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# INTRODUCTION TO CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

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ANTH 260 + MARIE MOUNT 1400 + T/TH 1:00-1:50PM  
LECTURES + F 9:00-2:50PM DISCUSSION SECTIONS



## CONTACT INFO

**INSTRUCTOR**  
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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In this course, we will explore a variety of concepts and theories that help us understand the similarities, differences, connections, and disconnections experienced by world communities (including ourselves). This course will expose students to a wide variety of topics within social and cultural anthropology, including how anthropological knowledge can shape our perspectives on the world we live in and the people we share it with. This course encourages students to: 1) explore the complex interaction between individuals, social groups, social structures, history, and culture; and 2) apply theoretical principles of social analysis to critically interpret society.

## **COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

This course will combine lectures with structured class discussion, films, and possible guest presentations and asks students to engage several key areas of inquiry. By the end of the semester, using examples encountered throughout this course, students should be able to:

1. Recognize, understand, and appreciate human diversity.
2. Develop an awareness of the issues of power and inequality both locally and globally.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the methods of ethnographic research.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of how anthropologists define culture.
5. Demonstrate knowledge of the subfields within anthropology.
6. Critically evaluate popular representations of cultures and peoples around the world.

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

Assignments for this course include 10 reading quizzes, 4 short assignments, a mid-term, and a final exam. Grades will be determined on the basis of the following:

10 Reading Quizzes:	5% each= (Total=50%)
4 Short Assignments:	5% each= (Total=20%)
Mid-Term Exam (in-class):	15%
Final Exam:	15%

### **Reading Quizzes (50%)**

Throughout the semester reading quizzes will be given on discussion days. This will be a quick quiz designed to test your reading comprehension of the assigned readings for the week and critical understanding of the films. 12 quizzes will be given during the semester (each quiz is worth 5 points and will count for 50% of your grade for the class) and the 2 lowest scoring quizzes will be dropped from your final score. There are no make-ups for missed quizzes (see exception for religious observances and medical emergencies only).

These quizzes may include key definitions, multiple choice, true/false, and short essay questions. While some short answer questions on the quizzes are constructed as purposely broad, you will need to do a thorough and close reading of the assigned materials each week and watch weekly films carefully. It is useful to take notes on the readings and films and review them in order to be prepared for the quiz.

### **Exams (30%)**

There are two exams that will cover the readings, lectures, and films discussed in class. These exams will be completed in class and may include key definitions, multiple choice, true/false, and short essay questions. These exams are not cumulative – the first exam will cover the first half of the course material and the second exam will cover the second half.

### **Short Assignments (20%)**

Through the semester, students will be required to submit 4 short assignments. Specific details, including assignment description, requirements, and grading rubric are on the Course website. Each assignment will be 1-5 pages in length (Times New Roman, 12 pt font, double-spaced).

1. **Behavioral Observation.** For this activity, students will: (1) select a public space on or close to campus (ex. McKeldin Mall, food court, grocery store, library, etc.); 2) spend ½ hour observing how people behave in this environment; 3) make two lists –behavior that is considered typical or “normal,” and behavior that considered atypical or “abnormal.” Forms will be available for you to fill; 4) write down your ideas about the following questions: What behaviors appear to be culturally specific? What is considered “normal” for that environment? What “abnormal” behaviors did you observe? What might account for this behavior? Consider individual preferences, other cultural practices, financial reasons, etc. What, if anything, surprised you? Additional details will be posted on the Course website.
2. **Film Review.** Films are essential components of this class and we will watch several films throughout the semester. Each student is expected to watch all of the assigned movies and to compose a short critical review piece of 1 film (750 words) that addresses the central question of “How would a student in this class benefit by watching this film - what would a student gain?” A more detailed guideline of the critical film review is available on the course website on Canvas. *Extra credit: If your TA determines that your piece is publishable, you can earn extra credit for submitting and getting your review published.*
3. **Food Diary and Auto-ethnography.** You will maintain a detailed record of your eating over a 2 day period and reflect upon what you can learn about yourself from your habits. Additional details will be posted on the Course website.
4. **Op-ed or Commentary.** One of the course goals is to strengthen your ability to understand the relevance of anthropology in informing and clarifying broader contemporary issues of our times (e.g. police brutality, climate change, homelessness, xenophobia). Op-eds and commentaries are fairly short opinion pieces (750 words) that are intended to reach broad audiences and influential people within your community. You will be expected to compose 1 op-ed of publishable quality on a contemporary issue that is important and interesting to you. You can consult newspapers or journals such as the New York Times or other outlets such as the Diamondback for examples of excellent op-eds and commentaries. You should strive to make your op-ed pieces as polished and as close to publishable as possible. *Extra credit: If your TA determines that your piece is publishable, you can earn extra credit for submitting and getting your piece published.*

