

ANTH 390-01 Issues in Anthropology (3 s.h.)

Fall 2011

Fitzelle 313

(CRN 711) T Th 4-5:15pm

Prerequisite: Junior or Senior standing, and 18 s.h. of ANTH courses.

General Education Attribute: WS2

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Office hours: T 1:30-3:30pm, W 2-2:45pm, Th 1:30-3:30pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What does it mean to be human? Are there human universals? How is behavior fashioned by nature and nurture? Is a unified discipline of anthropology possible? This seminar will assist students in answering basic questions about the nature of the human experience by considering practical and theoretical issues of interest to anthropologists and others. Students will discuss general questions in cultural and biological anthropology, as well as examine anthropological perspectives on current events. Guest lectures, film, readings, and discussion will form the basis of the seminar.

COURSE OVERVIEW

Anthropology has been described as a discipline “in crisis.” Is it a science or humanity? Are the four fields moving further apart? Even the concepts that have defined the discipline require rethinking today as developments in other fields of study challenge the approaches and understandings of anthropology. For example, can evolutionary psychology better explain human ideas and practices than anthropology? What does it mean when sociologists and political scientists cite “culture” as an explanation for poverty? How does the study of humanity change as our knowledge of both humans and other animals also changes? In this course, we will consider the importance, meaning, and relevance of anthropological holism, especially in times when reductionism seems to be preferred, in both scholarly and popular discourse.

This course is designed as the culmination of the undergraduate experience for majors in anthropology. A goal of the course will be for students to be able to articulate the approaches and perspectives of anthropology on issues of public concern.

REQUIRED TEXTS

You are not required to purchase any books for this course. However, you are required to print hard copies of the PDFs and bring them to class in order to discuss them. Points will be subtracted from your Attendance and Participation each time you fail to bring the readings.

The readings for this course will be drawn from (1) “mainstream media” sources such as The New York Times, (2) scholarly sources such as peer-reviewed journals, and (3) what might be called “popular scholarly” new media sources, in particular blogs written by academics. The readings will be available (either as PDF’s or as Web links) on the Angel site for this class.

Note that PDFs will be posted 1 week prior to the date that the reading assignment will be discussed in class, and remain posted until 1 week after the date. At that point, the PDF will be removed from Angel. It is the student's responsibility to download and print a hard copy of the reading to bring to class. Please check the reading schedule.

REQUIREMENTS

Your final grades for the course will be based on total cumulative points, broken down approximately as follows:

Class assignments

- "What is human nature?" (T 9/6) 10 points
- Anthropology in the News (Th 12/8) 15 points

Class presentation 25 points

Attendance and participation 25 points

1st response paper 20 points

2nd response paper 25 points

3rd response paper 25 points

4th/final paper 30 points

Your final grade will be based on meeting all of the above requirements. Failure to meet any one of the requirements can result in a failing grade. Also, please note in advance that there are no extra credit or make-up assignments.

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

"What is human nature?" (T 9/6) – Each student will be responsible for preparing brief comments in response to one of the short pieces included in the *American Anthropologist* "Forum On Nature and the Human." You will be evaluated according to the following criteria: In your presentation, explain the central argument, highlight what you consider a notable quote or passage from the piece, then explain and respond critically to it.

Anthropology in the News (Th 12/8) – Browse news sources from the last 12 months and bring to class two examples of issues either directly concerning anthropology in the news and / or relevant to anthropology. For each example, be prepared to briefly summarize the issue and to pose one or two questions for discussion. Print a hard copy of your examples. Be sure to note the source of your media example, including url.

CLASS PRESENTATION

Each student will be responsible for preparing a class presentation on one of the assigned readings. (A sign-up sheet will be circulated during the first full week of classes.) You will speak for about 10 minutes. You will be evaluated according to the following criteria: In your presentation, explain the central argument, highlight other key points of the article, describe the evidence and examples that the author employs, and offer two or three questions to generate class discussion.

ATTENDANCE / DISCUSSION

Attendance in class is required. Participation in class discussion will be considered for your final grade. Bringing readings to class will be counted as part of attendance and participation. For each class, you will be assigned either + or – for your participation in class discussion. Absence and / or lack of participation on a regular basis will affect your grade

negatively.

