Syllabus

SC003 Introduction to Cultural Anthropology
Fall 2010
Monday, Wednesday and Friday 2:00 to 2:50PM
O’Neil 211

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As the price of democracy is eternal vigilance, so the cost of vital culture is its continual re-creation. People never find out who they are, or their value, by looking into someone’s else’s mirror, nor by accepting cultural judgments from an earlier time. Those reflections are necessary correctives. They guide people toward goals and around pitfalls. But a living culture constantly adapts the usable past to present pressures. Not the other way around. When critics measure the present only with past yardsticks, or when they fail to search widely enough for an era’s authentic gestures, then it appears to them that no usable present culture exists. W. T. Lhamon Jr. in Deliberate Speed 2002

About the course
This course is an introduction to cultural anthropology. We will focus on what anthropology has to contribute to an understanding of the social issues of our times.

After introducing cultural anthropology and human evolution, we will move to issues that anthropologists are currently addressing such as marriage and the family, health and healing, sex and gender, political economy, youth culture, migration, social stratification, global warming, the rise of the East and globalization. Anthropologists are interested in the effects of what goes on around us on people.

The course will take a radical view of contemporary issues. We will attempt to “think outside the box.”

Requirements
Class attendance and keeping up with the readings are critical. If you don’t do the readings, I end up doing all the talking and that is boring for everyone.

You will be required to prepare four two-page papers on assigned topics. You must write the papers within the context of the course. Do not use the dictionary or the web. The papers are due in class on the assigned dates. You will lose twenty (20) percentage points if you hand the paper in late. Late papers may be turned into my mailbox in McGuinn 426.
Do not use the dictionary for the definitions of terms. We will develop our own definitions.

**Beware cutting and pasting your papers from the web. The plagiarisms are easy spot and easy to verify using Google. The university rules for plagiarisms are severe.**

You have a rewrite option (only if you handed the paper in on time). Rewrites are due in class one week after the papers are returned. If you choose this option, you will receive the higher grade.

There is a suggested approach for writing a formal paper in the reader. You are not required to use this format. It has an advantage in that you will know how to start.

At the beginning of each topic, there will be a quiz on the assigned readings and the film(s) for that week. The purpose of the quiz is to have you keep up with the readings and films. The format of the quiz will be true/false, multiple choice, matching and occasionally a question requiring a short answer. If you have read and viewed the films, the quizzes will be easy.

There will be a mid-term exam and a final exam.

**Grading**
The course grade is composed of three parts of equal weight (33.3 per cent) - (1) classroom - the papers and the quizzes, (2) the mid-term and (3) the final.

Since the papers and the quizzes account for one-third of the grade, they should be taken seriously. With the rewrite option and the number of quiz grades that can be dropped (including the attendance bonus - see below), this part of the course is designed to raise your grade. **Beware**, if you do not keep up with the readings, attend class and take the quizzes, the classroom grade will lower your grade.

There are four papers and fifteen quizzes. Your lowest paper grade and lowest quiz grade (one each) will be dropped. Your quiz and paper grades will be averaged for the classroom portion of your final grade.

The mid-term and the final will each be based on the material for that half of the course.

**Attendance**
There is no penalty for non-attendance. There is a bonus for attendance. If you miss three classes, your second lowest quiz grade will be dropped. If you miss two classes, your second and third lowest quiz grades will be dropped. If you miss one class, your second, third and fourth lowest quiz grades will be dropped. If you miss no classes, your second, third, fourth and fifth lowest quiz grades will be dropped. **This is a substantial bonus: don’t miss it.** **Because this is a bonus, no excuses for missing a class will be accepted.**

**If you have more than nine (9) unexcused absences, you will receive an F. No senior spring.**
Readings
The readings have been gathered into a course pack, available in the book store. A copy of the course pack is on reserve in the library. The readings have been selected to be readable, interesting and relevant.

Films
At the beginning of each unit there will be a film relevant to the unit’s topic. The films will be shown with minimal explanation so that you may experience them first hand. We will develop an anthropological understanding in discussion. “my DVD” means the DVD does not have a call number; it is an edited version that is on reserve.

