

Department of Anthropology  
Emory University  
Fall, 2004  
2:00-2:50 MWF

**ANT 202: Concepts and Methods in Cultural  
Anthropology**

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## **Syllabus**

Anthropology 202 is a required foundational course for anthropology majors and provides an introduction to the field for non-majors as well. In this course, we will explore the range of cultures around the world, including foraging bands in the Congo and South Africa, a group of swidden agriculturalists in an Amazonian tribe, the chiefdoms of the Northwest Coast of the U.S., irrigated rice farmers in Bali, and one group in an urban, industrial society—residents of Spanish Harlem in New York City. Through the in-depth reading of a series of ethnographies, we will explore the nature of culture and how it is studied by comparison and contrast. With this introductory survey, students can plan later in-depth study of economic development issues, interpretive or psychological anthropology, medical anthropology, political ecology, or other topics of interest. This course is useful for students wishing to take ethnographic world area courses, as well. Throughout the semester, students will be introduced to the major theoretical approaches of the field and will learn to contrast different research strategies and research questions.

In addition to learning *about* anthropology, students will have an opportunity to learn by *doing* anthropology. A series of exercises will expand the skills of observation and interviewing and allow the student to design and carry out a small library research project. Electronic library searching skills and careful writing skills will also be a part of the course.

### **Required Readings**

Students are requested to buy the following three books and one coursepack:

Colin Turnbull, *The Forest People*  
Janet Siskind, *To Hunt in the Morning*  
Phillippe Bourgois, *In Search of Respect*

Articles assigned in the course (see list at end of syllabus) are NOT on reserve in Woodruff Library but are reproduced in the required coursepack available on request from Pitney Bowes, in the basement of Woodruff Library. Students are encouraged to bring the appropriate text to class.

**Goals of the course:** Students who complete the course will be able to:

- Demonstrate mastery of basic terms and concepts in cultural anthropology.
- Discuss the ethnographic details of the 3 major groups studied and many other cultural groups, from lecture, readings, and movies.
- Demonstrate understanding of ethnocentrism, cultural relativism, emic and etic perspectives.

- Write accurately and with good evidence, showing the ability to compare cultures, using different perspectives and approaches.
- Use different theories of culture to analyze a single subject (and understand why some theories are more attractive to you than others).
- Construct an accurate kinship diagram.
- Carry out a simple library search on anthropological topics and separate sound sources from questionable ones.
- Carry out original library/electronic research on a contemporary group of personal interest somewhere in the world.
- Observe a cultural scene and report accurately what was observed.
- Conduct interviews and record the interaction using good anthropological techniques.
- Articulate the benefits of cultural anthropology for understanding major contemporary issues.

Students will have an opportunity to meet each of these goals throughout the course. In some areas, where work fails to meet a goal in one assignment, another assignment will offer a second opportunity to develop and demonstrate mastery.

**Written work:**

There will be four graded written assignments of different lengths due during the semester; details will be provided in a handout for each. Paper 1 will be due in the third week of class and will give you a chance to practice good anthropological observation skills and combine them with an understanding of ethnocentrism (10%). Paper 2 will be a comparison of cultures between the Mbuti, San, Sharanahua and other groups (25%) and will be due just before the midterm break. Paper 3 will be an essay on the Northwest Coast chiefdoms, demonstrating mastery of the different theoretical perspectives covered in that section (25%). Paper 3 is the final paper and will have various options, for students who have completed different levels of mastery on the earlier papers (30%). Each student will also write a 3-4 page Update Report (10%) which will be due when that topic is covered in class. Update Report topics can either be independent or team-based. That assignment is included at the end of this syllabus.

There will also be several pass/fail exercises throughout the term: a kinship chart assignment, several interview assignments, and a letter of transmittal with the final paper at the end of the course. Some students will also make an oral team presentation of their Update Report. Assignments for the pass/fail exercises will be handed out in class and posted on learnlink, throughout the semester. These activities will be evaluated as “check,” “check plus,” “check minus,” or “fail.” Failed assignments must be redone, until they are satisfactory. Class participation—in which students may demonstrate their mastery of the assigned materials and their willingness to think about issues raised in discussions—is important to this class. The care, conscientiousness, and overall quality of these assignments and class participation will contribute to the grade, and especially in cases where the average of written work falls between two letter grades. All written work must be completed in order to pass the course. S/U students must earn a C- in order to pass.

**Class Participation:** regular attendance and participation in discussions is expected.

### Daily Topics and Assignments

(Students are expected to have completed all readings, shown below on the day they are due. Full citations for coursepack articles are at the end of syllabus.)

