

AN 200: CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Inst.: Richard Bordner

Off. Hrs.: MWF 9-12, TR 9:30-12:20 or by app't (Eiben 122)

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Texts: Howes, David (ed.) 1996. *Cultural Consumption*. London: Routledge.

Kottak, Conrad & Kathryn Kozaitis. 1999. *On Being Different*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Recommended Text: Robbins, Richard 1997 (2nd ed.). *Cultural Anth*. Itasca: Peacock.

Course Description: This course is intended to provide an **introduction** to cultural **anthropology**. Anthropology is a very broad field - the systematic study of human beings. It aspires to describe and **explain** the similarities and differences between human groups and the stability, diversity and **change** within groups. Anthropologists are interested in all peoples, past and **present**.

Specifically this course is an **introduction** to what anthropologists have learned and how they **study** contemporary cultures. Culture is presented as a complex and dynamic **mechanism** by which human beings solve a variety of basic problems posed by **existence**.

Culture is defined as a **system of concepts, ideas, values, attitudes and beliefs** which are **learned** and shared within a human group. It is used to make **things**, to generate **behaviors** and **interpret experience**. It is a way of thinking about and looking at the world. Culture is symbolic and ideational. It is integrative - all parts are interrelated and constantly **adjusting** to one *another*. It is also adaptive, changing in response to circumstances.

Traditional **cultural** anthropology focused on "**primitive societies**" and less **technologically-advanced groups**. But in the last 50 years **anthropology** has moved to include the study of **dominant** cultures such as Japan and the United States. Thus while we will still follow the traditional **terms** and concepts of the discipline, one of the texts and much of the **class** discussion will focus on groups such as Americans **from an** anthropological perspective.

Course Objectives: 1) To develop a greater awareness of the role of culture in human **experience**. Specifically to help each of us to gain greater **awareness** of our own implicit assumptions, beliefs and values with the goal of developing a greater and more sympathetic **appreciation** of alternative **ways of looking** at and relating to the world To limit **Ethnocentrism!**

- 2) To **increase** our understanding of similarities and differences between **human** groups, of how and why cultures and societies change in different ways under different conditions. To provide a basic theoretical **perspective** for **thinking** about socio-cultural change;
- 3) To **provoke** intellectual curiosity which will lead to a lifelong interest in the basic **questions** raised by anthropology;
- 4) To provide better questions, rather than a set of simplistic and useless pseudo-answers.

Modes of Instruction: 1) **Lectures** and discussions: The lectures **will supplement** but NOT repeat the **material** covered in the texts. Both lectures **and textual** materials will be on the **exams**, and you are responsible for **BOTH**. Attendance is mandatory, if you want to pass the **class**.

- 2) **Simulations:** We **will** be doing several simulations this semester. You will be **working** in small groups and all members are **expected** to **contribute** their equal share to the group effort These simulations have proved in the past to be very useful **learning** tools to get across sophisticated concepts, so your active participation is **required**. Attendance will be mandatory.
- 3) **Films:** Films will be shown during the semester. You will be responsible for viewing them - attendance is mandatory and will be **taken**.
- 4) **Reaction papers:** In lieu of doing "real" fieldwork we **will** be getting into some situations during the semester where I will **expect** you to look at the world **through** with an **anthropologist's** perspective. This will include at least one film-based situation.

Grading:

- 1) **Exams:** There will be 3 exams in this class. All will consist of a **combination** of objective and short essay questions. The 3 **exams** will count for 60% of your course grade.
- 2) **Research Paper:** You will have to complete a research paper on a topic of your choice based on the course **material**. It must be approved by me or you may suffer the **consequences**. It will be **from 6-8** pages in length (**text**) and will **count** for 20% of the **course** grade.
- 3) **Reaction papers:** You will have to complete 3 reaction papers based on situations we get into during the semester. . **Each paper** will be from 2-4 pages and be your reactions to the questions posed. Remember a reaction paper is your opinion on a topic, not a research paper. The reaction papers are worth a **total** of 10% of your course grade.
- 3) **Class participation/Attendance:** In introductory courses to stay awake and interested requires a little effort, so participation is necessary both to understand the **material** and stay conscious. Various projects, such as the simulations also require not only your physical attendance but also some **mental** effort. This will count for 10% of your course grade.

THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY OF EXTRA-CREDIT WORK IN THIS CLASS

Grade Weight: **Exams(3)**.....60%
Reaction papers..... 10%
Part/Attend..... 10%
Research Paper 20%

A= 90-100 D=60-69
B= 80-89 F= -60
C= 70-79

- Aug. 30: Introduction**
Ass: Read **K&K ch. 1-2**
- Sept**
1: **Anthropology-Us/Them, ethnocentrism and cultural relativity**
Ass: Read K&K ch. 45
3: **Culture, ethnicity and concepts of social groups**
Ass: Read K&K ch. 6-7
6: **HOLIDAY**
8: **Video**
10: **Group behavior and the "dance of communication"**
13: **Culture, control and change**
Ass: Read H ch. 2 (Classen)
15: **Symbols, icons, commodities and perception**
Ass: Read K&K ch. 15
17: **Language and perception**
20: **Video**
22: **Sociolinguistics**
24: **Simulation**
27: **EXAM I (K&K ch. 1-7,15, H. ch. 2)**
Ass: Read **K&K ch. 9,16**
29: **Gender and social roles**
- Oct**
1: **Kinship-who are kin and why?**
Ass: Read H. ch. 1 (**Comaroff**), 7 (Grain)
4: **Marriage and family**
Ass: Read K&K ch. 10-11
6: **Individualism and the group**
8: **The "self" or "me" and the group**
Ass: Read H. ch. 3 (**Philibert & Jourdan**)
11: **HOLIDAY**
Ass: Read **K&K ch. 12**
13: **Simulation**
15: **Video**
18: **Simulation**
20: **EXAM II (K&K ch 9-12, 16, H. ch. 1, 3,7)**
Ass: Read **K&K ch. 8**
22: **Religious systems and belief**
25: **Religion and segregation/inclusion**
Ass: Read H. ch. 8 (Howes)
27: **Magic and the supranatural**
29: **Video**
Ass: Read **K&K ch. 13-14**
- Nov.**
1: **Social stratification**
Ass: Read H. ch. 4 (**James**)
3: **Rank, class & caste**
Ass: Read H. ch. 5 (**Weiss**), 6 (Hendrickson)
5: **Economic systems and the "world economic order"**
8: **Economics, culture and media**
10: **Video**
12: **Ethnic identity & nationalism**
15: **Diversity as concept and reality**
- Dec.**
17: **Simulation**
19: **Geopolitics and economic perception**
22: **Arts and kitsch**
24: **Culture and 'things'**
25-26: **Thanks. Recess-HOLIDAY**
29: **Famines, concepts of aid and development programs**
1: **Simulation**
3: **Simulation**
6: **Video**
8: **Trends in Hawai'i**
10: **Summary/RESEARCH PAPER DUE (late 1 grade off per day)**
13: **EXAM III 2:00 in regular room**