



DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

ANTH2515

FALL 2016

GENERAL INFORMATION

Course Instructor: Saul Cohen
Email: scohen@lakeheadu.ca
Lecture: Wednesday and Friday, 1:00 – 2:30, OA 1025
Office: OA 3008x, Desk 5
Office Hours: Wednesday and Friday, 11:30 – 12:30, or by appointment
Phone: 705 330-4008, ext 2990

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Cultural Anthropology has contributed many of the key concepts and analytic methods that provide insights into the human condition. Understanding these concepts enables students to better understand the past, present, and future condition of humankind.

This course provides students with an overview of anthropology's contribution to our understanding and study of the contemporary world. Through an investigation of anthropological ideas, concepts, methods, theories and case studies it will examine both social and cultural diversity and sameness as well as the way perceived and actual difference can lead to various inequalities. Today, anthropology builds upon a rich and controversial history to explain how we understand our own and other peoples' worlds, how we are constrained by social and cultural structures and yet always have potential for creative engagement, agency and emancipation. Through mainly ethnographic accounts we will show how certain intransigent social categories, including race, gender, class, environment, development, indigenous, etc, seem "natural" and self-evident to many, yet are the product of a complicated and constantly shifting historical, political and cultural context that can reproduce and mask various inequalities and problematic assumptions about the world in which we live. Rather than trying to discover the science of society we focus on the messy, contradictory and unequal worlds which provide the context of people's lives.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

1. **Participation (10%)** (positive active participation and demonstration of having completed the readings)

Consistent participation in lectures is a crucial component of the course. Class exercises and discussions are very important for your learning and assignments, quizzes and exam will be based on the class activities and lectures. Students should come to lectures on time, be prepared and actively listen and participate in the activities. Please keep all comments and discussions respectful and considerate. Any student displaying behaviour deemed to be disruptive by the professor will be

asked to leave the lecture/tutorial and may be subject to additional disciplinary action. **This includes non-participation through laptop or phone use in class (see discussion below).** Evaluation will be based on: demonstrating knowledge of readings, making comments, answering questions, active listening, engaging in discussions and demonstrating an ability to engage with the course material. In addition, students will be asked to hand in activity sheets in certain classes which although not graded will help constitute your participations grade. Students may receive an interim grade halfway through the semester.

2. **Mid-Term Test 1 (20%) – Week 5 (Wednesday, October 5)**
Mid-Term Test 2 (20%) – Week 9 (Wednesday, November 9)

The mid-term tests will consist of a combination of multiple choice, short, long answer and essay questions.

3. **Essay Proposal (5%) – Week 8 (Monday, October 31)**
Essay (15%) – Week 11 (Monday, November 21)

Questions based on the course readings will be handed out in class. Students will choose one question to critically discuss in a short essay/assignment (5 - 6 pages). Students may choose their own topic with prior approval from the course instructor.

4. **Final Exam (30%) – Time and Location TBA**

The final exam will take place in the final exam session and will consist of a combination of multiple choice, short, long answer and essay questions.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND READINGS:

1. Robbins, et al. 2013. Cultural Anthropology: A Problem-Bases Approach. Second Canadian Edition. Nelson Education: Toronto
2. Journal and newspaper articles to be downloaded from course website.
3. Conklin, B.A., 2001. Consuming Grief: Mortuary Cannibalism in an Amazonian Society.

COURSE POLICIES

1. Attendance

Attendance in all classes is mandatory. Classes are a combination of discussion, activities and lecturing. All three aspects are equally important toward gaining a strong foundation in the material and a better understanding of the course themes. I do not provide PowerPoint slides or lectures notes and exams questions emerge from the classes in an organic fashion. Students that are not able to attend lectures due to work or other requirements are advised against taking the course. Students that occasionally miss class must get lectures notes from someone who attended the class and should come to office hours if they have specific questions about the missed material.

2. Laptop and Mobile Phone Use in Class

It is strongly advised that students do not bring laptops to class. There are three reasons for this. First, research shows that typing notes is significantly less effective than writing notes. For this course, understanding of the material is much more important than typing every little piece of information. Second, laptops are a great distraction. The temptation to go on-line is often too great. Third, everyone is impacted by your decision to surf the web, go on social media, watch videos, etc. It is distracting to the professor. It is very obvious when students are not engaged in the lecture and are chatting or watching something on their laptops that is unrelated to the course material. It is also rude and distracting to your fellow students. Students get frustrated by students who surf the web during class. It does not make sense

to come to class only to peruse the web. If you have issues with distraction and attention, anxiety, screen addiction, etc., then speak to me or a counselling service to address these issues. **Students that are on their laptops or phones for non-course related reasons will be asked to leave the class.**

3. Assignment submission and late penalties

- Assignments handed in late will be assessed a late penalty of 5% per day, including weekends. Each weekend day counts as one day late. The reasons for this strict policy are that the due dates are given well in advance and the instructors want to ensure fairness in grading practices for all students.
- If assignments will be submitted late because of medical reasons, a signed medical note is required, stating the name of doctor, nature of illness, duration of illness, and expected delay and/or impact on the completion of student work. Students must use the official certificate (available online at <http://registrar.lakeheadu.ca/uploads/docs/F.HealthCertificate.pdf> and attach it to the assignment. Please inform the instructor in advance if you anticipate that your assignment will be late on account of medical reasons.
- Assignment extensions for non-medical reasons are given only in extenuating circumstances and on a case-by-case basis. In the event of non-medical extenuating circumstances, students should provide supporting documentation from their college registrar's office or Accessibility Services

4. Mandatory Meeting with Prof

If a student receives less than 60% for any assignment or test they are required to meet with the prof during office hours to work out a plan to improve their grades.

COURSE WEBPAGE

Throughout the academic year, information pertaining to the course will be posted by the instructor on the course website (Desire2Learn). Course announcements, syllabi, assignment guidelines, exam information and supplementary readings will be available on the course webpage. Any important announcements, including changes in due dates will be announced in-class and posted on Desire2Learn. **Please set D2L so you are notified via email**

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Student Accessibility Services (SAS) (Thunder Bay) and Student Affairs (Orillia) coordinate services and facilitates reasonable academic accommodations for students with disabilities. Academic accommodations are provided on the basis of documentation of a disability. Additional information is available at the following campus websites: Orillia: <http://orillia.lakeheadu.ca/about-us--orillia-student-affairs/>

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

The University takes a most serious view of offences against academic honesty such as plagiarism, cheating and impersonation. Penalties for dealing with such offences will be strictly enforced. A copy of the "Code of Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedures" including sections on plagiarism and other forms of misconduct may be obtained from the Office of the Registrar.

The following rules shall govern the treatment of candidates who have been found guilty of attempting to obtain academic credit dishonestly.

- (a) The minimum penalty for a candidate found guilty of plagiarism, or of cheating on any part of a course will be a zero for the work concerned.
- (b) A candidate found guilty of cheating on a formal examination or a test, or of serious or repeated plagiarism, or of unofficially obtaining a copy of an examination paper before the examination is scheduled to be written, will receive zero for the course and may be expelled from the University.

Students disciplined under the Code of Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedures may appeal their case through the Judicial Panel.

Note: "Plagiarism" shall be deemed to include:

1. Plagiarism of ideas as where an idea of an author or speaker is incorporated into the body of an assignment as though it were the writer's idea, i.e. no credit is given the person through referencing or footnoting or endnoting.
2. Plagiarism of words occurs when phrases, sentences, tables or illustrations of an author or speaker are incorporated into the body of a writer's own, i.e. no quotations or indentations (depending on the format followed) are present but referencing or footnoting or endnoting is given.
3. Plagiarism of ideas and words as where words and an idea(s) of an author or speaker are incorporated into the body of a written assignment as though they were the writer's own words and ideas, i.e. no quotations or indentations (depending on format followed) are present and no referencing or footnoting or endnoting is given. A listing of University Regulations can be found at:

<http://calendar.lakeheadu.ca/current/contents/regulations/univregsintro.html>

The code of student behaviour and disciplinary procedures can be found at:

<http://policies.lakeheadu.ca/policy.php?pid=60>

MISSED EXAMS

Make-up examinations will only be given with written documentation from a healthcare practitioner using the official Student Health Certificate, available at

<http://registrar.lakeheadu.ca/uploads/docs/F.HealthCertificate.pdf>.