RESPONSE PAPERS

You will be required to write four response papers. These writing assignments are intended to enable both the instructor and the student to assess the student's grasp of the material in this class. They also are intended to provide opportunities for the student to reinforce his or her understanding of it. The papers also should be treated as "cumulative" in the sense that the papers will build upon each other – i.e., material in the 1st paper should be considered further in the 2nd paper, and the final paper will draw from material in the previous three papers. Each paper should be no fewer than 5 and no more than 7 pages in length. It should be double-spaced in 12 point Times New Roman or other standard font. Instructions for the essay exams will be discussed in detail in advance of the due dates.

COURSE POLICIES & PROCEDURES

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

As noted above, regular attendance and participation in class is required. Although there are legitimate reasons for being absent from class (e.g., sickness), missing three or more classes, for whatever reasons, will lower one's course grade, and may result in failure.

It is the student's responsibility to inform the professor about the absence prior to or immediately after its occurrence. If you anticipate missing class because you are a student-athlete, you must identify yourself to the professor early in the course.

Remember also that students are responsible for all of the material covered in class. Make-ups for full credit will be permitted only for officially documented ("excused") absences, such as conferences or competitions. Make-ups for partial credit will be permitted for other absences.

ENVIRONMENT FOR LEARNING

This is a reading and discussion-intensive class. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss readings. Although it is not necessary for you to bring all of your books to every meeting of this class, you are required to bring your reading assignment.

Creating an environment for learning conducive to learning involves community effort. Individually, we will conduct ourselves in a manner that is respectful, considerate, and courteous of each other. Students are expected to arrive on time for class, and the professor is expected to end on time.

Students are expected to refrain from conversation not directly relevant to the material at hand and from the use of cellular phones, iPods, etc., during classes. If you wish to use a laptop during class, you must receive the instructor's permission.

Please note the following passage from the Student Code of Conduct:

Instructors have a responsibility to maintain an effective learning situation in their classrooms and to deal promptly with any disruptions that interfere with the learning situation. The instructor is in charge of his/her classroom. If he/she feels that a student is interfering with the right of other students to profit from attendance in that classroom or if he/she feels that he/she is being unreasonably hindered in the presentation of subject matter, the instructor has every right to eject the offending student from the class and/or notify the Student Development Office of the student's behavior.

The Student Code of Conduct can be accessed at <http://www.oneonta.edu/development/studevel.asp>.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

In order to meet the requirements of this class, it is expected that all of your written work, including take-home writing assignments and in-class essay exams, will represent your own honest, individual, and original efforts to engage with the material in this class. Please be careful with your written work. Dishonesty of any kind (e.g., “copying” or “borrowing”) will not be tolerated, and may result in a failing grade for the assignment and / or the class.

You will be expected to cite your sources properly and include a list of references. You may prepare your citations in any standard style used in scholarly writing (e.g., MLA, APA), but please be sure to use it consistently and correctly. For example, the style guideline for American Anthropologist is available at www.aaanet.org.

ANGEL

All students will be expected to use the Angel site for this class. Announcements, instructions for written assignments, presentation notes, and readings will be available on Angel. You also will submit written assignments on Angel unless noted otherwise.

E-MAIL

When you are e-mailing Dr. Han, please use only the following information in the subject line:

Your Last Name ANTH 390

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Please note that special considerations such as extensions on deadlines will be permitted only with official documentation. If special circumstances arise that prevent the regular and timely completion of assignments, it is the student’s responsibility to communicate them with the instructor. Please do so as soon as possible.

All material on this syllabus is subject to change.

Course schedule

Th 8/25	Introductions
	PART I. A DISCIPLINE “IN CRISIS”
T 8/30	Is anthropology a science? REQUIRED READING Nicholas Wade, “Anthropology a Science? Statement Deepens a Rift” (New York Times, December 9, 2010) (PDF) Adam Kuper and Jonathan Marks, “Anthropologists Unite!” (Nature, February 10, 2011) (PDF) Kate Clancy and John Hawks on bloggingheads: See segments “Did anthropology declare itself a non-science” and “Science: not just another way of knowing” http://blogs.plos.org/neuroanthropology/2011/02/06/john-hawks-kate-clancy-on-bloggingheads/

