

ANTH 3101 | FALL 2021

ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN CULTURE AND SOCIETY

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Office Hours: [Schedule a 30-min on-campus or online 30min visit!](#)

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Instructional Assistants (IAs) will be listed on Canvas

Course Description

Shifting American cultural values, emergent and contested identities, and complex social institutions undergird some of the most significant social issues in America today.

Oriented around the core concept of culture and cultural groups, the course is designed to introduce us to anthropological frameworks for understanding cultural diversity, and to develop our critical thinking skills for identifying, describing and explaining the social complexities of American (U.S.) culture.

Ethnographic case studies combine with current events to orient us to the intricacies of cultural diversity, while discussion and critical reflection help to raise our awareness and broaden our perspective of lives and livelihoods in the United States. Special time and attention will be devoted to mainstream and subcultural identities, as well as institutional and structural complexities in this pluralist, secular, nation-state.

Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify introductory anthropological terms and concepts as they apply to culture and society in the United States.
2. Evaluate social tropes, normative assumptions, and multiple perspectives of culture and society in the U.S. using anthropological terms and concepts.
3. Increase sensitivity to major aspects and characteristics of social issues in the U.S., causal and correlative factors, associated issues, and the nature of public and private organization addressing these issues.
4. Reflect on relationships between small-scale and large-scale social organization in the U.S. using anthropological terms and concepts.
5. Establish skills in discussing controversial issues with course colleagues using contemporary issues in U.S. culture and anthropological terms and concepts.
6. Illustrate growth in written communication skills over the course of the semester.
7. Demonstrate improved critical thinking skills over the course of the semester.

Required materials

There is no textbook for this course. All required readings, films, and other media are embedded in CANVAS.

Additional Notes: Media-based course content boldly encounters realities of lived experience in the United States. Although we may participate in many facets of "American" culture, the ideal and the real America are drawn into sharp contrast by reconsidering culture and society in the United States through the holistic lens of Anthropology. To this end,

emphasis on critical cultural relativism and social equality offers a multi-focal framework through which to situate America's sociohistorical past, recognize continuing cultural patterns of the present, and delve into interconnected social issues of the contemporary "American" experience.

Technical Support

Student Helpdesk: 940-565-2324 | helpdesk@unt.edu

Technical Skills Requirements

To be successful in this course, students will need to be able to:

- Send and receive email through Canvas and/or through Microsoft Outlook
- Create, send, and receive Microsoft Word documents
- Post to discussion boards
- Print Word documents OR open and print pdf files, using free Adobe Acrobat Reader (Links to an external site.)
- Navigate Canvas

It is the student's responsibility to ensure they familiarize themselves with the Hardware and Software Requirements for CANVAS as stipulated in the module:

"Online Course Technology Requirements & Skills" as well as conduct a CANVAS browser check.

Prerequisites

This is a 3000-level, intermediate Anthropology course. Although, there are no required prerequisites for this course, basic [UNT CORE requirements \(Links to an external site.\)](#) including but not limited to ANTH 1010 or ANTH 2300 are recommended.

Course Structure

This course takes place 100% online. During the Fall, we will spend roughly one week on each module. When this course is offered in Summer, we will cover roughly two modules per week.

The 14 Modules are grouped into three (3) main themes:

1. What is America/n?
2. Identity and Culture Groups
3. Institutions and Social Structures

With those broader themes in mind, our task is to read and work through the content of that week's module. *Start early! Do not wait until the last minute, because there is A LOT of content.*

Content – Course Elements

No books are required, as all Lessons contain essential anthropological concepts, definitions and frameworks needed to understand the Module in relation to the broader course theme. In addition to written content, embedded in the modules we will explore the following course **elements**. Students will be expected to incorporate at least two course **elements** in each assignment.

- Exercises
- Videos (ranging from short YouTube videos, news stories, and TedTalks to full-length documentaries)
- Articles

- Links to external resources that help to supplement content

All written course content is required reading unless noted otherwise. Embedded course elements will be designated as "required" or "recommended". The required elements are essential for your assignments; the recommended elements are, well - recommended!

Assessments and Scoring

Discussion Forums (13 @ 20 points each) **260 points**

Due: Sundays (check schedule for dates)

We will participate in weekly small group discussions, designed to engage with the learning objectives for that module. Discussion submissions will be graded on the basis of the quality of engagement with both 1) the content and 2) their discussion group peers.

There will be no extensions granted on discussion posts and late-posts will not be accepted. If there is an excused reason for the absence of a discussion post then an EXEMPTION will be recorded.

