PLEASE NOTE: NO CLASS ON SEPT. 17 (ROSH HASHANAH)

CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY
Sociology 2100-001
Dr. Donna Shai
Fall 2004  MWF 10:30-11:20
TOLENTINE 315

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COURSE GOALS:

1) To provide students with knowledge of  a) the core issues in anthropology and a familiarity with anthropology's major sub-areas (e.g. kinship, language, etc.),  b) the major research techniques, and c) culture both in terms of its manifestation in foreign societies, in subcultures of the United States, and in the student's own experience.

2) To encourage growth, creativity and experimentation through studying the works of anthropologists and carrying out three field assignments using anthropological techniques.

3) To utilize a variety of resources in studying culture, including field studies, films, and photography.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Anthropology is concerned with all varieties of people throughout the world and what we can learn from other cultures. Traditionally, anthropology has focused on non-Western cultures, but in recent years it has focused on American culture, e.g., Disneyworld, the mall and modern rituals. By becoming acquainted with culture in a variety of settings, anthropologists can often contribute to our understanding of human beings. The key subject of study is culture, the customary ways of thinking in a particular group or society. We will begin by discussing culture and the primary research technique in anthropology, participant-observer fieldwork, in some detail including "culture shock". Students will be reading about fieldwork and anthropologists' problems and experiences.

We will look at the innovations of “postmodern anthropology” and experiment with them in a project, “A sense of place”. We will examine creativity, artistic expression and social criticism among the Chinese, and Philadelphia urban muralists.

Next, we will discuss some contemporary problems in kinship and family in American society from an anthropological perspective, kinship in the Trobriand Islands, among the Tiwi and in India, as well as among Indian-Americans. A major theme which runs throughout this course is that these ideological forms are not just characteristic of “other cultures” but are part of our own lives. Therefore we discuss the worldview of the college student, ritualistic aspects of rock concerts, and rites of passage in the American life course. We will then examine language, speech communities (including “instant messaging”) and nonverbal communication. There will
be a unit on economics in which we look at anthropological perspectives on reciprocity and gift exchange. We will discuss the mall in the United States as a new market culture. Finally, we will look at culture change.

TEXTS TO BE PURCHASED:

Dettwyler, Dancing Skeletons
Williams, Bambo Jordan
Lenkeit, Introducing Cultural Anthropology (2nd edition)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS PERCENT OF GRADE

1) Three writing projects 60 (20 each)
2) Final Exam (cumulative) 20
3) Regular attendance and class participation 20

IMPORTANT DATES

Sept. 10 “Holism: assignment due
Sept. 17 No class
Sept. 27 “A Life History” due
Oct. 22 “A Sense of Place” due
Nov. 19 “Insider Language” due
TBA Final

SYLLABUS

Please note: After the first week, reading assignments are expected to be completed by the beginning of the week in which they are assigned.

Week One (Aug. 25-30)
Introduction to cultural anthropology; The fields of cultural anthropology; Why study other cultures?; What is culture?; Definitions of culture (webct); Subcultures; Citing sources in your papers: a worksheet (webct); Making connections (webct); A life history (webct); “In an oral history…” (webct); “I can read and I can write” (webct); Transcribing and editing oral history (webct).
Assignment: Print handouts and articles from webct and bring to classes
start Dettwyler, Dancing Skeletons.
read Lenkeit, Anthropology: what are its subfields and perspectives?,
Appendix A: How do you read an ethnography?

Week Two (Sept. 1-3, 8, 10)
Culture shock; Ethnocentrism; Cultural relativism; Holism: Collect papers.
Assignment due: Holmes, “Culture shock in paradise” (webct)
Lenkeit, “Culture: What makes us strangers when we are away from home?”
"Holism" assignment:
An important concept in anthropology is "holism" or the idea that all things exist in a context and are related to each other in important ways. For this reason an anthropologist can start with any item, however trivial, in a culture and ultimately relate it to the major themes in that culture. To understand any single aspect of a culture, we must look for its connections with other aspects of that culture. Show the holism in your life by choosing an object and relating it to a number of larger issues. For example, take a piece of clothing, a computer, a car, or some other item and discuss how it is interconnected with the areas of aesthetics, economics, gender, family, exchange, and legal affairs. Write about two pages typed, double spaced and be ready to discuss it in class. Due Sept. 10.

(No class on Sept. 17. Work on "A Life History")

**Week Three (Sept. 13-15)**
Fieldwork research tools: The life (or oral) history; Participant-observation; Discuss Anderson’s “Down Germantown Avenue”; Photography: Weems’ study of the family in photographs.
**Assignment due:** Lenkeit, “Fieldwork: How are data gathered?”
Anderson, “Down Germantown Avenue” in *Code of the Street* (webct)

**Week Four (Sept. 20-24)**
Photographs by Villanova students; Thinking about ethnographic films; “Number Our Days”.
**Assignment due:** Finish reading *Dancing Skeletons*
“A Life History” due in class, typed, Sept. 27. (See Instructions and “Guide to Writing Papers.”) Project cannot be submitted by e-mail.

