

SYLLABUS
CULTURE AND SOCIETY
ANTH 2300.100
SPRING 2022

Professor: Dr. Jara Carrington

Email: jara.carrington@unt.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:00-3:00 PM (open Zoom meeting room), or by appointment

Office: Sycamore Hall 122

Class meetings: MWF 11:00-11:50AM

Meeting location: GAB 310

Email Policy: Please use your email account when corresponding electronically (vs. Canvas email), and please allow 48 hours for a response. Emails sent during the weekend will be treated as if sent on Monday morning. 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) or your health care provider PRIOR to coming to campus. UNT also requires you to contact the UNT COVID Team at [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.

Electronics in the Classroom: Please turn off your cell phone prior to coming to class. Students may use laptop computers to take notes and for class purposes only; students checking email, using Facebook, etc. will be asked to turn off their computers and will not be allowed to use their computers in subsequent classes.

Academic Honesty: UNT and the Department of Anthropology do 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. This means that your assignment will be compared to a database containing published writings, online content, papers turned in by students at UNT and other universities, and more.

- Cheating includes the physical or electronic **distribution or use** of answers for graded components, such as discussion posts, writing assignments, and exams.
- Plagiarism is defined as misrepresenting the work of others (whether published or not) as your own.
- Plagiarism 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 who are suspected of cheating or plagiarism 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. We use Turnitin in this class, and even without that I will likely 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 to ask 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. Especially when authors are women, persons of color, queer, and/or are born outside the United States and Europe, plagiarism is yet another way in which these 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 with disabilities. 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.

University 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 ASSISTANCE? Contact the UNT IT Helpdesk!

Phone: 940-565-2324

E-Mail: helpdesk@unt.edu

Location: Sage Hall, Room 130

More Technology Resources

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

NEED ACADEMIC 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>

MISC. POLICIES

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

This course will enable you to develop and practice two skills important to anthropologists—written and oral forms of communication. Students can earn up to 1000 points for the semester. All grades will be assigned based on the following grading scale:

Class Participation	10%
Group Assignments	20%
Current Event Journal Presentation	15%
Ethnographic Observation and Fieldnotes Exercise	15%
Midterm Exam	15%
Core Assessment	5%
Ethnographic Interview and Report	20%

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. 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 group assignments that will be completed during our class period. Each grade is worth 20 points. Group assignments 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 and 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 Journal Presentations (150 points)

As a means to kick off our course meetings with student leadership, and to provide an opportunity for you to put the concepts and ideas we are learning in class in conversation with events and issues happening in our world today, students will research and present a report about a current event related to "culture." 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 topics like economics, politics, religion, language and communication, but also, food, social media, social movements, fashion, technology and more. Be creative!

In the second week of class, you will sign up with a partner to give a short, 7-10 minute presentation that will take place *at the beginning of class* on the day you select. In your presentation you will want to:

- a) Describe your topic/tell us what it is about
- b) Tell us how this topic relates to broader cultural norms or processes
- c) Explain this current event's significance by using at least one concept or theory from class discussion 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. To do this well, you will need to identify and describe/define the concept you are using.**
- d) Offer your very insightful and critical analysis of the object (FYI: "I thought it was interesting" is neither insightful nor critical).

Make sure to practice! Your verbal presentation should not go over ten minutes, and be ready to answer any questions we might have for you.

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

IV. Ethnographic Observation and Fieldnotes Exercise (150 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 **400-500 words**.

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, 400-500 words (100 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.

V. Midterm Exam (150 points)

There will be one examination for this class. The Midterm Exam is worth 150 points, and will cover lectures, readings, and all other materials from the first half of the course. The exam will be administered in class, and will consist of true/false, multiple choice, short answer questions, and an essay question. Note: Do not miss the scheduled exam. If a legitimate medical or family emergency causes you to miss an exam, it is your responsibility to contact me as soon as possible to schedule a make-up exam. You must bring me written proof such as a doctor’s note to justify your absence. Make-up exams may not follow the same format as regularly scheduled exams (for example, they may be all essay questions).

VI. University Core Course 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. This assessment will be completed on Canvas.

VII. Ethnographic Interview and Report (200 points)

To complete this project, you will create an interview questionnaire and then 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/or other areas in which you are interested.

