



**CULTURE AND POWER**  
**ANTH-110, FALL 2020**  
**Monday/Thursday: 12:55-2:10**

Prof. C. Anne Claus

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Anthropology Department, Hamilton 301

**Office hours:** 2:15-4:30 Mondays, or other days by appointment. Office hours this fall are all online (via Zoom) or on the phone; book a time here at <https://calendly.com/caclaus/15min>. Please let me know your phone number if you want me to call you.

This course is an introduction to key themes, theories, and practices of cultural anthropology. Cultural anthropology is the study of human society and culture. In the course, we examine human society comparatively, looking at the diversity of human existence. Exploring this diversity requires us to ask questions that interrogate our own understandings of the world. Anthropologists are engaged in theorizing the big questions of human sociality: How does power work? What binds people together and leads to conflict? What creates social change? To understand how anthropologists have raised and answered these questions, we investigate the characteristic research and writing method of the discipline, ethnography. Ethnography is a defining feature of cultural anthropology and a distinct way of understanding these big issues, and ethnographic writing is an essential part of producing anthropological knowledge. We will inquire into the kinds of knowledge that can be gained through long-term, immersive research with human communities, and we will seek to understand the relationship between ethnographic method, social theory, and anthropological knowledge.

**Course Objectives**

This course has two main objectives: to introduce students to cultural anthropology, and to provide them with critical tools necessary for understanding society from an anthropological point of view. To that end, the course introduces students to some pervasive themes in anthropological thinking about: culture; ritual and symbolism; race and ethnicity; gender and sex; power and human agency; kinship systems; and globalization. We also learn to read anthropological texts, ethnographies.

By the end of the course, students should:

1. Learn the scope and methods of socio-cultural anthropology through cross-cultural analysis of diverse cultures, including the student's own
2. Learn key concepts, terms, and methods related to anthropology and the comparative study of different social systems and processes of social change
3. Understand how people's perceptions, beliefs, values, and actions are shaped by social structures
4. Understand the relevance of anthropology for solving contemporary problems locally and globally
5. Understand the ethical principles and concerns that inform anthropological research



Integrative Courses > Diversity and Equity (DIV)

## Diversity and Equity Learning Outcomes



In this course, you will develop the following skills and knowledge:

- A. Describe patterns of thought or practices of historically marginalized peoples.
- B. Examine how legacies or experiences of oppression and responses to them shape contemporary realities or conditions.
- C. Analyze how structural inequalities shape social categories of human difference and how these constructions influence inequalities.
- D. Evaluate and reflect on values, policies, or practices needed to develop a more equitable society.

## Cultural Inquiry Learning Outcomes



In this course, you will cultivate the following Habits of Mind:

1. Identify your own or other groups' norms, biases, or forms of representation, and recognize their implications.
2. Examine how culture intersects with power relationships and how this intersection shapes knowledge production, ideas, or behavior.
3. Ask significant questions about a culture or cultures, and seek answers that include multiple perspectives and take into account cultural dynamics.

This class fulfills both cultural inquiry and diversity and equity learning outcomes (see above) associated with the AU Core in 2020. If you entered AU before fall 2018, ANTH-110 is also a course in Foundational Area 3, The Global and Cross-Cultural Experience, in the University's previous General Education Program.

### **Required Readings**

Class readings (and reading notes) are due the day they appear on the syllabus. Students should come to class prepared to discuss the readings.

All course readings will be available in Canvas (look in Course Reserves or in the weekly modules).

## **I: PRODUCING ANTHROPOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE**

### **WEEK 1: (8/24) Introductions**

Monday:

- No readings due

Thursday: ***\*REMINDER: reading notes are due by 9:00 p.m. the day before class on Canvas, every class session for the duration of the semester***

- Bohannon, Laura. 1966. Shakespeare in the Bush. *Natural History* August-September: 1—12.
- Hurston, Zora Neale. 1990 [1935]. Introduction, One. In *Mules and Men*. New York: Harper Perennial: 1-18. ***\*You do not need to submit reading notes for this reading.***

***\*\*\*Assignment 1 due: sign up for mandatory office hours this week so we can get to know you! 5 minute slots are available Thursday before and after class between 10:00-11:00 and 2:15-3:45. See "assignment 1" on class website for more info.***

### **WEEK 2: (8/31) Encountering Cultural Difference**

Monday:

