Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*
(SOAN 110-02: Spring 2020)

Classroom: Miller 104
Time: Mon/Wed/Fri 10:20-11:20

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Office Hours: MW 3-4pm
(and Tues by appointment)

Course Description
Anthropology is the holistic and comparative study of human life. Cultural anthropologists study the complexity of human experience, from micro-nuances of everyday behavior to economic structures and systems of knowledge making. We also study across different societies, including the most distant and different as well as those closest to our own home. The anthropological enterprise is inherently comparative because we seek to understand, analyze and write about others (and ourselves) in a way that is comprehensible to a scholarly audience. Anthropology revolves around the attempt to translate experience into words, life into language, meaning for some into meaning for others; it is therefore always an unfinished and imperfect enterprise.

This course will introduce some of the ways in which anthropologists have studied the collective processes we call ‘culture’. We will focus our semester around three studies – on Native American history, about injury and hope amongst gangs in Chicago and of the everyday consequences of war in a military town in Texas. Each book introduces a different society and culture as well as different approaches to anthropology. We will be concerned with the topical content of these ethnographies as well as the method and form with which they are written. Most importantly, we will seek to understand, question, and apply the concepts and analytical approaches presented by other anthropologists to our own life-world. Further readings complement the these texts, and various films, examples and activities will be used as primary material for in-class discussion and assignments.

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Course Objectives
By the end of this course, students should:
- appreciate ‘culture’ as a holistic, interconnected, and ongoing process through which we make sense of our life and the world;
- gain familiarity with the analytical approach of ‘anthropology’ as a discipline;
- be sensitive of the diversity and difference, as well as the similarities and shared concerns, between disparate people and individuals;
- be critical of systems, assumptions, and ways of thinking that seem familiar, obvious or taken-for-granted;
- learn about and from different cultures, individuals and ways of being in the world.
In addition, students should:
- read and write critically about anthropological literature and films;
- write clearly and critically about social behavior and conceptual frameworks;
- define and use key anthropological terms in their discussions and writing;
- conduct primary field-research;
- write a short ethnographic essay.

Required Books
Lassiter, Luke 2009 *Invitation to Anthropology*
MacLeish, Kenneth 2013 *Making War at Fort Hood: Life and Uncertainty in a Military Community*
Ralph, Laurence 2014 *Renegade Dreams: Living through Injury in Gangland Chicago*
Truer, David 2019 *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee: Native America from 1890 to the Present*

Additional articles and films will be delivered in class, through Moodle, and library reserves.

Expectations and Evaluation
Participation: 33% Full attendance and active engagement with class discussion is required by all students. Additionally, each student will post reading reflections on Moodle once a week. These posts will serve as a touchstone for class discussions and are required for full participation. Lectures will be based on readings, but will also include new information and ideas based on student interest. Reading, film, as well as discussion material will be included on the mid-term and final exams so it is important to be present, prepared, and attentive for all sessions. You are responsible for accessing any missed class material. Consistent absence, tardiness or lack of participation, excused or otherwise, will effect your grade! Please discuss any unavoidable absences with me directly to help mitigate this consequence.

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Exams: 33% A short-response exam will be given in class around the eighth week of class. It will cover the reading, film, and lecture material up to that point. Another short-essay exam will be given during the scheduled final exam time. It will cover the reading, films, and lecture material for the entire semester but will be weighted towards the latter half. The final exam will have more value in the calculation of your grade.

Papers: 33% You will have a short (~3 pages) review paper on an assigned theme due around the sixth week. This will be based loosely on class readings but will require direct analysis on a topic (e.g. film, object, reading) of your own choosing. A longer (~8 pages) ethnographic essay will be due on the last day of class. This will involve direct description as well as interpretation of an actual event that you have personally experienced. Each paper will be introduced with more detailed guidelines ahead of time.

Smiles: 1% Along with kindness

Classroom etiquette
- You are expected to attend every class meeting, come prepared to discuss designated readings and remain up to date on Moodle posts. Absence and lack of participation will affect your grade. Please contact me directly about any absences, planned or otherwise.
- We, as a college, academic discipline, and class are committed to engaging diverse and even conflicting views. Please treat your colleagues, myself and the subject matter with respect; and please voice alternative ideas whenever possible!
- Please turn off and put away all cell phones and electronic devices. I prefer that you take notes with pen/pencil and paper. If you have a compelling need to use a computer or other device for note-taking, please see me after the first meeting.
- We discuss reading during each session and I encourage you to bring the relevant texts to class. However, if you are able to access the readings and engage fully in discussion without purchasing a hard-copy or opening your computer in class I am very open to other means of access.
- I encourage you to see me individually. The best way to contact me is directly after class, during office hours, or with email. I will try to respond to email in a timely manner and expect you to do the same. But please make sure you have checked the syllabus, Moodle listings, and with your classmates before making direct inquiries for logistical matters.