Critical Reflection and Response (6 @ 50 points each) **350 points**

Due: Sundays (check schedule for dates)

Every other Module, we will upload one short 250-300 word (1 page) essay that addresses a specific element of the Module. CRRs are designed to practice pinpointing a main thesis argument to then expand upon and engage with in a thematic essay. The focus of CRRs is on concepts and main ideas. Short papers are an exercise in engaging with ideas in a more complex and anthropological perspective.

Engaged Anthropology Presentation - (1 @ 100 points) **100 points**

Due: (check schedule for dates)

This benchmark presentation will be a personalized and creative application of the course learning objectives. At the end-of-semester, video presentations will be submitted in a recorded 2-3minute Flipgrid presentation format. The presentation considers all three major course themes and situates them within a greater context of anthropological thought.

Expectations, Requirements, and Responsibilities

1. Access and follow all course instructions found in the Modules area of the course CANVAS page.
2. Complete all exercises, view videos, read content and required readings including, but not limited to, .pdf files and web articles.
3. Participate in group discussions using the CANVAS discussion forum, and upload short papers, thematic essays, and two benchmark projects in a timely manner to CANVAS in an acceptable format.

Grading

All grades will be issued on a letter basis. Here is an achievement scale for each letter designation:

- A: 90-100% (Outstanding, excellent work. Performs well above the minimum criteria.)
- B: 80-89% (Good, impressive work. Performs above the minimum criteria.)
- C: 70-79% (Solid, college-level work. Meets the criteria of the assignment.)
- D: 60-69% (Below average work. Fails to meet the minimum criteria.)
- F: 59 and below (Fails to complete the assignment.)

Grade-related Policies

Late Work

Discussions: Late submissions on discussions are not accepted without a University-excused absence because once the discussion board closes, participants can no longer interact or respond to one another. Extra credit opportunities may be made available throughout the semester so watch the course announcements.

If you have a legitimate University-excused absence, you will be issued an “excused” score in Canvas.

Critical Reflection/Response entries and Engaged Anthropology Presentations: Late submissions of Critical Reflection and Engaged Anthropology work will be accepted and no penalty shall be imposed if they are accompanied with any of the following at the time of submission:

- 1) Medical documentation (signed by a medical professional);
- 2) ODA Accommodations Letter that specifically lists late submission as an accommodation;
- 3) Dean's Memo.

Missing discussion posts accompanied by any of the aforementioned documentation will be granted an EXEMPTION.

Travel (work, vacation, moving, etc.) for any reason other than a University-approved activity will **not** be considered excused absence.

Extensions

Extension requests for Critical Reflection and Engaged Anthropology activities without documentation will be considered if requested in writing (via email) to Dr. Johnson at least 24 hours PRIOR to the due date of the assessment. There are no extensions for discussion posts. **Late penalty may be assessed for any unexcused late work in the amount of ½ letter grade per day.** Late work must be completed within one week of the due date.

Turnaround Time

We will do due diligence to submit grades for written assignments within 1 week of when they are due when turned in on time.

Grade Disputes

Grading of written assignments are completed by Instructional Assistants, who are Master’s Candidates in Applied Anthropology. Dr. Johnson will re-grade any assessment upon the request of the student. However, please understand that she may determine to give you a lower grade than the grade your IA originally posted. The grade assigned by Dr. Johnson is final.

Extra Credit (CHECK THIS OUT!)

There will be at least one opportunity for extra credit: if 75% of the class submits a SPOT Evaluation then everyone in the class will receive an additional +1% to be added to their final grade.

Course Policies

Assignment Policy

Assignments will be due ON THE DATE ASSIGNED by 11:59pm. All work submitted for credit must be ORIGINAL works created by the student uniquely for this class, for the Fall 2021 session. **If a student is re-taking ANTH 3101 then they must seek the approval of Dr. Johnson prior to re-submitting work otherwise it will be considered plagiarism.**

Papers submitted via any other medium (i.e. emailed) will not be accepted. Submission portals on CANVAS close at 11:59pm on the night that assignments are due. Plan to submit well before the deadline in order to account for technical difficulties. Technical difficulties do not constitute an “excused” reason for late submission of assignments.

Communicating with Your Instructional Team

Your first point of contact should always be with your IA. Email your designated IA if you have questions regarding your grade on an assessment. Similarly, if you are having trouble understanding a module's content or an assignment feel free to set up a ZOOM appointment with your IA. If after touching base with your IA you feel that you still have questions/concerns, or if your issue is with your IA then you should reach out to Dr. Johnson via email in order to schedule a ZOOM appointment. Please practice Netiquette in all communications and interactions.