- "Arrival Stories" Selected excerpts from ethnographies by Theodore Bestor, Philippe Bourgois, E.E. Evans-Pritchard, Lila Abu-Lughod, and Clifford Geertz.  
*\*For today's reading notes: choose three of these excerpts to submit one set of combined reading notes on, answering #2,3,4,6,7.*
- (optional) Geertz, Clifford. 1972. "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight." *Daedalus* 101 (1): 1-37.
- In-class film viewing of Dennis O'Rourke's documentary *Cannibal Tours* (viewable on YouTube at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQiDufdir\\_M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQiDufdir_M))

Thursday:

- Shah, Alpa. 2017. "Ethnography? Participant observation, a potentially revolutionary praxis." *Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 7. <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdfplus/10.14318/hau7.1.008>
- (optional) Foote Whyte, William. "On the Evolution of Street Corner Society." Appendix, in *Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum*. University of Chicago Press, 1960. (Please read pp 279-309, and 356-358).
- (optional) Rutherford, Danilyn et al. 2020. The Future of Anthropological Research: Ethics, Questions, and Methods in the Age of Covid-19. <http://blog.wennergren.org/2020/06/the-future-of-anthropological-research-ethics-questions-and-methods-in-the-age-of-covid-19-part-i/>

**\*\*\*Assignment 2 due at the start of class on Canvas.**

**WEEK 3: (9/7) Ethnography and Objectivity**

Monday:

- NO CLASS, LABOR DAY

Thursday:

- Martin, Emily. "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles." *Signs* (1991), Vol 16, No 3, pp 485-501.

**II: CULTURE AND MEANING**

**WEEK 4: (9/14) Symbols, Rituals, Materiality**

Monday:

- Douglas, Mary. [1991] 1966. "Introduction" and "Secular Defilement." In *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. New York: Routledge:1-6, 30-41.
- (optional) Turner, Victor. 1967. "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period" in *Rites de Passage*. In *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Thursday:

- Degani, Michael. 2020. Air In Unexpected Places: Metabolism, Design, and the Making of an 'African' Aircrete. *The Cambridge Journal of Anthropology*. Vol 38:2, 125-145.
- (optional) Abloni, by *Oktan Alexandre* (Documentary Educational Resources (DER), 2005) 51 minutes.

**\*\*Assignment 3 due at the start of class on Canvas.**

**WEEK 5: (9/21) Ties that Bind: Kinship and gift giving**

Monday:

- Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 1989. Death Without Weeping: Has poverty ravaged mother love in the shantytowns of Brazil? *Natural History* 98 (10 (October)):8, 10, 12, 14, 16.
- (optional) Wolf, Margery. 1972. Uterine Families and the Women's Community. In *Women and the Family in Rural Taiwan*. Stanford: Stanford University Press: 32-41.

Thursday:

- Kimmerer, Robin Wall. Ch: The Gift of Strawberries. In *Braiding Sweetgrass*.
- (optional) Mauss, Marcel. 1967 [1925]. Prestation, Gift and Potlatch; Distribution of the System. In *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*. New York: Norton: 3-5, 17-45.
- (optional) Stack, Carol. 1975. "Swapping" and "Personal Kindreds." In *All Our Kin: Strategies for Survival in a Black Community*. New York: Harper & Row.

### III: APPLYING ANTHROPOLOGY TO CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

#### WEEK 6: (9/30) Gender, Sex, and Sexuality

Monday:

- Cook-Gumperz, Jenny. Ch 11, "Public Discourse and the Private Life of Little Girls: Language and Women's Place in Language Socialization." In *Language and Woman's Place: Text and Commentaries*. Robin Lakoff, ed. Oxford University Press, 2004: pp 195-202.
- (Optional) "Prologue" and "Girls, Girls, Girls." *This American Life* 190, August 3, 2001. Available at: <http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/190/living-the-dream>

Thursday:

- Kulick, Don. 1997. The Gender of Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes. *American Anthropologist* 99 (3): 574-585.
- In-class viewing of clips from: Kim Longinotto and Jano Williams's documentary, *Shinjuku Boys*.
- (Optional) Ortner, Sherry. "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" In *Woman, Culture, and Society*, ed Rosaldo, Michelle.

**\*\*Assignment 4 due at the start of class on Canvas.**

#### WEEK 7: (10/5) Race and Ethnicity

Monday:

- Sacks, Karen Brodtkin. "How Did Jews Become White Folks?" In *Race*. Roger Sanjek and Steven Gregory, eds. Pp. 78-102
- Spend 15 minutes looking around this website, and play "The Game of Life Experience" at <http://www.understandingrace.org/lived/game/index.html>
- (optional) Fish, Jefferson. "Mixed Blood." *Psychology Today*, 2008.

