

SYLLABUS
ANTH 2300.200/300
CULTURE AND SOCIETY
FALL 2022

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Office Hours: By appointment on Zoom

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Email Policy:

- Please allow 48 hours for a response to your email. Emails sent after 4:00PM on Friday 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 2300.200/300) in the subject line along with the topic of the email.
- **Please email using your email account rather than Canvas.**

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 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 every aspect of our lives, from the way we communicate to the material objects we buy and consume. 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.

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>

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
- Some Lessons you will complete an additional writing assignment (Current Event Analysis, Ethnographic Observation, and Ethnographic Interview, see below for details)

~ All assignments (except the final discussion post and the Ethnographic Interview 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.

Grades

There are no exams in this course. However, this course does require you to use two skills important to anthropologists—reading and writing.

Calculating Your Grade

A total of 970 points are available in this class. To calculate your grade at any given moment, you divide the number of points you have received by the number of points possible at that point in time.

Grade Breakdown

Reflection Discussion Posts/Responses	14 weeks x 30 points = 420 points
Current Event Analysis	100 points
Core Assessment	50 points
Observation Activity/Field Notes	200 points
<u>Ethnographic Interview/Analysis</u>	<u>200 points</u>
Total points	970 points

ASSIGNMENTS

I. Discussion Boards: Reflection and Response Posts (30 points each)

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. Students may not make up discussion board posts after the due date has passed unless there is a university documented emergency.

II. 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 a Current Event Analysis.

In this assignment, you will pick 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 social movements, popular media, social media, news stories, domestic and international events, law/policy, and more. Be creative!

Your analysis should be at least 500-600 words. In your submission, you will want to:

1. Identify and provide a brief description/summary of your current event 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.**
3. Offer your very insightful and critical analysis of the topic/materials from an anthropological perspective; that is, what meaning might we learn from thinking about this topic from an anthropological standpoint (FYI: "I thought it was interesting" is neither insightful nor critical)

4. Include a weblink or copy of object if relevant

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

III. 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.

IV. 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 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 plus a drawn map of the space. 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 **THREE documents** for points

- Your detailed fieldnotes (see discussion and example in lesson) that you took during your observation (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)

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, 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.

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 (150 points), **along with a copy of the interview questions that you asked your interviewee** (50

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 concepts themselves.**
5. A reflection on the experience of doing the interview. How did it feel to be the interviewer? What did you learn? Was it easier or more challenging than you thought it would be? Did you know the person before the interview? If so, how do you see that person differently after 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. 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
10/2: Ethnographic Observation and Fieldnotes Assignment Due
11/6: Current Event Analysis Assignment Due
12/4: Core Assessments Due
12/14: Ethnographic Interview and Report Due

COURSE SCHEDULE

8/29-9/4 Lesson 1: Introduction to the Course	To Read: No required readings, familiarize yourself with the Canvas course webpage	To Turn In: DUE 9/4 1. Lesson 1 Reflection Discussion and Response Posts 2. Syllabus quiz (extra credit!!)
9/5-9/11 Lesson 2: Introduction to Anthropology	To Read: 1. Eller pgs. 1-19 2. Raybeck "The Dawn of Interest" 3. Watters "The Americanization of Mental Illness"	To Turn In: DUE 9/11 1. Lesson 2 Reflection Discussion and Response Posts
9/12-9/18 Lesson 3: The Concept of Culture	To Read: 1. Eller pgs. 20-34 2. DeLuca "Why Don't Westerners Eat Off One Plate" 3. Scheper-Hughes "Death Without Weeping"	To Turn In: DUE 9/18 1. Lesson 3 Reflection Discussion and Response Posts
9/19-9/25 Lesson 4: Ethnographic Fieldwork	To Read: 1. Eller pgs. 35-41 2. Miner "The Body Rituals of the Nacirema" 3. Nordling "Who Gets to Study Whom?"	To Turn In: DUE 9/25 1. Lesson 4 Reflection Discussion and Response Posts

9/26-10/2 Lesson 5: History and Theories in Anthropology	To Read: 1. Eller pgs. 42-60, 233-252	To Turn In: DUE 10/2 1. Lesson 5 Reflection Discussion and Response Posts 2. ETHNOGRAPHIC OBSERVATION ASSIGNMENT
10/3-10/9 Lesson 6: Economic Systems	To Read: 1. Eller pgs. 123-145 2. Suzman "Why Envy Might Be Good for Us"	To Turn In: DUE 10/9 1. Lesson 6 Reflection Discussion and Response Posts

	3. Smith "Cell Phones, Sharing, and Social Status in an African Society"	
10/10-10/16 Lesson 7: Politics, Social Order, and Social Control	To Read: 1. Eller pgs. 169-190 2. Farmer "An Anthropology of Structural Violence" 3. Sanchez "Facing COVID-19 as an Undocumented Essential Worker"	To Turn In: DUE 10/16 1. Lesson 7 Reflection Discussion and Response Posts
10/17-10/23 Lesson 8: Sex and Gender	To Read: 1. Eller pgs. 81-98 2. Emily Martin "The Egg and the Sperm" 3. Goel "Hijras- India's Third Gender Rises Again"	To Turn In: DUE 10/23 1. Lesson 8 Reflection Discussion and Response Posts
10/24-10/30 Lesson 9: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity	To Read: 1. Eller pgs. 100-121 2. AAA Statement on Race 3. Delgado and Stefancic "Introduction to Critical Race Theory"	To Turn In: DUE 10/30 1. Lesson 9 Reflection Discussion and Response Posts
10/31-11/6 Lesson 10: Culture Change and Culture Tradition	To Read: 1. Eller pgs. 215-232; 274-293 2. Lasco "The Dark Side of Skin Whitening" 3. Eriksen "How Globalization has Broken the Chain of Responsibility"	To Turn In: DUE 11/6 1. Lesson 10 Reflection Discussion and Response Posts 2. CURRENT EVENT ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT
11/7-11/13 Lesson 11: Kinship and Marriage	To Read: 1. Eller pgs. 146-168 2. Cott "An Archeology of American Monogamy"	To Turn In: DUE 11/13 1. Lesson 11 Reflection Discussion and Response Posts

	3. Nanda “Arranged Marriages in India”	
11/14-11/20 Lesson 12: Language and Communication	To Read: 1. Eller pgs. 61-79 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?”	To Turn In: DUE 11/20 1. Lesson 12 Reflection Discussion and Response Posts
10/21-10/27: NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING BREAK		
10/28-12/4 Lesson 13: Religion and Magic	To Read: 1. Eller pgs. 191-213 2. Gmelch “Baseball Magic” 3. Del Guericco “The Secrets of Haiti’s Living Dead”	To Turn In: DUE 12/4 1. Lesson 13 Reflection Discussion and Response Posts 2. CORE ASSESSMENTS
12/5-12/8 **NOTE THIS IS A SHORT WEEK, DISCUSSIONS ARE DUE ON THURSDAY!!** Lesson 14: Museums and Material Culture	To Read: 1. Eller pgs. 295-315 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”	To Turn In: DUE 12/8 1. Lesson 14 Reflection Discussion and Response Posts
12/14: ETHNOGRAPHIC INTERVIEW AND REPORT ASSIGNMENT DUE BY 11:59PM		