

**SYLLABUS**  
**CULTURE AND SOCIETY**  
**ANTH 2300.100**  
**FALL 2021**

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Office Hours: On Zoom Thursdays 2-3 or by appointment

Class meetings: MW 2:00-3:20

Meeting location: CHEM 106

Email Policy: Please allow 48 hours for a response to your email. Emails sent during the weekend will be treated as if sent on Monday morning. When emailing your professor or your Instructional Assistant, be sure to include the course number and section (ANTH 2300.100) in the subject line along with the topic of the email.

**Course Description**

Humans are social and cultural beings; our very survival depends upon it. This course introduces students to the field of cultural anthropology, which is the study of human cultures in their diversity and variations. Rather than providing a collection of facts about other cultures, however, this class attempts to help students understand, and utilize, the general approach anthropologists take when they study a culture; in other words, it will help you to *think like* an anthropologist. This class thus focuses on asking critical questions, rather than simply offering an inventory of answers.

Thinking like an anthropologist is a critical life and career skill in our globalized world. We interact with people from different cultural backgrounds than our own at a more rapid pace than ever before and across all domains of life. Furthermore, every day we see ample evidence of how social institutions and cultural norms influence everything from the distribution of wealth to the fate of the environment. Understanding humanity's social and cultural diversity, and being able to approach cultural diversity intelligently when you face it in your daily life, is one of the most important skills you can develop as a student. From politics to language to our understandings of social differences, this course will introduce you to the diversity and the commonalities in human societies and shed light on what it means to be human.

## Course Objectives

- Learn key anthropological concepts and theoretical approaches
- Learn and practice methodologies used by cultural anthropologists
- Become more aware of the complexity and diversity of cultures and societies within the United States and around the world
- Gain an understanding of your own experiences as a cultural and social being
- Develop and utilize critical thinking skills
- Develop and utilize written and oral communication skills

## Required Texts and Other Readings

One textbook is required for this course, entitled *Cultural Anthropology: Global Forces, Local Lives, 4th edition*, by Jack David Eller. (Make sure you get the **FOURTH** edition!) The text is available at the UNT University Bookstore. Additional articles and other required course materials will be posted on our course webpage for your downloading pleasure. All readings listed on the syllabus are required.

## COVID-Related Information

I recognize and understand the difficult times we are all in. The COVID-19 pandemic impacts us all in many ways, including physically, mentally, emotionally, financially, academically, and professionally. Please stay in communication with me, and I will work with you on challenges you may be encountering and to provide support to help you succeed. However, please keep in mind that I will continue to hold you accountable as a student.

## Attendance

Students are expected to attend class meetings regularly and to abide by the attendance policy established for the course. It is important that you communicate with the professor and the instructional team prior to being absent, so you, the professor, and the instructional team can discuss and mitigate the impact of the absence on your attainment of course learning goals. Please inform the professor and instructional team if you are unable to attend class meetings because you are ill, in mindfulness of the health and safety of everyone in our community.

If you are experiencing any [symptoms of COVID-19](#) please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or [askSHWC@unt.edu](mailto:askSHWC@unt.edu)) or your health care provider PRIOR to coming to campus. UNT also requires you to contact the UNT COVID Team at [COVID@unt.edu](mailto:COVID@unt.edu) for guidance on actions to take due to symptoms, pending or positive test results, or potential exposure.

## Face Coverings

UNT encourages everyone to wear a face covering when indoors, regardless of vaccination status, to protect yourself and others from COVID infection, as recommended by current

CDC guidelines. Face covering guidelines could change based on community health conditions.

### **Class Materials for Remote Instruction**

Remote instruction may be necessary if community health conditions change or you need to self-isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19. Students will need access to a device that can access the internet, a webcam, and microphone to participate in fully remote portions of the class. Information on how to be successful in a remote learning environment can be found at <https://online.unt.edu/learn>.

### **Important Things to Know to Succeed in this Class**

**Late work:** As a general rule, I do not accept late assignments or exams unless you have made specific arrangements with me in advance, have a doctor's note, and/or otherwise have received my approval. However, if you think you will miss a grade for a reason other than a medical excuse, please get in touch with me prior to the deadline and we may be able to work something out. Even if it only gets you partial credit, that is better than no credit at all!