Thursday:

\*\*\*GUEST LECTURE

- Readings TBD.
- (optional viewing) *Hue, A Matter of Color, 2014.*

WEEK 8: (10/12) **Indigeneity, Class, and Marginality**

Monday:

- Hathaway, Michael. China's Indigenous People? How Global Environmentalism Unintentionally Smuggled the Notion of Indigeneity into China. *Humanities* Vol 5, issue 54 (2016).
- (optional) Li, Tania. 2000. "Articulating Indigenous Identity in Indonesia: Resource Politics and the Tribal Slot." *Society for Comparative Study of Society and History*, pp 149-179.
- In-class viewing of selections from documentary, *Reel Injun*

Thursday:

- *Film.* Boebel and Walley, 2015. *Exit Zero: An Industrial Family Story.*
- Walley, Christine. 2015. "Transmedia as Experimental Ethnography: The Exit Zero Project, Deindustrialization, and the Politics of Nostalgia." *American Ethnologist* Vol 42:4, pp 624-639.

**\*\*Assignment 5 due at the start of class on Canvas.**

WEEK 9: (10/19) **Structural Violence**

Monday:

- Bourgois, Philippe and Jeffrey Schonberg. Ch 3, "A Community of Addicted Bodies" in *Righteous Dopefiend*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.
- (optional) *Righteous Dopefiend* Intro, Ch 1.

Thursday:

\*\*\*GUEST LECTURE on environmental justice, Shannon Clark

- Readings TBD
- Farmer, Paul. 1996. On Suffering and Structural Violence: A View from Below. *Daedalus* 125 (1): 261-283.

**\*\*Mid-term self-assessment is due today.**

WEEK 10: (10/26) **Resistance, Agency, and Politics**

Monday:

- Ogasawara, Yuko. Ch 4, "Popularity Poll" in *Office Ladies and Salaried Men: Power, Gender, and Work in Japanese Companies*. University of California Press, 1998.
- (Optional) *Righteous Dopefiend*, Ch. 5.

Thursday:

- LeBlanc, Robin. 2000. "Reconceiving Community: Pedaling and Peddling Democracy Among Japanese Housewives." Ch 2 in *Social Structures, Social Capital, and Personal Freedom*, Peter Lawler and Dale McConkey, eds. Praeger Publishers, 31-42.

**\*\*Assignment 6 due at the start of class on Canvas.**

**WEEK 11: (11/2) Development and Degradation**

Monday:

- Tsing, Anna. *Friction*. Ch 4., "Nature Loving." Pp 121-154.

Thursday:

- Dove, Michael and Daniel Kammen. 1997. "The Epistemology of Sustainable Resource Use: Managing Forest Products, Swiddens, and High-Yielding Variety Crops." *Human Organization*, Vol 56, No 1 pp 91-101.

**WEEK 12: (11/9) Localized Meanings**

Monday:

- Fadiman, Anne. "The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down," "Do Doctors Eat Brains?" and "Take as Directed." In *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Girous, pp. 20-59.
- (optional) Kleinman, A. and P. Benson. 2010. "Anthropology in the Clinic: The Problem of Cultural Competency and How to Fix It." In *Understanding and Applying Medical Anthropology – 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*, pp. 290-296.

**Thursday: Traveling Models of Rights**

**\*GUEST LECTURE**

Shepler, S. (2005). "The Rites of the Child: Global Discourses of Youth and Reintegrating Child Soldiers in Sierra Leone." *Journal of Human Rights* 4(2): 197-211.

**\*\*Assignment 7 due at the start of class on Canvas.**

**WEEK 13: (11/16) Translation and Globalization**

Monday:

- Katsuno, Hirofumi and Jeffrey Maret. "Localizing the Pokemon TV Series for the American Market." In *Pikachu's Global Adventure: The Rise and Fall of Pokemon*. Joseph Tobin, ed. Duke University Press: 2004 (pp 80-107).

Thursday:

- Besky, Sarah. Ch 4, "Fairness" in *The Darjeeling Distinction*, University of California Press, 2014.
- (optional) Bestor, Theodore. 2000. "How Sushi Went Global." *Foreign Policy* No.121 (Nov/Dec).



WEEK 14: (11/23)

Monday/Thursday:

**NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK**

WEEK 15: (11/30) **Anthropology and Social Change**

Monday:

- Abu-Lughod, Lila. "Do Muslim Women Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others." *American Anthropologist* 104, no. 3 (2002). Pp. 783-790.
- Gomberg-Muñoz, Ruth. 2013. "2012 Public Anthropology Year in Review: Actually, Rick, Florida Could Use a Few More Anthropologists." *American Anthropologist* 115(2):286-296.

