:: Anthropology 210 (CRN 21417): Comparative Cultures – 3 credits ::

Jamie Petts Class: Tue & Th 4-5:20 pm

Instructor, Social Sciences Benton Center Room 244

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**Course Description**

Examines the ethnographic process anthropologists use to study other cultures, the process of comparing two or more cultures in an ethnologic context, and the development of cultures over time to be what they are today. Introduces a methodology for engaging in culturally relative dialogue is introduced and then emphasized in all learning activities. Recommended: College-level reading and writing skills.

Welcome to Anthropology 210. This course introduces students to comparatively study human beings, societies, and cultures. This course provides students with an overview of cultural anthropology and its ways of understanding people. The course material explores the diversity of human cultures and takes a close look into a varied number of human communities in order to understand how they work, how they are different from others, and the forces that shape their worldviews.

Anthropology makes the strange familiar and the familiar strange. Why do we do the things we do? Throughout the course, you will be challenged to confront what you think is “normal” because the way you view the world is just one of many well-organized, equally sophisticated, and historically contingent approaches to life. Embrace this challenge and you may gain a better understanding of how you and others make sense of everyday life. Simply put, by exploring other cultures, you will better understand your own.

**Learning Outcomes:**

* Explore and describe historical and environmental influences on other cultures.
* Describe similarities and differences between cultures and apply the anthropological approach of cultural relativism.

**Instructor Philosophy**

One of my primary goals in teaching anthropology is to enable my students to develop appropriate tools to be able to engage and employ them both in and out of the classroom. As anthropologists we fully understand that the condition of being a human is that we have to understand the meaning of our experience. In the context of learning anthropology in the classroom, it is vital for students to viscerally learn to make their own interpretations rather than act on the purpose, beliefs, and judgments of others. Facilitating such an understanding is the pinnacle of my teaching philosophy. In other words, it is my hope and expectation that this course will help you create your own ideas and opinions about cultural phenomenon, particularly your own culture.

One of the foundational methodologies used in my classroom is focusing on each student’s needs, abilities, interests, and learning styles placing the instructor as a facilitator of learning, acknowledging that the student voice is central to the learning experience. The benefits of this approach strengthens student motivation, promotes peer communication, builds student-teacher relationships, and engages in learning as an active process, while simultaneously fostering each student to *take responsibility for their own learning.*

**Course Goals:**

~ Students will learn to see human cultures – whether in texts, religious rituals, or political or economic behavior from an anthropological perspective. These insights can be applied both to cultures separated from students’ own cultures by time or space as well as their own cultures.

~ Students will learn to recognize that cultures exist in time and space and are unique to that time and that space. Cultures are distinctive and understanding them requires accepting and negotiating otherness.

~ Students will understand that politics is intrinsically cultural and culture intrinsically political.

~ Students will appreciate the influence of the environment in enabling and constraining social life.

~ Students will have the opportunity to conduct an ethnographic project.

**Required Textbook:**

Asking Questions about Cultural Anthropology: A Concise Introduction (ISBN 978-0198826909) by Welsh and Vivanco.

**Additional Readings:**

All readings that are not found in our textbook will be posted to our class’s Canvas page.

\*You will need to do the posted readings and have a copy of this textbook to succeed in this course. If you are experiencing any obstacles in trying to purchase the textbook, please talk to me as soon as possible. Also, there is a copy of the textbook on course reserves in the Learning Center. The book is available for two hours at a time to check out.

\*Readings need to be completed by the day of the class that they are listed on the course schedule.

**Course Expectations and Classroom Culture:**

*Student Conduct:* The discipline of Anthropology requires us to explore the lives of others as well as our own. This means that certain topics can be sensitive at times and we have to act with the utmost respect for one another. The classroom must remain a safe space for us to explore our thoughts and learn. You will be expected to conduct yourself in an honest, professional, and ethical manner.

Laptops have been consistently proven to be a distraction in class for the students using them, other students, and the instructor. Use of a laptop or other technological device are not permitted in class without the prior consent of the instructor.

*Late Assignment Policy:* Please complete your work on time. Each day an assignment is late, it will drop a letter grade.

*Absences*: Attending all classes is correlated to student success. Attendance will be taken each week. If you know you will be absent, communicate with your instructor prior to the absence and arrangements will be made. If you have an unexpected absence, please follow along with the class on the syllabus, contacting your instructor if you have any questions.

**In-class writings cannot be made up.**

*Statement on Academic Dishonesty:* As a college student you will be held to the highest standards regarding academic integrity. Academic dishonesty includes: cheating (the intentional use of unauthorized materials, information, or study aids); fabrication (falsification or invention of any information); assisting (helping another commit an act of academic dishonesty); tampering (altering or interfering with evaluation instruments and documents); and plagiarism (intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another person as one's own). At the discretion of the instructor, engaging in academic dishonesty risks will absolutely result in a zero on the dishonest assignment and risks failing the entire course

*Students with Disabilities:*

LBCC is committed to inclusiveness and equal access to higher education. If you have approved accommodations through the Center for Accessibility Resources (CFAR) and would like to use your accommodations in the class, please talk to your instructor as soon as possible to discuss your needs. If you believe you may need accommodations but are not yet registered with CFAR, please visit the [CFAR Website](https://www.linnbenton.edu/cfar) (<https://www.linnbenton.edu/cfar)> for steps on how to apply for services or call 541-917-4789.

**Course Requirements & Grades:**

**Group Teaching Project: Language and Communication (10 points) due Thursday, October 11th**

Each person will teach their assigned reading although we will brainstorm ideas in a group. Do not think of this assignment as a presentation, approach it from the perspective of a teacher. Some of the central questions teachers need to ask themselves before preparing their classes are as follows:

What are the goals of the class session going to be?

What do I already know about this topic?

How can I best prepare for the class session?

What questions do I already have about this topic that I want to find out more about?

What is the significance of this?

How can we apply this knowledge directly to our own lives?

Readings: One reading for each group, but will be taught individually to another group.

1. Morgan, Mindy, J. (2005) Redefining the Ojibwe Classroom: Indigenous Language Programs within Large Research Universities. Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 36.1: 96-103
2. Meek, Barbra A. (2006) And the Injun goes “How!”: Representations of American Indian English in White Public Space. Language in Society 35.01: 93-128.
3. Conformity and Conflict textbook, Chapter 7. “Manipulating Meaning: The Military Name Game” by Sarah Boxer, p. 57
4. Conformity and Conflict textbook, Chapter 5. “Shakespeare in the Bush” by Laura Bohannan, p. 41

**Writing Assignments (15 points)**

These writings will take place both in-class and out of class. As an out of class assignment, they will warm you up for the material that will be presented in class that day. As an in-class writing assignment, they will act as an expansion exercise - an opportunity for you to express your opinions and reflect on the course material. For in-class writings, you will never be graded on organization, spelling, grammar, etc. This is called free association writing, or, in other words, a space for you to explore what flows out of your head and onto the paper.

**Concept Journal (20 points) - Due Tuesday, Week 9**

In this course you will keep a concept journal - a journal that is kind of like a vocabulary journal. Throughout the class, I will mention the journal and we will add new key terms to it. Your concept journal follows three steps: a) definition b) a sentence that *provides context* for the term and c) a short explanation of how you relate this word to your own life. You can staple pieces of paper together to create a journal or use a small notebook - whatever works for you.

Here is an example: let’s imagine in class the word “ethnocentrism” comes up in the lecture or text. This is not a word that is typically used in everyday conversation, yet is common in the social sciences.

a) Ethnocentrism (noun) or Ethnocentric (adjective)

1. the belief in the inherent superiority of one's own ethnic group or culture
2. a tendency to view alien groups or cultures from the perspective of one's own
3. belief in the intrinsic superiority of the nation, culture, or group to which one belongs, often accompanied by feelings of dislike for other groups

b) Believing that your culture is superior to others shows someone’s lack of imagination for not being able to see things from a different perspective.

c) I have a friend who sees things ethnocentrically. He often makes large generalizations about groups of people that are misinformed. He always talks about his “African neighbor” who makes a lot of noise upstairs as if all people from there are loud. It is ethnocentric to think of a group of people as one stereotype. Africa is a diverse continent with 57 different countries, but Americans too often make that ethnocentric mistake.

**Participation (10 points)** -

You will be given ample opportunity to participate. Participation does not only mean speaking up in class. In fact, when the same person speaks all the time it hampers others ability to participate. Participation is about engagement. There are many ways to engage with the material. One such way is speaking up in class and another way is being a solid group member. An additional way to participate is contribute to our course’s Canvas page. Your attendance will also be reflected in your participation grade.

**Ethnographic Interview (10 points) due Thursday, Week 5**

You will find a person over the age of sixty to interview. There will be a separate handout explaining this assignment in detail. You will have to turn in three parts for this assignment: 1) fieldnotes 2) typed transcript and 3) an analysis/reflection of the experience.

**Midterm (15 points) - Due Tuesday, Week 6**

The midterm will be based on your concept journal plus short answer questions. It will be a take home exam and handed out to you Thursday of Week 5 and handed in on Tuesday of Week 6. Late assignments will not be accepted.

**Group Quiz (5 points) -**

This will be unannounced and based on the readings. You will be paired with a classmate to answer the questions.

**Final Essay Exam (15 points) -**

The final exam in the class will be a summation of what you have learned in the course. Our final exam is Tuesday, December 4 at the normal class time of 4 PM.

