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## Welcome to AN200<sup>90</sup>, Cultural Anthropology!

~~Fall~~ Accelerated Term

11 January-24 March 1998

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**Phone:** 956-8425 (use *only* when you are unable to contact me via e-mail).

Our course web page: <http://host.fptoday.com/an200>

You are expected to read through the web page thoroughly, as you are responsible for following the instructions and meeting the deadlines outlined within. Check the website regularly for updates and new material (deadlines and requirements will not change, but other content may).

**TEXT:** Robbins, Richard K(1997) *Cultural Anthropology. a Problem-Based Approach*. Itasca, IL: Peacock. [2<sup>nd</sup>ed.] This is an excellent textbook which introduces key concepts, methods and ethical issues using up-to-date examples. Because he uses a problem-based approach, Robbins asks the reader to grapple with questions concerning cultural diversity, human rights, culture change and more. How can the perspective of anthropology contribute to answering these questions?

**SUPPLEMENTARY TEXT:** DeVita, Philip R, and James D. Armstrong, eds. (1998) *Distant Mirrors: America as a Foreign Culture* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition).

### SUMMARY COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces the "stuff" of cultural anthropology. That is, what do cultural anthropologists study and how do they go about investigating cultures in a systematic manner? Do anthropologists only study strange, "exotic" cultures -- or can we learn from studying our own culture? What do anthropologists mean when they talk about "culture"?

Because this is an introductory course, the emphasis will be on providing you with a thorough grounding in anthropological terminology, concepts and methods. These basics will be reinforced and illustrated in several ways:

1. Through case studies taken from many different cultures.
2. By giving you a range of the best sites on the web that feature anthropological topics.
3. By asking you to critically read and evaluate anthropological fieldwork and data; how would you as an anthropologist, do the work differently?.

In addition to mastering fundamental concepts, several major themes are woven throughout the course: first, what contribution can anthropologists make to the study of human cultures; and

second, what are some of the methodological and ethical problems facing anthropologists as they pursue their investigations of "other people"?

## OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this class is to:

- provide students with a basic understanding of cultural anthropology
- foster an appreciation of not only cultural diversity but also the unifying, universal characteristics that all human groups share;
- encourage critical thinking, especially in evaluating the validity of anthropological methods and investigations;
- suggest that you question yourself: is the way "my culture" does things the "only way"?

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Students are responsible for reading and understanding the syllabus and for meeting deadlines for readings and written assignments. If you do not understand the syllabus, please contact me at [altamaha@eudoramail.com](mailto:altamaha@eudoramail.com) or [adixon@hawaii.edu](mailto:adixon@hawaii.edu) as soon as possible.

### Your final grade is based on these four things:

Reaction/Response essays (3 @10 pts ea.)	30%
Web Board Discussion Participation: 8 sessions @ 3 pts./ea	25%
Mini-Quizzes (3 at 10pts./ea)	30%
Final Exam	15%

Deadlines: Because this course is part of an accelerated 10-week session, it is imperative that you keep up with readings and deadlines. The amount of work involved in this course is equivalent to a full semester course. This requires self-motivation and self-discipline on your part.

I will not accept late assignments, nor will I allow make-up assignments unless you can provide documented reasons for missing an assignment. It is your responsibility to contact me as soon as possible to inform me that you will miss an assignment, and to arrange to turn in any missed work.

Web Proficiency: Many students have taken online courses before, but even if you have not, I expect you to know how to use the internet, to send e-mail, and to use the WebBoard program. There are online tutorials available for all of these applications.

Web Board Participation: Note that WebBoard participation is a full quarter of your grade. This online course is structured so that students will learn as much from each other's contribution as they will from the books, assignments, and my guidance.

There are a series of weekly discussion groups on our WebBoard focused on problems from our text and current events. Discussions open Sunday and close the following Saturday. You must make a **substantive** contribution to each discussion in order to earn full points. I expect you to "carry" the discussion, though I will moderate when necessary.

E-mail: An e-mail directory of students in the class is provided so students can correspond.

**Reaction/Response Essays:** A reaction essay explores and analyzes a particular problem or academic work. In this class students will read selected chapters from the supplementary text and write reaction essays about their readings. There are three reaction essays assigned. Each essay should be no less than 2 but no more than 3 typewritten pages (single-spaced).

Keep in mind that a reaction essay is more than a summary or critique, but presents the key points the author of the reading makes, followed by an analysis of the implications of those points. The final third of each paper should include information that the student has found (on the web or other sources) about the "home" culture of the author who wrote the chapter under review. Sources must be fully and completely documented, and papers will be posted on the course web page for other students to read. Papers will be posted on the web for your fellow students to read, and you will be responsible for this material on the quizzes and final.

**A- Characteristics of an "A" caliber reaction paper include:**

An analysis of observations and a critique of the positives or negatives of the assignment.

A clear indication that the student has read and understands the assigned chapter.

Appropriate examples taken from the assigned chapter and additional references that are used to demonstrate the student's arguments.

Very few grammatical or spelling errors, and written in an academic manner (see writing tips on course web page).

Student provides full citations for all sources used.

**B - Characteristics of a "B" caliber reaction paper include:**

Student relies primarily on describing/summarizing the reading, rather than analysis/critique.

Provides some analysis of feelings.

Does not use sufficient examples and/or outside research to support points.

Some grammatical/spelling errors.

Written in professional academic style, including full citations.

**C- Characteristics of a "C" caliber reaction paper include:**

Paper is primarily descriptive, rather than critical/analytical.

Student fails to draw in outside research and examples to bolster his argument.

Significant number of grammatical/spelling errors.

Tone of paper is informal rather than academic.

**D/F- Characteristics of a "D" or "F" caliber reaction paper include:**

Fails to meet the minimum requirements outlined above.

Sloppily written, with a clear lack of time and effort put into the work.

NOTE: Failure to provide full citations for any work that is not your own, whether intentional or unintentional (i.e. plagiarism) will result in an automatic "F" for the whole course, as well as other possible academic penalties.

Online Quizzes: 10 pts./ea. These are open-book/ open-note and cover readings, yours and your classmates' reaction essays, and Web Board discussion materials. The format includes multiple choice and essay questions.

Final Exam: **15pts.** There is a required final examination at the end of the course. The format of this exam is short answer/essay and multiple choice. A week before the exam, I will post a series of study questions for the exam. The exam will cover all materials used for the course, including yours and your fellow students' ethnography reviews.

Grades: Grading will be determined as set forth in the Chaminade University General Catalog, as follows:

- A Outstanding scholarship and an unusual degree of intellectual initiative (90% or better)
- B Superior work done in a consistent and intellectual manner (80-89%)
- C Average work; indicating a competent grasp of the subject matter (70-79%)
- D Inferior work of the lowest passing grade; it is not satisfactory for fulfillment of prerequisite coursework. (60-69%)
- F Failure to grasp even the minimum subject matter; no credit given (59% and below)

Incompletes: As a rule, I do not give incompletes unless there is a documented, compelling reason.

A reminder: Plagiarism will result in an automatic "F" for the course and possible academic penalties, as outlined in the handbook. Carefully cite all work that is not your own in order to avoid this serious violation of academic honesty. See the "writing assists" on our website for help. Plagiarism also includes other violations of academic honesty, such as sharing work on quizzes. Make sure that all work is your own.

#### WEEKLY READING ASSIGNMENTS

\*\* These are only the assigned readings from your textbook. At the same time, you should be reading the resources for your reaction papers.

DATES & TOPIC	FOCUS	ROBBINS	DISTANT MIRRORS
11-16 Jan. <b>Wk1</b> ANTHROPOLOGY	What do anthropologists study?	Chap. 1	Chapter 18
18-23 Jan. <b>Wk2</b> CULTURE	What is culture? Why do cultures differ?	Chap. 1	Chapters 3, 18
25-30 Jan.. <b>Wk3</b> CULTURE CHANGE	Why and how do cultures change?	Chap. 2	Chapter 19
1-6 Feb. <b>Wk4</b> WORLDVIEW	Why do cultures see "reality" so differently?	Chap. 3	Chapter 16
8-13 Feb. <b>Wk. 5</b> FAMILY & KINSHIP	Who is our family? What makes a "family" in different cultures?	Chap. 4	Chapter 13
15-20 Feb. <b>Wk. 6</b> IDENTITY	How do you learn to be a member of your society?	Chap. 5	Chapters 7 & 10
22-27 Feb. <b>Wk. 7</b> SOCIAL HIERARCHY	Is everyone in your society equal? Why does social inequality exist?	Chap. 6	Chapters 5 & 8

1-6 Mar. Wk. 8 VIOLENT CONFLICT	Why do societies resort to violence? Is conflict inevitable?	Chap. 7	Chapter 6
8-13 Mar. Wk.9 CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN TODAY'S WORLD	Can't we all just get along? Can anthropology help?	Chap. 8	Chapter 9
15-20 Mar. Wk. 10	STUDY AND REVIEW	Review text readings and the student ethnographies and fieldwork exercises on the course website.	
FINAL EXAM: Place and time to be announced.			

### QUIZ & ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES

1 Feb. - Reaction paper #1 due  
 8 Feb.- Online quiz 1 due  
 22 Feb.- Reaction paper #2 due  
 22 Feb.- Online quiz 2 due  
 8 Mar.- Online quiz 3 due  
 15 Mar.- Reaction paper #3 due

Note: you may turn in reaction papers and online quizzes at ANY time before the due date. The due date is the last day that work will be accepted. Online quizzes will be posted 5 days before the due date. All work should be sent by midnight of the due date.