Part I - Setting the Stage

Week 1. January 20
Introduction to Cultural Anthropology

Week 2. January 22, 25 & 27
Culture
Franklin 1, Rensberger 25-30, Sterk 13-19, Elst 48-54, Spradley and McCurdy 1-5
Friday, 1-22. Film: selections from Advertising and the End of the World. 34 minutes.
(my DVD)
selections from The Overspent American. 15 minutes. (my DVD)
Film Note: There is much in these videos that set the stage for the course. What is culture? How does culture change? To what extent is the way you think and act influenced (controlled) by your culture? Do you have free will?
Monday, 9-25. Quiz #1 Culture

Week 3. January 29, February 1 & 3
Human Origins
Nanda and Warms 27-54, Williams 1-6
Friday, 1-29. Film: Evolution and Human Equality. 42 minutes. (my DVD)
Film note: This film is a lecture by Stephen J. Gould about concepts of evolution. It bridges from the 19th century work of anthropologists like William Henry Morgan in his effort to explain human progress as a linear process and to justify colonialism to current scientific evidence about human origins and human equality. The film brings into question structures of inequality in our society and especially our everyday acceptance of inequality as normal.
Monday, 2-1. Quiz #2 Human Origins
Friday, 2-3. Paper #1 – Culture – is due
Part II – Issues

Week 4. February 5, 8 & 10
Making a Living: Food and Survival
Moore-Lappe 189-193, Diamond 95-98, Moore 1-2, Cabaza de Vaca 91-93, 78-81
Friday, 2-5. Film: The Women’s Bank of Bangladesh. 47 minutes. HG3290.6.A8 G736
Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Bank won the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize for leveraging small loans into major social change for impoverished families. This film shows how the process works and how micro-financing can affect how people are able to make a living.

Monday, 2-8. Quiz #3 Making a Living

Week 5. February 12, 15 & 17
Marriage and the Family
Halberstam 508-520, Kristof 114-116, Tannen 62-70
Friday, 2-12. Film: sitcom videos - Ozzie and Harriet, episode 3 (Fraternity party). 22 minutes. PN1992.77.A38
- Friends, episode 2 (The one that ends with a sonogram). 30 minutes. PN1992.77.F75
Film note: Ozzie and Harriet was a radio show in the 1940s and by the 1950s, a TV show. Ozzie, Harriet, David and Ricky (their children) were a real family that performed as a sitcom family. You are probably familiar with Friends. Note the portrayals of the family. Does TV (the media) reflect culture or does it influence culture?

Monday, 2-15. Quiz #4 Marriage and the Family

Week 6. February 19, 22 & 24
Sex and Gender
Ferraro 255-277, Holmes 90 & 92, Mainichi 1, Strahinich 1, Lavelle 1-2, Hymowitz 1-2, Woods 1-3
Friday, 10-16. Film: Killing Us Softly, III. 35 minutes. HF5822.K5
Film note: This video is about the construction of female identity. Who is doing the constructing? Why is this construction process successful? What effect does it have on women? And on men?

Monday, 2-22. Quiz #6 Sex and Gender
Wednesday, 2-24. Paper #2 – Marriage and the Family – is due

Week 7. February 26, March 15 & 17
Migration
Hernandez 1-14, Rodríguez 50-61, Kronholz 1-3, Porter 1-2, Moreno 1-3, Kronholz and Rogers 1-3
Friday, 2-26. Film: selections from Blue Collar and Buddha. 28 minutes (my DVD)
selections from Alambrista. 32 minutes. (my DVD)
Film note: Blue Collar and Buddha examines the integration of an immigrant group in the U.S. Alambrista looks at the experiences of an illegal immigrant from Mexico.

Monday, 3-15. Quiz #7 Migration
Wednesday, March 22. Midterm Exam due in class.

Week 8. March 19, 22 & 24

Social Stratification and Class
Kornholz 1-3, Aeppel 1-3, Rubin 28-43, Brouwer 382-391

Friday, 3-19. Film: selections from People Like Us: Social Class in America. 57 minutes.
(my DVD)
Film note: I have excerpted 57 minutes from a 2 hour video. We like to think that America is classless. Not so. This video shows class in a way you will recognize. The consequences it reflects are disturbing. It puts the lie to our beliefs in meritocracy.

