

SYLLABUS
CULTURE AND SOCIETY
ANTH 2300.100
FALL 2022

Professor: Dr. Jara Carrington (she/they)

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Class meetings: MW 2:00-3:20

Meeting location: GATE 132

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

Course Description

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

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

politics to language to our understandings of social differences, this course will introduce you to the diversity and the commonalities in human societies and shed light on what it means to be human.

Course Objectives

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

Required Texts and Other Readings

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

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. 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

Names and Pronouns: I will gladly honor your request to call you by a name that differs from school records as well as whatever pronouns you use. I also understand that we grow and change in how we understand ourselves, therefore appropriate name and pronouns

can change during the semester. So, please advise me of how to address you whenever you feel comfortable, safe, and ready to do so. You can add pronouns to your Canvas account here <https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Student-Guide/How-do-I-select-personal-pronouns-in-my-user-account-as-a/ta-p/456>. The Pride Alliance office at UNT also offers support and information regarding communication about your name or pronouns.

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
Location: Sage Hall, Room 130

TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

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

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

UNT Learning Center

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

UNT Writing Center

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

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

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

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

EVALUATION AND EXPECTATIONS

Course Expectations

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

Grades

This course helps you to develop and use skills important to anthropologists, especially critical reading strategies, research methods, as well as oral and written communication skills. You will have the following opportunities to earn points for the class:

Class Participation	10%
In-Class Group Assignments	20%
Current Event Analysis	10%
Core Assessment	5%
Ethnographic Observation and Fieldnotes	20%
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. Reading Assessments/Group Assignments (200 points)

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

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

III. Current Event Analysis (100 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 an analysis of a "Current Event" making use of at least one concept or theory from the class and/or required readings.

In this assignment, you will describe a specific "current event" related to "culture" and then analyze it's cultural significance by applying at least one concept 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 things like economics, politics, and religion, but also things like film, social media, food, clothing, and more. Be creative and choose a topic that is interesting to you!

Your submission should be 500-600 words, and it should include:

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

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

IV. Core Assessment (50 points)

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

V. Ethnographic Observation and Fieldnotes Assignment (200 points)

To complete this project, you will go to a site/location of your choice for at least one hour of time-- the place you choose is up to you, so long as it is within the parameters outlined below. You will observe and participate in the activities taking place at this location, especially paying attention to the setting itself, the environment, the people and/or animals there, 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 will also draw a map of the space/place. You will then use the fieldnotes and map to write a narrative description about this space/place, using in-depth description to convey your experience to the reader. Your narrative write-up should be **600-750 words**.

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

- Your detailed fieldnotes that you took during your observation, at least one full page (50 points)
- Drawn map of the space/place (50 points)
- A more formal written narrative describing in detail your experience, 600-750 words (100 points)

The written narrative should include 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, with particular attention to the “attributes” of culture, to discuss the cultural function, significance, or meaning(s) of this space/place. To do this well, you must first describe the relevant attribute(s).**
5. Reflections on your experience of this activity—Did you interact with your environment or did you mostly only observe? What did you learn about this space/place seeing it from an anthropological point of view? 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. Your submission will be evaluated for thoroughness and attention to detail.

Parameters for completing this assignment:

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

- Wherever you choose, please be respectful of the people who are there.
- Make sure that the site is safe and please be aware of your surroundings.

VI. Ethnographic Interview and Report (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 experiences within a particular cultural and historical context
3. Discussion of your interviewee's life (childhood, youth, adulthood if relevant); including important or significant life experiences
4. **Application of at least two concepts from the lesson content and/or textbook to analyze, interpret, and/or understand the content of the interview. To do this well, you must first describe/define the concept itself.**
5. A reflection on the experience of doing the interview.