The following require communication with the instructor, Dr. Johnson (and not your IA):

- a. Extension requests
- b. Re-Grade requests
- c. Extenuating Circumstances/Concerns (cheating, harassment, health, etc.)
- d. ODA Requests
- e. Requests for Incomplete (INC)

UNT Policies

Technology Support

Part of working in the online environment involves dealing with the inconveniences and frustration that can arise when technology breaks down or does not perform as expected. Here at UNT we have a [Student Help Desk \(Links to an external site.\)](#) that you can contact for help with Canvas or other technology issues:

Phone: 940-565-2324

Email: helpdesk@unt.edu

Current list of [Student Help Desk hours \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

For additional support, visit this [Canvas Technical Help \(Links to an external site.\)](#) web page.

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences. According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

ADA Policy

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website disability.unt.edu.

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.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct (Links to an external site.). The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

The Dean of Students Office (Links to an external site.) enforces the Code of Student Conduct (Links to an external site.). The Code explains what conduct is prohibited, the process the DOS uses to review reports of alleged misconduct by students, and the sanctions that can be assigned. When students may have violated the Code they meet with a representative from the Dean of Students Office to discuss the alleged misconduct in an educational process.

Important Notice for F-1 Students Taking Distance Education Courses

To read detailed Immigration and Customs Enforcement regulations for F-1 students taking online courses, please visit the Electronic Code of Federal Regulations (Links to an external site.)website. The specific portion concerning distance education courses is located at Title 8 CFR 214.2 Paragraph (f)(6)(i)(G).

The paragraph reads:

(G) For F-1 students enrolled in classes for credit or classroom hours, no more than the equivalent of one class or three credits per session, term, semester, trimester, or quarter may be counted toward the full course of study requirement if the class is taken on-line or through distance education and does not require the student's physical attendance for classes, examination or other purposes integral to completion of the class. An on-line or distance education course is a course that is offered principally through the use of television, audio, or computer transmission including open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, or satellite, audio conferencing, or computer conferencing. If the F-1 student's course of study is in a language study program, no on-line or distance education classes may be considered to count toward a student's full course of study requirement.

University of North Texas Compliance

To comply with immigration regulations, an F-1 visa holder within the United States may need to engage in an on-campus experiential component for this course. This component (which must be approved in advance by the instructor) can include activities such as taking an on-campus exam, participating in an on-campus lecture or lab activity, or other on-campus experience integral to the completion of this course. If such an on-campus activity is required, it is the student's responsibility to do the following:

- (1) Submit a written request to the instructor for an on-campus experiential component within one week of the start of the course.
- (2) Ensure that the activity on campus takes place and the instructor documents it in writing with a notice sent to the International Student and Scholar Services Office. ISSS has a form available that you may use for this purpose.

Because the decision may have serious immigration consequences, if an F-1 student is unsure about his or her need to participate in an on-campus experiential component for this course, s/he should contact the UNT International Student and Scholar Services Office (Links to an external site.) by telephone 940-565-2195 or email internationaladvising@unt.edu to get clarification before the one-week deadline. Rev. 7/22/2016

Sexual Assault Prevention

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct. Federal laws and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex as well as sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565-2648. Visit Title IX Student Information (Links to an external site.) for more resources.

Undocumented Students

Please see [UNT'S Resources for DACA Students](#) for helpful information!

Academic Support Services

- The [UNT Academic Resource Center \(Links to an external site.\)](#), which provides links to the bookstore, registration and advising information, tuition information, financial aid, and more.
- The [UNT Academic Success Center \(Links to an external site.\)](#), which offers academic support services and free individual tutoring.
- [UNT Writing Lab \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- [UNT MathLab \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Student Services

- [Multicultural Center \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- [Counseling and Testing Services \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- [Student Affairs Care Team \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- [Student Health and Wellness Center \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- [Pride Alliance \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- [Student Legal Services \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- [UNT Food Pantry \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Return to Learn: Policies and Support for Fall 2020 and COVID-19

If you are experiencing cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, or any of the other possible symptoms of COVID-19 (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html> (Links to an external site.)) please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu) or your health care provider.

Absences

During the COVID-19 pandemic, a higher rate of absenteeism is likely. Students may become ill or asked to self-isolate because they have come in contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19. While class attendance is expected, it is important to be mindful of the health and safety of everyone in our community, especially given concerns about COVID-19. In spring 2020, Faculty Senate approved a COVID-19 impact on attendance statement to include in course syllabi. The statement was revised in July to align with newly adopted UNT procedures. Below is the attendance impact statement to include in fall 2020 syllabi. It is also included in the [syllabus template available on the DSI CLEAR website \(Links to an external site.\)](#).

Students are expected to participate in online classes regularly and to abide by the attendance/participations 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.

