

**ANTH 2010-002,
“Cultural Anthropology”**

MWF 9:10am to 10:05am, TODD 204

**Professor: Dr. Sarah Taylor
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Course Description:

As Cultural Anthropologists we are committed to exploring the complex webs of social relations, beliefs, and behaviors through which humanity makes the world into a meaningful and coherent place. In pursuit of this knowledge anthropologists have long been known to travel to the most out-of-the-way places in search of cultural practices that open our eyes to every possible way of being human. We then bring this knowledge back to the classroom in an attempt to make the seemingly chaotic, the “strange,” the “exotic,” appear more familiar and understandable.

At the same time, cultural anthropology is capable of providing a fresh, sometimes unsettling perspective on our own cultural positions, practices, assumptions, and beliefs. Through anthropology we strive to intellectually distance ourselves from our own familiar surroundings in order to expose the “strangeness” of our own habits. The theories and methodologies of anthropology allow us to explore and, at times, critique those aspects of our lives that we might have never before thought to question. In the process we learn about ourselves, others, and different possible ways to be in the world.

This course introduces the student to the methods and theories of cultural anthropology, one of four sub-disciplines in American Anthropology (the other three being archaeology, biological/physical anthropology, and linguistics). Key issues we will examine in this class from an anthropological perspective include culture, identity, family, race, gender, violence, language, nationality, globalization, and power. Our ultimate goal is to better appreciate the influence of cultural processes in the making of our lived realities.

Required Text:

Gary Ferraro *Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective*, 9th Edition

Along with the text, additional readings, films, and other online materials will be available on D2L.

Office Hours:

Monday and Wednesday, 1:00pm to 4:00pm, Tuesday and Thursday 11:00am to 2:00pm, and by appointment.

Grading:

Quizzes	15 points each x10	150 points
Exams	50 points each x3	150 points
Participation	10 points each x10	100 points

Total 400 points

360-400	A
320-359	B
280-319	C
240-279	D
1-239	F

Quizzes:

Short reading and film quizzes will be given throughout the term. More than 10 quizzes will be given, however only 10 will be counted toward your grade. There is **NO OPPORTUNITY to make up a reading quiz.**

Participation:

Your participation grade is divided evenly between discussion posts and in-class assignments.

Discussion Posts (10 points each):

You are expected to post discussion responses to five (5) weekly topics throughout the semester. You are free to choose which weeks to complete your responses; however I encourage you to avoid leaving them all for the end of the semester. Each week's response is due by 11:59pm on the Saturday after the topic you are responding to was discussed. For example, if you post a discussion response for week 1, it would be due by 11:59pm on Saturday September 1st.

In-class assignments (10 points each)

All in-class assignments are listed in the syllabus as ICA. These range from short written responses to a question or questions posed during a lecture to bringing in an item from home. I may ask you to identify a main concept, comment on how a film seen in class illustrates a concept from the readings, ask you to use class discussions to think about a current event or pose a question left unanswered by the lecture. There is **NO OPPORTUNITY to make up an in-class assignment.**

Exams:

There will be **three equally weighted exams** during the term. Each exam will consist of 50 multiple choice questions created from the previous chapters. The exam questions encourage you to think critically about what you have read and to bring together bodies of knowledge, theories, and concepts from different sections of the book, class lectures, and supplemental materials. Each exam is worth 50 points, for a total of 150 points. The exams are not cumulative: each one only covers the chapters preceding it from the last exam. **It is expected that no make-up exams will have to be given.** However, if there should arise some unusual circumstance which requires you to miss an exam, you are required to let me know of the situation as soon as possible, and to provide a written and verifiable excuse. **Make up exams will be in essay form.**

[**Alternative Essay Exam Format:** I will make available a **long essay exam** to those students who want an alternative exam format. The essays are challenging. If you are interested in this option please contact me at least one week prior to the exam so that we may work out the logistics of this option.]

Cheating:

If you keep up with the reading, pay attention and take notes during lectures, and study before the exams, there is no reason you should not succeed in this class. In other words, there is no reason to cheat. This class is designed for students to work on their own and to follow a code of ethics that holds you, the student, personally accountable. If I observe any collusion between students, **both parties fail the exam!** Cheating is immediately reported to the Dean of Judicial Affairs. I recommend you review the Judicial Affairs website (www.mtsu.edu/~judaff) should you have any questions about what constitutes cheating. Cheating is easy to avoid. Please take the class seriously, do your work honestly, and we will all enjoy a rewarding semester.

