

DOUGLAS COLLEGE
Anthropology 1100-005
Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology

Fall 2008, Fridays, 8:30-11:20a (DL B2210)

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I am available at other times by appointment. You may also contact me at any time at the email address listed above.

Aims and Objectives

This course is designed to get you thinking about cultural diversity and cultural change. Should we care that cultures change? Why? Why not? How can we think about and study the cultures of another group of people without judging them?

This course introduces you to the study of cultural anthropology. Beyond the big questions above, we will discuss language, communication, culture, kinship, political systems, economic systems, religion, and changing cultures. Examples of cultural practices will be drawn from around the world and presented using lectures, films, and slide presentations.

Other Course Resources

www.tadmCILwraith.com – This is my website. A page on the website is devoted to this class. You can keep up with the lecture schedule there, find additional copies of handouts, and review slides presented in class. You can also see my Skype status on the front page of the website.

www.anthroblog.tadmCILwraith.com – This is my blog. I discuss issues related to anthropology, studying anthropology, and my other interests here. Much of the blog deals with aboriginal rights in British Columbia. Feel free to browse at your leisure and, should you feel inclined, you are able to comment on what I write about on the blog.

Textbooks

Ember, Carol R. and Melvin Ember. 2009. *Human Culture: Highlights of Cultural Anthropology*. Toronto: Pearson Ed.

Barker, John. 2008. *Ancestral Lines: The Maisin of Papua New Guinea and the Fate of the Rainforest*. Toronto: Broadview.

Course Requirements

i) Readings: Students are expected to complete required readings before class.

ii) Tests and Exams: There is a midterm exam and a final exam in this class. Students are responsible for all materials discussed in class. The tests will cover material from a limited number of lectures and the final exam will include materials from the entire course.

iii) Written Assignments: There are two longer written assignments and two shorter written assignments for this course. The longer assignments consist of 1) the observation of a 'cultural scene' and 2) the interpretation of the activities in that 'cultural scene.' The shorter assignments require you to review briefly two chapters of Barker's book (one in each half of the term). All assignments will be discussed in class and handouts will be provided.

Evaluation

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Chapter Review I	Sept 26	5%
Observation Writing Assignment I	Oct 10	25%
Midterm Exam	Oct 17	20%
Chapter Review II	Nov 21	5%
Observation Writing Assignment II	Nov 28	25%
Final Exam	TBA	20%

Respectful Learning Environment

Students are expected to adhere to all College policies regarding respectful conduct in all aspects of this course. This includes classroom conduct and online conduct through message boards, etc.

Please Note: Creating a respectful learning environment also includes the appropriate use of laptops and other kinds of electronics in class. Be aware that anyone sitting behind you can see what you are doing on your laptop – and it can be VERY distracting.

If you feel you must watch movies, do email, text, etc. during class, then please get yourself a privacy screen for your laptop's monitor. Better yet: save those activities for another time.

Attendance

As material discussed in class will differ from the text material, attending class is important. If you miss a class, it is strongly recommended that you obtain the notes from another student.

Policy on Missed Tests

You must contact the instructor before an examination if an emergency prevents you from attending. Make up tests will only be administered if the student provides a **legitimate and pressing** reason for missing the test. **Otherwise a grade of 0 will be assigned for the test.**

Late Assignments

Penalties for late assignments will be discussed in class. No assignments will be accepted after the last day of our class (November 28, 2008).

Plagiarism (Academic Dishonesty) Policy

Plagiarism is defined as a student “submitting the words, ideas, images or data of another person as his or her own in any academic writing, essay, thesis, research project or assignment in a course or program of study”. **Plagiarism amounts to cheating: it is a serious academic offence and will be dealt with as such in this course. If you are caught plagiarizing, you will receive a grade of 0 for the assignment and you will be subject to College disciplinary measures.**

Language Competency Policy

Students are advised that this is a **language intensive course**. Much of the material covered relies upon students possessing a good grasp of English grammar and syntax. It is **strongly recommended** that students have completed English 124 (Writing Skills) or possess its equivalent level for reading and writing English **prior** to taking this course. Students who do not possess a “post-secondary” level of reading and writing competence in English will not be able to complete this course successfully. Students for whom English is a second language are **strongly** advised to ensure that their level of English proficiency is adequate before taking this course.

Lecture Outline and Reading Assignments

The course will follow the general outline of the textbook and we will use films, slide presentations and discussion groups in order to complement the materials presented in the book.

