
Introduction to Anthropology: Cultural

ANTHR 2 SYLLABUS

"The world in which you were born is just one model of reality. Other cultures are not failed attempts at being you: they are unique manifestations of the human spirit."

-- Wade Davis

ANTHR2 Section 62745 TuTh 12:40-2:00PM Room 1604

Instructor: Michelle Y. Merrill Office: Room 429C

Office Hours: **M** 4:50 - 5:50pm in 429C and 9:05 - 9:15pm in 431 or 429C

Tu 2:15-2:40 pm in 429C **Th** 2:10 - 2:45 pm in 1604 or 429C

F 12:05-12:30pm in 431 or 429C & other times by appointment

Contact Info: michelle.merrill@cabrillo.edu; <http://www.cabrillo.edu/~mmerrill/>

Phone: 477-3700x1620 (messages only)

ANTHR2 (Catalog Description): Presents a cross-cultural, comparative study of contemporary human behavior with emphasis on the effects of globalization on contemporary cultures. Topics investigated include cultural patterns, language, subsistence, economics, religion, kinship, values and norms, sex and gender, marriage, cultural change, and migration.

Course Objectives

Like Cabrillo College itself, this course seeks to honor the core values of “academic freedom, critical and independent thinking, and respect for all people and cultures.” This class provides opportunities to develop and practice skills in all of Cabrillo’s “Core Four” competencies:

Communication - reading, writing, listening, speaking and/or conversing

Critical Thinking and Information Competency - analysis, computation, research, problem solving

Global Awareness - an appreciation of scientific processes, global systems and civics, and artistic variety

Personal Responsibility and Professional Development - self-management and self-awareness, social and physical wellness, workplace skills

By completing this course, you should have the skills and understanding to:

1. Critically assess culture as the distinguishing phenomenon of human life and evaluate the relationship between culture and human behavior.
2. Synthesize the dynamics of culture change with regard to kinship, language, subsistence patterns, economics, and religion and analyze the affect of globalization on contemporary cultures.
3. Compare and contrast specific cultures' gender roles, social organization, or ideology.

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4. Write essays and papers that demonstrate an understanding of cultural dynamics, ethnocentrism, and cultural relativism.

...my Aunt Rebeca asks, 'Rutie, pero dime, what is anthropology?' While I hesitate, she confidently exclaims, 'The study of people? And their customs, right?'

Right. People and their customs. Exactly. Así de fácil. Can't refute that. Somehow, out of that legacy, born of the European colonial impulse to know others in order to lambast them, better manage them, or exalt them, anthropologists have made a vast intellectual cornucopia. At the anthropological table, to which another leaf is always being added, there is room for studies of Greek death laments, the fate of socialist ideals in Hungary and Nicaragua, Haitian voodoo in Brooklyn, the market for Balinese art, the abortion debate among women in West Fargo, North Dakota, the reading groups of Mayan intellectuals, the proverbs of a Hindi guru, the Bedouin sense of honor, the jokes Native Americans tell about the white man, the plight of Chicana cannery workers, the utopia of Walt Disney, and even, I hope, the story of my family's car accident on the Belt Parkway shortly after our arrival in the United States from Cuba...

Anthropology, to give my Aunt Rebeca a grandiose reply, is the most fascinating, bizarre, disturbing, and necessary form of witnessing left to us at the end of the twentieth century...

Ruth Behar, 1996. The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology That Breaks Your Heart (pg. 4-5)

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Class Participation and Attendance

I expect student participation in class discussions, and I encourage everyone to freely ask questions, provide feedback, and otherwise contribute to our in-class interactions. I also expect students to attend all lectures on time, **having completed required readings before coming to class**. Attendance, effort, and participation will account for a substantial portion of your grade. More than 1 absence will result in point loss, as will excessive and recurrent tardiness. I will hold you responsible for all course material, including course videos (most of which are not in the library, and must be viewed in class)--so get good notes from other students (NOT me) if you miss class!

This is a writing intensive course. Students are expected to work more than 2 hours outside of class for every hour in class. Students are expected to write 4,000 – 12,000 words for the class.

Using Website and Blackboard

While this is a traditional "lecture" class, we will be using web resources and Blackboard (some call this "blended learning" or a "web enhanced" class). There are three main goals motivating this requirement: 1. to allow you to develop and practice your skills online (as a crucial aspect of professional development for most jobs requiring a college degree), 2. to provide a venue for sharing learning experiences with classmates outside of the limited time of lectures, and 3. to maximize the learning experience during lectures, by providing more time for face-to-face interaction with the instructor and your classmates. (Trust me, Blackboard does not save me a whole lot of time as an instructor – it's definitely not for my benefit.)

I have used Blackboard, WebCT and Moodle for previous classes, but this will be the first semester where I will be using it for all assignments, and making more use of its interactive features. Please do review the student

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tutorials available on your “My Blackboard” page (in the bookmark list to the right). Please be patient if there are glitches – just let me know right away if you encounter problems once you are logged onto the Blackboard site.

You can access Blackboard from the Cabrillo homepage or from my standard website (<http://www.cabrillo.edu/~mmerrill/anthro2.htm>). I may continue to use my standard website for posting some non-interactive materials – be sure to check it also.

Common Courtesy and Common Sense

Students frequently discover that not everyone shares their personal beliefs, experiences, and convictions. Respect for many points of view is required in this class. Disagreements are healthy and help us to learn, but students must maintain a respectful attitude and courteous conversation at all times. My goal as an instructor is not to convince you to hold a particular opinion on controversial issues, but to encourage you to think critically and with an open mind about the facts, evidence, ideas and theories presented in class.

Classroom etiquette regarding portable electronic devices is not unlike takeoff and landing on an airplane – for the most part, they should be turned off and stowed away. Cell phones and pagers should be **OFF** at all times (an exception may be made for caretakers who can keep their phones/pagers on vibrate for emergency situations, provided the instructor is notified ahead of time). You should have nothing in your ears other than hearing aid devices if needed.

You may use a recorder for lectures, as long as it is unobtrusive (though in my experience, paying attention and taking notes during lecture is more useful). PDAs and laptop computers are permitted during class provided they aren't making much noise.

Other behavioral norms are expected to minimize classroom disruptions and avoid disturbing your fellow students. Arrive on time for class. Do not begin packing your things and preparing to leave until the instructor has indicated class is actually finished. Do not interrupt the instructor or your classmates while they are speaking, but by all means **DO** raise your hand when you have a question or comment. Basically, use a little common sense, try to imagine what is likely to annoy your instructor or classmates, and then avoid doing those things if you wish to remain in class.

Special Accommodations

Many of you may need special accommodations, whether due to disabilities, language difficulties, or other conditions. I am very willing to work with you in order to help create a more positive learning experience. However, I do need some advance notice in order to accommodate students with special needs; if you have special needs, please inform me of your situation within the first two weeks of class.

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to exercise academic honesty and integrity. All sources used must be properly documented. Cheating or plagiarism will result in point loss and disciplinary action, possibly including a failing grade for the class and/or recommendation for dismissal. To learn about what plagiarism means and how to avoid it, please see the description at: <http://www.cabrillo.edu/~sholt/MITPlagiarism.pdf> or http://www.plagiarism.org/learning_center/what_is_plagiarism.html and review the links provided by the Cabrillo College Library at <http://libwww.cabrillo.edu/depts/libraryinstruction.html>.

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Required Texts

Fadiman, A. (1997). *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures*. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux.

Monaghan, J. & Just, P. (2000). *Social & Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Thomas, E. M. (2006). *The Old Way: A Story of the First People*. New York: Sarah Chrichton Books.

Additional required readings will be assigned and distributed in class or available as PDFs on the password-protected portion of the website.

Grading & Assignments

Letter Grade or P/NP (students must request P/NP option in writing by October 3rd).

You will be responsible for:

- in-class and online participation and writing exercises (150 points total)
- two midterm essay assignments (50 points each, 100 points total)
- a kinship diagram or alternative project (50 points)
- a final project, including a proposal (25 points), the project itself (150 points), and a presentation (25 points)

500 total points

A brief overview of the assignments is provided below. Further details about these assignments will be provided in class and online.

First Midterm Essay Assignment

- **Nacirema:** Describe a routine or common event from your everyday life that would seem extraordinary to someone from a different culture or subculture.

Visual Investigations of Culture: Kin Diagram or Alternative Project

- Create a kin diagram of your family (see tutorial at <http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/anthropology/tutor/fundamentals/fund1.html>) and answer questions in writing. **OR**
- Create a map of your community with drawings or photos, labeling key features according to instructions.

Second Midterm Essay Assignment – choose either:

- **Linguistics:** Practice participant-observation to make an ethnographic description of a communication event, focusing on either body language or (sub)culture specific dialect and vocabulary. **OR**
- **Economics:** Choose any product that is available to you as a consumer. Try to find out how the price you pay is established, where and by whom the product is made. Make a detailed record your efforts and results.

Final Project Assignment

- Propose an in-depth research project on a specific culture (other than the !Kung Bushmen or Hmong) or a cross-cultural investigation of one of the topical themes from the course. Write a paper about your chosen culture or topic based on independent library research, with at least four outside references. Give a brief presentation related to your research project in class.

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Course and Major Assignment Schedule

Subject to change. Changes will be announced in class and posted on the website. Small assignments will be added online nearly every week.

Date	Topic	Reading/Assignments Due
9/1	WHAT IS ANTHROPOLOGY?	Syllabus
9/3	ANTHROPOLOGY AND ETHNOGRAPHY	Monaghan & Just: Intro. & Ch 1
9/8	ETHNOGRAPHY AND CULTURE	Monaghan & Just: Ch 2 "Doing Fieldwork among the Yanomamo" (online)
9/10	CULTURE AND THE "OTHER"	Thomas: Ch 1&2 "Body Ritual Among the Nacirema" and/or "The Mysterious Fall of the Nacirema" (online)
9/15	CULTURE AND SOCIETY	Monaghan & Just: Ch 3
9/17	FINDING YOUR PLACE	Thomas: Ch 3 - 6
9/22	SYMBOLS AND MEANING	FIRST MIDTERM ESSAY DUE (Nacirema)
9/24	NOT JUST LIP SERVICE	"Fighting For Our Lives" (online)
9/29	YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT?	FINAL PROJECT TOPIC PROPOSALS DUE Monaghan & Just: Ch 6 "Understanding Eskimo Science" (online)
10/1	YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT?	Thomas: Ch 7-11 POTLUCK WITH BRIEF STORY TO TELL
10/6	KITH AND KIN	Monaghan & Just: Ch. 4
10/8	PARENTHOOD	"How Many Fathers Are Best for a Child?" (online)
10/13	MEN, WOMEN, AND OTHER OPTIONS	"A World Full of Women" and "The Berdache Tradition" (online)
10/15	MEN, WOMEN, AND OTHER OPTIONS	Monaghan & Just: Ch 8 Thomas: Ch 12
10/20	GROWING PAINS AND LIFE HISTORIES	"The Initiation of a Maasai Warrior" and "What about Female Genital Mutilation?" (online)
10/22	GROWING PAINS AND LIFE HISTORIES	Thomas: Ch 13 "Where Fat is a Mark of Beauty" (online)
10/27	EXCHANGE SYSTEMS	VISUAL INVESTIGATIONS OF CULTURE DUE "Too Many Bananas, Not Enough Pineapples..." (online)
10/29	ECONOMICS, POLITICS, AND SOCIAL STRATIFICATION	Thomas: Chapters 14-16
11/3	ECONOMICS, POLITICS, AND SOCIAL STRATIFICATION	Fadiman: Ch 1-4
11/5	CULTURE CHANGE, COLONIALISM, AND GLOBALIZATION	Fadiman: Ch 5-7 "The Price of Progress" (online)
11/10	CULTURE CHANGE, COLONIALISM, AND GLOBALIZATION	Thomas: Chapter 18-20 "Why Can't People Feed Themselves?" (online)
11/12	BELIEF SYSTEMS, RITUAL, MAGIC, AND RELIGION	Monaghan & Just: Ch. 7 "Baseball Magic" (online)
11/17	BELIEF SYSTEMS, RITUAL, MAGIC, AND RELIGION	Thomas: Chapter 17 Fadiman: Ch 8 & 9 "The Adaptive Value of Religious Ritual" (online)

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Date	Topic	Reading/Assignments Due
11/19	BELIEF SYSTEMS, RITUAL, MAGIC, AND RELIGION	SECOND MIDTERM ESSAY DUE (Economics or Linguistics) Fadiman: Ch 10-12
11/24	BELIEF SYSTEMS, RITUAL, MAGIC, AND RELIGION	Fadiman: Ch 13-15
12/1	RACE AND ETHNICITY	“Understanding Race” website (http://www.understandingrace.org) Fadiman: Ch 16 & 17
12/3	RACE AND ETHNICITY	Monaghan & Just: Ch. 5, Afterword Fadiman: Ch 18 & 19 “Mixed Blood” (online)
12/8	CLASS PRESENTATIONS	FINAL PROJECTS DUE
12/10	CLASS PRESENTATIONS	
12/17	CLASS PRESENTATIONS	Finals Week: Thursday, Dec. 17, 10:00am -12:50pm

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