Getting Started on D2L:

All supplemental readings and materials for this course are on-line through the MTSU D2L website. The discussion posts will be submitted in the discussion section of the course's homepage.

To reach the class page you may begin on the **MTSU homepage**. At the top of the page you will see a tab for **PIPELINEMT**. Click on this tab and you will be taken to the **Login** page. Once you have entered your **username** and **password** (for new users there is a link that will help you set up a new account) you will be at the PIPELINEMT Gateway page. You should see a link for D2L at the top right of the page. Click on this link. A new window should open, in which you will see your classes listed by semester. Find the correct link for this class (**Cultural Anthropology - ANTH-2010-002**) and click on it.

You are now at the **home page** for our class. Important information concerning this class will be posted on this home page, including a more complete discussion of how to navigate the website. However, I suggest you take some time to look around at the various resources as they are set up through D2L. You will see, for example, at the top of the page tabs for **content and discussion**. These links will lead you to most everything you will need for this class. This should be enough to get you started.

Class policies and etiquette:

- PowerPoint presentations will not be posted on D2L or elsewhere, as they are meant to supplement your notes. Some films are available online, while others can be found in the library. All information covered in the Ferraro text, all PDFs of readings on D2L, and material from films and lectures presented in class are fair game for the exams. I encourage you to contact other students via the discussion forum in D2L to ask questions on any material you miss. Additionally, all PowerPoint presentations can be reviewed in my office during office hours or at a scheduled meeting time.
- There are no points associated specifically with attendance; however, based on the number of points earned through quizzes and in-class assignments, one cannot successfully complete this class without regular attendance.
- This class will emphasize discussion, participation, and sharing of different perspectives. While dissent from the prevailing notions presented in the readings and class discussions is accepted (and even encouraged!), it must be expressed in a manner respectful to the authors we are reading and to other members of the class.

- No electronic devices are necessary for successful participation in class discussion. Please do not text, type, talk, etc...during the class unless it pertains to the week's topic and is something you would like to discuss with the class as a whole.
- This class runs from 9:10am to 10:05am. This means that I am entitled to use the entire class time to present information; it is therefore unacceptable for students to interrupt the lecture and discussion by shuffling papers, packing book bags, and other similarly disruptive activities associated with the end of class.
- Lastly, your success in this class is my main objective for the semester. Should you experience unexpected academic, personal, or work related issues that affect your participation in the class please contact me right away. I will not always be able to accommodate you; however the earlier you discuss the situation with me the more likely I will be able to assist.
- I will do everything in my power to stick to the schedule as presented here. If, for some reason, there are changes, these changes will be announced in class and posted on the course website on Pipeline. Again, you must keep up with these changes if they so occur.

Course Schedule:

Week 1: August 27-31

- M Introduction: You, Me, and Us
- W Chapter 1: What is Anthropology?
- F PDFs: Miner "Body Ritual Among the Nacirema" (1968) and Boulanger
"Usans: The Real People Confront Globalization" ~ Quiz #1

Week 2: September 3-7

- M Labor Day (no class!)
- W Chapter 2: The Concept of Culture ~ ICA: Breaking the Norm
- F Chapter 3: Applied Anthropology ~ Quiz #2

Week 3: September 10-14

- M Chapter 4: The Growth of Anthropological Theory
- W PDF: Grebinger, "The Button: Not a Simple Notion" ~ ICA: Item
Analysis
- F PDF: Lee, "Eating Christmas in the Kalahari" ~ Quiz #3

Week 4: September 17-21

- M Chapter 5: Methods in Cultural Anthropology
- W *Taking Sides*, Issue 2, "Was Margaret Mead's fieldwork on Samoan
adolescents fundamentally flawed?" ~ Quiz #4
- F EXAM 1

Week 5: September 24-28

- M Chapter 6: Language and Communication
- W Film: *Do You Speak American?*
- F Quiz #5 ~ ICA: Branding Culture