**Extra-credit Assignment (optional) - (5 points) -**

Warning! This is a four hour documentary so do not count on this! Search for the BBC Documentary entitled, Century of Self by Adam Curtis. It is broken into four parts so searching “Century of Self Part 1” on YouTube can be helpful. The extra credit assignment is to watch the whole documentary, taking hand-written notes on points made that stuck out to you. You will turn in your hand-written notes along with in a minimum one page essay (typed) reflecting on what you learned in the film and how it relates to your own life.

Your grade can be cleanly calculated out of 100 points. It should not be a surprise to you.

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| Total Points | Final Grade |
| 100-81 | A |
| 80-61 | B |
| 60-41 | C |
| 40-21 | D |
| 20 and below | F |

**Tentative Overview of Course and Readings \*Subject to Change\***

**AQ = Asking Questions**

**CA = Canvas**

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| Date & Topic | Tuesday Class | Thursday Class |
| Week 1: Sept 25 and 27  Introductions & Anthropology | Syllabus - in-depth  Introductions  Short Film: The Danger of a Single Story **(CA)** <https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en>  **(Handed out in class and on CA) Nice Girls Don’t Talk to Rastas p. 31-36 + questions**  Key Terms | **(AQ) Letter from the Authors p. xviii**  **(AQ) Preface p. xx-xxii**  **(AQ) Chapter 1 pp.1-21**  **(AQ) Chapter 2 pp.22-40**  Key Terms |
| Week 2: Oct 2 and 4  Language & Communication | **(CA) “Whorf Revisited: You Are What you Speak” p. 49-56 + questions**  **(CA) Conversation Style: Talking on the Job p. 53 + questions**  Meet with your group for teaching project  Clip, Write, Talk! Activity | **(AQ) Chapter 3 pp. 41-44 (up to section titled Historical Linguistics) and pp. 50-60.** |
| Week 3: Oct 9 and 11  Language & Communication | Ethnographic Interview assignment explained  **(AQ) Chapter 4 pp. 61-71**  **(CA) Ethnography & Culture p. 6-12** | **Group Teaching Project due** |
| Week 4: Oct 16 and 18  Technology & Cultural Change | Short film: Sherry Turkle - Connected, but Alone? | **(CA) Eskimo Science article + questions** |
| Week 5: Oct 23 and 25  Technology & Cultural Change | Lecture + Short Movie Clip  **(CA) Watching The Clock: A Mother's Hope For A Natural Birth In A Cesarean Culture Health Affairs (2015) 34 (1):178-182 + questions**  **(CA) The Most Scientific Birth is Often the Least Technological One + questions**  (https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2012/03/the-most-scientific-birth-is-often-the-least-technological-birth/254420/)  **(CA) Homebirth Reading**  (https://today.oregonstate.edu/archives/2014/jan/study-finds-home-births-comparatively-safe-%E2%80%93-low-risk-women-infants)  Midterm take home exam - handed out | ***Ethnographic Interview due***  Group work  **(CA) How Natural Birth Became Inaccessible to the Poor** https://www.sapiens.org/body/indigenous-midwives-mexico/ |
| Week 6: Oct 30 and Nov. 1  The Anthropology of Globalization | **Midterm exam due**  Lecture + Key Terms  **(AQ) Chapter 13 pp. 248-255**  **(CA) How Sushi Went Global by Theodore Bestor p. 297-306 + questions** | **(AQ) Chapter 5 (all)**    **(AQ) Chapter 7 (all)** |
| Week 7: Nov 6 and 8  Towards an Anthropology of Women | **(CA) Global Women in the New Economy p. 326-334 + questions**  **(CA) The Global Trade in Filipina Workers + questions** | **(AQ) Chapter 9 (all)** |
| Week 8: Nov 13 and 15  Towards an Anthropology of Women | **(CA) The Opt-Out Phenomenon: Women, Work, and Identity in America + questions**  **(CA) Lila Abu-Lughod: Do Muslim Women Need Saving? p. 208-216 + questions**  Short Film: Wearing Hijab | **(AQ) Chapter 10 (all)** |
| Week 9: Nov 20  Religion | **(AQ) Chapter 11 (all)**  Questions + group activity | *NO CLASS. College is closed for the Thanksgiving holiday.* |
| Week 10: Nov 27 and 29  Environmental Anthropology & Closing | Lecture + class activity  Inuit Observations on Climate Change Film   1. **(CA) Lisa Bennett article - 10 things you want to know about human nature if you’re fighting climate change + questions** 2. **(CA) We are Going Underwater Susan Crate p. 88-95 + questions**   **CA) How does an Anthropologist Add Value in the Workplace? + questions** | **(AQ) Chapter 6 pp. 112-117** |
| December 4 | Final Exam | No class. Term is over! |

**Changes to the Syllabus**

I reserve the right to change the contents of this syllabus. You will be given notice of relevant changes in class, through a Canvas Announcement, and/or through LBCC e-mail.

“The purpose of anthropology is to make the world safe for human differences.”

- Ruth Benedict