Key Concepts in Ethnology
Department of Anthropology
Lakehead University
ANTH-2515
Winter 2024

Instructor: Frederico Oliveira, PhD
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Dates of Appointments: January 8 to April 3, 2024
Classes Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 8:30 am to 10 am
Office Hours: Tue & Thu (1 pm – 2 pm) or by appointment

Land Acknowledgment:

Lakehead University respectfully acknowledges its campuses are located on the traditional lands of Indigenous peoples.

Lakehead University acknowledges the history that many nations hold in the areas around our campuses, and is committed to a relationship with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples based on the principles of mutual trust, respect, reciprocity, and collaboration in the spirit of reconciliation.

Course Description and Objectives:

The understanding and explanation of cultural diversity worldwide is the focus of study of sociocultural anthropologists. The meaning and purposes underlying the study of different cultures have changed considerably since the origins of the discipline from the end of the 19th century until the current days. Economic interests, political agendas, ethics and intellectual commitments have informed distinct views of the so-called "object" of study in anthropology, "the Other" and how it should be approached and described. This course is intended to present the core concepts that inform anthropological thought and research from the early moments of the discipline until the present. The progress of the readings and discussions is organized in two units: 1) Key concepts discussed in the light of classical schools and some contemporary examples; 2) Recent and controversial debates, including periods of transition, internal crisis and moments of theoretical and practical significance regarding the essential relationship between anthropology and cultural diversity. The successful students are expected at the end of the course to be able to:

a) Examine some of the broader questions underlying the main theories, concepts and intellectual debates;

b) Understand how anthropologists elaborate research questions and approach their data;

c) Be familiar with scientific papers and their structural organization;

d) Develop, at least from the introductory level, the capacity to critically look and think anthropologically about social phenomena;

e) Enhance their abilities to think critically, read, propose research questions and write in ways appropriate to the discipline.

The course is organized around lectures and class discussions. We will go through some of the conceptual ideas about a particular topic. Then broader discussions will be proposed to expand such concepts or theoretical debates. Discussions will form an essential part of the learning process and will revolve around current and controversial issues in anthropology. Student attendance and participation are essential.

These are some of the debates and concepts that will be addressed during the course:

- Ethnocentrism and cultural relativism
- Is Language the essence of culture?
- Are humans worlds culturally constructed?
- What is myth?
- Qualitative and quantitative research
- Universalism vs. Particularism
- Individual and society: where is the agency?
- Limitations of the comparative method
- Anthropology as science or literature?
- Alterity and the self
- Ethnography and theory
- Ethnographic authority and post-modernism
- Human rights and anthropological relativism

Course Readings:

A number of articles and book chapters are required readings and are listed below for each week. All are available electronically on the course website.

Course Requirements and Grading:

Graded assignments include the following:

> *Class Participation*
> 10% of course grade
>
> Quizzes
> 60% of course grade
>
> *Final Take-Home Exam*
> 30% of course grade

Class Participation: Attendance is mandatory. Reading (sometimes a lot) and attendance are critical to achieving a satisfactory grade and learning objectives in this course. Students are required to critically read all assigned materials prior to class and participate actively (in their own way) in class discussions and assignments. Attendance will be verified using the registration features of Zoom platform.

Quizzes: Throughout the semester, students are expected to answer five quizzes that will cover the content of the reading material and class discussions. The quizzes will be applied using the D2L Quiz feature. It is important that students be up-to-date with the reading material and available on the days the quizzes are applied. The **five quizzes** will have the format of Multiple-Choice and True or False questions. **The final grade for this assignment will be calculated by keeping the best four marks and discarding the lowest score.**

Quiz #1: January 24	Worth 15%
Quiz #2: February 7	Worth 15%
Quiz #3: February 28	Worth 15%
Quiz #4: March 13	Worth 15%
Quiz #5: April 1	Worth 15%

Final Take-Home Exam – In the final weeks of class, students will receive a take-home exam covering the material discussed during the course. Typically, the exams will contain a number of questions, normally short essay questions. More information will be provided.

Requirements for Internet Access

Since this course will be delivered remotely, students are required to have a reliable Internet connection. We will be meeting for the class using the Zoom platform, which means each student will need to have access to a webcam (optional) and a microphone (highly recommended). The link to each live session will be posted on the D2L website. It is recommended that each student find a place where they can participate in class free of distractions in order to follow the lectures and engage actively in classroom discussions. We will make sure everyone is familiar with the basic use of Zoom for class discussions and lectures during the first class. I suggest that you keep your microphone off during the whole class. Turn on your microphone only when you have the intention to speak and contribute to class discussions.

