

Introduction to Cultural Anthropology
ANTH – 105 Syllabus
Fall 2011

American University – Central Asia
Department of Anthropology

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Course Description:

Have you ever thought why there are so many different cultures and traditions in our world? And each one of them is unique in their cultural, historical and traditional background. Why democracy has been most fruitful exactly in France, and the Great Wall was built in China, not in any other country of the world? These and numerous other questions Anthropology seeks to answer.

In a wide sense Anthropology is a discipline concerned with understanding the “other”, even if the “other” is within one’s own culture and society. It seeks to study comprehensive human diversity that takes various forms and is manifested in human daily life, which we, anthropologists study.

This course will acquaint you with important basics, on which all the anthropological theory and works are based and without which any anthropological research would hardly be possible. It is designed to celebrate the difference, creativity, and inventiveness expressed through culture, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and personality. It will also deal with the destructive aspects of culture and social life: the effects of class, caste, ethnic, racial and gender hierarchies in both simple and complex societies.

Throughout the course students are expected to get thorough knowledge on the nature of Anthropology as a discipline on the basis of the topics that would be covered during lectures and seminars. Students are always encouraged to question commonly held assumptions about what is “normal” or “natural” in human experience. As well, it will provide students with a perspective on the human condition that is global in scope while remaining sensitive to local manifestations of cultural diversity. Films, videos and slide presentations will supplement lectures and readings.

Course Outline:

This course is divided into two parts: *1st part* is designed to provide students with the very basic knowledge on the subject of anthropology, nature of culture, how modern human culture and society have been developing and evolving throughout centuries. It will familiarize students with the various components of cultural anthropology: fieldwork, language, personality and patterns of subsistence and economic systems, etc. *2nd part* is designed to introduce students with the main figures of Anthropological theory, their theories, backgrounds and biographies, and why their studies have been so groundbreaking for their time and century.

Main textbooks of the course are

“*Cultural Anthropology*” by Conrad Philipp Kottak 9-th edition

“*Anthropological theory*” *An introductory history, 3rd edition* by R. Jon McGee and Richard L. Warms

“*Cultural Anthropology*” 7th edition by Nanda Warms

“*Cultural Anthropology*” *An applied perspective, 5th edition*, by Gary Ferraro

All listed books are available at the university library, otherwise, readers and copies of the texts will be provided

Course Requirements and Evaluation:

Introduction to Anthropology course has one final examination, which will test your knowledge that you managed to carry out from this course; all exams and quizzes are taken in written form. This course also requires “journal entries” based on the visual and text materials that are provided in it (alternatively, you can choose to write 2 reflection papers on any subject of the course (min 3- max 6 pages, Times New Roman 12pt). Also, each one of you has to make a class presentation on one of the provided. And finally, you are expected to carry out one Community Observation Work.

The relative weight in grading breaks down as follows:

| Grading Instrument | Percentage contribution |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Attendance, participation | 15% |
| Class presentation | 10% |
| Reflection papers | 20% |
| Community Observation Work | 15% |
| Journal | 20% |
| Final exam | 20% |

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|---------------------|--|
| A = 100%-95% | C- = 72%-70% |
| A- = 94%-90% | D+ = 69%-67% |
| B+ = 89%-87% | D = 66%-63% |
| B = 86%-83% | D- = 62%-60% |
| B- = 82%-80% | F = 59% and less, plagiarism, cheating |
| C+ = 79%-77% | |

Attendance and Participation in Class Discussions: Participation does not mean your attendance during the classes. *Participation means your active participation, familiarity with the reading material and involvement* during the class discussions, which will play an important role in your final grade for the whole course. Please note that it is 10% out of your total 100%. During the class your participation will be evaluated in points and later summed up into the percentages.

Class Presentation: Throughout the course *each student* is ought to prepare a presentation during the seminar classes on any of the topics that are provided at the end of this syllabus. Topics for class presentations represent Personalities and Works of the most famous anthropologists whose contribution to the discipline was enormous, the section is called “Giants of Anthropology”.

If you miss your day of presentation, the second chance for presenting before the class will not be given, which results in loss of points and negatively affects the final grade for the course. Partial or full plagiarism of texts used for the presentation will not be tolerated, so I advice you not to copy and paste texts from your sources, but instead rephrase them with your own words.

Community Observation Work (COW): In the framework of this particular course, you will be given an opportunity to take part in diverse religious/cultural/social activities of Kyrgyzstan. Based on your fieldwork research activity you will develop your journal entries. This assignment plays an important role in the framework of this course, as it prepares you for the actual field research that you will need as an anthropologist.

Community Observation Work includes:

- ✓ COW is carried out by group of 2, maximum 3 students
- ✓ For the successful completion of the fieldwork you will have to research/observe/participate in the life of the community which you have chosen
- ✓ You should pay visit to your chosen community at least 5 times throughout the semester, and it should be 2 hours minimum
- ✓ As a proof of your active participation and research for the COW assignment you will present your field-notes from your fieldwork
- ✓ Field-notes should include: subjective/personal thoughts and feelings while carrying out the field research. Your team's achievements. Who were your interviewees. What behaviour have they presented before you, what were the peculiarities of their behaviour, describe their behaviour. Try to look deeper into their social organization and analyze it.
- ✓ Final paper with analysis or interpretation of your team's semester-long fieldwork. It should be minimum 4 pages and maximum 6 pages long (12 Times New Roman, double space). Unlike field-notes it is not an individual work, you should present it as a team work, and it should not include your personal/subjective thoughts. Ideally it should be objective, and non-biased.
- ✓ Final team presentation of the work you have fulfilled. Presented in groups.

Journal: The main purpose of the journal is to write your responses to all texts and homework questions that may be given during the lectures or seminar classes.

- ✓ Reflections of reading materials
- ✓ Responses to homework questions
- ✓ Should be in chronological order, and should reflect your own critical view on the reading material and various personal observations that you may find relevant.
- ✓ Format of each journal entry should correspond with current week's topic(s). It should provide a concise summary of the text material and followed by your critical view of the text, and other relevant notes and observations.
- ✓ Minimum length of each entry is 300 words, and maximum 450 words.
- ✓ You are required to hand over me your journal entries during each seminar classes either printed or hand-written

Reflection Papers: Over the course of the semester, you will write 2 reflection papers, 10% each (minimum 3 pages, 12pt Times New Roman, double space). In each reflection paper you will respond to original text excerpts from outstanding anthropologists. The deadline for each reflection paper is *one* week from the day it was announced.

Late reflection papers will be marked down *one letter grade* (for example B to C) per working day the assignment is late. Papers and assignments submitted 3 days after the deadline will not be accepted and graded. Traditionally deadline is 17.00 of the deadline day. **Be careful of plagiarism! Papers that were proved to be or suspected of plagiarism are automatically graded F and gets warning, if plagiarism repeats, students gets X for the course.**

Final Exam: This core examination of the course is meant to test your general mastery of the course material. It may be either in-class-examinations as essay questions, or take home essays with strict deadlines. This should be discussed during the class, and one of the options chosen.

I expect you to do your own work in accordance with the Code of Conduct, AUCA (http://www.auca.kg/en/students/registrars_office_student/conduct). It should go without saying that **cheating and plagiarism cannot be tolerated in any form in scholarly work, but it will be stated for your information that any exam or paper that contains plagiarized material will receive a grade of zero, and may possibly be grounds for flunking the class.** Please be

sure you understand what constitutes plagiarism and what are acceptable forms of citing published (and unpublished) material. For an explanation of how to properly cite sources see: (MLA format citing at <http://www.library.cornell.edu/resrch/citmanage/mla> or at <http://www.easybib.com/>).

Wikipedia and alike web-sites are not considered trustworthy sources for citing.

Attendance

Please note that attendance is required. Attendance will be checked in the beginning of each class period. If you are late you can be allowed to the class but will get an absence in the attendance list.

If you got sick, you have to notify an instructor or the office manager in advance, and later submit an official document (spravka) from a physician, especially if you are scheduled to make a class presentation. *Three unexcused absences* will result in "X" for the whole course.

Cell phone/wireless connection: While I recognize that cell phone technology has become a particularly important social resource in our everyday lives, I am requested that if you carry a cell phone (or beeper), PLEASE keep the ringer/buzzer "off" while you are in class. No wireless web connections in lecture or sections, please.

Office hours:

- Please note that I am always available in my office hours to discuss or clarify questions and concerns you may have related to the course or the discipline in general.

-A sign up sheet with designated times (for those of you who plan ahead and/or want to reserve a longer time slot with me).

-Drop by times for shorter inquiries and conversations. I am also always available right after class for questions. Please only use email for emergencies or quick clarifications and come to my office hours for any substantive questions.

COURSE MATERIALS:

Assigned articles and book chapters will be placed on reserve and can also be downloaded using the electronic library resources at AUCA.

Note: This syllabus is *subject to change* as necessary throughout the semester. *All* students are responsible for attending classes for information in this regard. Check the E-course system and your university e-mail for updates and announcements, information on essays and exams.

Lectures Schedule

| Week # | Title and Key Topics |
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| 1 | <p>Introduction. What is Anthropology? The holistic study of humanity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of Anthropology – Then and Now • Anthropology vis-à-vis other disciplines. Why we are the best • What do anthropologists do/Anthropology and Contemporary Life • Methods in Anthropology/fieldwork/research • Anthropology in popular culture/Anthropology in future • Review of the course and discussion of the course policies <p>Kottak, Chapter 1, pp 11-22; ch.2 pp 35-37 Ferraro, Chapter 1, pp 2-11</p> |
| 2 | <p>The Culture Concept. Understanding the “other”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding other cultures (ethnocentrism, cultural relativism) • Colonialism. “Us” and “Them” • Culture and adaptation • Culture, society and individual • Race, ethnicity and identity/We all come from Africa <p>Kottak, Chapter 3, pp 62-75 Kuper, Adam. 1988. The Idea of Primitive Society in <i>The Invention of Primitive Society</i>. Pp. 1-15. NY: Routledge Film and further discussion “Nanook of the North”</p> |
| 3 | <p>Growing up Human. The beginning of Human Culture. Patterns of subsistence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neolithic revolution • Human adaptation • Environment and Culture • Major food getting strategies • Why don't modern apes use stone tools and become humans? <p>Kottak, Chapter 7, pp 160-172 Julian Steward. 1955. <i>The Patrilineal Band</i>. pp 240-256 BBC film excerpt on Human Evolution</p> |
| 4 | <p>Chiefdoms and pre-modern states. Political order and Social Control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tribes, chiefdoms, states • The rise of chiefdoms and states: ecological, and trade factors • Social differentiation • Leadership, power and social control • Alternative: is it necessary for mankind to be controlled? <p>Kottak, Chapter 10, pp 240-266 Theories of Power and Inequality. Max Weber. <i>The Types of Legitimate Domination</i>. Text excerpt by Ch. Lemert. Pp . 122 - 133</p> |
| 5 | <p>Race, Nation, Ethnicity. Social stratification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity • Racism, and race/ nation/ethnicity based violence • Types of societies • Racial and Ethnic stratification • Caste system/division of labour <p>Kottak, Chapter 4, pp 82-99 Ferraro, Chapter 13, pp 303-326</p> |
| 6 | <p>Kinship, family and marriage. Gender and Sexuality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functions of Marriage and the family • Kinship and taboos/choosing a mate/number of spouses • Descent groups/kinship diagrams |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural construction of gender/sexual behaviour/gender roles • Homosexuality. Feminism and gender ideology • Gender and sex based violence/law, custom and crimes against women <p>Kottak, Chapter 8, pp 188-201 Ruth Fulton Benedict. 1930. <i>Psychological Types in the Cultures of the Southwest</i>. Pp 220-230 Film and further discussion “Bride Kidnapping”</p> |
| 7 | <p>Language and Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linguistics and Anthropology: The nature and origins of Language • The origins of language/the universality structure of language • Language and Culture, the interrelation of both • Can language really affect our way of thinking? • Is language a product of evolution? <p>Kottak, Chapter 6, pp 130-156 Ferraro, Chapter 6, pp 116-123</p> |
