

Critique of Civilization

ANTH 229-81

Spring 2007

Wed 5:00-7:30 pm, Schu 203

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Office Hours: MWF 11:00 am-12:00 pm, and by appointment (drop-ins are welcome)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course explores the concept of civilization and its opposite, the primitive or savage, from anthropology's unique cross-cultural perspective. We will examine how these paired concepts figure prominently in the origin and development of anthropology, and how anthropology ultimately challenges the validity of both. We will explore what various people have meant by these terms and the contexts of their use, how anthropological research gradually weakened both, and how anthropologists study the contemporary uses of these concepts as aspects of culture. This intellectual history touches upon the ideologies and social consequences of progressivism, romanticism, colonialism, neocolonialism, environmentalism, indigenism, New Age religions, neoconservatism, and traditionalist social movements. The course is lecture based and includes several writing assignments.

Prerequisites: SoS

COURSE ATTRIBUTES:

ANTH 229 counts toward the Liberal Arts credits required of all College majors. Anthropology majors also use the course to fulfill the Cultural Anthropology requirement or as an elective in the major. The course also counts toward the requirements for the anthropology minor.

REQUIRED READINGS:

Patterson, Thomas C. 1997 *Inventing Western Civilization*. Monthly Review Press.

Krech, Shepard III. 1999. *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History*. W. W. Norton & Company.

Other readings on BlackBoard (see Schedule, below).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Our classroom activities will include lectures, videos, and discussion. You will be expected to read on your own time, according to the attached schedule. Classroom participation is part of your grade, so good attendance and keeping up with the readings is essential. Absences will be excused if they meet college criteria. Students who do not attend class on a regular basis will be involuntarily withdrawn.

The course grade will be based on the following measures:

One short assignment	5%
Three quizzes	35% (11.67% each)
Three essay assignments	50% (16.67% each)
Class participation	10%

The last quiz will be given during the final exam period.

Essay assignments: Three papers (roughly 5 pages each) will be written in response to specific questions I hand out. These papers principally address the assigned readings. They do not require any additional readings.

Research Paper Alternative: In lieu of the third essay assignment, and for an additional 5 to 15% extra credit, you may elect to write a paper based on library research. You must choose this option by March 21, and have my approval on a topic. Acceptable papers will be 7-10 pages, typed, double-spaced, with

standard fonts and margins, with proper citations of all sources used. Web-based sources—unless they are scholarly papers—will not be accepted. The amount of extra credit awarded will reflect the quality and effort invested.

Class participation: Contributions to discussion count toward the class participation portion of the grade. Questions and comments in class are encouraged.

BlackBoard site: Course materials will be available via BlackBoard. I will enroll you on BlackBoard. On the College’s website, choose BlackBoard on the Quick Links menu. Choose Login. Enter your official username (the first part of your email address recognized by the Registrar), enter your official college password, and click Login. After you are enrolled, you only need to login and click on the course title on your welcome page to go to the course site. Readings and any other items (copies of handouts, assignments, etc.) will be placed under Course Documents.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

All students are responsible for knowing the College’s policies on academic honesty. Any student found cheating will receive a failing grade and may be reported to the Student Conduct Committee for possible further action consistent with College policy, including possible dismissal from the College. Information on plagiarism will be available on BlackBoard.

SCHEDULE: (Readings should be completed by the date shown.)

Conceptual Roots

Jan. 17 Introduction

Jan. 24 Major Concepts: Cultural ideas and analytical tools

Patterson, Chapter 1

Robert A. Brightman: “Primitivism in Missinippi Cree Historical Consciousness.”
Man 25(1):108-127 (1990).

Anthropology is Shaped by the Ideas of ‘civilized’ and ‘savage’

Jan. 31 The Great Chain of Being: Roots of biological anthropology

Patterson, Chapter 2

Stephen Jay Gould: “Bound by the Great Chain” from *The Flamingo’s Smile: Reflections in Natural History*, W.W. Norton, 1985, pp. 281-290.

Definitions & quotes assignment due

Feb. 7 The Columbian (re)Discovery: Earthly paradise, savages, & the Enlightenment

Patterson, Chapter 3

Feb. 14 Industrial revolution & Evolutionism

Patterson, Chapters 4 & 5

Quiz #1

Feb. 21 The Myth of the Mound Builders

Krech, Introduction & Chapter 1

Essay #1 due

Feb. 28 BREAK

Mar. 7 Anthropology’s Romantics

Krech, Chapter 2

Stanley Diamond: Selections from “In Search of the Primitive.” In Montague, Ashley, ed., *The Concept of the Primitive*, Free Press, 1968, pp. 96-147.

Anthropology Challenges the Ideas

Mar. 14 Anthropology debates *the primitive*

Krech, Chapter 3

Sol Tax: “Terminology: ‘Primitive’ peoples.” *Current Anthropology* 1(5/6):441 (1960).

Lois Mednick: “Memorandum on the use of primitive.” *Current Anthropology* 1(5/6):441-445 (1960).

Mar. 21 The Indus Harrapan Problem: What is a *civilization*?

Anthony P. Andrews: “Cities, States, and Civilizations,” from *First Cities*. Smithsonian, 1995, pp. 8-15.

Charles Keith Maisels: “The Indus Civilizations—Conclusions & Childe’s Checklist,” from *Early Civilizations of the Old World*. Routledge, 1999, pp. 252-259.

Quiz #2

Last day for alternative paper topics to be approved.

Mar. 28 Hunter-gatherers: Status of a primitive archetype

Krech, Chapter 4

Marshall Sahlins: “Notes on the Original Affluent Society.” In Lee, Richard B. and Irven DeVore, eds., *Man the Hunter*. Aldine, 1968, pp. 85-89.

Apr. 4 BREAK

Apr. 11 Old wine in new bottles: *Modern and traditional societies*

Krech, Chapters 5-6

Essay #2 due

Studying Primitivism & Progressivism

Apr. 18 Primitivism in environmentalism: Human consequences of the wilderness myth and ecologically noble savages

Krech, Chapter 7

Beth A. Conklin & Laura R. Graham: “The Shifting Middle Ground: Amazonian Indians and Ecolitics.” *American Anthropologist* 97(4):695-710 (1995).

Apr. 25 Primitivism in '60s Counterculture and New Age Spiritualism

Stewart Brand: “Indians and the Counterculture, 1960s-1970s.” In Washburn, Wilcomb E., ed., *Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 4, Indian-White Relations*, Smithsonian, pp. 570-572.

Paul C. Johnson: “Shamanism from Ecuador to Chicago: A Case Study in New Age Ritual Appropriation.” *Religion* 25:163-178 (1995).

May 2 Neoconservative Progressivism

ANTH 229— *Critique of Civilization*

Krech, Epilogue

Keith Windschuttle: “The Cultural War on Western Civilization.” In Kramer, Hilton and Roger Kimball, eds., *The Survival of Culture: Permanent Values in a Virtual Age*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2002, pp. 98-121.

Essay #3 is due via email as an attachment by May 9

May 9

NO CLASS

May 18

5:00–7:30 pm Final Exam Period

Quiz #3

All material in this syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.