

## ANTHROPOLOGY 101: INTRODUCTION TO CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

M/W/F

Joshua D. Rubin, Pettengill 161

Office Hours: Mondays 12-2pm, Wednesdays 1-2pm, and by appointment

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### Course description:

Welcome to Anthro 101. This course is designed to introduce you to anthropology and to help you to conceptualize the discipline. What is cultural anthropology? What does it study? How and why does the discipline study what it does? What sort of knowledge does anthropology promise, and what other disciplines does it draw upon for inspiration? As we consider these questions, we will draw inspiration from a wide range of ethnographic works.

### Course structure:

For most of you, this will be your first encounter with anthropology. This syllabus is designed to engage you and immerse you in the field. Each week of this course covers a central aspect of anthropological theory and research. You will read the work of anthropologists who have written compellingly and, in many cases, beautifully on each topic, and we will discuss those assigned readings in class.

You will also have the chance to experience these topics for yourself. This class will operate as something of a “flipped classroom.” Every week of the course comes with its own small project, which each of you will complete over the weekend. This project replaces your weekend reading assignment. On Monday of each week, you will be placed into randomly assigned groups, in which you will discuss your findings. One or two groups – selected by me, at the beginning of Monday’s class – will share their observations with the rest of us. On Wednesdays and Fridays, we will discuss the assigned readings and – just as importantly – *place them in the context of the projects you completed for Monday*. If everything goes according to plan, these readings and projects will complement each other. You will approach each set of readings with an interpretive toolkit that you yourself have developed over the weekend, and you will finish each week of class with a nuanced perspective on the particular aspect of anthropological theory or practice that a given week is designed to highlight. It is my responsibility to make sure that the projects and the readings align, and I take this responsibility very seriously.

By the end of the semester, I am confident that you will possess not only a robust understanding of anthropology theory and practice, but also an admiration for the complex, creative, and fascinating ways that humans organize their worlds.

### Course goals:

1. To discover central pillars of anthropological thought
2. To learn and learn to use the theories and methodologies that define the discipline
3. To find out why anthropology matters
4. To gain an appreciation for the vast range of possibilities available for anthropological research

### Texts:

Kincaid, Jamaica. *A Small Place*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000 [1988].

Govindrajana, Radhika. 2018. *Animal Intimacies: Interspecies Relatedness in India's Central Himalayas*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

All other readings will be made available on Lyceum. Assigned readings are to be completed in time for the class under which they are listed.

**Assignments and grading:**

**1) WEEKLY PROJECTS (45 points—9 projects, 5 points each):**

Anthropology is a hands-on discipline, and this course reflects that. Nearly each weekend, between the first week and the last, you will complete a separate small project. These projects will cover a range of topics and research strategies – including family trees, interviews, observation, and creative writing – and they stand in for your regular weekend reading obligations. You should therefore plan to devote as much time to this small project as you would to any other weekend reading assignment.

Your weekly reports should always be typed, printed, and submitted to me at the end of class each Monday.

NOTE #1: If you know that you are going to be out of town for a given weekend, or too busy with other work, you should be sure to do your small project a few days beforehand, at a more convenient time.

NOTE #2: These weekly projects are designed to help you develop an anthropological perspective. You will invariably find, as every fieldworker finds, that there are questions you wish you could have asked or things you did not think to notice. Do not be discouraged! These lessons are part of your growth as an anthropologist.

NOTE #3: These weekly projects are, as you can probably imagine, quite time-consuming for me to grade. As such, do not be alarmed if you do not receive particularly detailed feedback. I am using these projects to mark your progress, point out your most interesting findings, and make specific recommendations. If you want to discuss your project in greater depth, please feel free to visit me during my office hours.

**2) GROUP WORK, GROUP SHARING AND PARTICIPATION (35 points):**

On Mondays, we will work in “labs” to share and discuss your weekend projects. For these labs, the class will be broken in groups of 4-5 people, and these groups will change with every week. At the end of each Monday lab, one or two groups will take the lead on sharing their research with the rest of the class.

The effort that you display in your collaborative group work will constitute a significant portion of your grade for this class. If you demonstrate a concerted effort to share your own ideas, listen to the ideas of your classmates, and discuss commonalities between them, you will surely do well in this aspect of the class. Students who wish to keep track of their participation grade on their own are encouraged to contact me at the midpoint of the semester for a provisional evaluation.

NOTE #1: If you would prefer *not* to participate in a specific lab discussion, because doing so would make you uncomfortable, you may opt out of doing so by sending me an email by Sunday night at 8PM. I will still expect you to submit your weekend project to me (in person or via email) by class time.

NOTE #2: It should go without saying that attendance and participation during regular lectures will be factored into your grade as well. If I notice that you are checking your phone, or using a permitted computer for business not related to our course, I will call on you immediately to verify your engagement in our discussion and speak with you after class. If this happens repeatedly, your in-class participation score will be reduced to 0. If you have more than three unexcused absences in the semester, your in-class participation score will be reduced to 0.

### 3) SHORT PAPERS (5 double-spaced pages in the length):

#### a. Performance of self (Due at the end of Week 5) (50 points)

This project is a critical reflection on the ways that you “perform yourself” in everyday life. It should describe not only how you think you act, but also why you think you act the way that you do. Each of us deploys – both consciously and not – cultural resources in order to make ourselves intelligible to others. What resources (language, dress, personal grooming, body posture and movement, material goods, etc.) do you deploy? What kind of self are you trying to appear to be when you use these resources, and where did your idea of a self come from? Is this self emblematic of your social background in any respect? Do other people always see what you want them to see when they interpret you? This short essay can focus on a particular social situation or a particular aspect of your performative persona, but it should 1) reference readings from the first five weeks of the semester, and 2) draw inspiration from the small projects that you have produced thus far.

#### b. Social worlds of Bates and/or Lewiston (Due at the end of Week 11) (70 points)

This project is your introduction to writing ethnography. For it, you will be expected to construct an argument about the social worlds that surround you. How do they operate? Who interacts with whom? How? And where? What brings Bates and Lewiston together and what keeps them apart? How do gender, race, class, language, and ethnicity shape the interaction of these social worlds? What do people at Bates and/or Lewiston seem to care about? How do you *know* these things? To defend your claims, you will draw from the small projects you have completed for this course. If you noticed something interesting in your observation sessions or your analysis of a particular material object or your study of sociality, you can return to it here. Whatever projects you use, you will be expected to reference our in-class readings as well.

### 4) FINAL EXAM (80 points):

At the end of the course, you will take a comprehensive in-class final exam. There will be a review session on the final day of the term.

Your course grade will be calculated as a percentage of accumulated points (A = 94-100; A- = 90-93; B+ = 87-89; B = 84-86; B- = 80-83; etc.). All assignments are due on the dates indicated on the syllabus. Late work will be marked down 5% per day and unexcused assignments that are more than one week late will be graded as a 0.

#### **Additional policies:**

To make submitting, organizing, and returning your papers easier for all of us, please EMAIL them to me – formatted as Microsoft Word documents if possible – as files named **[lastname].[firstname]-[assignment title]** by the date and time they are due. If you do not have ready access to a computer or would prefer to receive handwritten comments, you may also print out your assignments and turn them in at class time.

I do not permit the use of electronic devices during our class sessions unless by special arrangement with me. If you *are* given permission to use a computer, I will expect you to lower (not close!) the screen whenever you are not actively taking notes. This practice both confirms for me your engagement in the discussion and encourages you to think consciously about the notes you’re taking and when you’re taking them.

### **Academic integrity:**

Plagiarism is defined as claiming another's words and/or ideas as your own. Both plagiarism and failing to cite source materials are serious classroom concerns and they will be treated as such. At the same time, it has been my experience that instances of plagiarism are rarely premeditated acts of deception. More commonly, they stem from misunderstandings and time-related panic. If this is the case, then it is as much my job as yours to make sure plagiarism does not occur in our class. To that end, I have designed this course specifically to alleviate any finals-week time crunch. Each weekly project described in the syllabus is designed to help you both think critically about anthropology and develop and execute your short papers. These projects will also provide you with opportunities to receive semi-regular feedback on your paper ideas as they take shape.

It is also my responsibility to communicate my citation guidelines to you. They are as follows: I will expect you to provide references whenever you quote or paraphrase the work of another person. When in doubt, cite! This includes quotations from books, articles, magazines, films, lectures, and interviews.

You can use this example as a template for your in-text citations:

**In *Animal Intimacies*, Radhika Govindrajana writes, "XXX XXX" (Govindrajana 2018, 30-1).**

If you are citing a lecture or an interview, please do so in the following manner: **As XXX explained during my interview with them, XXX (Interview, [insert date here]).**

For full bibliographic references, please use Chicago Author-Date (as I have done in this syllabus). If you have any additional questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me!

### **Course Schedule:**

#### **WEEK ONE: Introduction.**

Monday, Jan. 13 –

Introduction.

Wednesday, Jan. 15 –

Miner, Horace. 1956. "Body Ritual Among the Nacirema." *American Anthropologist* 58 (3):503-507.

Friday, Jan. 17 –

Goffman, Erving. 1959. *The Presentation of Self*. New York: Anchor Books. (Selection: "Introduction")

Graeber, David. "Dickheads: The Paradox of the Necktie Resolved." *The Baffler* 27 (2015).

#### **WEEK TWO: You.**

*PROJECT: Self-presentation.*

Monday, Jan. 20 –

**NO CLASS – MLK DAY**

Wednesday, Jan. 22 –

Discuss your self-presentation project.

Friday, Jan. 24 –

Jackson, John L. 2001. *Harlemworld : doing race and class in contemporary Black America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Selection: "White Harlem")

### **WEEK THREE: Kinship.**

*PROJECT: Kinship chart.*

Monday, Jan. 27 –

Discuss kinship charts and findings.

Wednesday, Jan. 29 –

Govindrajan, Radhika. 2018. *Animal Intimacies: Interspecies Relatedness in India's Central Himalayas*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Chapter 1)

Friday, Jan. 31 –

Govindrajan, Radhika. 2018. *Animal Intimacies: Interspecies Relatedness in India's Central Himalayas*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Chapter 2 and Epilogue)

### **WEEK FOUR: Interviews.**

*PROJECT: Phone interview.*

Monday, Feb. 3 –

Discuss themes from phone interviews.

Wednesday, Feb. 5 –

Myerhoff, Barbara G. 1980. *Number our days*. 1st Touchstone ed. New York, N.Y.: Simon and Schuster. (Selection: "Forward" and "Needle and Thread: The Life and Death of a Tailor")

Friday, Feb. 7 –

Basso, Keith H. 1970. "'To Give up on Words': Silence in Western Apache Culture." *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 26 (3):213-230.

### **WEEK FIVE: Situating the Self.**

*PROJECT: Drafting assignment 1.*

Monday, Feb. 10 –

Assignment 1 workshop.

Wednesday, Feb. 12 –

Kleinman, Arthur, and Erin Fitz-Henry. 2007. "The Experiential Basis of Subjectivity: How Individuals Change in the Context of Societal Transformation." In *Subjectivity: Ethnographic Investigations*, edited by João Biehl, Byron Good and Arthur Kleinman, 52-65. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Guenther, Lisa. "The Concrete Abyss." <https://aeon.co/essays/why-solitary-confinement-degrades-us-all>.

Friday, Feb. 14 –

Kulick, Don. 1997. "The Gender of Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes." *American Anthropologist* 99 (3):574-585.

**\*PERFORMANCE OF SELF PAPER DUE BY SATURDAY FEB. 15, AT 11:59PM\***

**NO CLASS; WINTER RECESS (FEB. 15-23)**

**WEEK SIX: Sociality.**

*PROJECT: Watching Commons.*

Monday, Feb. 24 –

Discuss conversation notes.

Wednesday, Feb. 26 –

Trapp, Micah M. 2016. "You-Will-Kill-Me-Beans: Taste and the Politics of Necessity in Humanitarian Aid." *Cultural Anthropology* 31 (3):412-437.

Friday, Feb. 28 –

Gershon, Ilana. 2008. "Email my heart: Remediation and romantic break-ups." *Anthropology Today* 24 (6):13-15.

**WEEK SEVEN: Observation 1 (Etic).**

*PROJECT: Observation, in Lewiston.*

Monday, Mar. 2 –

Discuss observations.

Wednesday, Mar. 4 –

Malinowski, Bronislaw. 2001. "The Subject, Method and Scope of This Inquiry." In *Readings for a History of Anthropological Theory*, edited by Paul A. Erickson and Liam D. Murphy, 206-227. Orchard Park: Broadview Press, Ltd.

Friday, Mar. 6 –

Jencson, Linda. 2001. "Disastrous rites: liminality and communitas in a flood crisis." *Anthropology and Humanism* 26 (1):46-58.

**WEEK EIGHT: Engagement.**

*NO PROJECT – Begin reading Kincaid!*

Monday, Mar. 9 –

In-class film, "The Couple in the Cage," and discussion.

Wednesday, Mar. 11 –

Kincaid, Jamaica. 2000 [1988]. *A Small Place*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Friday, Mar. 13 –

Abu-Lughod, Lila. 2002. "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others." *American Anthropologist* 104 (3):783-790.

**WEEK NINE: Observation 2 (Emic).**

*PROJECT: Further observation, in Lewiston.*

Monday, Mar. 16 –

Discuss elaborated observations.

Wednesday, Mar. 18 –

Ashforth, Adam. 2005. "On Living in a World with Witches." In *Witchcraft, Violence, and Democracy in South Africa*, 63-87. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Friday, Mar. 20 –

Downey, Greg. 2007. "Producing Pain: Techniques and Technologies in No-Holds-Barred Fighting." *Social Studies of Science* 37 (2):201-226.

**WEEK TEN: Material Culture.**

*PROJECT: Documenting material culture.*

Monday, Mar. 23 –

Discuss pictures or objects.

Wednesday, Mar. 25 –

De León, Jason. 2013. "Undocumented migration, use wear, and the materiality of habitual suffering in the Sonoran Desert." *Journal of Material Culture* 18 (4):321-345.

Friday, Mar. 27 –

Bernstein, Anya. 2015. "Freeze, die, come to life: The many paths to immortality in post-Soviet Russia." *American Ethnologist* 42 (4):766-781.

**WEEK ELEVEN: Creative writing.**

*PROJECT: Drafting assignment 2.*

Monday, Mar. 30 –

Assignment 2 workshop.

Wednesday, Apr. 1 –

Lempert, William. 2014. "Decolonizing Encounters of the Third Kind: Alternative Futuring in Native Science Fiction Film." *Visual Anthropology Review* 30 (2):164-176.

Friday, Apr. 3 –

Stewart, Kathleen. 2013. "Regionality." *The Geographical Review* 103 (2):275-284.

[One-page extra credit reflection on Chapter 6 of Govindrajan is announced.]

**\*SOCIAL WORLDS OF BATES/LEWISTON PAPER DUE BY SATURDAY APR. 4, AT 11:59PM\***

**WEEK TWELVE: Conclusion.**

Monday, Apr. 6 –  
Conclusion.

Wednesday, Apr. 8 –  
Govindrajan, Radhika. 2018. *Animal Intimacies: Interspecies Relatedness in India's Central Himalayas*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Chapter 6)

*One-page extra credit reflection on Chapter 6 of Govindrajan is due at the beginning of class!*

Friday, Apr. 10 –  
Review/Exam prep

**FINAL EXAM: Friday, April 17.**