Your goal for this assignment will be to utilize anthropological concepts from class and/or the textbook to understand and explain your interviewee's life experiences and worldview. That is, 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. In your final write-up, 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 (175 points), **along with a copy of the interview questions that you asked your interviewee** (25 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. Depending on your focus, this could include a discussion of important or notable life experiences, family, work, education, travel, migration, food preferences, holidays, rituals, religion, and more.
3. **Application of at least two concepts from the lesson content and/or textbook to analyze, interpret, and/or understand the content of the interview. That is, I want to see you make a connection between your interviewee's life and something you have learned in this class. To do this well, you will need to identify and describe/define the concepts you are using.**
4. A reflection on the experience of doing the interview. What did you learn about your interviewees cultural background, or about your own? How did you feel doing the interview? Was it more or less challenging than you expected? Did the questions you created seem clear to the interviewee? Did you get the information you needed from your questions or was there anything that was missing?

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

Your Current Events Presentation Date

2/16: Turn in Ethnographic Observation and Fieldnotes Exercise

3/2: Midterm Exam

4/25: Complete CORE Evaluation on Canvas

5/10: Turn in Ethnographic Interview and Analysis Assignment

Course Schedule

Section 1: “The Danger of a Single Story”: Anthropology and the Study of Humans

1/19: First day of class; No readings assigned

1/21: Douglas Raybeck “The Dawn of Interest”

1/24: Eller pgs. 1-9

Section 2: Cultural Anthropology and the Culture Concept

1/26: Eller pgs. 9-19

1/28: Eller pgs. 20-30

Section 3: Packing Your Anthropological Backpack: Methods and Practices

1/31: Eller pgs. 35-42

2/2: Anthropology Now <https://anthronow.com/fieldnotes/poco-a-poco-writing-from-the-road-in-lima-peru>

Tips for writing fieldnotes:

<https://www.reed.edu/anthro/201/fieldnotesandtech.html>

Fieldnotes examples: (they start a little down the page)

<https://www.reed.edu/anthro/201/fieldcommentaries.html>

2/4: Horace Miner "The Body Rituals of the Nacirema"

Section 4: A Brief History of Anthropology

2/7: Eller pgs. 43-50

2/9: Eller pgs. 50-62

2/11: Eller pgs. 260-271

2/14: Selection from Edward Said's "Orientalism"

Section 5: Culture, Currency, and Power: Political and Economic Systems

2/16: Eller pgs. 145-158

DUE! ETHNOGRAPHIC OBSERVATION AND FIELDNOTES EXERCISE

2/18: Eller pgs. 159-169

2/21: Marcel Mauss, selection from "The Gift"

2/23: Eller pgs. 193-208

2/25: Eller pgs. 208-215

2/28: Michel Foucault, Selection from "Discipline and Punish" (read pages 1-top of page 7/finish paragraph from page 6)

3/2: MIDTERM EXAM

Section 6: Thinking Anthropologically About...

Gender, Sexuality, Race, and Class

3/4: Eller pgs. 89- 102

3/7: 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!)

3/9: AAA Statement on Race:
<http://www.americananthro.org/ConnectWithAAA/Content.aspx?ItemNumber=2583>

3/11: Eller pgs. 103- 113

3/14- 3/18: SPRING BREAK! NO CLASS!
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3/21: Eller pgs. 113-121

3/23: 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!)

Language, Communication, and Culture

3/25: Eller pgs. 63-73

3/28: Eller pgs. 73-83

3/30: Boroditsky “How Language Shapes Thought: The Languages We Speak Affect our Perceptions of the World”

Kinship and Family

4/1: Eller pgs. 170-183

4/6: Eller pgs. 184-192

4/8: Nancy F. Cott- “An Archeology of American Monogamy”

Religions, Rituals, and Symbols

4/11: Eller pgs. 216-228

4/13: Eller pgs. 229-240

4/15: George Gmelch “Baseball Magic”

Section 7: Current Topics in Anthropology

Food and Culture

4/18: Roland Barthes “Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption”

4/20: Psyche Williams-Forsen “More than Just the ‘Big Piece of Chicken’: The Power of Race, Class, and Food in American Consciousness”

The Body

4/22: Eller pgs. 123-130, 135-138

4/25: Paul Farmer "An Anthropology of Structural Violence"
DUE! University Core Course Assessment (on Canvas)

Museums and Material Objects

4/27: Selection from "Material Culture" in *Asking Questions about Anthropology*

4/29: Cairns "Museums are Dangerous Places: How Te Papa is Challenging Colonialist History"

Travel and Tourism

5/2: Eller pgs. 335-338

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

5/4: Final Thoughts and considerations (if necessary)

5/10: DUE! Ethnographic Interview and Report