

**SYLLABUS**  
**CULTURE AND SOCIETY**  
**ANTH 2300.002**  
**SPRING 2020**

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Office: Sycamore Hall 119

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

Meeting location: Cury 204

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 2300.002) 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 writing skills

## Course Expectations

This course requires reading, preparation, and 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 or discussions in order to do well in this course, 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 and exams. Comments that are disrespectful to your classmates and/or myself will not be tolerated.

Each class period, I will expect you to:

- Have completed the readings
- Pose questions for clarification or extension of points
- Participate actively in discussion and debate

## Required Texts and Other Readings

One textbook is required for this course, entitled *Cultural Anthropology: Global Forces, Local Lives, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition*, by Jack David Eller. (Make sure you get the THIRD 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.

## Important Information

**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 in class, and I am relatively 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/silence the ringer 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:** The Department of Anthropology does not tolerate plagiarism, cheating, or helping others to cheat. For this class, writing assignments may 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 Assistants 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 (even late) 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 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.

**Basic Needs:** You can't learn if you are hungry! UNT is one of the few college campuses around the country that has a Food Pantry on campus. Any current UNT student in need can visit the UNT 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.

**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.

## Course Evaluation

Class Participation	10%
Reading Assessments/Group Assignments	20%
Current Events Presentation	20%
Ethnographic Interview and Analysis	20%
Midterm Exam	15%
Final Exam	15%

### 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 Events 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 5 "Current Events" journal entries throughout the course, worth 40 points each.

Journal entries will identify a "current event" and analyze it using concepts from class. Current Event topics can include anything related to "culture" (which, you will find out, is most everything!) including economics, politics, law, social movements, religion, language,

kinship, social and news media, food, and more. While current news stories or notable events make especially good “Current Events,” other options include identifying and analyzing activist efforts/groups (history of organizations and/or coalitions, organizational brochures, manifestos, protest and mobilization, etc), artistic works (poems, music lyrics, artwork, performance art, etc), academic or intellectual work (articles, books, etc), or any other sites of analysis that you think are relevant. Be creative!

Each journal entry should be at least 250 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 topic from class or your required readings**
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 it much more relevant for you. Note that in class, I may sometimes ask you to discuss recent current event journal entries with your classmates.

#### **IV. ETHNOGRAPHIC INTERVIEW AND REPORT (200 POINTS)**

To complete this project, you will conduct an 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 will develop a questionnaire that will help you gain information about your interviewee’s childhood and life growing up, their education and work experiences, their family relationships, their experiences migrating if relevant, and their experiences with/opinions about U.S. culture/society (amongst other areas in which you are interested). Your goal here is to try to understand how cultural theories and concepts from class/the text relate to your interviewee’s life experiences and worldview.

You will turn in a **800-1000 word paper** describing your interviewee’s life, along with a copy of the interview questions. In the paper, you will use the recording and your notes from the interview to give a detailed description and analysis, including:

1. In-depth description of the interviewee’s life experiences
2. The cultural relevances and/or meanings that you
3. Use of at least two concepts from the course and/or text to analyze the content of 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.**

In this project, you will also 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. I suggest that include a section in your final paper that details your own reflections on this experience.

### **V. Exams (300 points)**

There will be two examinations for this class, a Midterm and a Final Exam. The Midterm Exam is worth 150 points, and will cover lectures, readings, and all other materials from the first half of the course. The Final Exam is also worth 150 points, and will cover lecture, readings, and all other materials from the second half of the course. Although the Final Exam is not intended to be fully comprehensive, it may draw on concepts and materials introduced earlier in the semester. The exams will consist of true/false, multiple choice, short answer questions, and an essay question.

Do not miss the scheduled exams. 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).

**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 Events Journal deadlines

2/24: Midterm Exam

4/13: Turn in Ethnographic Interview and Analysis Assignment

5/4: Final Exam

## **Course Schedule**

### **Section 1: "The Danger of a Single Story": Anthropology and the Study of Humans**

1/13: First day of class; No readings assigned

1/15: Douglas Raybeck "The Dawn of Interest"

1/17: Eller pgs. 1-9

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

1/20: NO CLASS- MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY

1/22: Eller pgs. 9-13, 20-28

1/24: Eller pgs. 14-17

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

1/27: Eller pgs. 35-41

~ **Current Events Journal 1 DUE** ~

1/29: Anthropology fieldnotes <http://anthronow.com/fieldnotes/poco-a-poco-writing-from-the-road-in-lima-peru>

1/31: Horace Miner "The Body Rituals of the Nacirema"

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

2/3: Eller pgs. 42-50

2/5: Eller pgs. 50-60

2/7: Edward Said- selection from "Orientalism"

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

2/10: Eller pgs. 176-185

~ **Current Events Journal 2 DUE** ~

2/12: Eller pgs. 170-176

2/14: Michel Foucault, Selection from "Discipline and Punish" (read pages 1-top of page 7/finish paragraph from page 6)

2/17: Eller pgs. 123-133

2/19: Eller pgs. 133-138; 141- 145

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

**2/24: MIDTERM EXAM**



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

2/26: Eller pgs. 89- 99

2/28: 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!)

3/2: Anne Fausto-Sterling “The Five Sexes”

~ **Current Events Journal 3 DUE** ~

3/4: AAA Statement on Race:

<http://www.americananthro.org/ConnectWithAAA/Content.aspx?ItemNumber=2583>

3/6: Eller pgs. 100- 110

## **3/9- 3/13: SPRING BREAK!**

3/16: Eller pgs. 110-119

3/18: Kimberlé Crenshaw- selection from “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex”

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

*Language, Communication, and Culture*

3/20: Eller pgs. 61-70

3/23: Eller pgs. 70- 79

~ **Current Events Journal 4 DUE** ~

3/25: Shaylih Muehlmann “Spread your ass cheeks: And other things that should not be said in indigenous languages”

*Kinship and Family*

3/27: Eller pgs. 146- 154

3/30: Eller pgs. 155-160

4/1: Nancy F. Cott- “An Archeology of American Monogamy”

*Religions, Rituals, and Symbols*

4/3: Eller pgs. 191-198

4/6: Eller pgs. 205-212

~ **Current Events Journal 5 DUE** ~

4/8: George Gmelch "Baseball Magic"

*Food and Culture*

4/10: Roland Barthes "Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption"

4/13: Psyche Williams-Forsen "More than Just the 'Big Piece of Chicken': The Power of Race, Class, and Food in American Consciousness" (pgs 344- 348 required, the whole article is recommended!)

***DUE: ETHNOGRAPHIC INTERVIEW AND ANALYSIS***

*The Body*

4/15: Eller pgs. 316- 324

4/17: Paul Farmer- An Anthropology of Structural Violence pgs. 305- 311

4/20: Paul Farmer- An Anthropology of Structural Violence pgs. 311-317

*Museums and Material Objects*

4/22: Selection from "Material Culture" in *Asking Questions about Anthropology*

4/24: Selection from "Material Culture" in *Asking Questions about Anthropology*

*Travel and Tourism*

4/27: Christine Preble- "Cruise Ship Tourism in Cozumel, Mexico: Frios Como la Naturaleza de los Gringos lo Dice"

4/29: Final considerations, no required readings

**5/4: FINAL EXAM 10:30AM-12:30AM**