### LATE ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments must be completed on time. Assignments not turned in on the date they are due will be penalized by a letter grade for each day they are late (for example: a B will become a C if turned in a day late) and may not receive written comments. Assignments that are four or more days late will not be accepted and will receive a failing grade.

### GRADES

I do not discuss grades via e-mail; questions about grades need to be discussed in-person. Grades in this course are earned and not negotiated. My grading policies are very transparent and your progress in this course is available on Canvas as assignments are graded. It is your responsibility to keep up with your progress in this course and if you feel that your performance has not been evaluated fairly you must discuss this with me within a reasonable amount of time before the end of the semester.

The Grade Scale for this course:

97- 100 = A+    87 – 89 = B+    77 – 79 = C+    67- 69 = D+    0 – 60 = F  
 94 – 96 = A    84 – 86 = B    74 – 76 = C    64 – 66 = D  
 90 – 93 = A-    80 – 83 = B-    70 – 73 = C-    61 – 63 = D-

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular attendance and participation in this class is the best way to grasp the concepts and principles being discussed. However, in the event that a class must be missed, the policy is:

1. **Religious Observances:** it is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor or the TA of any intended absences for religious observances *within 2 weeks of the start of class*. Prior notification is especially important in connection with due dates for course assignments, since failure to reschedule these due dates may result in loss of credits during the semester.
2. **Medically Necessary Absences:** Students who miss a single class (lecture or discussion section) for a medical reason must make a reasonable effort to contact the instructor or TA in advance, and upon return to class, present the instructor/TA with a self-signed note which acknowledges that the information provided is accurate. A student's failure to provide an accurate statement is a violation of the Honor Code. Students who have a prolonged absence due to illness (multiple consecutive absences) are required to provide written documentation from a health care provider specifying the dates that they were in the provider's care.

In the event a student is absent for a Major Grading Event (quiz or exam), he or she must provide documentation of illness from a health care professional, as well as make a reasonable effort notify the instructor or TA in advance. All health care professional documentation must include exact dates of absence and must be turned in within one week of the missed grading event. *You are responsible for any notes or class material missed, regardless of the reason that you missed class.*

## COMMUNICATION

Turn on notifications for the course in Canvas and check your Email regularly, as this will be the main way that we will communicate regarding updates or course news. You should attend discussion sections regularly. You can also attend office hours or contact us via email. Keep in mind, however, that after 5pm on weekdays, we are unlikely to respond to your email until the following morning.

## WRITING ASSISTANCE

An essential part of scholarship is having others review and comment on your written work. Although you can enlist the assistance of our teaching assistant for feedback, brainstorming and assistance in refining your writing, the TA's time is greatly limited due to the number of students in the course. Therefore, I highly encourage you to use the University's Writing Center. The Writing Center works with students offering individual consulting on writing as well as workshops on writing and related issues in communication. Services are free to the university community.

## HONOR CODE

UMD is an academic community that assumes personal and professional integrity on the part of all its members. Supporting these values in word and deed is the responsibility of each member of the community and alleged acts of academic misconduct should be taken seriously and dealt with according to the university's policy, <http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/iii100a.html>. UMD's student-administered Honor Code and Honor Pledge prohibits students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents and forging signatures.