Thursday:

- Semester wrap-up and review
- *CLASS EVALUATIONS*

WEEK 16 (12/7)

**\*\*FINAL EXAM FOR THIS CLASS IS THURSDAY, DEC 10 11:20-1:50**

### **THE FINE PRINT:**

This class meets on our Canvas site. We have an additional Slack group for informal conversations. **Our class has four major requirements.**

### **Grading**

Class elements and their percentage of student grades are as follows:

<b>Class preparation (reading notes) + participation</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Assignments</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>Attendance</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>15%</b>

A: Superior, original, thoughtful work in completion of all requirements;

B: Very good work in completion of course requirements;

C: Satisfactory work in completion of course requirements;

D: Unsatisfactory or incomplete work in course requirements and/or a failure to meet minimum attendance requirements;

F: Failure to meet minimum course standards for assignments, participation, and attendance.

### **A) Class Preparation and Participation**

The reading materials that will provide the basis for our class discussions have been thoughtfully chosen, and completing the required reading is critical for this class.



1) **Reading notes:** For each reading, you will complete a critical analysis of the logic, argument, and writing style. **Follow the *Reading Notes Guide* that is uploaded to the class Canvas site.** Reading actively will leave you with questions about the readings, their relationship to one another and to current events, and to class themes. Writing these notes requires you to reflect on what you have read and is one of the best ways to increase your understanding of the readings and prepare you for the class discussions and other work. For each class you will submit your reading notes to the appropriate discussion thread on the Canvas site by 9 p.m. the day before class. We grade these as complete/incomplete. \*\*\*There are 25 “Reading Note Days” this semester. You can miss 5 without negatively impacting your grade.

## 2) **Participation**

### a. **Participation in class discussions**

This class has a mix of short lectures followed by large and small group discussions. You probably have a lot to say about the readings and we encourage your participation, since talking about the readings/class topics will help you understand them better. Another great way to participate in class this semester is to use the ‘chat’ function during our class. If you are shy or reticent to participate and want some help strategizing, please let your instructor or TA know, we’re here to help.

### b. **Summaries and current events**

Once during the semester, each student will be responsible for either 1) summarizing the previous class period at the start of class or 2) relating the class theme that week to a current event/media item (worked into the class at your discretion during the day that it is due. The article should be linked on the class Slack site, invite link is [here](#)). These are short, 3-4 minute informal presentations. This is part of your participation grade. You will sign up for these on our Canvas site during the first week of class.

## B) **Course Assignments**

Over the course of the semester, each student will work on a **series of seven assignments** that involve anthropological observation, participation, and analysis. The purpose of these assignments is to learn about anthropological insights through multiple dimensions and to gain firsthand experience of some of the analytical possibilities and methodological challenges of conducting anthropological fieldwork. We will discuss these assignments at length in class. All assignment details are on the Canvas site.

All written assignments must be single spaced, 12 pt font, with 1 inch margins on all sides. All assignments must comply with the generally accepted rules of academic writing, style, and citation (for guidance see the MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing <http://thewritesource.com/mla.htm> or the American Anthropological Association style guide:

[http://www.aaanet.org/pubs/style\\_guide.htm](http://www.aaanet.org/pubs/style_guide.htm)). Presentation and clarity are important; we recommend spending 80% of your effort writing and 20% on editing your assignments before turning them in.

All course assignments must be uploaded to the class website by the time/date noted in the most recent syllabus available on the class website. \*\*You get one free “late assignment” pass.

### C) **Attendance**

We may have regular **pop quizzes** in class. These count for attendance in class. You get zero points if you are not in class when we take the pop quiz (your bottom two scores will be dropped). These quizzes cover the reading and lecture materials. The quizzes are closed-note and timed unless otherwise explicitly noted.

### D) **Final Exam**

There will be one final assessment based on lectures, readings, assignments, and films. There will be no make-up exams except in cases of medical emergency. In this case, the student must contact the instructor before the exam or as soon as possible after missing it. Make-up exams will be scheduled within one week of the missed test. Not taking an exam results in zero points (an F).

### E) **Extra Credit**

There will be limited opportunities for extra credit in class this semester for students who view the “optional” readings or films and post about them on our class Slack site. You can also get extra credit for linking news articles in our Slack site (invite link is [here](#)) related to the class that are from reputable news sources and writing something about how they connect to the class discussion or readings. If you’re already familiar with a class topics, we encourage you to post and respond and help other learners. The Slack site will be monitored occasionally by the instructors. In order to get extra credit, you must reference class discussions or required readings and also reference how the extra credit reading/film made you think differently (4-8 sentences). Extra credit will help you if your final grade is on the cusp of a higher grade.