	<p>RECOMMENDED READING Daniel Lende, "A Vision of Anthropology Today – and Tomorrow" (Neuroanthropology, February 11, 2011) http://blogs.plos.org/neuroanthropology/2011/02/11/a-vision-of-anthropology-today-%E2%80%93-and-tomorrow/</p>
Th 9/1	<p>The end of anthropology? Ulf Hannerz, "Diversity Is Our Business" (American Anthropologist, December 2010) (PDF) Michael E. Smith, "Why Anthropology is too Narrow an Intellectual Context for Archaeology*" (anthropologies, May 15, 2011) http://www.anthropologiesproject.org/2011/05/why-anthropology-is-too-narrow.html</p>
	<p>PART II. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE THE "STUDY OF HUMANITY"?</p>
T 9/6	<p>What is "human" nature? Agustín Fuentes , Jonathan Marks, Tim Ingold, Robert Sussman, Patrick V. Kirch, Elizabeth M. Brumfiel, Rayna Rapp, Faye Ginsburg, Laura Nader, Conrad P. Kottak, "On Nature and the Human" (American Anthropologist, December 2010) (PDF) Class assignment: Each student will be responsible for preparing brief comments in response to one of the short pieces included in the American Anthropologist "Forum On Nature and the Human." You will be evaluated according to the following criteria: In your presentation, explain the central argument, highlight what you consider a notable quote or passage from the piece, then explain and respond critically to it.</p>
Th 9/8	<p>Humans and other animals Guest discussant: Renee Walker REQUIRED READING Renee Walker, Darcy Morey, and John Relethford, "Early and Mid-Holocene Dogs in Southeastern North America: Examples from Dust Cave" (Southeastern Archaeology, Summer 2005) (PDF) Carole Kaesuk Yoon, "Mysteries that Howl and Hunt" (New York Times, September 27, 2010) (PDF) RECOMMENDED READING Gardiner Harris, "Who's the Dog Hero in the Raid on Osama Bin Laden?" (New York Times, May 5, 2011) (PDF) Elisabeth Bumiller, "The Dogs of War: Beloved Comrades in Afghanistan" (New York Times, May 12, 2011) (PDF) Presentation on Walker et al.</p>
T 9/13	<p>From the "animal turn" to the "species turn" Eben Kirksey and Stefan Helmreich, "The Emergence of Multispecies Ethnography" (Cultural Anthropology, November 2010) (PDF) Presentation on Kirksey and Helmreich</p>
Th 9/15	<p>Humans and aliens: An anthropology of science fiction Guest discussant: John Relethford REQUIRED READING Bojan Zikic, "We Are Me, and They Are Hive: Individual and Collective Identity as a Relational Characteristic of Humans and Aliens in Science Fiction" (Antropologija 2010) (PDF) Kyle Munkittrick, "Protecting Aliens from Us – an E.T. Bill of Rights" (Science Not Fiction, October 22, 2010)</p>

	<p>http://blogs.discovermagazine.com/sciencenotfiction/2010/10/22/protecting-aliens-from-us%E2%80%94an-e-t-bill-of-rights/</p> <p>RECOMMENDED READING</p> <p>Kyle Munkittrick, "Our Discomfort with the Ungendered" (Science Not Fiction, June 2, 2011)</p> <p>http://blogs.discovermagazine.com/sciencenotfiction/2011/06/02/our-discomfort-with-the-ungendered/</p> <p><i>Presentation on Zikic</i></p>
T 9/20	1st ESSAY EXAM (THE STUDY OF HUMANITY) DUE