This course adheres to the policies of the University of Maryland's Honor Code which applies to all work submitted for academic credit. For assignments, you must cite all written sources that you consulted, whether you quote directly or paraphrase. This is true whether you are using electronic or printed materials. Incomplete or improper citations are a form of plagiarism. If you are unfamiliar with proper citation formats, or have questions please consult me, a reference librarian, the teaching assistant or a style manual. Lack of familiarity with proper procedures is not a defense.

### CLASSROOM ELECTRONICS POLICY

Laptops or tablets are allowed in the classroom for note-taking only. Cell phones and any other noisemakers are to be completely turned off. If violations occur, all electronic devices will be banned.

### ACCOMODATIONS FOR DISABILITIES

UMD has long been committed to providing instruction and services that help students achieve academic success. While students with disabilities have always been a part of our student body, we understand better now the difficulties they encounter while in college and the ways in which we can provide effective support. Students are required to provide documentation of a disability before we may provide reasonable accommodations.

### REQUIRED BOOKS

- Spradley, James & David McCurdy, eds. (2011) *Conformity and Conflict: Readings in Cultural Anthropology*. (14th Edition; free PDF on Canvas)
- Fadiman, Anne. (1998). *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*. New York: Farar, Straus and Giroux.
- Bourgois, Philippe & Jeffrey Schonburg. (2009). *Righteous Dopefiend*. UC Press.
- Articles and supplementary material are available through Canvas.

Readings are due on the day they are listed in the week-by-week outline. It is your responsibility to read the syllabus carefully and come to class prepared. I reserve the right to slightly modify the syllabus depending on how the class is progressing.



**DETAILED COURSE SCHEDULE****Week 1: Introduction—Anthropology as a Four Field Science**

August 29/31:

FILMS: *The Kidnapped Bride* (Kyrgyzstan); *N!ai, The Story of a !Kung Woman* (Namibia)

Lee, "Eating Christmas in the Kalahari" (S/M Chp 2)

Gmelch, "Nice Girls Don't Talk to Rastas" (S/M Chp 4)

McCurdy, "Using Anthropology" (S/M Chp 39)

September 1: Discussion

**Week 2: Culture, Ethnography, and Representations**

September 5/7:

FILM: *Endangered Jarawa* (India); *Dinka Diaries* (United States)Fadiman, *Spirit Catches You*, Chapters 1-3

Spradley, "Ethnography and Culture" (S/M Chp 1)

Bohannon, "Shakespeare in the Bush" (S/M Chp 5)

Guneratne &amp; Bjork, "Village Walks" (S/M Chp 33)

September 8: Discussion (Quiz)

**Week 3: Ecology, Environment, and Subsistence**

September 12/14:

FILM: *The Herders of Mongun-Taiga* (Soviet Union)Fadiman, *Spirit Catches You*, Chapters 4-8

Lee, "The Hunters" (S/M Chp 9)

Diamond, "Domestication and the Evolution of Disease" (S/M Chp 11)

September 15: Discussion (Quiz)

**September 17, 11:59PM: Behavioral Observation Assignment DUE on Canvas****Week 4: Economies and Exchange Relations**

September 19/21:

FILM: *The Real Piggy Bank* (Vanuatu); *Black Gold* (Ethiopia)Fadiman, *Spirit Catches You*, Chapters 9-11

Cronk, "Reciprocity &amp; the Power of Giving" (S/M Chp 13)

Bourgois, "Poverty, Office Work..." (S/M Chp 14)

Weatherford, "Cocaine and the Economic..." (S/M Chp 15)

September 22: Discussion (Quiz)

**Week 5: Reproduction and Kinship**

September 26/28:

FILM: *Club Native* (Mohawk Nation, Canada); *First Person Plural* (US, Korea)Fadiman, *Spirit Catches You*, Chapters 12-16

Scheper-Hughes, "Mother's Love" (S/M Chp 17)

McCurdy, "Family and Kinship in Village India" (S/M Chp 18)

Goldstein, "Polyandry" (S/M Chp 19)

September 29: Discussion (Quiz)

**Week 6: Gender and Sexualities**

October 3/5:

FILM: *The Women's Kingdom* (China); *Two Spirits* (US)

Fadiman, *Spirit Catches You*, Chapter 17-19

Tannen, "Conversation Style" (S/M Chp 8)

Wolf, "Uterine Families" (S/M Chp 20)

Fausto-Sterling, "The Five Sexes" (Canvas)

October 6: Discussion (Quiz)

**Week 7: Race, Class, Caste**

October 10/12:

FILM: *Brazil in Black and White* (Brazil); *Separate and Unequal* (US)

Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?" (S/M Chp 23)

Fish, "Mixed Blood" (S/M Chp 24)

**Friday, October 13– Mid-Term Exam (in discussion section)****Week 8: Religion and Magic**

October 17/19:

FILM: *Inside Mecca* (Middle East)

Bourgois & Schonberg, *Righteous Dopefiend*, Chapters Intro & 1

Freed & Freed, "Taraka's Ghost" (S/M Chp 28)

Gmelch, "Baseball Magic" (S/M Chp 29)

Niehaus, "Witchcraft in Anthropological Perspective" (Canvas)

October 20: Discussion (Quiz)

**October 22, 11:59PM: Op-ed or Commentary DUE on Canvas**

**Week 9: Politics and Law**

October 24/26:

FILM: *Prison State* (US)

Bourgois & Schonberg, *Righteous Dopefiend*, Chapters 2 & 3

Sutherland, "Cross-Cultural Law" (S/M Chp 25)

Harris, "Life without Chiefs" (S/M Chp 26)

Whitehead, "Deceptive Stereotypes about 'Tribal Warfare'" (Canvas)

October 27: Discussion (Quiz)

**Week 10: Anthropology of Development**

October 31/November 2:

FILM: *Life and Debt* (Jamaica)

Bourgois & Schonberg, *Righteous Dopefiend*, Chapters 4-5

Reed, "Forest Development the Indian Way" (S/M Chp 12)

Alverson, "Advice for Developers" (S/M Chp 36)

Reitman, "How the World Failed Haiti" (Canvas)

November 3: Discussion (Quiz)

**Week 11: Globalization and Transnationalism**

November 7/9:

FILM: *Black Gold* (Ethiopia); *Bitter Seeds* (India)

Bestor, "How Sushi Went Global" (S/M Chp 32)

Shandy, "Road to Refugee Resettlement" (S/M Chp 34)

Ehrenreich & Hochschild, "Global Women..." (S/M Chp 35)

Condry, "Japanese Hip-Hop..." (Canvas)

November 10: Discussion (Quiz)

**November 12, 11:59PM: Food Diary & Auto-ethnography DUE on Canvas**

**Week 12: Medical Anthropology and the Body**

November 14/16:

FILM: *Health for Sale* (India, South Africa, Switzerland)

Bourgois & Schonberg, *Righteous Dopefiend*, Chapters 6-8

Miner, "Body Ritual among the Nacirema" (S/M Chp 31)

Barrett, "Medical Anthropology" (S/M Chp 37)

November 17: Discussion (Quiz)

**Week 13: Thanksgiving holidays**

November 21/23/24: NO CLASS OR DISCUSSION

**Week 14: Methods, Fieldwork, and Ethics**

November 28/30:

FILM: *Human Terrain*

Bourgois & Schonberg, *Righteous Dopefiend*, Chapter 9

Sterk, "Fieldwork on Prostitution" (S/M Chp 3)

December 1: Discussion (Quiz)

**December 3, 11:59PM: Film Review DUE on Canvas**

**Week 15: Public Engagements and Applied Anthropology**

December 5/7:

FILM: *The Anthropologist*

Bourgois & Schonberg, *Righteous Dopefiend*, Conclusion

Alverson, "Advice for Developers" (S/M Chp 36)

Stryker, "Public Interest Ethnography" (S/M Chp 38)

Omohundro, "Career Advice for Anthropology Undergraduates" (S/M Chp 40)

December 8: Discussion (Quiz and Review Session for Final-please bring questions)

**FINAL EXAM: TBD by Registrar**