**Week Five (Sept. 27-Oct. 1)**
Collect first project; “A sense of place” (webct); Student example (webct); Sioux reservation (webct); Block in Espana, New Mexico (webct); New directions in Anthropology: The anthropologist as vulnerable observer (webct); Panopticism: the politics of architecture and technology.
**Assignment due:** Behar, “My Mexican friend Marta who lives across the border from me in Detroit” (webct).
Lenkeit, “Applying anthropology: How does it make a difference?”

**Week Six (Oct. 4-8)**
Kinship and family; “Table 1: Summary of Abbreviations” (webct); Film: “Kinship and Descent”; Discuss *Dancing Skeletons*.
**Assignment due:** Begin reading *Bambo Jordan*
Lenkeit, “Marriage, family and residence: What are the possibilities?”
“Kinship and descent: Are these the ties that bind?”
“A sense of place” due October 22 in class.

**Week Seven (Oct. 18-22)**
Kinship in the Trobriand Islands; Kinship among the Tiwi; Marriage in India; Collect second project.
**Assignment due:** Nanda, “Arranging a marriage in India” (webct)
Week Eight (Oct. 25-29)
Discuss assignment; Cultures and creative expression; Worldview; “The worldviews of college students…” (webct)
Assignment due: Lenkeit: “Expressions: Is this art?”

Week Nine (Nov. 1-5)
Ritual, magic and witchcraft; The Rite of Passage (webct); Discuss witchcraft in Kearney.
Film: Strange Beliefs.
Assignment due: Kearney, “A very bad disease of the arms” (webct)
Lenkeit,” Belief systems: How do we explain the unexplainable?”

Week Ten (Nov. 8-12)
Insider language (webct); Glossary (webct); Speech communities, instant messaging; Nonverbal communication; The language and speech of bars.
Assignment due: Hahn, “Raising a few eyebrows in Tonga” (webct)
Frake, “How to ask for a drink in Subanun” (webct)
Lenkeit, “Language: Is this what makes us human?”
“Insider language” due in class Nov. 19

Week Eleven (Nov. 15-19)
Economic systems I: Gift exchange; The Trobriand Islands (webct); The Kula Ring (webct); “Inalienable possessions”; Collect third project.
Assignment due: Counts, “Too many bananas, not enough pineapples, and no watermelon at all: three object lessons in living with reciprocity” (webct).

Week Twelve (Nov. 22, 29, Dec. 1)
Economic systems II: The Kwakiutl potlatch; The mall as a marketplace; Start discussing Bambo Jordan.
Assignment due: Finish Bambo Jordan.

Week Thirteen (Dec. 3-8)
Finish discussing Bambo Jordan; What might be barriers to change from cultural values and attitudes? (webct); Cultural change (webct); The case of the leaking houses; Film: “Contact”
Assignment due: Lenkeit, Culture change: How do we see the unforeseeable?
Project #3 due April 19

Week Fourteen (Dec. 10, 13)
Suggested readings for pleasure (webct); Review; Final exam TBA.

COURSE POLICY

1. Books: It will be important for you to have your own books and to bring them to class when instructed. It is best to purchase texts immediately since the bookstore may not stock them after the initial sales period.

2. Attendance: All students are responsible for what is covered in the classroom, for
announcements made and for work assigned. It is expected that students will attend all sessions. Since examinations will include material which is not in the text or in the library, it is unlikely that a student would be able to do well in the course with frequent absences. Also, class participation will be taken into consideration in the assignment of grades. Excessive absences (more than 6 unexcused absences) will result in the lowering of your grade by one full letter grade. An excused absence is defined as a serious, urgent or mandatory situation which is documented on official letterhead by a physician, University official, or clergyman.

3. **Examinations:** There will be three projects, occasional assignments and a final exam. Notification of inability to take the exam must be prior to the exam or within 48 hours. Full credit will only be given for work handed in by the deadline. Late papers must be initialed and dated by the Sociology Department and placed in my box. **Papers and assignments will have one-half letter grade deducted per day late.**

4. **Grades:** Grades are based on your examination results, papers, progress, class performance and attendance. Performance in class including assigned work may affect your grade by approximately half a grade. For attendance, see above.

**Course Guidelines for Grades**

The examinations in this course are the most important factor in determining a student's grade. The following represent the grading criteria which incorporate the official university grade definitions.

A  is the highest academic grade possible, an honor grade which is reserved for accomplishment that is distinctive and demonstrably outstanding. On examinations, question answers reflect that the student has a superior mastery of course material and a very high degree of understanding. Questions are answered completely and thoughtfully. Not only does the answer reflect the student's thorough familiarity with the material but that he/she can discuss it intelligently, apply it, when asked, to other material, and come up with examples of his/her own. Any errors are likely to be minor. ("A" students usually participate in class discussions and raise thoughtful questions. When they are not sure of something, they ask for clarification.)

