

# Cultural Anthropology

ANT 2410 – Spring 2016 – Sections 3121, 4098, 4099, 4108, 4114 & 4123



**Instructor:** Dr. Richard Kernaghan  
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**TA:** Iliana Villegas  
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Office hours: Tues 9:30-10:30am; Wed 3:30-5:30pm

**Lecture:** Tuesdays 8-9 (3:00-4:55pm)  
Thursdays 8 (3:00-3:50pm)  
LIT 0109

**Discussion Sections:**  
3121 - R 3 (9:35-10:25am) LIT 0237  
4098 - R 4 (10:40-11:30am) TUR 2342  
4099 - R 5 (11:45-12:35pm) TUR B310  
4108 - R 6 (12:50-1:40pm) LIT 0217  
4114 - R 7 (1:55-2:45pm) LIT 0205  
4123 - R 9 (4:05-4:55pm) LIT 0205

**Description:** Cultural anthropologists study the distinctive ways people create, negotiate and make sense of their own social worlds vis-à-vis the worlds of others. Through research in locales both far away and near to home, anthropologists examine relations and events that influence and

determine social belonging and exclusion, whether based in gender, kinship, religion, political economy or historical constructions of race, ethnicity and citizenship. The scope of cultural anthropology is thus broad, and its practitioners pursue a variety of approaches as they explore diverse human phenomena. This class provides an introduction to the discipline through a consideration of several everyday themes that hold an important place in the intellectual tradition of cultural anthropology and are of vital relevance today.

**Course Objectives:** The purpose of this class is to increase students' familiarity and comfort with anthropological notions—such as habitus, reciprocity, personhood, and the sacred—and to show how these same concepts can increase critical awareness and understanding of our own lives as unfolding across multiple communities. In so doing, the course aims to enhance sensitivity to social differences, while also underscoring the moral and ethical dimensions entailed by ethnographic research. This course will furthermore be an opportunity for each of us to hone our interpretative skills so that we become ever more perceptive as readers, accomplished as writers and generous as participants in group discussions.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. Identify, recognize and recall influential concepts & concerns of cultural anthropology
2. Demonstrate skills of textual interpretation
3. Practice anthropological modes of research & representation
4. Develop sensitivity to the ethical implications of ethnography
5. Design an independent project that critically engages a major theme of cultural anthropology

**Required Texts:**

Biehl. *Vita* (University California Press, 2005)

Clastres. *Chronicle of the Guayaki Indians* (Zone Books, 1998)

Gonzalez. *Unveiling Secrets of War in the Peruvian Andes* (University of Chicago, 2011)

Raffles. *Insectopedia* (Vintage Books, 2010)

**For your convenience the above required texts have been placed on reserve at Library West. However, you will need a copy of your own for reference during class. All remaining assigned and recommended readings can be downloaded from the Canvas course page.**

**Summary of course structure and requirements:**

On Tuesdays (periods 8-9) and Thursdays (period 9), the entire class will meet in LIT 0109 for lecture, student commentary and questions. After the Tuesday lecture, we will frequently screen an ethnographic film or documentary. On Thursdays, in addition to that day's lecture, the class will split up into section groups for in-depth discussion of readings and films, course concepts and projects. The discussion sections are led by Netty and Illiana—our brilliant and extremely knowledgeable graduate Teaching Assistants.

During the semester, you will be asked to complete two ethnographic experiments and to compose two brief response papers on specified readings. There will also be a mid-semester exam, a 6-7 page final project paper, and a number of pop quizzes.

**Class etiquette:**

Please arrive to all sessions punctually with that week's assigned materials in hand. It is important that you have carefully reviewed all required readings *prior to class*, so you will be in a position to share your informed questions, impressions and interpretations.

We strongly request that you refrain from leaving in the middle of class. If you know ahead of time you will need to depart early, then please sit next to the door so that you can minimize disruption. During the Tuesday lecture there will be a 10-minute break mid-session to stretch legs, get a drink at the water fountain or use the restroom.

Laptops/tablets may be used to take notes during lectures, but not in the Thursday discussion sections. Kindly turn cell phones to silent for the duration of class.

**Evaluations** – Final course grades will be determined in light of five criteria:

**1. Participation & pop quizzes (10%)**

Participation will be evaluated based on various measures of the degree to which you have played an active, informed role in class. These include volunteered commentary and questions, attendance and quizzes. You are also encouraged to meet with Dr. Kernaghan or with your assigned TA in office hours to talk about course content or about your ideas and plans for the final project.

**2. Two ethnographic experiments (10%)**

These are brief exercises in the observation of some contemporary setting of social life, including explorations of personal memory. For each exercise you will be asked to craft a 300-word report of your findings and reflections.

**3. Two short writing assignments (20%)**

Short writing assignments are synthetic response papers (650-700 words) in which you are asked to address a question derived from the readings. They will give you an opportunity to develop and demonstrate a good grasp of the material.