	PART III. A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION THAT IS NO LESS REAL: RACE
Th 9/22	<p>Welcome to the human race Guest discussant: Tracy Betsinger REQUIRED READING Nicholas Wade, "Signs of Neandertals Mating with Humans" (New York Times, May 6, 2010) (PDF) Sean B. Carroll, "Hybrids May Thrive Where Parents Fear to Tread" (New York Times, September 13, 2010) (PDF) Jason Antrosio, "Neandertals as a Human Race" (Living Anthropologically, May 15, 2011) http://www.livinganthropologically.com/part-1-11-neandertals-as-a-human-race/ RECOMMENDED READING Nicholas Wade, "Neandertals and Early Humans May Not Have Mingled Much" (New York Times, May 9, 2011) (PDF)</p>
T 27	<p>From human race to human races? Alan R. Templeton, "Genetics and Recent Human Evolution" (Evolution 2007) (PDF) Jason Antrosio, "More Mothers Than Mitochondrial Eve (Living Anthropologically, May 16, 2011) http://www.livinganthropologically.com/part-1-10-more-mothers-than-mitochondrial-eve/ <i>Presentation on Templeton</i></p>
BREAK	
T 10/4	<p>What is "race"? Guest discussant: John Relethford Franz Boas, "Race and Progress" (Science, 1931) John Relethford, "Race and Global Patterns of Phenotypic Variation (American Journal of Physical Anthropology, 2009) Heather Edgar and Keith L. Hunley, "Does Race Exist?" (Podcast, 2009) http://unmlive.unm.edu/2009/05/12/does-race-exist/ <i>Presentation on Relethford</i></p>
Th 10/6	<p>How race becomes biology Clarence Gravlee, "How race becomes biology: Embodiment of social inequality (American Journal of Physical Anthropology, 2009) Daniel Lende, "How Experience Gets Under the Skin (Neuroanthropology, January 3, 2011) http://blogs.plos.org/neuroanthropology/2011/01/03/how-experience-gets-under-the-skin/ <i>Presentation on Gravlee</i></p>
T 10/11	<p>Inventing anthropology and its "others" Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "Anthropology and the Savage Slot" (in <i>Global Transformations: Anthropology and the Modern World</i>, 2003) (PDF) <i>Presentation on Trouillot</i></p>
Th 10/13	<p>A critique of the "culture of poverty" REQUIRED READING Patricia Cohen, "'Culture of Poverty' Makes a Comeback" (The New York Times, DATE) (PDF) Daniel Lende, "The Culture of Poverty Debate" (Neuroanthropology, October 18, 2010)</p>

	<p>http://blogs.plos.org/neuroanthropology/2010/10/18/the-culture-of-poverty-debate/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+plos%2Fblogs%2Fneuroanthropology+(Blogs+-+Neuroanthropology)&utm_content=Google+Reader</p> <p>Daniel Lende, "Culture of Poverty: From Analysis to Policy" (Neuroanthropology, November 4, 2010)</p> <p>http://blogs.plos.org/neuroanthropology/2010/11/04/culture-of-poverty-from-analysis-to-policy/</p> <p>RECOMMENDED READING</p> <p>Neal Conan, Patricia Cohen, and Sudhir Venkatesh, "Talk of the Nation: Reconsidering the 'Culture of Poverty'" (National Public Radio, October 20, 2010)</p> <p>http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=130701401</p>
T 10/18	<p>2nd ESSAY EXAM (RACE) DUE</p> <p>PART IV. NATURE / CULTURE</p>
Th 10/20	<p>Nature and culture on display: Museums Guest discussant: Lisa Sorenson REQUIRED READING Benedict Anderson, "Census, Map, Museum" (in <i>Imagined Communities</i>, 1991) (PDF) Susanne Gusten, "Turkey Presses Harder for Return of Antiquities" (<i>The New York Times</i>, May 25, 2011) (PDF) RECOMMENDED READING Ian Johnson, "At China's New Museum, History Toes Party Line" (<i>The New York Times</i>, April 3, 2011) (PDF)</p>
T 10/25	<p>Ethnicity and identity Guest discussant: Brian Haley Brian Haley and Larry Wilcoxon, "Anthropology and the Making of Chumash Tradition" (<i>Current Anthropology</i>, December 1997) <i>Presentation on Haley and Wilcoxon</i></p>
Th 10/27	<p>Should you take love advice from evolutionary psychology?: Gender and sexuality John Tierney, "The Threatening Scent of Fertile Women" (<i>The New York Times</i>, February 21, 2011) (PDF) Kate Clancy, "Mate Magnet Madness: When the Range of Possible Explanations Exceeds Your Own Hypothesis" (<i>Context and Variation</i>, March 4, 2011) http://professorkateclancy.blogspot.com/2011/03/mate-magnet-madness-when-range-of.html</p>
T 11/1	<p>Queering anthropology Guest discussant: Cynthia Klink Tom Boellstroff, "Queer Studies in the House of Anthropology" (<i>Annual Review of Anthropology</i>, 2007) (PDF) The Daily Mail Reporter, "The oldest gay in the village: 5,000-year-old is 'outed' by the way he was buried" (<i>The Daily Mail</i>, April 8, 2011) http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-1374060/Gay-caveman-5-000-year-old-male-skeleton-outed-way-buried.html Rosemary Joyce, "'Gay Caveman': Wrecking a perfectly good story" (<i>Ancient Bodies, Ancient Lives</i>, April 7, 2011) http://ancientbodies.wordpress.com/2011/04/07/gay-caveman-wrecking-a-perfectly-good-story/ <i>Presentation on Boellstroff</i></p>