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Semester Schedule*

part 1) Anthropological Stories

Week 1
Mon, Jan 20: Martin Luther King Day [no classes]
Wed, Jan 22: Class overview
Fri, Jan 24: Luke Lassiter Invitation to Anthropology - Chapt 1) Evolution and the Critique of Race

Week 2
Mon, Jan 27: David Truer Heartbeat of Wounded Knee - Prologue & 1) Narrating the Apocalypse
Wed, Jan 29: Lassiter Invitation - 2) Anthropology and Culture
Fri, Jan 31: Truer Heartbeat - 2) Purgatory

Week 3
Mon, Feb 3: Truer Heartbeat - 3) Fighting Life
Wed, Feb 5: Lassiter Invitation - 4) History, Change, and Adaption
Fri, Feb 7: Truer Heartbeat - 4) Moving on Up

Week 4
Mon, Feb 10: Truer Heartbeat - 5) Becoming Indian
Wed, Feb 12: [FILM - David Mueller A Good Day to Die / Neil Diamond Reel Injun]
Fri, Feb 14: Truer Heartbeat - 6) Boom City

Week 5
Mon, Feb 17: Truer Heartbeat - 7) Digital Indians & Epilogue
Wed, Feb 19: Lassiter Invitation - 7) Knowledge, Belief, and Disbelief & Afterword
Fri, Feb 21: Clifford Geertz - ‘Culture’

[Essay 1 due]

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Part II) Injury, Hope, Bodies

Week 6
Mon, Feb 24: Laurence Ralph Renegade Dreams - Preface & Part One
Wed, Feb 26: Lassiter 3) Ethnography
Fri, Feb 28: Ralph Dreams - 1) Development

Week 7
Mon, Mar 2: Ralph Dreams - 2) Nostalgia
Wed, Mar 4: Lassiter 5) Sex, Power, and Inequality
Fri, Mar 6: Ralph Dreams - 3) Authenticity

Week 8
Mon, Mar 9: Lassiter 6) Work, Success, and Kids
Wed, Mar 11: Midterm Review
   [Gender Studies Symposium]
Fri, Mar 13: [Midterm Exam]
   [Gender Studies Symposium]

Week 9
Mon, Mar 16: [FILM - Ryan Coogler Fruitvale Station]
   [final project proposal]
Wed, Mar 18: Bourgois et al - ‘Coming of Age in the Concrete Killing Fields’
Fri, Mar 20: Ralph Dreams - 4) Disability

Week 10
SPRING BREAK

Week 11
Mon, Mar 30: Ralph Dreams - 5) Disease & Conclusion, Postscript
Wed, Apr 1: João Biehl and Peter Locke - ‘The Anthropology of Becoming’
Fri, Apr 3: Kenneth MacLeish Making War at Fort Hood - Prologue & Introduction

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part III) Nation, Economy, Responsibility

Week 12
Mon, Apr 6: Kenneth MacLeish Making War at Fort Hood - 1) A Site of Exception
Wed, Apr 8: Michael Taussig - The Magic of the State (selections)
Fri, Apr 10: Kenneth MacLeish Making War at Fort Hood - 2) Heat, Weight, Metal, Gore, Exposure

Week 13
Mon, Apr 13: Kenneth MacLeish Making War at Fort Hood - 3) Being Stuck and Other Problems in the Reproduction of Life
Wed, Apr 15: Judith Butler Frames of War: When is Life Grievable? (selections)
Fri, Apr 17: [Festival of Scholars - participation required]

Week 14
Mon, Apr 20: Kenneth MacLeish Making War at Fort Hood - 4) Vicissitudes of Love
Wed, Apr 22: [FILM - Clint Eastwood American Sniper]
Fri, Apr 24: Kenneth MacLeish Making War at Fort Hood - 5) War Economy & Postscript

Week 15
Mon, Apr 27: Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois - ‘Making Sense of Violence’ from Violence in War and Peace
Wed, April 29: final review
[Final essay due]
Fri, May 1: [no class READING DAY]

Tuesday May 5: 1-4pm FINAL EXAM (date/time set by registrar, no exceptions)

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