### **Course Policies:**

#### *Attendance and participation*

If you anticipate the need to miss class for religious holidays, approved participation in University activities, or other reasonable outside commitments you should inform the instructor in writing during the first two weeks of class. After the first two weeks of class, the instructor will not approve absences. I do not accept doctor’s notes (except in extreme cases of repetitive absences) because they cost you money and effort to get and if you’re sick I would rather that you just stay home and work on feeling better. Many students have legitimate reasons to miss one or two classes over the course of the semester. If you miss more than that you will be participating less, missing important lecture content, and your grade will likely suffer. If you do

miss class, get notes from a classmate and then make an appointment to speak with the instructor or your TA about any questions you may have.

Readings and lectures complement one another but are not repetitive. Skip either and you will miss out on great opportunities to learn. For those of you who are concerned about grades, the final exam will be based on material covered in class and in the readings, and part of your participation grade is derived from class attendance (taken during pop quizzes which cannot be made up).

Each day's readings should be completed before coming to class. Please have electronic or paper copies of the relevant readings and your reading notes in class for reference. Come prepared to raise questions and discuss ideas with the class. Active and thoughtful participation is expected of every student.

### *Respectful engagement*

You may disagree with statements made by others in class or things you encounter in the readings. Understanding different interpretations is part of what anthropology is about, and respectful disagreement can be a productive way of thinking through difficult issues. This class is a safe space for sharing diverse viewpoints. Don't be afraid to talk, and always be respectful of others.

### *Tech policy*

We will be online this semester because of the pandemic. Various studies<sup>1</sup> suggest that taking notes with pen and paper results in better recall and retention than note taking with a laptop or tablet, think about it! (This should go without saying but, no non-class communications should occur on any devices during class time.) Audio, visual, or video recording or dissemination of the class/class materials in any form is not allowed without the express permission of the instructor. This class will be recorded by the instructor and saved for the duration of the semester.

### *Late Work*

Timely completion of the assignments is important. Unexcused late work will be marked down by half a letter grade for every day it is late. Excuses will be granted for emergency situations only. \*\*You get one free "late assignment" pass.

### *Contacting the Instructors*

Your TA and I are happy to discuss course readings, lectures, assignments, and exams with you, please make an appointment to speak with us! You can get in touch with me via phone or email, though please note that I generally do not respond to

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<sup>1</sup> Pam A. Mueller and Daniel M. Oppenheimer. The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard: Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking. *Psychological Science* June 2014 vol. 25 no. 6 1159-1168.  
Carrie B. Fried, In-class laptop use and its effects on student learning, *Computers & Education*, Volume 50, Issue 3, April 2008, Pages 906-914.  
Yamamoto, Kevin, Banning Laptops in the Classroom: Is it Worth the Hassles? *Journal of Legal Education*, Vol. 57, 2008.

phone messages or emails received after 5:00 p.m. until the following day. If your TA or I haven't replied to you after 48 hours, please nudge us again.

### *Course Content*

The instructor reserves the right to change the content and schedule of this course syllabus during the semester.

## **Important Information**

### *Disabilities*

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please notify the instructor with a letter from the Academic Support and Access Center (885-3360, [www.american.edu/ocl/asac/](http://www.american.edu/ocl/asac/)) as soon as possible so that we can make the proper arrangements.

### *Academic Integrity*

American University holds its students to the highest academic standards, and violations to academic integrity like plagiarism, inappropriate collaboration, dishonesty in examinations or assignments, using your own previously submitted work, and fabrication of data are unacceptable. By enrolling at AU and registering for class you have acknowledged your commitment to the Academic Integrity Code found here: <http://www.american.edu/academics/integrity/code.cfm> I am required to report violations of academic integrity to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, whose policy it is to fail students for the course. Please talk to the instructor, your TA, or a reference librarian if you are unsure of what plagiarism is.

### *Resources*

AU has many resources designed to help students with their specific academic and personal circumstances. Academic Support Services include time management, reading, note taking, and test-taking strategies, among other things. AU also has resources to help with difficult personal situations and in 2013 over 7,000 students used AU counseling services. These resources can generally be found at the Office of Campus Life's Academic Support and Access Center ([www.american.edu/ocl/asac/](http://www.american.edu/ocl/asac/)). Additional resources may be helpful if you're new to college or a first-generation college student; Michelle Obama's YouTube series is one example. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=egLfd8sa7xM> Please see the instructor if you are having trouble locating any of these resources.

### *Emergency Preparedness*

In the event of a weather or health related event, please note that AU policies state that "Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Canvas...students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies."