

Anthropology of Games and Play

ANTH 3811-FA
Fall 2017

Instructor: **Dr. Diana Christopher**
E-Mail: dchrist4@lakeheadu.ca

The course will focus on the nature of play and its universal role in human development. We will examine the cross- cultural differences of play and games using ethnographic examples. The variety of new technologies (including video games technologies) that are changing the rules of the game of playing in our human society will be discussed. We will try to gain a better understanding of the underlying connection between play, game and ritual as a fundamental anthropological concept.

Required Reading Materials

1. **Hendricks, T.S.** Play and the Human Condition, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield, 2015. – Chapters, Amazon
2. **Hamayon, R.** Why We Play: An Anthropological Study, Chicago Hau Books, 2016. – Chapters, Amazon
3. **Whitebread, D., Basillio M , Kuvalja M & M. Verma.** The importance of Play. A report to the value of children's play with a series of policy recommendations. Written for Toy Industries of Europe, April 2012. – will be sent as a file
4. **Binmore, K.G.** Game Theory: a Very Short Introduction. New York, Oxford University Press, 2007. – e-book, Lakehead Library

Recommended Reading Materials

1. **Kline, S. , Dyer-Witthford, N. de Peuter, G.** Digital Play: The Interaction of Tehnology, Culture, and Marketing. McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003. – Chapter, Amazon
2. **Brown S. Vaugan C.** Play: How it shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul, The Penguin Group, 2009.- Chapters, Amazon
3. **Turocy, T.L, Von Stengel B.** Game Theory: CDAM Research Report LSE-CDAM-2001-2009, October 8, 2001- will be sent as a file

Course Policies:

1. **Attendance:** It is very important that you make every effort to attend and participate in all scheduled classes.
2. **Courtesy in Class:** You are encouraged to ask and answer questions. However, all your questions and answers should be directed to the whole class as part of the class discussion. Refrain from any private conversations during class. Make sure that your phone is turned off, prior to entering the class. While computers may be used in class for taking notes, text messaging, game- playing, web- surfing, looking at pictures, or other irrelevant activities are not acceptable in the classroom.
3. **Academic Dishonesty** includes plagiarism and cheating, is as serious offence and carries penalties varying from failure in an assignment to suspension from the University.
4. **Policy on Late Essays and Assignments:** All late essays and assignments will be issued with a late penalty of **3% per day late, including week-ends, and will not be accepted after 5 days late.**
5. **Class Preparation and Participation:** Student participation will be emphasized. You are expected to have read and become familiar with any material assigned in class. Contributions to class discussions will be reflected in your final grade.
6. **Illnesses and Emergencies:** Please inform in advance, before class time by e-mail if you are to be absent. Furthermore, if an illness, injury, or other emergency impacts your coursework. Any changes will need to be supported by documentation verifying sufficient cause, and settled in writing between the student and the instructor.
7. **Clarity in communication is very important** when working with people, when learning, or writing. If you need some additional information, send me an e-mail. During the week I will respond to your e-mail messages within 24 hours, during the weekend it could be 48 hours.

Marking Scheme:

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|------------------------|-------------|
| Class Work Discussions | 35% |
| Quizzes (1) | 10% |
| Presentations (2) | 30% |
| Final Assignment | 25% |
| TOTAL: | 100% |

Tentative Course Schedule

| Week | Dates | Class | Activities |
|---------------|---|--|------------------------|
| Week 1 | Tuesday Sept 5 Thursday Sept 7 | Introduction to Anthropology of Games and Play | Discussion |
| Week 2 | Tuesday Sept 12 Thursday Sept 14 | Human Development and Play | Discussion |
| Week 3 | Tuesday Sept 19 Thursday Sept 21 | Child's Play | Quiz |
| Week 4 | Tuesday Sept 26 Thursday Sept 28 | Rituals and Play | Discussion |
| Week 5 | Tuesday Oct 3 Thursday Oct 5 | Cross Cultural Variations of Games and Play | Mid Term Presentations |
| Week 6 | Tuesday Oct 10 Thursday Oct 12 | READING WEEK | |
| Week 7 | Tuesday Oct 17 Thursday Oct 19 | Animals at Play | Discussion |
| Week 8 | Tuesday Oct 24 Thursday Oct 26 | Play Therapy | Discussion |
| Week 9 | Tuesday Oct 31 Thursday Nov 2 | Game Theory | Discussion |
| Week 10 | Tuesday Nov 7 Thursday Nov 9 | Technology and Play | Mid Term Presentations |
| Week 11 | Tuesday Nov 14 Thursday Nov 16 | War Games | Discussion |
| Week 12 | Tuesday Nov 21 Thursday Nov 23 | Social Games | Discussion |
| Week 13 | Tuesday Nov 28 Thursday Nov 30 | The Future of Play | Final Assignment Due |
| | DECEMBER 4 | COURSE END | |