



Welcome to AN200 Cultural Anthropology!

Fall Accelerated Term

5 October-17 December 1998

Instructor: Anna Dixon

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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 H.(1997) Cultural Anthropology: a Problem-Based Approach. Itasca, IL: Peacock. [2nd.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?

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"?
- give you hands-on experience in conducting anthropological research.

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 or adixon@hawaii.edu as soon as possible.

Your final grade is based on these five things:

Ethnography Review (in 2 parts @10 pts ea.) **20%**

Web Board Discussion Participation:

8 sessions @ 5 pts./ea 40%

Mini-Quizzes (3 at 10pts./ea) 30%

Final Exam 10%

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 **40%** 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 book, 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 the full 5 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.

Ethnography Review: An ethnography is an anthropological case study of one particular culture or subculture. Each class member will choose an ethnography to review. This is not a "book report." The structure of your 8-10 (doublespaced) pp review will be as follows:

PART I (due 2 November; 10 pts.) 4-5 pp. minimum including:

- a. brief description of the group described in the ethnography(who they are; where they live; how large the group is; how they make a living). You should allot about 2-3 pages for this. You may include maps and other images, but these are additional to what you write.
- b. description of the anthropologist, his/her research objectives and methods used in the study. This should take about a page.
- c. A list of at least 5 web sites you have found related to this group, their *URLs*, and a 1-2 sentence description of each. This should take about a page.

PART II (due 1 December; 10 pts.) 4-5 pp. minimum including:

- a. Choose any two chapter topics from Robbins and write approximately 1 page each on how these topics apply in the ethnographic group you chose (e.g. marriage & family, identity, violent conflict). You can select particular topics within these chapters for your discussion.
- c. Commentary on the anthropologist's research objectives and methods used in the ethnography (at least 2 pages). Did the anthropologist use appropriate methods to answer the research questions posed? What are some of the ethical questions raised by this ethnography? How would you do the work differently if you were the anthropologist?
- d. A list of at least 5 additional web sites you have found related to this group, their *URLs*, and a 1-2 sentence description of each (about 1 page).

You may choose any ethnography you like, subject to my approval. I have a number of **ethnographies** available for your use, or you may purchase one or check one out from the library. If you do not select one by the second week of the course, I will assign one to you. Your finished reviews will be published on the course web page for your colleagues to read. You may, of course, turn in your reviews at any time before the final due date, but no later than the final due date.

Mini-Quizzes: 10 pts./ea. These are open-book/ open-note and cover readings, yours and your classmates' ethnographic reviews, and Web Board discussion materials.

Final Exam: 10 pts. 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 Chominade University General Catalog, as follows:

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| 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 on the group that you have chosen to study.

| <u>DATES & TOPIC</u> | <u>FOCUS</u> | <u>ROBBINS ASSIGNMENTS DUE</u> | |
|--|--|---|--|
| 4-10 Oct. Wk1 ANTHROPOLOGY | What do anthropologists study? | Chap. 1 | none; read Chap 1 and start thinking about your "group." |
| 11-17 Oct. Wk2 CULTURE | What is culture? Why do cultures differ? | Chap. 1 | select ethnography and submit your choice & brief description. |
| 18-24 Oct. Wk3 CULTURE CHANGE | Why and how do cultures change? | Chap. 2 | Work on Review Pt. 1 |
| 25-31 Oct. Wk4 WORLDVIEW | Why do cultures see "reality" so differently? | Chap. 3 | Miniquiz on Chaps 1-2 due 26 Oct. |
| 1-7 Nov.. Wk. 5 FAMILY & KINSHIP | Who is our family? What makes a "family" in different cultures? | Chap. 4 | Review Pt. 1 due 2 Nov. |
| 8-14 Nov. Wk. 6 IDENTITY | How do you learn to be a member of your society? | Chap. 5 | Miniquiz on Chaps. 3-4 due 9 Nov. |
| 15-21 Nov. Wk. 7 SOCIAL HIERARCHY | Is everyone in your society equal? Why does social inequality exist? | Chap. 6 | Work on Review Pt. 2 |
| 22-28 Nov. Wk. 8 VIOLENT CONFLICT | Why do societies resort to violence? Is conflict inevitable? | Chap. 7 | Miniquiz on Chaps. 5-6 due 23 Nov. |
| 29 Nov.-5 Dec. Wk.9 CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN TODAY'S WORLD | Can't we all just get along? Can anthropology help? | Chap. 8 | Review Pt. 2 due 1 Dec. |
| 6-12 Dec. 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.