**4. Mid-semester in class exam (25%)**

The midterm will test your familiarity with specific readings as well as major concepts that have emerged in class discussions during the first half of the semester.

### 5. Term project paper with supplementary ethnographic journal (35%)

The *term paper* is a 1600- to 1800-word ethnographic exploration of one of four class themes (Names, Gifts, Secrets or Death) through the lens of *a personal experience of your own or of someone who you know well*. As part of your research and in preparation for writing the final paper you are required to keep fieldnotes (a research journal, diary, scrapbook, etc.) and submit them at the end of the semester. The specific details of the research can be worked out in consultation with Dr. Kernaghan or your TA. We encourage you to be creative in your approach and in selecting the exact form your final paper will take.

A concise and compelling 250-word abstract outlining the objectives of your project is due on March 14. The term paper and accompanying fieldnotes must be handed in no later than the last day of class (Apr. 19).

**Written Assignments for this class must be submitted twice:** first through Canvas, using the Turnitin review service; and then, in printed/hard copy form to your TA *by the beginning of class* the day they are due. With the exception of quizzes and the midterm, all assignments should be typed and double-spaced with one-inch margins. Please number the pages.

**Attendance:** If you must miss lecture or discussion section, please inform your TA ahead of time (or as soon as possible) and present appropriate documentation. In such cases you are responsible for contacting a classmate to obtain notes on materials and topics covered while away.

Absences for reasons of religious holiday, illness, and official university business are excused; however, proper notification should still be provided.

**Please note:** Since participation as well as assimilation of vital class materials depend upon attendance, multiple absences (4 & above) will necessarily undermine academic performance. Students who have a high number of absences risk failing the course.

**For official UF Policy on attendance and absences please consult:**

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

#### **Assignment Deadlines and Exam date:**

- 1) ethnographic exercises: Jan. 14, Feb. 18
- 2) reading response papers: Feb. 4, Mar 24.
- 3) mid-term in class exam: Feb. 23
- 4) final paper abstract: Mar. 10
- 5) final paper & ethnographic journal: Apr. 19

**Late work & make-up exams:** Short assignments handed in late but still within one week of the original due date will be docked a letter grade. After one week, they will no longer be accepted. Make-ups for the mid-term exam will be allowed only for excused absences. There will be no second chances to take missed quizzes, and **no extensions will be granted for the final paper.**

**Academic Honesty:** As you are aware, plagiarism and cheating are serious academic offenses. All work submitted for a grade must be free from unauthorized assistance or deliberate misrepresentations of

one's own effort. The penalty for plagiarism or cheating is a grade of zero points on the assignment in question. In such cases an incident form will also be sent to the Office of the Dean of Students.

If you have questions about what constitutes academic misconduct, please consult the UF Honor Code as well as the UF Policies on Academic Honesty, Student Rights and Responsibilities. These are available online at

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx>

also

<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/seminars-modules/academic-integrity-module>

**Accommodations for students with disabilities:** The University of Florida is committed to providing academic accommodations for students with disabilities. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, a student should present his/her accommodation letter to me supporting a request for accommodations. The University encourages students with disabilities to follow these procedures as early as possible within the semester.

**Grading:** The following scale will be used for grades on all assignments and exams: 94-100=A; 90-93=A-; 87-89=B+; 83-86=B; 79-82=B-; 76-78=C+; 72-75=C; 69-71=C-; 66-68=D+; 62-65=D; 59-61=D-; 58 and below=E (failing).

Regarding university grading policies, be advised that a grade of C- is not valid for major, minor, Gen Ed, Gordon Rule, or for college basic distribution credit. For questions about minus grades, please see <http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>.

You may consult current UF policy on how grade point averages are calculated at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx#calculating>.

**Additional UF Resources:**

The Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall (864-1138) <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/for-students/>

Career Resource Center, Reitz Union (392-1601) <http://www.crc.ufl.edu/>

Student Health Care Center (392-1161) <http://shcc.ufl.edu/>, and

University Counseling & Wellness Center, 3190 Radio Road (392-1575) <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>

*The Instructor may make minor adjustments to readings during the semester. Any and all modifications will be announced ahead of time.*

## Course Schedule

### week 1

#### What is cultural anthropology?

1/5

introductions

**film:** *First Contact* (Connolly & Anderson)

1/7

Augé & Colleyn, "Understanding the Contemporary World"  
Williams, "Culture"  
Raffles, *Insectopedia*, pp: 3-14

### I. Ethnography

### week 2

#### strangers & estrangements

1/12

Giridharadas, "Getting in (and out of line)"  
Simmel, "The Stranger"  
Mauss, "Bodily Techniques"  
Stewart, *Ordinary Affects*: "Yard Sale," "PMS Powered"

recommended:

Fortes, "Strangers"  
Erbaugh, "China Expands Its Courtesy: Saying 'Hello' to Strangers"

**film:** *Nanook of the North* (Flaherty)

1/14

Raffles, *Insectopedia*: "Chernobyl"  
Stewart, *Ordinary Affects*: "Scanning"

**exercise 1 due**

### week 3

#### fieldnotes

1/19

Augé, *In the Metro*: "Memories"  
Augé & Colleyn, pp. 81-95: "The Field"  
Ottenberg, "Thirty Years of Fieldnotes"  
Stewart, *Ordinary Affects*: "Fragments"

recommended:

Clifford, "On Ethnographic Surrealism"  
Leiris, "The Sacred in Everyday Life"



**short films:**

*Binary Selves* (Erica Lord)

*The Cut-Ups* (Burroughs)

1/21

Moore, "Explaining the Present"

Bowen/Bohannon, *Return to Laughter*, Ch. 4

Burroughs, "The Cut-Up Method of Brion Gyson"

**II. NAMES**

**week 4**

**personhood**

1/26

Romero, "A Culture of Naming That Even a Law May Not Tame"

Scott, "The Creation of Surnames"

Clastres, *Chronicle of the Guayaki*, Ch. 1: Birth

**film:** *108 Cuchillo de Palo* (Renate Costa) [first half]

**recommended:**

Wines, "In a Land of Homemade Names, Tiffany Doesn't Cut It"

Morris, "What's in a Name (Part I)"

Frazer, "Personal Names Tabooed"

Taussig, *Beauty and the Beast*: "The Designer Name"

1/28

Levi-Strauss, "The Individual as Species"

**week 5**

**classing people and things**

2/2

Agamben, "Magic & Happiness"

Clastres, *Chronicle*, Ch. 4: The Grown-Ups

Durham, *Between the Furniture and the Building*: excerpt on the chair

**film:** *108 Cuchillo de Palo* (Renate Costa) [second half]

2/4

Raffles, *Insectopedia*: pp. 141-161

**response paper 1 due**

### III. GIFTS

#### week 6

#### moral community

2/9

Mauss, *The Gift*: Introduction  
Clastres, *Chronicle*: Ch. 5: Women, Honey & War

recommended:

Emerson, "Gifts"  
Boas & Hunt, "The Potlatch"

**short film:** *Night Cries: A rural tragedy* (Tracey Moffatt)

2/11

Raffles, *Insectopedia*: "Fever/Dream"  
Clastres, *Chronicle*: Ch. 6: Killing

#### week 7

#### fortune (or crime)

2/16

Baudelaire, "Counterfeit money"  
Newell, "Estranged Belongings"

**film:** *Manufactured Landscapes* (Burtynsky)

2/18

Raffles, *Insectopedia*: "Generosity (the Happy Times)"

**exercise 2 due**

#### week 8

#### Exam and final project preparations

2/23

**In-class Mid-term**

2/25

final project planning session

#### Spring Break

3/1 & 3/3

NO CLASS



#### IV. SECRETS

##### week 9

##### magnifying life

3/8

Simmel, "Secrecy"  
Canetti, "Secrecy"  
Caillois, "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia"

##### recommended

Raffles, *Insectopedia*: "Ex Libris Exempla"

**guest lecture (tbc)**: Richard Freeman

3/10

Van Tilburg, "Interviews of the Unspoken"

**project abstract due**

##### recommended

Moore, "Secret of the Men"

##### week 10

##### the unsaid

3/15

Gonzalez, *Unveiling Secrets of War*, Chs: I & II

In class review of the *Piraa Causa* paintings

3/17

Gonzalez, *Unveiling Secrets of War*, Ch: III

##### week 11

##### public secrecy

3/22

Gonzalez, *Unveiling Secrets of War*, Ch: VIII  
In class Q & A with the author (via skype)

##### recommended:

Gonzalez, *Unveiling Secrets of War*, Ch: VII

3/24

discussion

**response paper 2 due**

#### V. DEATH

##### week 12

##### dying: personal & impersonal

3/29

Raffles, *Insectopedia*: "Death"

Hertz, "Collective Representation of Death"

**film**: *Forever* (Honigmann)

3/31

Hurston, "Zombies"  
Wilenz, "A Zombie is a Slave Forever"  
Zimmer, "Deciphering the Tools of Nature's Zombies"

**week 13**

**dead to the social**

4/5

Biehl, *Vita*: Intro

**recommended**:

Mauss, "the idea of death suggested by the collectivity"

4/7

Biehl, *Vita*: Part I

**week 14**

**language & subjectivity**

4/12

Biehl, *Vita*: Part II

**recommended**:

Biehl, *Vita*: Part IV

**film**: *The Engineer* (Charles & Passarelli)

4/14

Biehl, *Vita*: Part VI

**week 15**

**words of the dead**

4/19

concluding remarks

**final paper due**