| 8 | <p>Culture and Religion, Myths and Magic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Function of Religion. Characteristics of Religion • Animism, shamanism, paganism. Witchcraft and sorcery • Do all societies have religions? Religion as an instrument of power and control over society. • Why aren’t Muslim or Christian prayers considered types of magic? <p>Kottak, Chapter 12, pp 302-314 Ferraro, Chapter 14, pp 336-340</p> |
| 9 | <p>Economic structure from ancient to modern</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invention of money and material value • Economic systems • Economic behaviour. • Traditional economic systems • “Chernaya kassa”, Kula and Potlatch <p>*Bronislaw Malinowski “The Kula Ring” – first reflection paper text Bronislaw Malinowski. 1922. <i>The Essentials of the Kula</i>. Pp, 157-173 Ferraro, Chapter 8, pp 168-183</p> |
| 10 | <p>Colonialism, Globalism and Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European expansion: Motives and Methods • Forced labour and colonialism • Independence and Development. Urbanization • Globalization. New forms of Colonization. Neo-liberalism • Cultural boundary maintenance. Cultural survival of indigenous people <p>Kottak, Chapter 15, pp 388-402 Film and further discussion “Afrique, je te plumerai” aka “Africa I will fleece you”</p> |
| 11 | <p>The Evolution of Anthropological Theory*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early history of Anthropological Theory • The Classic Phase of Anthropological Thought: Unilineal Evolution and Diffusion • British, American and French Anthropology <p>*material to be distributed Ferraro, Chapter 4, pp 62-80 Stocking, George. 1974. <i>The Basic Assumptions of Boas’ Anthropology</i>. Pp 1-20</p> |
| 12 | <p>Contemporary Theory in Cultural Anthropology*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materialism. Cultural materialism and Marxism |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functionalism and Structuralism *material to be distributed |
| 13 | Giants of Anthropology* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emile Durkheim – Social fact • Clifford Geertz – Balinese cockfight • Margaret Mead – Sex and Temperament in three primitive societies • Bronislaw Malinowski – Functionalism Narayan, Kirin. 1993. How native is a “Native” Anthropologist? <i>American Anthropologist</i> 95. pp 671-686 |
| 14 | Giants of Anthropology* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claude Levi-Strauss – Structuralism • Ruth Benedict – poetic anthropology: Patterns of Culture • Evans Pritchard – The Nuer • Pierre Bourdieu – Symbolic Capital and Symbolic Violence *material to be distributed; topics from weeks 13 and 14 are to be chosen for the second reflection paper Claude Levi-Strauss. 1960. <i>Four Winnebago Myths: A Structural Sketch</i> . Pp 362-371 |
| 15 | Applied Anthropology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applied vs. Pure Anthropology • Examples of Applied Anthropology • Anthropology in future. Space and discovering new Planets • Anthropology in Science Fiction: Ursula le Guin • Anthropology and Sociology • What do anthropologists with higher degree do? |

Topics for class presentations*:

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|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Emile Durkheim | Clifford Geertz |
| Margaret Mead | Bronislaw Malinowski |
| Frederic Barth | Edward Sapir |
| Michel Foucault | Jurgen Habermas |
| Claude Levi-Strauss | Max Weber |
| Carl Marx and Frederic Engels | Ruth Benedict |
| Evans Pritchard | Pierre Bourdieu |
| Franz Boas | Victor Turner |
| Antonio Gramsci | George Simmel |

*- Topics listed above are the personalities important both for Anthropology and Sociology, they are recommended for your presentations before the class. If you admire some other personas from the discipline you are free to discuss the possibility of presenting him/her with me.

Please note that the presentation on these Giants of Anthropology should not only contain their biographies, and dates of their birth, death and publications, in most cases these facts make the presentation boring and incomprehensible for the audience. In this regard I recommend you to focus more on their theories, works and concepts with which they have come up during their lives. The presentation should reflect their influence on the general development of anthropological thought, who influenced their initial works and whom they have influenced themselves. Try to be innovative and creative. By the end of the presentation student should prepare discussion questions for the class to ensure the presentation has been successful and understandable for all. Should you have any questions related to your presentations, you are free to contact me right after the class or during my office hours.