COVID-19 impact on attendance

While attendance is expected as outlined above, it is important for all of us to be mindful of the health and safety of everyone in our community, especially given concerns about COVID-19. Please contact me if you are unable to attend class because you are ill, or unable to attend class due to COVID-19 including symptoms, potential exposure, pending or

positive test results, or if you have been given specific instructions to isolate or quarantine from a health care provider or a local authority. It is important that you communicate with me prior to being absent so I may make a decision about accommodating your request to be excused from class.

Student Health and Wellness Center

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 Hotline at 844-366-5892 or COVID@unt.edu for guidance on actions to take due to symptoms, pending or positive test results, or potential exposure. While attendance is an important part of succeeding in this class, your own health, and those of others in the community, is more important.

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. The following locations will have disposable masks available for students who do not have a face covering or need a new one.

Locations with an asterisk (*) are open evening and weekends.

- Main Campus
 - Art Building 101 – College of Visual Arts and Design
 - Business Leadership Building 290 - Ryan College of Business
 - Chilton Hall 289 - College of Health and Public Service
 - Chilton Hall 331 – College of Merchandising, Hospitality and Tourism
 - ESSC 354 – Toulouse Graduate School
 - General Academic Building 220 – College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences
 - Hickory Hall 283/254 – College of Science Advising
 - Hurley 207 - VP Student Affairs office
 - Marquis Hall 105 – International Affairs
 - Music Building 247– Ricco Dean’s Suite College of Music
 - Matthews Hall 105 - College of Education Student Advising
 - PEB – Room 209 – College of Education
 - Sage 320 – TAMS & Honors College
 - Sycamore 206 – Mayborn School of Journalism
 - Union 205 - Union Information Desk*
 - Welch Complex – CHE Main Office – College of Education
 - Willis 223 – Library*
- Discovery Park
 - College of Engineering - A140
 - COI Advising Office - C232 // Dean’s Office : E290

Vaccinations

Vaccinations are critical to the success of our return to typical operations. UNT has implemented a [vaccination campaign with incentives](#) for students, faculty and staff who voluntarily provide proof of vaccination. All who voluntarily disclose will receive a prize and be entered into a pool to win large prizes (such as tuition for a semester, parking pass, professional development funding).

International students and incoming international faculty access to vaccines is varied. UNT will accept vaccines recommended by the CDC and/or World Health Organization. Anyone who has not received one of these vaccines will be asked to quarantine for 10 days and will be offered the opportunity to receive a CDC recommended vaccine. A list of approved vaccines is on the [Health Alerts Website](#).

Only those vaccines listed on CDC/WHO sites are approved for the UNT community. Please visit the Health Alerts Website for a list of approved vaccines.

UNT Anthropology Cares!

A NOTE ABOUT LEARNING DURING UNPRECEDENTED TIMES (adapted from Dr. Jason Tham and Dr. Nunez-Janes)

The COVID-19 pandemic continues, so do the challenges and suffering of people in our own cities, state, country and around the world. As we try to navigate, manage, and survive during these times of injustice, persecution, joblessness, homelessness, sickness and death, we have the opportunity to come together in this class. We are a learning community, and as individuals who are part of this collective space, we should be guided by the following principles:

People are the priority. Educational institutions may claim that students and teachers are their top priority, yet the holistic wellbeing of students and educators is ultimately demonstrated by actions and practices that clearly and uncompromisingly prioritize the people most impacted by them.

As participants in the process of teaching and learning we should remember to put people first by practicing the ideas we will learn about in this class with empathy and compassion. We must remember to engage with our minds as well as our hearts as *sentipensantes*, human beings whose humanity is deeply connected to our ability to think and feel.

Stay informed. We will seek reliable sources of information to stay informed about developments related to the pandemic and to local and global social injustices. We will also ponder contradicting sets of information “out there” and how these inform our convictions. We will use this to make informed personal and professional decisions.

Communicate and connect. We will communicate with each other often and will remain connected. This may mean experimenting with communication platforms that may be new to some of us. It may also mean changing platforms as needed. Please reach out when you have questions and when you need support.

Celebrate accomplishments. We will take time to celebrate and mark our collective class accomplishments and the individual accomplishments that are significant to you. Any kind of achievement during an uncertain time is a testament to your ability to persevere and our collective ability to do it together.

Take time to thrive. It is important that individually and collectively we take time to take care of our minds, bodies, and spirits. If you are not feeling well and are struggling to do the work for this class, **let me know so that we can come up with alternatives.** Do not push yourself beyond your limits; invest in self-care and self-preservation. Take time to do things that nurture your body, mind, and soul.

*SO GLAD TO HAVE YOU WITH US THIS FALL!
LOOKING FORWARD TO AN AWESOME SEMESTER!
-DR. JOHNSON & THE INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANTS*