

## :: Introduction to Cultural Anthropology ::

**Lauren Visconti**  
**Faculty, Social Sciences**  
**visconl@linnbenton.edu**

**T/R 10:00-11:20 :: Tadena 207**  
**Office: SSH 111**  
**Hours: Friday 2-4 + by appointment**

### **Course Description:**

Anthropologists today research sites as varied as Wall Street investment banks, India's Supreme Court, cities in Nigeria, villages in Japan, classrooms in Peru, Indonesian mining towns, Miami's nightclubs, health clinics in Sweden, caves in Greece, oceanographic research ships, and San Francisco's Chinatown. Their methods often involve months or years of observing, participating in the communities they study - an approach that generates deep knowledge of the immense variety of human experience and ways of life.

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". The way you view the world is just one of many well-organized, equally sophisticated, and historically contingent approaches to life and one way of being. By exploring other cultures, we begin to better understand our own.

This course introduces students to key concepts, methods, theories, and approaches in cultural anthropology. It provides an opportunity for new analytical strategies and frameworks for understanding culture, power, language, politics, economics, inequality, race, class, gender, migration, health, and globalization. We all hold enormous assumptions about these topics and hardly tease these assumptions apart, assuming they are "natural" - and under closer scrutiny, we come to understand that they are complex cultural processes. Cultural anthropology helps provide the tools to test these assumptions so that we can better understand the contemporary world and actively engage our shared challenges.

### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

- Articulate an understanding of culture as a dynamic and adaptive mechanism used by humans to live a life that would be impossible if totally dependent on nature, while also recognizing that new environmental pressures and stimulus are continually at play.
- Apply anthropological theories, insights, and methods to contemporary situations students are likely to encounter in their professional and personal lives.
- Use cultural anthropology to understand specific societal problems in a wide variety of areas, such as medicine, education, social relationships, government, architecture, business and economic development.

- Develop a critical understanding of cultural diversity and its implications, ultimately enhancing sensitivity to other cultures.
- Identify and analyze complex practices, values and beliefs and the culturally and historically defined meanings of difference.

### **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 create our own ideas and opinions about cultural phenomenon, particularly about our own culture.

Taking responsibility for your own learning and participating in class discussions is what makes our course enjoyable!

### **Required Textbook:**

- 1) Guest, K. J. (2017) *Cultural Anthropology: A Reader for a Global Age*. Norton Publishers.
- 2) *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down* by Anne Fadiman

\*These texts are essential in order to succeed in this course. Please talk to your instructor immediately if you are experiencing any access issues.

### **Course Rules 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. We are all required to conduct ourselves in an honest, professional, and ethical manner.

### **Technology Statement**

\*Laptops and other screen devices have consistently been 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 solely permitted after discussing this need with your instructor.

However, we do use Canvas in this course! We will be uploading all of our assignments there. No assignments will be accepted elsewhere.

Here is your access to our course this term. This has also been sent to your email. Contact your Instructor as soon as possible if you are having any issues getting into Canvas. I am your point of contact for any help with this site.

**<https://canvas.instructure.com/enroll/RAG7TF>. Alternatively, they can sign up at <https://canvas.instructure.com/register> and use the following join code: **RAG7TF****

### **Late work policy**

- ❖ Late work that we complete *outside* of class is accepted for less credit. Work that is completed in class (quizzes and in-class writings) can not be made up.
- ❖ The amount of points earned drops each day an assignment is late. For example, if you have an assignment due on Tuesday worth five points and you upload it to Canvas on Thursday, you will receive three points. Achieving those three points is absolutely worth it and I encourage you to complete your work.
- ❖ Additionally, the last day to submit any late assignments is the last day of class of Week 10. No assignments will be accepted after this date.

### **Absences:**

Attending all classes is correlated to student success. The films, lectures, and discussions we engage with in class are crucial to your participation in the course as well. 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 engage in the following steps:

- 1) Check our course calendar to stay on track
- 2) Log into Canvas to find the slides posted from the day you missed
- 3) Email your classmate (s) to check in with them

If you have any questions after this do not hesitate to contact your instructor if you have any questions.

\*Missing the equivalent of three weeks in this course results in not being able to pass.

**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 accommodation needs:** Accommodations are a collaborative effort between students, faculty, and staff. You should meet with your instructor during the first week of class if you have a documented disability and need accommodations. Your instructor needs to know this from you in order for you to best be accommodated. If you think you may need accommodation services please contact Center for Accessibility Resources (CFAR): 541-917-4789. <https://www.linnbenton.edu/cfar>

**Basic Needs Statement:**

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Roadrunner Resource Center for support ([resources@linnbenton.edu](mailto:resources@linnbenton.edu) , or visit us on the web [www.linnbenton.edu/RRC](http://www.linnbenton.edu/RRC) under Student Support for Current Students). Our office can help students get connected to resources to help. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to provide any resources that they may possess.

**Policy on Children in Class:**

It is my belief that if we want women in academia, that we should also expect children to be present in some form. Currently, the college does not have a formal policy on children in the classroom. The policy described here is thus, a reflection of my own beliefs and commitments to student, staff, and faculty parents.

1) All exclusively breastfeeding babies are welcome in class as often as is necessary to support the breastfeeding relationship. Because not all women can pump sufficient milk, and not all babies will take a bottle reliably, I never want students to feel like they have to choose between feeding their baby and continuing their education. You and your nursing baby are welcome in class anytime.

2) For older children and babies, I understand that minor illnesses and unforeseen disruptions in childcare often put parents in the position of having to choose between missing class to stay home with a child and leaving him or her with someone you or the child does not feel comfortable with. While this is not meant to be a long-term childcare solution, occasionally bringing a child to class in order to cover gaps in care is perfectly acceptable. Please be mindful when a sickness is contagious to help protect the health of others.

3) I ask that all students work with me to create a welcoming environment that is respectful of all forms of diversity, including diversity in parenting status.

4) In all cases where babies and children come to class, I ask that you sit close to the door so that if your little one needs special attention and is disrupting learning for other students, you may step outside until their needs have been met. Non-parents in the class, please reserve seats near the door for your parenting classmates.

5) I understand that often the largest barrier to completing your coursework once you become a parent is the tiredness many parents feel in the evening once children have *finally* gone to sleep. The struggles of balancing school, childcare, and often another job are exhausting! I hope that you will feel comfortable disclosing your student-parent status to me. This is the first step in my being able to accommodate any special needs that arise. While I maintain the same high expectations for all students in my classes regardless of parenting status, I am happy to problem solve with you in a way that makes you feel supported as you strive for school-parenting balance. Thank you for the diversity you bring to our classroom.

6) Lastly, a lot of the course material we talk about in class is only for adults and can be too difficult for children to process. The instructor is more than willing to accommodate children in the classroom, but can not make any changes to the content of the course based on what might be appropriate/inappropriate for children.

### **Requirements for success in this course**

- 1) Come to class prepared
- 2) Access required texts
- 3) Complete work on time
- 4) Participate and engage respectfully with your classmates
- 5) Look at Course Calendar daily
- 6) Access and use CANVAS course online

### **Course Requirements & Grades ~**

#### **3 Podcasts (10 points)**

In this course, we will listen to three podcasts at home. For the first one, you write one page reflection. The second one, you come prepared to class to engage in a discussion on the topic you learned about at home. The third podcast/article is one of your choice from the website sapiens.org. You will teach what you learned to a small group and facilitate a discussion in class on your topic.

#### **Danger of a Single Story & Illness and Healing Assignment (10 points)**

These are two separate assignments that will be detailed in class. The Danger of a Single Story reflection can be found under Week 1 on CANVAS and the Illness & Healing Assignment corresponds to our Medical Anthropology module under Week 3.

### **6 Discussion Questions (15 points)**

You will hand in the discussion questions that correspond to four separate articles we read in our text. This will help you engage deeper in the readings and I encourage you to not only seek the “right” answer, but also reflect on the work as well.

### **Teaching Project (10 points)**

Each person will teach their assigned reading, although we will brainstorm ideas in a group. You are responsible for individually teaching your article for 10 minutes to your classmates. A rubric will be provided to you beforehand.

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?

### **Midterm Exam (10 points)**

This consists of 8 open-ended questions. You are allowed to use your notebooks. Zero technology is permitted during the use of this exam.

### **Group Film Activity (5 points)**

You will be paired with a classmate(s) to answer the questions from the film we watch.

### **Research Teaching Project (10 points)**

You will be assigned a topic related to our module on class inequality. Similar to the teaching project, you will research the topic your group is assigned and then present your topic individually to another group in class. Do not think of this assignment as a presentation, approach it from the perspective of a teacher. You will be peer-evaluated and a rubric will be provided to you prior to the assignment.

You are responsible for teaching your group about your assigned site. Presentation should include, but is not limited to the following:

- Brief history/map of the place.
- Who lives there? Who doesn't?
- What happened? Why did this happen? Did it "need" to?
- Apply an Environmental Justice framework to your site
- Discuss the public's response and resistance tactics.
- Was there any resolution? If so, what did it look like?
- How could this be avoided in the future?

### **Overview of Grading**

<b><u>Assignment</u></b>	<b><u>Total points</u></b>
Danger of a Single Story Assignment	5
Podcast I reflection	5
Illness & Healing Assignment	5
Teaching Project I	10
Midterm	10
Black Gold Film Activity	5
Discussion Questions	2.5 each X 6 = 15
Sapiens article/podcast	5
Spirit Reading Quizzes	2.5 each X 6 = 15
Research Teaching Project	10
Final reflection in class writing	5
Final exam	10

Total points	100
--------------	-----

**Course Calendar Winter 2020**

\* Textbook: Cultural Anthropology: A Reader for a Global Age = R

\*\* The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down = Spirit

\*\*\*Canvas = (CA)

	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>
<b>Week 1: Jan 6th</b> <b>Anthropology in a Global Age</b>	Introductions & Syllabus & Learning Management System (LMS)	1) R =Intro p. 3-7 2) R =From The Land of Open Graves, Jason De León, p. 7-18 3) First Assignment due
<b>Week 2: Jan 13th</b> <b>Culture, Ethnography &amp; Fieldwork</b>	1) R = Reading Ethnography p. 1-2 2) Podcast reflection due (CA) <a href="https://onbeing.org/programs/mahzarin-banaji-the-mind-is-a-difference-seeking-machine/">https://onbeing.org/programs/mahzarin-banaji-the-mind-is-a-difference-seeking-machine/</a>	1) R = Shakespeare in the Bush, Laura Bohannon, p. 95-104 + review questions p. 104 2) R = From Number Our Days Barbara Myerhoff p, 72-82 + review questions p. 83.
<b>Week 3: Jan 20th</b> <b>Medical Anthropology</b>	1) R= p. 348-350 2) Reading: Sociocultural Perspective of health & body (CA) 3) Illness & Healing Part I due (bring to class, don't upload to CA yet) and Part II conducted in class 4) R = From Valuing Deaf Worlds in Urban India, p. 361 - 372 + review questions	Illness & Healing Assignment due I, II + III due (upload to CA)  Spirit Ch. 1-3 due (Reading Quiz)
<b>Week 4: Jan 27th</b> <b>Medical Anthropology</b>	Podcast (1 hour). Be prepared to discuss and write in class (CA)  <a href="https://www.democracynow.org/2012/12/25/dr_gabor_mat_on_the_stre">https://www.democracynow.org/2012/12/25/dr_gabor_mat_on_the_stre</a> <a href="https://www.democracynow.org/2012/12/25/dr_gabor_mat_on_the_stre">ss</a>	<i>Teaching Project due</i>

<p><b>Week 5: Feb 3rd</b></p> <p><b>Economic Anthropology</b></p>	<p>(CA) Read Chapter on Economics handout p. 124-140</p>	<p>R = From Jibaro to Crack Dealer; Confronting the Restructuring of Capitalism in El Barrio, Philippe Bourgois p. 238-249 + discussion questions</p> <p>Spirit Ch. 4-8 due (Reading Quiz)</p>
<p><b>Week 6: Feb 10th</b></p> <p><b>Economic Anthropology</b></p>	<p>Midterm Exam</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Finish Film</li> <li>2) Group activity film</li> <li>3) Spirit Ch. 9-11 (Reading Quiz)</li> </ol>
<p><b>Week 7: Feb 17th</b></p> <p><b>Ethnicity &amp; Nationalism</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) R =p. 145-146</li> <li>2) Read Chapter on Ethnicity and Nationalism (CA)</li> <li>3) R = How Did Jews Become White Folks? + review questions p. 126</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) R = From Mohawk Interrupts, Audra Simpson p. 158-166 + review questions due p. 166</li> <li>2) Spirit Ch. 12-14 due</li> <li>3) Start Film: Human Family Tree</li> </ol>
<p><b>Week 8: Feb 24th</b></p> <p><b>Ethnicity &amp; Nationalism</b></p>	<p>R = “Landmine Boy” and Stupid Deaths, Paul Farmer p. 147-158 + discussion questions</p> <p>Film: Human Family Tree</p>	<p>SAPIENS podcast assignment due</p> <p>Film reflection in class</p> <p>Spirit Ch. 15-17 due (Reading Quiz)</p>
<p><b>Week 9: March 2nd</b></p> <p><b>Ecological Anthropology</b></p>	<p>Reading on Canvas: Forest Development the Indian Way, p. 1-10</p>	<p>Research Teaching Project due</p>
<p><b>Week 10: March 9th</b></p> <p><b>Ecological Anthropology</b></p>	<p>Film - Cuba</p>	<p>Film Assignment</p> <p>Spirit Ch. 18-19 + final reading quiz</p> <p>Final Writing Reflection in class</p> <p><i>*Last possible day instructor accepts assignments</i></p>

- Final exam = Tuesday, March 17th at 9:30 - 11:20 a.m.