B  is a grade that denotes achievement considerably above the acceptable standard. Good mastery of course material is evident in examination answers. Student can answer most questions asked but some answers may be incomplete or incorrect, lacking the thorough mastery demonstrated by examinations graded "A".

C  is a grade which indicates a satisfactory degree of attainment. It is the average grade that may be expected of a student of average ability who gives to the work a reasonable amount of time and effort. This grade implies familiarity with the content of the course and acceptable mastery of course material as evidenced by examination answers. In exams there may be gaps in the student's explanation. He/she may not be completely familiar with all course material but shows an overall comprehension. Sometimes a "C" grade results from a number of careless errors. Major questions may be answered in a way as to imply lack of thorough preparation or mastery.
D is a grade given when examinations show a limited understanding of course materials, meeting only the minimum requirements for passing the course. It signifies a quality of achievement which falls below the average acceptable standard for the course. Student makes serious errors in discussing sociological research. Explanation may be too generalized, suggesting hasty or careless preparation. The student may have poor attendance resulting in lack of important information needed in exam. The student may not have taken adequate notes or may have borrowed notes which were inadequate in themselves. Important sociological terms may be used incorrectly or student may be unfamiliar with them. While in most cases the student is aware of lack of preparation, occasionally a student is truly surprised that cursory minimum effort or careless work is not sufficient for an average or above-average grade.

F Student's examination work does not come up to the minimal standards for the course. Many questions may be left unanswered or are incorrectly answered due to lack of familiarity with material. Student may not have read assigned work, may have read it quickly and not reviewed it sufficiently before examination or may have read and reviewed it but failed to convey that impression. Answers may be disjointed, confused, and/or include irrelevant material. Theory may be totally misunderstood or severely distorted.

Guide to Exams

1. Attend classes regularly. You are responsible for all material presented in class.

2. Read all assignments. Questions will be specific. You will not be able to answer from general knowledge.

3. Answer all questions. Follow directions. Do not assume that there is a choice of question unless that is specifically stated. If there is a choice offered, answer only the question(s) required.

4. Read the question carefully. There may be introductory material. Answer what is specifically asked. Answer all parts of the question. Be as clear, precise and detailed as you can.

5. If you are asked to discuss a concept or to write an essay on a subject, do not be too brief or vague. Never assume that you can leave out crucial information "because the professor knows the article."

6. If you are asked to refer to a concept in an essay, be sure to mention it specifically by name in your discussion.

7. Write legibly. Sometimes a question cannot be graded unless every word can be read. Under these circumstances, your exam will not be graded. An "incomplete" will be given until the exam can be read. The student will be responsible for rectifying the situation before the incomplete period expires and the "N" becomes an "F".
Guide to Writing Papers

1. Always follow directions for a written assignment. Complete all parts of the assignment as stated. If you have any questions about it or have problems in carrying it out, do not hesitate to consult me.

2. Try not to confuse fact and opinion.

3. Be sure your generalizations are sufficiently supported.

4. To avoid accidental plagiarism, acknowledge the source of any idea that is not general knowledge. When you find a passage that you want to use, take it down verbatim (copy every word, every capital letter, and every mark of punctuation exactly as in the original.) You may also paraphrase someone’s idea by changing the words completely and leaving out quotation marks. You still must give a citation. Use sociological style. Sociological style uses an in-text citation, e.g. (Smith, 1997:33) for a direct quote and (Smith, 1997) for an indirect quote. An indirect quote means summarizing someone’s ideas in your own words. A full listing in alphabetical order appears at the end of the paper on a page entitled “References”. The following are sample citations for a book and an article in sociological style:


   For references from the Web, give the website, date and author, if provided.

5. Do not assume that you can leave out crucial information "because the professor knows the article." You must always give the name of the author whose works you are discussing, and the name of the book from which you are drawing your ideas.

6. If you are asked to discuss concepts, always define them in general. Examples alone are usually insufficient.

7. Write in paragraphs. A paragraph is a unit of thought made up of related sentences. The first sentence is indented about five spaces. A new paragraph signals a change in the direction of thought. It is impossible to say how long a paragraph should be, since personal style is important. A very rough rule of thumb would be about 120-150 words. Scholarly essays tend to have longer paragraphs than journalistic ones.

8. Avoid sentence fragments. A fragment is a part of a sentence which cannot stand alone but which begins with a capital letter and ends with a period. The following are some examples: "When the party broke up." "Everyone else having gone home." "All Americans whether they live in the city or the countryside."
9. Do not use fused sentences or the comma splice (also called "run-on"). Fused sentences are two or more sentences run together without any punctuation. An example is "It was late we went home." Comma splice is the careless linking of two sentences with a comma. “The waves were high, he could not swim to shore.”

10. Use the apostrophe to indicate possession, e.g., "Gloria's brother". Use an apostrophe to mark omissions in contracted words: it's, didn't, you're, there's. Do not use the apostrophe with pronouns such as its, ours, or theirs.

11. Proofread your paper and correct mistakes before handing it in. Check for spelling mistakes and "typos" (careless errors). Read each line carefully to check for missing words or unclear references.