Final examinations run from Friday, December 9 - 19. There will be no rescheduling of examinations to accommodate holiday travel or extracurricular activities. No one will be allowed to write examinations prior to the scheduled date.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS		
Week 1	So, What is Anthropology and Why Should We Spend Time Learning About It? Introduction and course overview No class Friday	
Week 2	Me and the “Other” The Possibilities and Pitfalls of Social/Cultural Anthropology Robbins Preface and Chapter 1 – Culture and Meaning Miner, Horace (1956) Body Ritual Among the Nacirema Conklin – Introduction	
Week 3	How Can We “Know” Someone Else? Fieldwork, Ethnography and the Anthropological Methods Robbins Chapter 2 – Doing Fieldwork in Sociocultural Anthropology Lee, Richard Borshay 1997. Eating Christmas in the Kalahari. In <i>Conformity and Conflict: Readings in Cultural Anthropology</i> . 3. 24-29. Bourgois, Phillipe. 2002. Understanding Inner-City Poverty: Resistance and Self-Destruction under U.S. Apartheid. In <i>Exotic No More</i> , eds. Philippe Bourgois et al, 15- 32. University of Chicago Press: Chicago.	
Week 4	Is “Progress” Inevitable? Transitioning Cultures and “Developing” People Robbins Chapter 3 – The Meaning of Progress and Development Shrestha, Nanda. 1995. Becoming a Development Category. In <i>Power of Development</i> . ed. Jonathan S. Crush, 266-277. New York: Routledge. Ferguson, James, and Larry Lohmann. 1994. The anti-politics machine: "Development" and bureaucratic power in Lesotho. <i>The Ecologist</i> 24, (5): 176-182	
Week 4	Surely Nature is “Natural” The Social Construction of the Pristine Robbins chapter 4 – Constructing Realities Cronon, William. 1995. The trouble with wilderness; or, getting back to the wrong nature. In <i>Uncommon ground: Toward reinventing nature.</i> , ed. William Cronon, 69-90. New York: W.W. Norton & Co Fairhead, James, and Melissa Leach. 1996. Rethinking the forest-savanna mosaic: Colonial science and its relics in West Africa. In <i>The Lie of the Land: Challenging Received Wisdom on the African Environment</i> . eds. Melissa Leach, Robin Mearns, 105-121. Oxford; Portsmouth	

Week 5	<p>Family Ties and Modern Families Gender, Marriage and Kinship</p> <p>Robbins Chapter 5 – Constructing Families and Social Relationships</p> <p>Matrix, Sydney. 2006. “I-Do” Feminism Courtesy of Martha Stewart Weddings and HBC’s Vow To Wow Club: Inventing Modern Matrimonial Tradition with Glue Sticks and Cuisinart. <i>Ethnologies</i>, 28(2): 53-80.</p> <p>Obler, Susanne R. 1980. Is the Female Husband a Man? Woman/Woman Marriage among the Nandi of Kenya. <i>Ethnology</i>. 19(1) 69-88.</p>	Test #1 (Wed)
Week 6	<p>“Reinventing the Primitive”? Indigenous Identity and Politics</p> <p>Robbins Chapter 6 – Constructing Identities</p> <p>Sylvain, Renee. 2003. “Class, Culture, and Recognition: San Farm Workers and Indigenous Identities”. <i>Anthropologica</i> 45(1):105-113.</p> <p>Conklin, Beth and Graham, Laura. 1995. The Shifting Middle Ground: Amazonian Indians and Eco-politics. <i>American Anthropologist</i> 97(4): 695-710.</p>	
Week 7	<p>Why are We Still Talking About Race? Anthropological Critiques of Racist Thinking</p> <p>Robbins Chapter 7 –Social Hierarchies</p> <p>TBA</p>	
Week 8	<p>Why are There Still Witches in Africa? Rethinking Modernity and Neoliberalism</p> <p>Robbins Chapter 8 – Globalization, Neoliberalism and the State</p> <p>Ong, Aihwa. 1988. The Production of Possession: Spirits and the Multinational Corporation in Malaysia. <i>American Ethnologist</i> 15(1): 28-42.</p> <p>Green, Maia, and Simeon Mesaki. 2005. The birth of the "salon": Poverty, "modernization," and dealing with witchcraft in southern Tanzania. <i>American Ethnologist</i> 32, (3) (Aug.): 371-88.</p>	Proposal Due (Mon)
Week 9	<p>Putting it All Together: An Ethnography</p> <p>Conklin, B.A., 2001. Consuming Grief: Mortuary Cannibalism in an Amazonian Society.</p>	Test #2 (Wed)
Week 10	<p>Putting it All Together: An Ethnography</p> <p>Conklin, B.A., 2001. Consuming Grief: Mortuary Cannibalism in an Amazonian Society.</p>	

Week 11	<p>Saving Which Planet and for Whom? Violence in Various Forms</p> <p>Robbins Chapter 9 – Resolving Violence</p> <p>Chapin, Mac. 2004. A Challenge to Conservationists. <i>World Watch</i> November/December 2004:17-21.</p> <p>Neumann, Roderick. 2001. Disciplining peasants in Tanzania: From state violence to self-surveillance in wildlife conservation. In: <i>Violent Environment.</i>, eds. Peluso, Nancy .L. and Michael. Watts, 305-327. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.</p>	Final Essay Due (Monday)
Week 12	Conclusions, Review and Test Preparation	