

Inst.: Richard Bordner

Off. Hrs.: M, W and F 9-12 or by app't (Eiben 122)

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Texts: Hendry, Joy 1999. Other People's Worlds. New York: New York Univ. Press.

Knab, Timothy 1995. The War of Witches. Boulder. Westview.

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**.

Specific Measured Course Outcomes: The following are explicit **goals** of this class and will be measured by **various** instruments during the semester:

- 1) An understanding of the pervasive nature of ethnocentrism and **how** it shapes our views both of ourselves and others;
- 2) The intellectual difference between holistic and specialized **disciplines** both in approach and **explanation**;
- 3) The process of cultural **adaptation** called acculturation (the group)/assimilation (the individual);
- 4) The culture concept;
- 5) The impact of world view, that of the **power** of perception versus reality;
- 6) The power of kinship to define relationships;
- 7) The dynamics of the **demands** of the group versus the **interests** of the **individual**;
- 8) The cultural definition of normative behavior,
- 9) Forms of conflict resolution and their limitations.

- 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**. You will be **writing** several of the reaction papers based on the **films**.
- 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 some **film-based** situations.

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%	A= 90-100	D=60-69
Reaction papers10%	B= 80-89	F= -60
Part/Attend10%	C= 70-79	
Research Paper 20%		