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

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

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

Dates To Remember

10/10: Ethnographic Observation and Fieldnotes Assignment Due

11/14: Current Event Analysis Due

11/28: Core Assessment Due

12/14: Ethnographic Interview and Report Assignment Due

Course Schedule and Required Readings

Section 1- Anthropology and the Study of Humans

8/29: First day of class; No readings assigned

8/31: 1. Douglas Raybeck "The Dawn of Interest"
2. Eller pgs. 1-9

9/5: Labor Day- No Class Today!
Check out this article about Labor Day history from History.com to find out more about why we celebrate this holiday:
<https://www.history.com/topics/holidays/labor-day-1>

Section 2- Cultural Anthropology and the Culture Concept

9/7: Eller pgs. 9- 19

9/12: Eller pgs. 20-30

Section 3- Packing Your Anthropological Backpack:

Methods and Practices

9/14: 1. Eller pgs. 35-42
2. Anthropology Now "Poco a Poco: Writing from the Road in Lima, Peru"
3. Tips for writing fieldnotes:

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

- 9/19: 1. Horace Miner "The Body Rituals of the Nacirema"
2. Fieldnotes examples: (they start a little down the page)
<https://www.reed.edu/anthro/201/fieldcommentaries.html>

Section 4- A Brief History of Anthropology

- 9/21: Eller pgs. 43-62
- 9/26: 1. Eller pgs. 260-271
2. Edward Said- selection from "Orientalism"

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

- 9/28: Eller pgs. 145-158
- 10/3: 1. Eller pgs. 159-169
2. Marcel Mauss, selection from "The Gift" (focus especially pgs. 108-111)
- 10/5: Eller pgs. 193-208
- 10/10: 1. Eller pgs. 209-215
2. Michel Foucault, Selection from "Discipline and Punish" (read pages 1-top of page 7/finish paragraph from page 6)

***10/10: ETHNOGRAPHIC OBSERVATION AND FIELDNOTES ASSIGNMENT DUE!
SUBMIT ON CANVAS BY 2:00PM***

Section 6- Thinking Anthropologically About... *Gender, Sexuality, Race, and Class*

- 10/12: Eller pgs. 89- 102
- 10/17: Emily Martin "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles"
- 10/19: 1. Eller pgs. 103- 113
2. American Anthropological Association's Statement on Race
<http://www.americananthro.org/ConnectWithAAA/Content.aspx?ItemNumber=2583>
- 10/24: 1. Eller pgs. 114-121
2. 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

10/26: Eller pgs. 63-83

10/31: Boroditsky “How Language Shapes Thought: The Languages We Speak Affect our Perceptions of the World”

Kinship and Family

11/2: Eller pgs. 170-192

11/7: Nancy F. Cott- “An Archeology of American Monogamy”

Religions, Rituals, and Symbols

11/9: Eller pgs. 216-228

11/14: 1. Eller pgs. 229-240
2. George Gmelch “Baseball Magic”

**11/14: CURRENT EVENT ANALYSIS DUE!
SUBMIT ON CANVAS BY 2:00PM**

Section 7- Current Topics in Anthropology

Food and Culture

11/16: Roland Barthes “Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption”

11/21: Psyche Williams-Forsen “More than Just the ‘Big Piece of Chicken’: The Power of Race, Class, and Food in American Consciousness”

11/23: Thanksgiving Holiday; No Class

Museums and Material Objects

11/28: 1. Selection from “Material Culture” in *Asking Questions about Anthropology*
2. Cairns “Museums are Dangerous Places: How Te Papa is Challenging Colonialist History”

**11/28: CORE ASSESSMENT DUE!
COMPLETE ON CANVAS BY 11:59PM**

The Body

- 11/30: 1. Eller pgs. 123-130, 135-138
2. Paul Farmer "An Anthropology of Structural Violence"

Travel and Tourism

- 12/5: 1. Eller pgs. 335-338
2. Christine Preble- "Cruise Ship Tourism in Cozumel, Mexico: Frios Como la Naturaleza de los Gringos lo Dice"
- 12/7: Final Thoughts and considerations (if necessary)

**12/14: ETHNOGRAPHIC INTERVIEW AND REPORT DUE!
SUBMIT ON CANVAS BY 11:59PM**