

# **Introduction to Anthropology**

ANT 201  
Spring 2004  
Carl Icahn Laboratory 101  
M-W 11:00-11:50 AM

Professor: João G. Biehl (jbiehl@princeton.edu)  
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## **Course Description:**

Anthropology is a comparative study of culture, society, and human difference. The field challenges us to consider the many ways in which people's lives are shaped by social relations, cultural images, and historical forces. Based on ethnographic accounts and documentary films, the course will introduce the student to the primary domains of social and cultural anthropology: kinship and social organization; religion, belief and rituals; gender and sexuality; variations in family life and parenting and in individual identity-making; deviancy and social control; economic and social exchanges; colonialism and political violence; sickness and healing; rational-technical interventions and social suffering; global developments and transformations in local worlds; shifting concepts of human rights and citizenship. The course will familiarize students with ethnographic fieldwork methods and will question the universality of cultural categories and the range of variation among human societies. The course will also introduce students to some of the key historical figures in 20th century anthropology and to the development of key concepts, theoretical approaches, and to major dilemmas in the field, past and present, as it seeks to understand, interpret, and represent the lived world of people abroad and at home.

## **Requirements/Grading:**

The success of the course depends on your commitment to complete all required readings for each class and precept meeting, to critically reflect on the readings, to participate actively in class and precept discussions, and to creatively integrate these insights in the written assignments (one short paper and two take home exams).

Class and Precept Participation: 15%  
Short Paper (due on March 1): 20%  
Take Home Midterm Exam 25%  
Take Home Final Exam 40%

## **Course Materials**

Assigned articles and book chapters can be downloaded from Firestone Library's electronic reserve. The following books will be available for purchase at the U-Store, and are on reserve at Firestone Library:

Clastres, Pierre. *Chronicle of Guayaki Indians*. New York: Zone Books, 1998.

Muegler, Eric. *The Age of Wild Ghosts*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.

Shostak, Marjorie. *Nisa: The Life and Words of a !Kung Woman*. New York: Vintage Books, 1981.

Stack, Carol. *All Our Kin*. New York: Basic Books, 1997.

Taussig, Michael. *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild man: A Study in Terror and Healing*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986.

Willis, Paul. *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1977.

Week One  
February 2 and 4

### **What is Anthropology?**

Malinowski, Bronislaw. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. Long Grove: Waveland Press, 1984 [1922], pp. xv-xviii, 1-25; 49-80.

Williams, Raymond. "Anthropology," and "Culture." *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1983, pp. 38-40, 87-93,

Film: *Bronislaw Malinowski: Off the Veranda*

Week Two  
February 9 and 10

### **Culture Matters and the Native's Point of View**

Malinowski, Bronislaw. *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989, pp. 3-16; 107-114; 272-279.

Geertz, Clifford. "From the Native's Point of View." *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*. New York: Basic Books, 1983, pp. 73-93.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. *Tristes Tropiques*. New York: Penguin Books, 1992 [1955], pp. 17-21, 37-44.

Foucault, Michel. "Two Lectures." *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings, 1972-1977*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1980, pp. 80-84.

Kottak, Conrad Phillip. "The Exploration of Cultural Diversity." *Mirror For Humanity: A Concise Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*. New York: Overture Books, 1996, pp.1-20.

Week Three  
February 16 and 18

### **The Ethnography of a Life History**

Shostak, Marjorie. *Nisa: The Life and Words of a !Kung Woman*. New York: Vintage Books, 1981. (Excerpts)

Gordon, Robert. *The Bushman Myth: The Making of the Namibian Underclass*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1992, pp. 157-220, 255-267.

Kottak, Conrad Phillip. "Culture." *Mirror For Humanity: A Concise Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*. New York: Overture Books, 1996, pp.21-36.

Film: *N!ai, the story of a !Kung Woman*

Week Four  
February 23 and 25

### **Social Body, Ritual, and Identity**

Benedict, Ruth. "The Individual and the Pattern of Culture." Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989 [1934], pp.251-278.

Kenyatta, Jomo. 1962. "Initiation of Boys and Girls." In *Facing Mount Kenya: The Tribal Life of the Gikuyu*. New York: Vintage Books, pp.125-148.

Miner, Horace. 1956. "Body ritual Among the Nacirema." *American Anthropologist* 58:503-507.

Poole, Fitz John Porter. "The Ritual Forging of Identity: Aspects of Person and Self in Bimin-Kuskusmin Male Initiation." *Rituals of Manhood: Male Initiation in Papua New Guinea* (ed. Gilbert Herdt). Berkeley: University of California press, 99-154.

Shweder, Richard. "What about 'Female Genital Mutilation?' And Why Understanding Culture Matters in the First Place." *Annual Editions*, pp.144-152 (originally published in *Daedalus*, Fall 2000, pp.209-232).