- Fri, Aug. 27 Introduction to the Course; ritual committee appointed. What is culture? What is ethnocentrism? Observation assignment handed out and discussed.
- Mon, Aug. 30 Class ritual adopted. Discussion of culture, ethnocentrism, and readings. Overview of evolution and foragers (slides); different anthropological approaches. Bantus and Belgians.  
(Assignments: Bodley, p. 1-15; Johnson “In Search of the Affluent Society;” and Harris “Mother Cow” and “What Is/Are Culture/s?” and p. 31-32 “Emics and Etics”)
- Wed, Sept. 1 Discussion of the Forest People; Update Reports sign-up. Guidelines for reading ethnographies.  
(Turnbull, *The Forest People*, Ch. 1-3 and p. 147-150 in Bernard article “Participant Observation”—we’ll read the rest later, though feel free now)
- Fri, Sept. 3 Library Skills Training for Update Reports--MEET IN Woodruff Library, Room 314. (Turnbull, Ch. 4-6).
- Mon, Sept. 6 NO CLASS—Labor Day Holiday
- Wed, Sept. 8 Discussion of Mbuti mobility, subsistence, play and social control; the Boasians. Observation assignment due.  
(Turnbull, Ch. 7-12, McGee and Warmes, “Historical Particularism” in coursepack)
- Fri, Sept. 10 Mbuti discussion, cont. (Forest People—all) Mbuti Update Report presentation.
- Mon, Sept. 13 Gender and community, causal perspectives.  
(Turnbull article “Mbuti Womanhood” and McGee and Warmes, “Cultural Ecology...” in coursepack)
- Wed, Sept. 15 Population growth and the evolution of bands; sedentarization and its impact.  
(Lee, “What Hunters Do for a Living” and Harris “Cultural Materialism” p. 141-52 in coursepack)
- Fri, Sept. 17 Movie: *!Kung San: Resettlement*  
(Start Siskind, *To Hunt in the Morning*--Ch. 1).

- Mon, Sept. 20 The “Real People” and the Trouble with “Tribes;” Fried’s critique. Genealogy chart assignment explained. (Siskind Ch. 2-3)
- Wed, Sept. 22 Kinship as basis for social organization; Second Paper Assignment handed out. (Genealogy charts due; Siskind, Ch. 4-5)
- Fri, Sept. 24 Gender and contrasts with the Forest People; Structural-functionalism. (McGee and Warms, “Functionalism” p. 154-6; Siskind, Ch. 6)
- Mon, Sept. 27 Ritual drug use, solidarity, sexuality, and myth analysis (Siskind, Ch. 7-8)
- Wed, Sept. 29 Final issues in Siskind (Siskind—all)
- Fri, Oct. 1 Amazonian Strategies of Resistance and discussion; Movie: *Contact: The Yanomami Indians of Brazil* (Second Paper due)
- Mon, Oct. 4 Amazonian Update Report and Contemporary Issues of Amazonian Indigenous Culture and Global Impacts (Turner article, “The Kayapo Resistance,” in coursepack)
- Wed, Oct. 6 Jivaro Shrunken Heads and the Anthropology of Religion; Rites of Passage. Discussion of anthropological methods. (Bernard “Participant Observation” in coursepack)
- Fri, Oct. 8 Evolution of Ranking and Inequality: from Big Men to Chiefs. Interview assignment discussed; Ethical issues in anthropological research. (Bernard “Unstructured...Interviewing” in coursepack)
- Mon, Oct. 11 **No Class—Fall Break**
- Wed, Oct. 13 Ritual, Rank, and Social Control in a Chiefdom; Movie *The Cows of Dolo Ken Paye*. (work on interview assignments)
- Fri, Oct. 15 Overview of course so far; Culture and Personality School (McGee and Warms, “Culture and Personality” and Benedict “The Northwest Coast...” in coursepack; first two interviews due)
- Mon, Oct. 18 Functionalism and Cultural Ecology—How to Decide When to Have a Potlatch. Class Potlatch? Third Paper Assignment handed out. (Pidocke “The Potlatch System” in coursepack)
- Wed, Oct. 20 Levi-Straussian Structuralism vs. Cultural Materialism.

- (Harris “An Open and Shut Case” p. 202-15; McGee and Warms, “Structuralism” p. 310-11 in coursepack)
- Fri, Oct. 22 Movie: *The Far West*.  
(Shore “Kwakiutl Animal Symbolism” in coursepack)
- Mon, Oct. 25 Discussion of Shore article; Symbolic Anthropology and Myth Analysis II.  
(Second round of interviews due.)
- Wed, Oct. 27 Northwest Coast Chiefdoms Update Report. Anthropological Approaches to Agency and Decision-making.  
(Johnson and Earle “The Corporate Group”, and Jay “Salmon,” and Raban, “Passage to Juneau” excerpts p. 216-221, 98-106, 230-232 [*Please read in this order—it won’t make much sense otherwise.*])
- Fri, Oct. 29 Movie: *The Goddess and the Computer*; State Level Societies—Inequality, Caste and Class.  
(Third Paper due)
- Mon, Nov. 1 Discussion of movie and the green revolution; Interpretive Anthropology (Geertz, “Deep Play” in coursepack)
- Wed, Nov. 3 Political Economy and Interpretive Approaches, continued.  
(Roseberry “Introduction” [focus esp. on p. 10-11] and “Balinese Cockfights: The Seduction...” in coursepack)
- Fri, Nov. 5 Bali Update Report; Discussion of final round of interviews. Monotheism and Rappaport’s Perspectives on Religion.  
(Remaining interviews due)
- Mon, Nov. 8 Industrial Society; the Meaning of “Respect”  
(Bourgeois, *In Search of Respect*, Ch. 1-2).
- Wed, Nov. 10 Caste and Class; Industrial Workers  
(Bourgeois, Ch. 3)
- Fri, Nov. 12 Comparison of Theoretical Approaches in the New York Case.  
**Last day to turn in independent update reports.**  
(Bourgeois, Ch. 4 and Erickson, “Symbolic and Interpretive Anthropology” p. 130-35, “Political Economy” p. 135-40, and “Post Modernism” p. 140-9)
- Mon, Nov. 15 Race, Ethnicity, and Identity.  
(Bourgeois, Ch. 5)
- Wed, Nov. 17 Movie: *Ethnic Notions*, and discussion  
(Bourgeois, Ch. 6)

- Fri, Nov. 19     **No Class: American Anthropological Association Meetings**  
(Bourgois, Ch. 7)
- Mon, Nov. 22    Gender, Sexuality, and Family; Hand out final paper assignment and letter of transmittal assignment.  
(Bourgois, Ch. 8 and McGee and Warms, “Anthropology and Gender”)
- Wed, Nov. 24    Final Issues in Spanish Harlem; Atlanta History and Parallels with NY; NY Update Report.  
(Bourgois, Conclusion and Epilogue)
- Fri, Nov. 26     **No Class—Thanksgiving Break**
- Mon, Nov. 29    Ethnocentrism revisited; race and racism, media and culture.  
(Coontz, “Pregnant Girls” in coursepack)
- Wed, Dec. 1     Reciprocity, Mauss, and the Kula; Discussion of campus reciprocity.
- Fri, Dec. 3      Reciprocity, Ethnic Relations, and Indian Drunkenness in Ecuador; The San Juan Fiesta in Agato.
- Mon, Dec. 6     Last day of class: Summary and slides; course evaluations  
(Final papers and letter of transmittal due)

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**Coursepack List of Articles and Book Excerpts for the Course**

*Full citations are provided here for all coursepack readings, in the order in which they are due. Sometimes we will need to refer to these materials, so you would be wise to bring the assignment to class.*

Bodley, John, 1977. “Understanding Other Cultures” In, *Cultural Anthropology: Tribes, States, and the Global System*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield. Pages 1-15.

Johnson, Allen. 1981. “In Search of the Affluent Society” *Human Nature* (Sept.)

Harris, Marvin, 1974. “Mother Cow” In, *Cows, Pigs, Wars and Witches: The Riddles of Culture*. Pp. 6-27. NY: Vintage.

Harris, Marvin, 1999. “What Is (Are) Culture(s)?” and “Emics and Etics” in, *Theories of Culture in Postmodern Times*. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira. Pp. 19-29 and 31-2.

Bernard, Russell, 1998. “Participant Observation” In, *Research Methods in Cultural Anthropology*. Russell Bernard, ed. Pp. 136-164. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- McGee, R. Jon and Richard L. Warms, 1996. "Historical Particularism" Pp. 128-30 in *Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield.
- Turnbull, Colin, 1981. "Mbuti Womanhood" In, *Woman the Gatherer*. Frances, Dahlberg, ed. Pp. 205-219. New Haven: Yale U. Press.
- Lee, Richard B., 1968. "What Hunters Do for a Living, or How To Make Out on Scarce Resources" In, *Man the Hunter*, Richard B. Lee and Irven DeVore, eds. Pp. 30-43. Chicago: Aldine.
- McGee, R. Jon and Richard L. Warms, 1996. "Cultural Ecology and Neoevolutionary Thought" Pp. 221-3 in *Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield.
- Harris, Marvin, 1999. "Cultural Materialism" In, *Theories of Culture in Postmodern Times*. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira. P. 141-52
- McGee, R. Jon and Richard L. Warms, 1996. "Functionalism" Pp. 154-6 in *Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield.
- Turner, Terence, 1993. "The Kayapo Resistance" Ch. 34 in *Conformity and Conflict*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed. James Spradley and William McCurdy, eds. NY: Longmans
- Bernard, Russell, 1998. "Participant Observation" In, *Research Methods in Cultural Anthropology*. Russell Bernard, ed. Pp. 136-164. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Bernard, Russell, 1994. "Unstructured and Semistructured Interviewing" In, *Research Methods in Anthropology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Pp. 203-224. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Benedict, Ruth, 1934. "The Northwest Coast of America" excerpt, Pp. 173-94. In, *Patterns of Culture*. NY: Houghton Mifflin.
- McGee, R. Jon and Richard L. Warms, 1996. "Culture and Personality" Pp. 202-6 in *Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield.
- Piddocke, Stuart, 1965. "The Potlatch System of the Southern Kwakiutl: A New Perspective." *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 21:244-64.
- Harris, Marvin, 1979. "An Open and Shut Case" In, *Cultural Materialism*. NY: Random House. Pp. 202-215
- McGee, R. Jon and Richard L. Warms, 1996. "Structuralism" Pp. 310-11 in *Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield.
- Shore, Bradd, 1996. "Kwakiutl Animal Symbolism: Food for Thought". In, *Culture in Mind*. NY: Oxford.
- Johnson, Allen W. and Timothy Earle, 1987. "The Corporate Group and the Big Man Collectivity" Pp.160-172. In, *The Evolution of Human Societies*. Stanford, CA: Stanford U.P.
- Jay, Tom, 1994. "Reaching Home Excerpt" 6 pps from *Reaching Home: Pacific Salmon, Pacific People*. Anchorage, Alaska: Northwest Books

Raban, Jonathan, 1999. "Passage to Juneau, Excerpts" Pp. 216-221, 98-106, 230-323 (in this order, please) In, *Passage to Juneau: A Sea and Its Meanings*. NY: Pantheon.

Geertz, Clifford 1973 "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight" In, *Interpretation of Cultures, Selected Essays*. NY: Basic Books

Roseberry, William, 1989 "Introduction" (Pp. 1-14) and "Balinese Cockfights and The Seduction of Anthropology" (Pp.17-29) In, *Anthropologies and Histories: Essays in Culture, History, and Political Economy*. New Brunswick, NY: Rutgers U. Press.

Erickson, Paul A., 1998. "Symbolic and Interpretive Anthropology," "Political Economy," "Postmodernism and Conclusion" Pp. 130-149 In, *A History of Anthropological Theory*. Orchard Park, NY: Broadview Press.

McGee, R. Jon and Richard L. Warms, 1996. "Anthropology and Gender: The Feminist Critique" Pp. 391-2 in *Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield.

Coontz, Stephanie, 1992. "Pregnant Girls, Wilding Boys, Crack Babies, and the Underclass: The Myth of Black Family Collapse. Pp.232-54. NY: Basic Books.

## Update Report Assignment

Each student is asked to work with a team or independently to do an Update Report either about a culture that we have studied in class (we will need about half the class to do team projects, to give us a good coverage on these groups) or on an independent topic.

The finished paper should be 3-4 pages (double-spaced) in length, plus a **List of Sources**.

Update reports should address the following questions:

1. What do we know about this group today? Do they still exist as a named group? What do we know about changes and continuities in their lives and cultures, compared to what we have read?
2. Is there a major issue for this group that has brought them into the news? What was it about? (If there are multiple issues, team members may want to divide them up).
3. What issues in their lives today have relevance to the other things we've talked about in the course? Where can we draw connections with issues, places, theories, or other groups? This section of the report needs to be at least half a page in length.
4. All Update Reports should include a list of sources following proper anthropological format. (Style Sheet for Papers will be handed out).

General guidelines: We will have good help for the in-class topics from Liz Cooper, the anthropology library consultant, who will give us a day of training early in the semester. Feel free to check in with Liz, or course instructors early on (or at any time), to get suggestions about which groups/names, etc might yield results in a search. Team members should feel free to share materials and must coordinate the class presentation. Papers should be written independently, but it's fine (in fact, desirable) to work together on the project. Please use **CREATIVITY** in preparing materials for presentation to the class.

### **Independent Update Reports:**

The basic guidelines are the same as to topic, questions, and length of product. Choose a cultural group to update that you are interested in, and please clear the topic with me beforehand. Independent projects can be turned in at any time, but no later than Friday, Nov. 12 (if they concern bands, tribes, or chiefdoms, it would be better to do them while we are covering those topics in class). Independent update reports will probably not be presented in class, but some topics may be appropriate for a short presentation.

Goals of this assignment: To strengthen your skills in anthropological research and the use of electronic databases; to strengthen writing and public speaking skills; to strengthen your ability to connect anthropological concepts from the course to contemporary trends and events.

Update Reports that do a strong job on parts 1, 2, and 3 and have an appropriate bibliography will receive an A. Weakness in any one of the 4 parts will lower the grade to a B; multiple weaknesses will receive a C or lower.