Th 11/3	<p>Revisiting the nature / culture of language: The “new” linguistic relativism Guy Deutscher, “Does Your Language Shape How You Think?” (The New York Times, August 26, 2010) (PDF) <i>Presentation on Deutscher</i></p>
T 11/8	<p>What happened to history?: The origins of language and the metaphors we live by Nicholas Wade, “Languages Grew from a Seed in Africa, Study Says” (The New York Times, April 15, 2011) (PDF) John Hawks, “Language serial founder effects?” (John Hawks Weblog, April 15, 2011) http://johnhawks.net/node/15429 Ives Goddard and Bruno Frolich, “Goddard and Frolich Respond to Atkinson” (Language Log, May 20, 2011) http://languageog.ldc.upenn.edu/nll/?p=3152</p>
Th 11/10	<p>Food and eating REQUIRED READING Marlene Zuk, “The Evolutionary Search for Our Perfect Past” (The New York Times, January 19, 2009) (PDF) Daniel Lende, “Paleofantasies of the perfect diet – Marlene Zuk in NYTimes” (Neuroanthropology, January 21, 2009) http://neuroanthropology.net/2009/01/21/paleofantasies-of-the-perfect-diet-marlene-zuk-in-nytimes/ RECOMMENDED READING Michael Pollan, <i>The Omnivore’s Dilemma</i> (Introduction and Chapter 1) Please download a PDF of the Excerpt from the author’s Website: http://michaelpollan.com/books/the-omnivores-dilemma/</p>
T 11/15	<p>Extinction and the uses of Darwin Gillian Beer, “Darwin and the Uses of Extinction” (Victorian Studies, Winter 2009) (PDF) <i>Presentation on Beer</i></p>
Th 11/17	<p>3rd ESSAY EXAM (NATURE / CULTURE) DUE</p>
	<p>BREAK</p>
	<p>PART V. (HOW) IS ANTHROPOLOGY USEFUL?</p>
T 11/29	<p>“Is archaeology useful?” Shannon Lee Dawdy, “Millennial archaeology. Locating the discipline in the age of insecurity” (Archaeological Dialogues, 2009) [PDF] Jeremy Sabloff, “How can archaeologists usefully contribute to public policy considerations?” (Archaeological Dialogues, 2009) [PDF] <i>Presentation on Dawdy</i> <i>Presentation on Sabloff</i></p>
Th 12/1	<p>Anthropology as a climate science Guest discussant: Cynthia Klink Dale Mackenzie Brown, “The Fate of Greenland’s Vikings” (Archaeology, February 28, 2000) http://www.archaeology.org/online/features/greenland/ Stephen Russell, “Climate Change Has Effected And Changed Human History” (ArchNews, January 14, 2011) http://www.archnews.co.uk/featured/4737-climate-change-has-effected-and-changed-human-history.html Julie Brugger, Kate Dunbar, Christine Jurt, and Ben Orlove, “Global Warming and</p>

	<p><i>Changing Water Resources: Perceptions of Glacier Retreat in Mountain Regions” (Anthropology News, February 2010) (PDF)</i></p> <p><i>Timothy Kohler, Mark Varien, Aaron Wright, and Kristin Kuckelman, “Mesa Verde migrations: New archaeological research and computer simulation suggest why Ancestral Puebloans deserted the northern Southwest United States” (American Scientist, 2008) (PDF)</i></p> <p><i>Elizabeth Shogren, “Is Ancient People’s End a Warning for the Future?” (National Public Radio, July 29, 2007)</i></p> <p>http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=12313268</p>
T 12/6	<p>The misuses of anthropology?</p> <p><i>Alexis Madrigal, “Why Are Spy Researchers Building a ‘Metaphor Program’?” (The Atlantic, May 2011) (PDF)</i></p> <p>OTHER READING TBD</p>
Th 12/8	<p>Anthropology in the news</p> <p>Class assignment: Browse news sources from the last 12 months and bring to class two examples of issues either directly concerning anthropology in the news and / or relevant to anthropology. For each example, be prepared to briefly summarize the issue and to pose one or two questions for discussion. Print a hard copy of your examples. Be sure to note the source of your media example, including url.</p>
T 12/13	<p>11am – 1:30pm 4th / FINAL ESSAY EXAM ON HOLISM</p>