Film: *Guardians of the Flutes* by Paul Reddish (BBC, 1994).

Week Five  
March 1 and 3

### **Kinship**

Geertz, Clifford. "Thick Description: Toward and Interpretive Theory of Culture." *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 1973, pp. 3-32.

Schneider, David. *American Kinship*. 1968, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1968, p.21-29; 107-117.

Stack, Carol. *All Our Kin*. New York: Basic Books, 1997 [1974].

Collier, Jane. "Is there a Family?" Roger Lancaster (ed.). *The Gender/Sexuality Reader*. New York: Routledge, 1997, pp.71-81.

Borneman, John. "Caring and Being Cared For: Displacing Marriage, Kinship, Gender, and Sexuality." James Faubion (ed.). *The Ethics of Kinship: Ethnographic Inquiries*. New York: Roman and Littlefield, 2001, pp.29-45.

Film: Margaret Mead (produced by NBC)

#### **First Assignment is due on March 1:**

A short paper (no more than 4 double-spaced pages) discussing the concept of "cultural relativism" in light of a contemporary issue related to religion, kinship, or sexuality.

Week Six  
March 8 and 10

### **People's History and The Limits of Ethnographic Representation**

Clastres, Pierre. *Chronicle of Guayaki Indians*. New York: Zone Books, 1998. (Excerpts)

Rosaldo, Renato. "Grief and a Headhunter's Rage." *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis*. Boston: Beacon, 1993, pp.1-21.

### **Spring Break**

Week Seven  
March 22 and 24

### **The Sense of Inequality**

Willis, Paul. *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1977, pp.1-116.

Reynolds, Pamela. "The Ground of All Making: State Violence, the Family, and Political Activists." Veena Das et al (ed). *Violence and Subjectivity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000, pp. 141-170.

Scott, James C. "Everyday forms of peasant resistance." *Journal of Peasant Studies*, vol. 13 (1986), p. 5-35.

Film: *The Invention of Childhood* by Liliana Sulzbach (2000).

Week Eight  
March 29 and 31

### **Where is Anthropology Today?**

Marcus, George and Fischer, Michael M.J. *Anthropology as Cultural Critique*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986, pp.77-110.

Taussig, Michael. *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild man: A Study in Terror and Healing*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986.  
(Excerpts).

Week Nine  
April 5 and 7

### **Globalization and Cultural Citizenship**

Sahlins, Marshall. "Cosmologies of Capitalism." Dirks, Nicholas (ed.). *Culture/Power/History Reader*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Appadurai, Arjun. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996, pp. 27-65.

Ong, Aihwa. "Cultural Citizenship as Subject-Making." *Current Anthropology* 37(5):737-762.

Rosen, Lawrence. "The Circle of Beneficence: Narrating Coherence in a World of Corruption." *The Culture of Islam: Changing Aspects of Contemporary Muslim Life*. Chicago: The University of Chicago press, 2002, pp.3-20.

Kottak, Conrad Phillip. "Cultural Exchange and Survival." *Mirror For Humanity: A Concise Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*. New York: Overture Books, 1996, pp.252-270.

Week Ten  
April 12 and 14

### **Social Suffering**

Arthur Kleinman, Veena Das, and Margaret Lock. "Introduction." *Social Suffering*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997, pp.

Das, Veena. 1998. "Suffering, Legitimacy, and Healing: The Bhopal Case." *Critical Events: An Anthropological Perspective on Contemporary India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp.137-174.

Nelson, Diane. 2001. "Stumped Identities: Body Image, Bodies Politics, and the Mujer Maya as Prosthetic." *Cultural Anthropology* 16 (3):314-353.

Week Eleven  
April 19 and 22

### **Memory, Violence, and Place**

Muegler, Eric. *The Age of Wild Ghosts: Memory, Violence, and Place in Southwest China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001. (Excerpts)

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. "Un-Doing: The Politics of the Impossible in the New South Africa." Manuscript.

Escobar, Arturo. 2003. Displacement, Development, and Modernity in the Colombian Pacific. *International Social Science Journal* 175:157-67.

Week Twelve  
**The Future of Anthropology**

Geertz, Clifford. 2000. "The world in pieces: culture and politics at the end of the century." *Available Light: Anthropological Reflections on Philosophical Topics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp.218-263.

Comaroff, Jean and John Comaroff. 2000. "Millennial Capitalism: First Thoughts on a Second Coming." *Public Culture* 12(2):291-343.

Warren, Kay, "Toward an Anthropology of Fragments, Instabilities, and Incomplete Transitions." In Carols J. Greenhouse, Elizabeth Mertz, and Kay B. Warren (eds). *Ethnography in Unstable Places*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2002, pp.379-392.