**Extra Credit:** Extra credit can be earned at any point during the semester. I will suggest several opportunities to the class as they arise, and I am open to creative ideas from you. Options to earn extra credit include: completing a relevant movie/documentary analysis, attending a talk/lecture on campus and writing a summary, going to a relevant cultural event, festival, or location and writing a brief summary and analysis, or creating an artistic piece such as poetry, painting, sculpture or music. You must get approval from me ahead of time for your choice, so check with me before you do the work.

**Academic Honesty:** The Department of Anthropology does not tolerate plagiarism, cheating, or helping others to cheat. For this class, writing assignments will be submitted through Turnitin, a Web based resource that compares the text of student papers to an extensive electronic database for textual similarity. From UNT's Academic Integrity Policy:

**"Cheating"** means the use of unauthorized assistance in an academic exercise, including but not limited to:

1. use of any unauthorized assistance to take exams, tests, quizzes, or other assessments;
2. use of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments;
3. use, without permission, of tests, notes, or other academic materials belonging to instructors, staff members, or other students of the University;
4. dual submission of a paper or project, or resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructor;
5. any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage on an academic assignment.

**“Plagiarism”** means use of another’s thoughts or words without proper attribution in any academic exercise, regardless of the student’s intent, including but not limited to:

1. the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement or citation, or
  2. the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in selling term papers or other academic materials.
- The definition of plagiarism means it may be inadvertent or intentional. That is, plagiarism is still plagiarism even if you “didn’t mean to do it.” Any facts, statistics, quotations, or paraphrasing of any information that is not common knowledge, should be cited.
  - Students suspected of any of these will receive an automatic zero on the assessment. I also reserve the right to pursue further disciplinary action within the UNT system. Students will be provided the opportunity for a hearing; if found guilty they can receive an automatic “F” in the course. Multiple violations may result in dismissal from the university.
  - For more information on paper writing, including how to avoid plagiarism, and how to use citations, see <http://www.unt.edu/anthropology/writing.htm>. For information on the University’s policies regarding academic integrity and dishonesty, see the UNT Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities, <http://www.unt.edu/csrr/>.

Two more points about this: A) Just don’t do it. I promise, I and your Instructional Assistant will be able to tell if the writing is not yours. It is better to talk with me about why the assignment is not complete, or asking for help on in-text citations, rather than passing off someone else’s work as your own. B) This is also an issue of a politics of citation. When you represent someone else’s thoughts/writing as your own, you are denying them credit for their intellectual work. For many of our authors, especially those who are women, persons of color, queer, and/or live outside the United States and Europe, this is yet another way in which their voices are marginalized within the western academy. Actions have meaning. Please cite your sources.

**Academic Accommodations:** The University of North Texas is committed to providing accommodation for all students. If you have or acquire a disability that may affect your participation in class, I will strive to accommodate your needs. To ensure that the necessary accommodations are made, be sure to contact the Office of Disability Accommodation (located in Sage Hall) as soon as possible to ensure your needs are met in a timely manner. They will work with both of us to ensure proper accommodations are made. If you need accommodations, please remember that reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Office of Disability Accommodation. Note that students need to obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

## Resources

**UNT Food Pantry:** Any current UNT student in need can visit the Food Pantry 8am-6pm Monday-Thursday and 8pm-5pm on Fridays. Students will check-in at the Dean of Students Office front desk in the Union, Suite 409. Students may go directly to room 366 from 5PM-6PM, Monday-Thursday. Students who visit the food pantry can request to meet with a staff member to discuss any difficulties they may be facing during the hours of 8am-5pm. When appropriate, referral to additional campus and/or community resources will be made. The Dean of Students Office has established protocols that allow for student confidentiality and dignity to be maintained. In addition, there is a pantry located at the Discovery Park Location in the Engineering Library (M130) next to the Career Center, as well as a Food Pantry located at UNT's Frisco campus, which can be accessed by visiting the information desk. **YOU CAN'T LEARN IF YOU ARE HUNGRY!**

**NEED TECHNICAL HELP/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE? Contact the UNT IT Helpdesk!**

**Phone:** 940-565-2324

**E-Mail:** [helpdesk@unt.edu](mailto:helpdesk@unt.edu)

**Location:** Sage Hall, Room 130

### TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

<http://it.unt.edu/helpdesk>

**NEED ACADEMIC HELP/ASSISTANCE? UNT IS HERE FOR YOU!**

#### UNT Learning Center

The UNT Learning Center provides a variety of tutoring services that are open to you—including online tutoring for distance students. Check out their website for more information here: <https://learningcenter.unt.edu/tutoring>

