culture and memory

Social memory, history and memory, ritual and commemoration

When a community’s memories differ from the researcher’s reconstructions

**Week Twelve** (Mar 24-28)

Sexuality and culture, cultures of gender

- Assignments -

Reaction paper 3 due

**Week Thirteen** (Mar 31-Apr 4)

Meaning revisited: symbolism and subsistence at once: Food, clothing, and identity

Globalization and attendant changes

**Week Fourteen** (Apr 7-11)

Religion and Nationhood / Personae and Imagined Communities / Rituals and Community

**Week Fifteen** (Apr 14-18)

Interventions and culture

Debates on, challenges of, applying anthropology

Corporate anthropology

**Week Sixteen** (Apr 21-23) \*Apr 24-25 are reading days for final exams

Recap and revisitation: what is culture, and how should we approach understanding it?

EXAM 2

- Assignments -

Final reaction paper due