Class Format

Classes will have a hybrid format alternating between pre-recorded and live lectures. Pre-recorded lectures will have the link posted online on D2L and will generally cover the content of that week's readings. Students can watch it at their own time and pace for this class, but I recommend that you reserve a fixed time slot not to compromise your study routine.

Live lectures will focus on covering the week's readings and also on debating the essential concepts, and expanding on the central issues regarding the reading material. Important: The live classes will not be recorded.

Important: The course outline provides the dates when the classes will be pre-recorded or live. Consult the course outline every week to ensure you are up-to-date with the lectures, important dates and relevant points of the content.

Policies and Procedures:

Grading Policy:

Assignments will be evaluated primarily based on a student's understanding of the material presented in the course.

General Course Policies:

1. Avoid disrupting class by joining in late or allowing background noise to disturb the dynamics of the class. Disruptions will result first in a warning and then in a 5% penalty to the student's final grade. If the student's behaviour disturbs the learning environment of the class, the student will be asked to leave.

2. Students are expected to be respectful of their fellow students, their instructor, and cultures and traditions that are not their own.

3. Plagiarism consists of passing off as one's own the ideas, words, writings, etc., that belong to someone else. In accordance with this definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy another person's work and turn it in as your own, even if you should have the permission of that person. This is a serious issue. Violation of the university's policy will result in a grade penalty or failure of the course. This type of violation will stay on your academic record.

4. Students are responsible for taking their own lecture notes. Course outline, journal articles and book chapters will be posted online on Desire2Learn at least one week prior to the due date. All the course readings will be provided as scanned PDF documents posted on Desire2Learn.

5. The primary communication tool between the instructor and students is Lakehead University's e-mail account. Students are asked to check regularly (including before the class) their LakeheadU e-mail account and Desire2Learn for unforeseen changes to the class. As a general rule, student questions sent 24 hours prior to an assignment or test will not be replied. Grades are supposed to be returned to the students at a maximum period of two weeks after the assignment is delivered.

6. Students are welcome to schedule online appointments to discuss any topic related to their academic progress or course content.

7. This syllabus is subject to minor changes during the course of the semester.

<div align="center"><u>**Course Schedule**</u></div>

<u>**UNIT 1: Key Concepts**</u>

<u>**Week 1:**</u>   **Introduction to the Course / Film Exhibition**

(Jan-8)
(Jan-10)

<u>**Week 2:**</u>   **The Anthropologist as a Myth Teller / Early Anthropology**

(Jan-15 – Pre-recorded)
(Jan-17 – Live)   Richardson, Milles. (2010). "How it works in the Global world: Anthropologist, the myth teller". In: *Paradigms for Anthropology*. (Paul Durrenberger & Suzam Erem, orgs.), pp. 21-41.

Tylor, Edward Burnett. "The Science of Culture [1873]" in History of Anthropological Theory (Paul Erickson & Liam Murphy, orgs. pp. 28-39).

Morgan, Louis Henry. "Ethnical Periods [1877]" in History of Anthropological Theory (Paul Erickson & Liam Murphy, orgs. pp. 40-48).

Miner, Horace. 1956. "Body Ritual among the Nacirema" in American Anthropologist, 58(3), pp. 503-507.

<u>**Week 3:**</u>   **Cultural Relativism**

(Jan-22 - Live)
(Jan-24 **** Quiz 1****)   Moore, Jerry. (2009). Franz Boas: Culture in Context (Chapter 3, Moore) In: *Visions of Culture*. Lanham: Altamira Press.

Benedict, Ruth. "The Individual and the Pattern of Culture [1934]" in History of Anthropological Theory (Paul Erickson & Liam Murphy, orgs. pp. 134-145).

Mead, Margaret. "Introduction, Coming of Age in Samoa [1928]" in History of Anthropological Theory (Paul Erickson & Liam Murphy, orgs. pp. 128-133).

<u>**Week 4:**</u>   **Ethnography and Participant Observation**

(Jan-29 – Pre-recorded)
(Jan-31 – Live)   Malinowski, Bronislaw. [1922]. "Excerpts from the Argonauts of the Western Pacific." In: *Paradigms for Anthropology*. 2010. (Paul Durrenberger & Suzam Erem, orgs.), pp. 2-20.

Evans-Pritchard. (1937). "Witchcraft is an Organic and Hereditary Phenomenon" (Chapter 1 from *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande*).

Evans-Pritchard. (1937). "The Notion of Witchcraft Explains Unfortunate Events" (*Chapter 4 from Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande*).

Week 5:   **French Structuralism**

(Feb-5 - Live)
(Feb-7 ** Quiz 2**)   Moore, Jerry. (2009). Claude Lévi-Strauss: "Structuralism"
(Chapter 17). In: *Visions of Culture*. Lanham: Altamira Press.

Levi-Strauss, Claude. "Chapter 1: Nature and Culture". In Elementary Structures of Kinship, pp. 3-12.

Claude Lévi-Strauss: (1977). "The Effectiveness of Symbols" (from *Structural Anthropology*, Vol.1).

Week 6:   **Sociological Foundations of Reciprocity**

(Feb-12 – Pre-recorded)
(Feb-14 - Live)   Marcel Mauss: "The Gift" (Introductory and Chapter 1)

Jacques T. Godbout & Allain Caillé. (1998). "Introduction: Does the Gift (Still) Exist"?. In: *The World of the Gift*. McGill-Queen's University Press.

Week 7:   **Reading Week**

(No Class: Family Day & Winter Reading Week, Feb 20-24)

Week 8:

(Feb-27 – Film)
(Feb-28 – ** Quiz 3 **)

Week 9:   **Symbolic Anthropology**

(Mar-4 – Pre-recorded)
(Mar-6 - Live)   Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretative Theory of Culture". In: The Interpretation of Cultures, pp. 3-32.

Clifford Geertz. 2005. "Deep Play: notes on a Balinese cockfight" (from *Daedalus Journal*), pp. 56-87.

UNIT 2: Current Issues in Anthropology

Week 10:   **The Crisis of Representation in Anthropology**

(Mar-11 – Live)
(Mar-13 **** Quiz 4****)   James Clifford: "On Ethnographic Authority". In: Representations 1(2), pp. 118-146

Week 11:   **Kinship, Alterity and the Boundaries of Difference**

(Mar-18 – Pre-recorded)
(Mar-20 – Live)   Carsten, Janet. (2000). "Knowing Where You've Come from: Ruptures and continuities of Time and Kinship in Narratives of Adoption Reunions". In: *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 6(4): 687-703.

Clarke, Morgan. (2007). "Closeness in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Debating Kinship and Biomedicine in Lebanon and the Middle East". In: *Anthropological Quarterly*, 8(2): 379-402.

Stolcke, Verena. (1995). Talking Culture: New Boundaries, New Rhetoric of Exclusion in Europe. *Current Anthropology*, 36(1): 1-24.

Week 12:   **Anthropology of Science**

(Mar-25 – Pre-recorded)
(Mar-27 – Live)   Latour, Bruno. *Science in Action*. 1986. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press (Introduction: Opening Pandora's Black Box)

Wynne, Brian. 1996. "Misunderstood Misunderstandings: Social Identities and the public uptake of science". In: *Misunderstanding science? The public reconstruction of science and technology*. Alan Irwin and Brian Wynne (eds.). Cambridge University Press, pp. 19-46.

Week 13:

(Apr-1 ****Quiz 5****)

(Apr-3 – **Make-up exams**)

Desire2Learn

The course uses Desire2Learn for its course website. To access the course website or any other Desire2Learn-based course website, go to the LU portal login page at https://myinfo.lakeheadu.ca/ and log in using your LU username and password. Once you have logged in to the portal, look for the **mycourselink** module, where you'll find the link to our course website along with the link to all other Desrise2Learn-based courses you are registered.

Use of AI

Generative artificial intelligence (Generative AI or GenAI) is a category of AI systems capable of generating text, images, or other media in response to prompts. These systems include ChatGPT and its variant Bing (built by OpenAI) and Bard (built by Google), among several others. Other Generative AI models include artificial intelligence art systems such as Stable Diffusion, Midjourney, and DALL-E. **Any use of GenAI systems to produce assignments for this course is not permitted.** All work submitted for evaluation in this course must be the student's original work. The submission of any work containing AI-generated content will be considered a violation of academic integrity ("Use of Unauthorized Materials").

Accessibility Needs

Lakehead University is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Student Accessibility Services as soon as possible.