#### UNT Writing Center

Also, the UNT Writing Center provides assistance with any academic writing needs. Find more about their services here: <https://writingcenter.unt.edu>

**Canvas Privacy Policy:** <https://www.instructure.com/policies/privacy>

**Canvas Accessibility Policy:** <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-2061-accessibility-within-canvas>

**Emergency Notification and Procedures:** UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

# EVALUATION AND EXPECTATIONS

## Course Expectations

This course requires your engagement with new and sometimes academically rigorous materials. Further, we may cover content in this course that challenges your personal beliefs and opinions. I do not expect you to agree with course materials in order to do well in this class, but I do expect you to a) approach these topics in an open and intellectual fashion and b) use course content and the provided resources to complete assignments. Comments that are disrespectful to your classmates and/or myself will not be tolerated.

## Grades

There are no exams in this course. However, this course does require you to develop and use two skills important to anthropologists—reading and writing. Students can earn up to 1000 points for the semester. All grades will be assigned based on the following grading scale:

Class Participation	10%
Reading Assessments/Group Assignments	20%
Current Event Journals	20%
Core Assessment	5%
Ethnographic Observation and Fieldnotes	20%
Ethnographic Interview and Report	25%

### I. Class Participation (100 points)

This class relies on the intellectual commitment and *active* participation of all students. Active participation means going beyond merely showing up for class, and means: responding to discussion questions that I pose to the class, asking your own questions for clarification, bringing in relevant contributing information, and respectfully responding to classmates' discussion points. Two participation grades will be given—one at the midterm and one at the end of the semester (50 points each).

In order for you to participate, you need to have completed the reading assignment for that day. You may want to bring the assigned reading to class each day so that you can refer to them and utilize them during class. You should take notes on lectures and classroom discussions as well as readings, because these notes will come in very handy for the writing assignment and, *especially*, preparing for the midterm and final exams. As part of this grade, you will be evaluated on the frequency and quality of your contributions to class discussion and your participation in group work.

### II. Reading Assessments/Group Assignments (200 points)

In order to encourage students to come to class, and to come to class having read the required readings, 10 grades will be given throughout the semester for reading assessments given at the beginning of a class or group assignments completed during our class period. Each grade is worth 20 points. Readings assessments and group assignment days will be random and unannounced. Group assignments will vary, but will involve

demonstrating that you have read/understand the concepts and ideas from the readings for that day's class. Students who are absent will not be given the opportunity to make up these points unless they have a documented excuse and/or have received permission from the instructor ahead of time.

### **III. Current Event Journals (200 points)**

In order to provide an opportunity for you to put the concepts and ideas we are learning in class in conversation with events and issues in our society today, each student will complete four "Current Event" journal entries throughout the course, worth 50 points each.

Journal entries will identify a specific "current event" related to "culture" and analyze it using concepts from our lesson content and/or the required readings. By current I mean it should have happened within the past 5 years or so. Current Event topics can include anything related to culture (which, you will find out, is mostly everything!) including economics, politics, social movements, religion, language and communication, kinship, food, social media, and more. Be creative!

Each journal entry should be at least 300 words. In each entry, you will want to:

1. Identify and provide a *brief* description/summary of your topic
2. **Explain this current event's significance to course content using at least one concept or theory from class or your required readings. That is, I want to see you make a connection between your current event topic and something you have learned in this class. Be sure to define/describe the concept you use to show you know what it means!**
3. Offer your very insightful and critical analysis of the topic/materials (FYI: "I thought it was interesting" is neither insightful nor critical)
4. Include a weblink or copy of object if relevant

Try to select topics that raise your curiosity or interest—it will make this assignment much more interesting for you.

### **IV. Core Assessment (50 points)**

This course is part of the University Core Curriculum. In order to ensure the course is fulfilling its role in the Core, a course assessment will be given to all students.

### **V. Ethnographic Observation and Fieldnotes Assignment (200 points)**

To complete this project, you will go to a site/location of your choice for at least one hour of time-- the place you choose is up to you, so long as it is within the parameters outlined below. You will observe and participate in the activities taking place at this location, especially paying attention to the setting itself, the environment, the mood, and anything else you might observe or sense. Try to use all of your available senses, and document all the different things that you experience and feel.

You will record these observations as fieldnotes, which you will turn in as one part of the final assignment. You should have at least 1 full page of notes. You will then "write up" your

fieldnotes into a coherent narrative that uses in-depth description to convey your experience to the reader. You will submit this as the second part of this assignment. Your narrative write-up should be **600-750 words**.

That is, you will submit **TWO documents** for points

- Your detailed fieldnotes that you took during your observation (50 points)
- A more formal written narrative describing in detail your experience, 600-750 words (150 points)

Your submission will be evaluated for thoroughness and attention to detail. Include in your narrative write up discussion of the following elements:

1. In-depth description of the place/space, including structures, landscape elements, natural or man-made objects, the “feeling” of the place, etc.
2. IF YOUR SITE IS SAFE TO SOCIALLY DISTANCE, AND THERE ARE OTHER PEOPLE THERE: Observe and note descriptions of the people, including demographics, comportment and dress, interactions amongst people, expressions of emotions or moods, etc.
3. IF YOU CHOOSE A SITE WHERE THERE ARE NO OTHER PEOPLE: Closely observe the environment, paying attention to the ways that plants, insects, and/or animals interact within the space; the topography of the space; how “culture” and “nature” interact, etc.
4. **Use the anthropological concept of “culture” as described in the lesson content and the text to discuss the cultural function, significance, or meaning(s) of this space/place. To do this well, you must first describe/define the concept of culture itself.**
5. Reflections on your experience of this activity—Did you interact with your environment or did you mostly only observe? Did it seem strange to be an observer? Why or why not?

Keep in mind, the more descriptive detail, the better! Help your reader draw a picture in their mind.

Parameters for the assignment:

- Select a SAFE location where you are able to safely socially distance. Outdoors is preferable.
- ***Please do not select a location or event on campus, and I would prefer that this study take place outside of any coffee shops, bars, or other “hangout” spots that you already frequent.*** Choose some place or event that is different for you, it will make this project considerably more interesting!
- Keep in mind you need to be in the space for at least an hour, so do not select a location where this would be difficult or inappropriate to do.
- Wherever you choose, please be respectful of the people who are there.
- Make sure that the site is safe and please be aware of your surroundings.



## **VI. Ethnographic Interview and Report (250 points)**

To complete this project, you will conduct an ethnographic interview with someone who is from a *different* cultural, or sub-cultural background than you. It is up to you to describe how the interviewee's cultural background is different from your own (in some cases, it may be obvious, in others, less so). You can choose to do this interview using video conferencing technology due to COVID restrictions/health concerns.

For this assignment, you will develop an interview questionnaire that will help you to gain information about their life. You may want to ask about your interviewee's cultural background, their childhood and life growing up, their education and work experiences, their family relationships, and other areas in which you are interested. Your goal is to utilize anthropological concepts from class and/or the textbook to understand and explain your interviewee's life experiences and worldview.

In this project, you will analyze the content of the interview using anthropological theories and concepts that we have discussed in class and that you have learned through your readings. You will be expected to discuss the relationship between a particular instance (person, community, or place) and the broader cultural context in which they exist. Remember, you need to approach this project like an anthropologist: open minded and without value judgments placed on those who are different from you.

You will turn in a **900-1000 word paper** describing your interviewee's life (200 points), **along with a copy of the interview questions that you asked your interviewee** (50 points). In the final paper, you will give a detailed description and analysis of the interview, including:

1. Brief description of the subculture your interviewee is a part of, and your position in relation to it (i.e. how your cultural background is different from and/or similar to your interviewee)
2. Discussion of your interviewee's life experiences within a particular cultural and historical context
3. Discussion of your interviewee's life (childhood, youth, adulthood if relevant); including important or significant life experiences
4. **Application of at least two concepts from the lesson content and/or textbook to analyze, interpret, and/or understand the content of the interview. To do this well, you must first describe/define the concept itself.**
5. A reflection on the experience of doing the interview.

\*\* Please make sure you have consent from the person before you conduct your interview, and please be respectful to your interviewee. For instance, if you can see that a topic makes them uncomfortable, discontinue that line of questioning.

**NOTE:** The instructor reserves the right to add, delete, or revise segments of the syllabus. Any changes in the course schedule will be announced in class and on the course webpage.

**\*A Note on Paper Formatting: All papers are to be double spaced, with 12-point font and 1-inch margins on all sides, and should contain a works cited/references page. In-text quotes and references should be properly cited. You may use whichever format you are most familiar with (i.e. MLA, APA, Chicago), but you must be consistent. If you do not know what I am talking about here, please, please, please ask the Instructor, your Instructional Assistant, or the UNT writing lab for help.**

### **Dates To Remember**

Current Event Journal Entries Deadlines

10/20: Ethnographic Observation and Fieldnotes Assignment Due

11/17: Core Assessment Due

12/8: Ethnographic Interview and Report Assignment Due

## **Course Schedule**

### **Section 1: Anthropology and the Study of Humans**

8/23: First day of class; No readings assigned

8/25: 1. Douglas Raybeck "The Dawn of Interest"  
2. Eller pgs. 1-9

### **Section 2- Cultural Anthropology and the Culture Concept**

8/30: Eller pgs. 9- 19

9/1: Eller pgs. 20-30

9/6: Labor Day! No Class today, but check out this article about Labor Day history from History.com to find out more about why we celebrate this holiday:  
<https://www.history.com/topics/holidays/labor-day-1>

### **Section 3- Packing Your Anthropological Backpack: Methods and Practices**

9/8: 1. Eller pgs. 35-42  
2. Anthropology fieldnotes <http://anthronow.com/fieldnotes/poco-a-poco-writing-from-the-road-in-lima-peru>

9/13: Horace Miner "The Body Rituals of the Nacirema"  
~ **DUE! Current Event Journal 1** ~

#### **Section 4- A Brief History of Anthropology**

9/15: Eller pgs. 43-50

9/20: 1. Eller pgs. 50-62  
2. Edward Said- selection from "Orientalism"

#### **Section 5- Culture, Currency, and Power: Political and Economic Systems**

9/22: Eller pgs. 193-208

9/27: 1. Eller pgs. 208-215  
2. Michel Foucault, Selection from "Discipline and Punish" (read pages 1-top of page 7/finish paragraph from page 6)

9/29: Eller pgs. 145-158  
~ **DUE! Current Event Journal 2** ~

10/4: 1. Eller pgs. 159-169  
2. Marcel Mauss, selection from "The Gift" (focus especially pgs. 108-111)

#### **Section 6- At the Intersections: Gender, Sexuality, Race, and Class**

10/6: 1. Eller pgs. 103-113  
2. American Anthropological Association Statement on Race

10/11: Eller pgs. 113-121

10/13: Eller pgs. 93-102

10/18: 1. Emily Martin "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles" (pgs. 485-492 required, whole article recommended!)  
2. Anne Fausto-Sterling "The Five Sexes"

10/20: Kimberlé Crenshaw- selection from "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics" (pgs. 139-152 required, whole article recommended!)  
~ **DUE! Ethnographic Observations and Fieldnotes Assignment** ~

## **Section 7- Thinking Anthropologically About...**

### *Language, Communication, and Culture*

10/25: Eller pgs. 63-73

10/27: 1. Eller pgs. 73-83  
2. Boroditsky "How Language Shapes Thought: The Languages We Speak Affect our Perceptions of the World"

### *Kinship and Family*

11/1: Eller pgs. 170-184

11/3: Nancy F. Cott- "An Archeology of American Monogamy"  
~ **DUE! Current Event 3** ~

### *Religions, Rituals, and Symbols*

11/8: Eller pgs. 216-232

11/10: George Gmelch "Baseball Magic"

### *The Body*

11/15: 1. Eller pgs. 123-130  
2. Paul Farmer- An Anthropology of Structural Violence pgs. 305- 311

11/17: Paul Farmer- An Anthropology of Structural Violence pgs. 311-317  
~ **DUE! Core Assessment (online)** ~

### *Material Objects and Space/Place*

11/22: Selection from "Material Culture" in *Asking Questions about Anthropology*  
~ **DUE! Current Event 4** ~

11/29: Psyche Williams-Forsion "More than Just the 'Big Piece of Chicken': The Power Race, Class, and Food in American Consciousness"

12/1: Christine Preble- "Cruise Ship Tourism in Cozumel, Mexico: Frios Como la Naturaleza de los Gringos lo Dice"

12/8: ~ **DUE! Ethnographic Interview and Report** ~