Monday, 3-22. Quiz #8 Social Stratification

Week 9. March 26 & 29

Supernatural Beliefs
Lotus Pond 1-2, Plotkin 156-163

Friday, 3-26. Film: I Am A Sorcerer. 48 minutes. (my VHS tape)
Film note: What you are about to see is bizarre if you are not familiar with syncretic religions. Use your anthropology. Be culturally relative. View the film from the point-of-view of the participants. If you are ethnocentric, the film does not work; i.e., it remains bizarre.

Monday, 3-29. Quiz #9 Supernatural Beliefs
Monday, 3-29. Paper #3 – Social Stratification - is due

Week 10. March 31 & April 7

Youth Culture
Hoffman 82-85, Storey 141-143, Schloss 1-3, Chang 118-125, Bourgois 21-28

Wednesday, 3-31. Film: selections from Style Wars (my DVD)
Film note: Youth culture covers an enormous range of activity. I have chosen the Hip Hop movement. This film looks mostly at graffiti and the motivations behind it. What started out as writing names on walls is evolving into an art form. We are interested in the Hip Hop movement’s effect on people - practitioners and viewers.

Wednesday, 4-7. Quiz #10 Youth Culture

Week 11. April 9, 12 & 14

Global Warming
Rosenthal 1-3, Roach 1-2, EPA – Future Temperature Change 1-5, EPA – Future Sea Level change 1-2, Barclay 1-2, Xinhua 1-2, Revkin 1-3

Friday, 4-9. Film: Too Hot To Handle. 54 minutes. QC981.8.G56 T66
Film note: Too Hot To Handle presents global warming as a natural phenomenon and a human enhanced event. The focus is on the implications of global warming for the U.S.

Monday, 4-12. Quiz #11 Global Warming
Week 12. April 16 & 22

**Health & Healing**
Miller 171-196, Glass-Coffin 101-109 & 127-136, Goulding 1-8

**Friday, 4-16. Film:** Miracle Man: John of God. 50 minutes. BF1275.F3 M57
Film note: The treatment of illness is not exclusively about biological medicine. Spiritualism plays a role in healing and wellness.

**Wednesday, 4-22. Quiz #12 Health and Healing**

**Wednesday, 4-22. Paper #4 - Global Warming – is due**

Week 13. April 24 & 26

**Homelessness**
Gonzales 1, Hurt 1, Blackstarnews.com 1, Duffield 195-199, Ralston 1-3, Amster 7-14

**Friday, 4-24. Film:** selections from It Was A Wonderful Life. 47 minutes (my DVD)
Film Note: Middle and upper class women talk about their slide into homelessness, how they are getting along and their hopes for the future. It happened to them. Could it happen to any of us? We learn that homelessness is about much more than alcohol, drugs and mental retardation.

**Monday, 4-26. Quiz # 13 Homelessness**

Week 14. April 28 & 30

**Globalization**
Greider 11-26, Wright 1-2, Donnelly 1-2, Engardio 1-5, Bellman 1-2, Chao 1-2, Ehrenreich 11-49, McCraken 1-4, Wessel 1-4

**Wednesday, 4-28. Film:** Life and Debt. 20 minutes. HC154.L54
**Trading Democracy.** 30 minutes. HF1746.T73
Film note: Life and Debt shows what has happened in Jamaica after independence. This is a contemporary example of the process described in the Moore Lappe article “Why Can’t the Poor Feed Themselves” (week 4). If you think global change only benefits the rich nations and hurts poor nations, consider the situation presented in Trading Democracy. Once laws and agreements are enacted, they are open to interpretation, often beyond the original intention. With NAFTA, we have a devastating situation in existence. Nation states have limited experience in the new global economy. Just as Jamaica found itself in a “bind,” so have the parties to the NAFTA agreement.

**Friday. 4-30. Quiz #14 Globalization**

Week 15, May 3 & 5

**The Rise of the East**
Jacques 1-16, Kahn 1-3, Brooke 1-3, Rai 1-3, Yahoo 1-2, Romero 1-2

**Monday, 5-3. Film:** Selections from Boston Legal, season 5, disc 4, episode 12. 17 minutes (my DVD)

**Monday, 5-3. Quiz # 15 Rise of the East**

**Final Exam**
Due in my mailbox in McGuinn 426 by 5PM on Wednesday, May 12