Week 6: October 1-5

- M Chapter 7: Subsistence Patterns
- W Film: *Guns, Germs, and Steel*
- F PDF: Ehrenreich "Nickel and Dimed" ~ Quiz #6

Week 7: October 8-12

- M Chapter 8: Economics
- W Film: *Island of Flowers* and first half of *Black Gold* ~ Quiz #7
- F Film: remainder of *Black Gold*

Week 8: October 15-19

- M Fall break (no class!)
- W Chapter 9: Marriage and the Family
- F Film: *Strange Relations* ~ Quiz #8

Week 9: October 22-26

- M Chapter 10: Kinship and Descent
- W ICA: Family Tree
- F Quiz #9

Week 10: October 29-November 2

- M Chapter 11: Sex and Gender
- W Film: Dadi's Family
- F EXAM 2

Week 11: November 5-9

- M Chapter 12: Social Stratification
- W PDF: Chambers "Can the Anthropology of Tourism Make Us Better Travelers?" ~
Film: *Gracias a los Gringos*
- F Quiz #10

Week 12: November 12-16

- M Chapter 13: Political Organization and Social Control
- W PDF: *Taking Sides*: "Do Sexually Egalitarian Societies Exist?" ~ Quiz #11
- F Film: *Ongka's Big Moka: The Kawelka of Papua New Guinea*

Week 13: November 19-23

- M Chapter 14: Belief Systems
- W Films: *The Popul Vuh* and *Tajimoltik (Five Days Without Name)*
- F Thanksgiving break (no class!)

Week 14: November 26-30

- M Chapter 15: Art
- W *Taking Sides*: Issue 15: Do Museums Misrepresent Ethnic Communities Around the World?
- F Quiz #12

Week 15: December 3-7

- M Chapter 16: The Modern World Order ~ ICA: Made in America
- W Quiz #13 ~ Film: *Maquilaopolis*
- F Final Exams begin (no class)

Week 16: December 10-15

Final Exam: Wednesday, December 12, 10:00am to 12:00pm in TODD 204

WHAT IS THE MTSU GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM?

The General Education Program is at the core of Middle Tennessee State University's educational mission and is designed to provide all undergraduate students with the intellectual building blocks that will make it possible to find meaning in an ever-changing world. The Program provides students with a broad knowledge and appreciation of the arts and sciences, the interdisciplinary nature of knowledge, and the methods of inquiry demanded in a variety of fields. Among these are the intellectual skills that provide a basis for effective communication, problem solving, and evaluation. The Program also explores cultural diversity, values, ethics, global issues, and the individual's responsibility as a citizen of the community and the world. As one-third of your requirements for the undergraduate degree, the central goals of the MTSU General Education Program are to provide students with the skills to:

- Think independently and critically;
- Analyze and evaluate beliefs and attitudes, data and ideas, issues and values;
- Gather information through various methods of inquiry;
- Integrate and synthesize new ideas and information;
- Communicate verbally, quantitatively, and artistically in a variety of contexts and media;
- Weigh options and make decisions based on rational, ethical, moral, and aesthetic considerations;
- Integrate acquired knowledge and personal experience with historical, cultural, and contemporary perspectives in a changing and diverse society; and
- Recognize the significance of personal well being and understand the roles, problems, and concerns of an engaged citizen.

ANTH 2010 Cultural Anthropology fulfills part of the Social/Behavioral Sciences requirements of the MTSU General Education program. The *broad goals* of the Social/Behavioral Sciences requirement are (a) to develop in the student an understanding of self and the world by examining the content and processes used by social and behavioral sciences to discover, describe, explain, and predict human behavior and social systems; (b) to enhance knowledge of social and cultural institutions and the values of this society and other societies and cultures in the world; and (c) to understand the interdependent nature of the individual, family, and society in shaping human behavior and determining quality of life.

While the approaches to the topics will vary by individual instructor, the more specific goals of ANTH 2010 Cultural Anthropology are to provide you with the opportunity to learn how to:

Recognize, describe, and explain social institutions, structures, and processes and the complexities of a global culture and diverse society. This course examines culture and society from a cross-cultural perspective. You will be presented with information on the diverse ways in which human cultures and societies organize themselves through kinship, marriage, economy, environmental adaptation, politics, religion, and other core institutions. You will have opportunities to critically examine both the commonality and diversity of the human experience. You will also examine the historical linkages of cultures, how cultures have traditionally influenced one another, and how they continue to do so in the global context (sometimes in unexpected ways).

Think critically about how individuals are influenced by political, geographic, economic, cultural, and family institutions in their own and other diverse cultures and explain how one's own belief system may differ from others. By examining culture and society from a cross-cultural perspective, you will have the opportunity to develop skills within the framework of “cultural relativism” – understanding beliefs and practices from the perspective of other cultures. By practicing these skills, you will have the opportunity to develop the sensitivity to better comprehend how and why other belief systems may differ from your own.

Explore the relationship between the individual and society as it affects the personal behavior, social development and quality of life of the individual, the family and the community. This course specifically addresses the relationship between individuals and their society/culture – including the childhood acquisition of cultural norms; the relationship of language, identity and culture; the place of the individual within social settings; how the roles of the individual vary within and across cultural boundaries, and a strong focus on how individuals (including anthropologists) define their roles within their own and other communities.

Examine the impact of behavioral and social scientific research on major contemporary issues and their disciplines' effects on individuals and society. Each course instructor has different experience and perspectives, but all bring to the classroom the relevance and impacts of their research. You will be exposed to many examples of how “global culture” impacts smaller cultural groups, how anthropologists identify themselves within those communities, and how this interaction is affected by and affects those groups. We will explore how societies have interacted over the past five centuries of global contact -- this interaction at the local, national, and international level has increasingly shaped the current state of the world and its people. Through exposure to how non-Western societies have dealt with the impacts of colonization, economic expansion, and westernization, you will have the opportunity to develop a better understanding of how individuals are influenced by larger social forces.

Take ethical stands based on appropriate research in the social and behavioral sciences. Working abroad or here at home with peoples of other cultures creates many challenges for anthropologists. Looking at our own culture through the “cultural lens” of other people both requires and demands developing different perspectives. We will examine the issue of professional ethics and the broader issues of human rights in the context of cross-cultural and global issues. You will hear of the primary responsibilities of the researcher towards the people studied, to the public, to the social science discipline of which they are a part, to students, and to their own and host governments. Personal

insights into how these multiple and sometimes conflicting constituencies are balanced by professional ethics and a respect for individuals of other cultural backgrounds.

Analyze and communicate the values and processes that are used to formulate theories regarding the social context of individual human behavior in the social and behavioral sciences. We will examine the history and development of theories in the social sciences – along with critical evaluations of how and why certain theories were developed, discarded, retained, and/or changed.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Reasonable Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: If you have a disability that may require assistance or accommodations, or if you have any questions related to any accommodation for testing, note taking, reading, etc., please speak with me as soon as possible. You may also contact the Office of Disabled Student Services (898-2783) with any questions about such services.

Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship

To retain Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship eligibility, you must earn a cumulative TELS GPA of 2.75 after 24 and 48 attempted hours and a cumulative TELS GPA of 3.0 thereafter. You may qualify with a 2.75 cumulative GPA after 72 attempted hours (and subsequent semesters), if you are enrolled full-time and maintain a semester GPA of at least 3.0. A grade of C, D, F, or I in this class may negatively impact TELS eligibility. Dropping a class after 14 days may also impact eligibility; if you withdraw from this class and it results in an enrollment status of less than full time, you may lose eligibility for your lottery scholarship. Lottery recipients are eligible to receive the scholarship for a maximum of five years from the date of initial enrollment, or until a bachelor degree is earned; students who first received the lottery scholarship in Fall 2009 or later will additionally be limited to 120 TELS attempted hours. For additional Lottery rules, please refer to your Lottery Statement of Understanding form, review lottery requirements on the web at <http://scholarships.web.mtsu.edu/telsconteligibility.htm> or contact the Financial Aid Office at 898-2830.

True Blue Pledge

MTSU is committed to developing and nurturing a community devoted to learning, growth and service. Each person who joins or affiliates with the community does so freely and accepts and practices the following core values and expectations:

- **Honesty and Integrity**
- **Respect for Diversity**
- **Engagement in the Community**
- **Commitment to Nonviolence**