

**SYLLABUS**  
**ANTH 2300.200/820**  
**CULTURE AND SOCIETY**  
**SPRING 2022**

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Email Policy: Please use your email account for all electronic correspondence with your teaching team (vs. Canvas email function), and please allow 48 hours for a response. Emails sent after 4PM on Friday 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 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.

## **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:** 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.

## 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>

## NAVIGATING THE COURSE

Note that because this is an introductory-level course, there are no prerequisites for knowledge in this field.

Some students find online courses daunting or confusing, but this course is designed to be straightforward and user-friendly. Everything that you turn in is through Canvas. The structure of the course is as follows:

- The class is divided into 14 Lessons.
- Generally speaking for each Lesson, you will complete the following:
  1. Assigned readings from the textbook
  2. Lesson content on Canvas (found under “Units and Lessons”) that expands on the textbook reading
  3. Two articles to read on Canvas – the links to these will be in the lessons on Canvas.
  4. One reflection discussion post and at least one “response post” to a classmate about the materials for that Lesson (see more detail below); prompts are provided
  5. Some Lessons you will complete a “Current Event Journal” assignment in addition to the discussion posts (see below for details)
- You will also complete two longer writing assignments (Ethnographic Observation and Ethnographic Interview, see below for details)

**~ All assignments except the final assignment will be due on Sundays by 11:59 PM. However, the earlier you post your reflection discussion post, the more time your classmates will have to respond!~**

## **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.

### **Calculating Your Grade**

A total of 915 points are available in this class. To calculate your grade at any given moment, you divide the number of points you have earned by the number of points possible at that point in time.

### **Grade Breakdown**

Reflection Discussion Posts/Responses	13 weeks x 30 points = 390 points
Current Event Journals	3 entries x 50 points =150 points
Core Assessment	25 points
Observation Activity/Field Notes	150 points
<u>Ethnographic Interview/Analysis</u>	<u>200 points</u>
<b>Total points</b>	<b>915 points</b>

## ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

### I. Discussion Boards: Reflection and Response Posts (30 points each, 390 points total)

Reflection discussion posts and response posts are due each week. Prompts for each reflection post will be provided. For each prompt, you will create one original reflection post and respond to at least one of your classmates' posts. Your original post should be at least 300 words (20 points), and your response should be at least 100 words (10 points). You are welcome and encouraged to say more!

The goal for this assignment is to create a dialog between you and your fellow students regarding important issues and topics raised in the readings. For those who may not have participated in online discussions before, it's okay to have different opinions from others--in fact, that's part of what can make online discussions so rich and vibrant! Just remember to address those differences in a courteous manner. If you have a different opinion or idea about something, support what you are saying with evidence from the lesson content, textbook, and/or required readings.

If a post contains offensive or disrespectful language, it will be removed and the student will receive 0 points for that week's discussion board grade.

### II. Current Event Journals (50 points each, 150 points total)

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 THREE "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. To do this well, you will need to identify and describe/define the concept you are using.**
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.

### **III. Core Assessment (25 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.

### **IV. Ethnographic Observation and Fieldnotes Assignment (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 **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 (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. Ethnographic Interview and Report (200 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 (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?

\*\* 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. If used, 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**

Every Sunday: Reflection and Response Discussion Posts Due  
2/6, 2/27, 4/10: Current Event Journal Due Dates  
3/13: Ethnographic Observation and Fieldnotes Assignment Due  
5/10: Ethnographic Interview and Report Due

## COURSE SCHEDULE

<p>1/18-1/23 Lesson 1: Introduction to the Course</p>	<p>To Read: No required readings</p>	<p>To Turn In: DUE 1/23 1. Lesson 1 Reflection Discussion and Response Posts <b>2. Syllabus quiz (extra credit!!)</b></p>
<p>1/24-1/30 Lesson 2: Introduction to Anthropology</p>	<p>To Read: 1. Eller pgs. 1-19 2. Raybeck "The Dawn of Interest" 3. Watters "The Americanization of Mental Illness"</p>	<p>To Turn In: DUE 1/30 1. Lesson 2 Reflection Discussion and Response Posts</p>
<p>1/31-2/6 Lesson 3: The Concept of Culture</p>	<p>To Read: 1. Eller pgs. 20-30 2. DeLuca "Why Don't Westerners Eat Off One Plate" 3. Scheper-Hughes "Death Without Weeping"</p>	<p>To Turn In: DUE 2/6 1. Lesson 3 Reflection Discussion and Response Posts <b>2. Current Event Journal #1</b></p>
<p>2/7-2/13 Lesson 4: Ethnographic Fieldwork</p>	<p>To Read: 1. Eller pgs. 35-42 2. Miner "The Body Rituals of the Nacirema" 3. Nordling "Who Gets to Study Whom?"</p>	<p>To Turn In: DUE 2/13 1. Lesson 4 Reflection Discussion and Response Posts</p>

<p>2/14-2/20 Lesson 5: History and Theories in Anthropology</p>	<p>To Read: 1. Eller pgs. 43-62, 260-280</p>	<p>To Turn In: DUE 2/20 1. Lesson 5 Reflection Discussion and Response Posts</p>
<p>2/21-2/27 Lesson 6: Economic Systems</p>	<p>To Read: 1. Eller pgs. 145-169 2. Suzman "Why Envy Might Be Good for Us" 3. Smith "Cell Phones, Sharing, and Social Status in an African Society"</p>	<p>To Turn In: DUE 2/27 1. Lesson 6 Reflection Discussion and Response Posts <b>2. Current Event Journal Entry #2</b></p>
<p>2/28-3/6 Lesson 7: Politics, Social Order, and Social Control</p>	<p>To Read: 1. Eller pgs. 193-215 2. Farmer "An Anthropology of Structural Violence" 3. Sanchez "Facing COVID-19 as an Undocumented Essential Worker"</p>	<p>To Turn In: DUE 3/6 1. Lesson 7 Reflection Discussion and Response Posts</p>
<p>3/7-3/13 Lesson 8: Sex and Gender</p>	<p>To Read: 1. Eller pgs. 93-102 2. Emily Martin "The Egg and the Sperm" 3. Anne Fausto-Sterling "The Five Sexes" 4. Goel "Hijras- India's Third Gender Rises Again"</p>	<p>To Turn In: DUE 3/13 1. Lesson 8 Reflection Discussion and Response Posts <b>2. Ethnographic Observation and Fieldnotes Assignment Due</b></p>



**NOTE THAT THE ETHNOGRAPHIC OBSERVATION AND FIELDNOTES ASSIGNMENT IS DUE 3/13!!**

<p>3/21-3/27 Lesson 9: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity</p>	<p>To Read: 1. Eller pgs. 103-122 2. AAA Statement on Race 3. Delgado and Stefancic "Introduction to Critical Race Theory"</p>	<p>To Turn In: DUE 3/27 1. Lesson 9 Reflection Discussion and Response Posts</p>
<p>3/28-4/3 Lesson 10: Culture Change and Culture Tradition</p>	<p>To Read: 1. Eller pgs. 241-259; 332-341 2. Lasco "The Dark Side of Skin Whitening" 3. Eriksen "How Globalization has Broken the Chain of Responsibility"</p>	<p>To Turn In: DUE 4/3 1. Lesson 10 Reflection Discussion and Response Posts</p>
<p>4/4-4/10 Lesson 11: Kinship and Marriage</p>	<p>To Read: 1. Eller pgs. 170-192 2. Cott "An Archeology of American Monogamy" 3. Nanda "Arranged Marriages in India"</p>	<p>To Turn In: DUE 4/10 1. Lesson 11 Reflection Discussion and Response Posts <b>2. Current Events Journal Entry #3</b></p>
<p>4/11-4/17 Lesson 12: Language and Communication</p>	<p>To Read: 1. Eller pgs. 63-83 2. Boroditsky "How Language Shapes Thought: The Languages We Speak Affect our Perceptions of the World" 3. Arnold "Can an iPhone App Help Save an Endangered Language?"</p>	<p>To Turn In: DUE 4/17 1. Lesson 12 Reflection Discussion and Response Posts</p>

<p>4/18-4/24 Lesson 13: Religion and Magic</p>	<p>To Read: 1. Eller pgs. 216-240 2. Gmelch "Baseball Magic" 3. Del Guerico "The Secrets of Haiti's Living Dead"</p>	<p>To Turn In: DUE 4/24 <b>1. Core Assessment Due</b> 2. Lesson 13 Reflection Discussion and Response Posts</p>
<p>4/25-5/1 Lesson 14: Museums and Material Culture</p>	<p>To Read: 1. Selection from "Material Culture" in <i>Asking Questions about Anthropology</i> 2. Kahn "Not Really Pacific Voices: Politics of Representation in Collaborative Museum Exhibits" 3. Cairns "Museums are Dangerous Places: How Te Papa is Challenging Colonialist History"</p>	<p>To Turn In: DUE 5/1 1. Lesson 14 Reflection Discussion and Response Posts</p>
<p><b>ETHNOGRAPHIC INTERVIEW AND REPORT ASSIGNMENT DUE TUESDAY MAY 10 BY 11:59PM</b></p>		