Note: Barker = *Ancestral Lines*
E&E = Ember and Ember's *Human Culture*

Week 1: Introduction to Anthropology (September 5)

- E&E 1 & 2

Week 2: Anthropological Methods (Sept 12)

- E&E 1 & 2
- Barker Chp 1

Week 3: Economic Anthropology (Sept 19)

- E&E 4
- Barker Chp 2
- Slide Presentation: Hunting in a Modern World

Week 4: Exchange Systems (Sept 26)

- E&E 4
- **Chapter Review #1 Due**
- Film: Ongka's Big Moka

Weeks 5 – 6: Kinship (October 3, 10)

- E&E 7
- Barker Chp 3
- Film: Kinship and Descent
- **Observation Writing Assignment I Due in Class October 10**

Week 7: Midterm: October 17 (During Our Regular Class Time)

Week 8: Religion and Ritual (October 24)

- E&E 9
- Barker Chp 4
- Film: Witchcraft Among the Azande

Week 9: Social Stratification (October 31)

- E&E 5
- Barker Chp 5
- Film: TBA

Week 10: Political Anthropology and Midterm II (November 7)

- E&E 8
- Film: The Mursi

Week 11-12: Language/Communication (November 14, 21)

- E&E 3
- Barker Chp 6; Conclusion
- Video: The Dane Zaa
- **Chapter Review #2 Due on November 21**

Week 13: Culture Change (November 28)

- E&E 10 (Nov 24)
- E&E 12 (Nov 26)
- Film: Hunters and Bombers
- **Observation Writing Assignment II Due in Class**

Final Exam Will Be Held During the Exam Period

Surviving and Being Successful in Anthropology 1100

Here are some helpful hints which will help you survive this course and hopefully enjoy it as well.

1) Don't Read the Texts or View Films for Plot: Years of television viewing have conditioned most students to read for (or watch for) plot. Students in this class are often dismayed when, after viewing all of the films, reading all the texts, and being able to recount the central story (which is indeed important), they do miserably on the exams. You must remember more than the story line. Each lecture is designed to emphasize a particular point (or points) about human society and to get you to raise interesting questions yourself.

Ask Yourself: what point is being emphasized each week in the lectures? How does the film relate to that point? The readings? What message does the director of the film want to convey? How do the answers to these questions help me understand the world I encounter on a daily basis? What other questions do the lectures raise for me?

When preparing for tests: Can you outline the relationship between readings, lectures and films? Can you link the central ideas we have discussed to real world, real life issues that you are or will be confronting? You should be able to do this! .Difficulty in answering these questions is an early warning signal that you are not viewing/reading correctly.

2) Read Twice and Take Notes During Films and Lectures: two readings are better than one. Read the reading assignments and the film questions before attending class or viewing a film. This will alert you to what is important - what to look for in the film. After viewing, review your readings or notes. This will reinforce the message of the film and help you make the links between reading, lecture and film: Questions that should come up for you are: why are we reading this article? What are the 2-3 most important points the author makes? What does this have to do with the films? What terms did you encounter in the reading that were unfamiliar to you? I suggest that after completing each reading you make a few end notes summarizing the main points of the article or chapter. Write these notes directly in your book. These summary notes will help considerably when it comes time to prepare for the exams.

3) Build Your Vocabulary: Anthropology, like any other field of study has its own special vocabulary. It is in your interest to look up words that you do not understand. Keep a running list at the back of your notebook . Feel free to come in and ask about things you do not understand (after you have made some effort to deal with them yourself).

4) Study in Groups if Possible: Group study helps you find the blind spots in your own study habits and provides you with feedback on what is important and what is not. Also, it's a lot more fun to discuss film with others than to quietly and privately consume it. Ask Yourself: are my study partners and I focusing on the same issues? If not, why not? You might even want to arrange a study group to go out for a pizza or coffee immediately after class.

5) Do all of the Required Work: The various units of this course are designed to complement one another. Everything in the class has a purpose. You cannot compensate for a missed film with extra reading nor substitute discussions for viewing the films. Each component of the course builds on the other. Don't expect the lectures or the films to make sense if you gloss the readings. And stay current. If you put off the reading until right before the exam a lot of the things that we talk about in class won't make much sense to you.

6) Come to Office Hours: I like anthropology and I am happy to talk with you about it. Bring your questions and your classmates and drop in and have a conversation.

Note: These ideas are adapted from 'Strategies for Survival in Anthro 106' at the University of Massachusetts.

Watching Anthropological Films

I find it hard to talk about anthropology without providing you with some sense of how it is done and what anthropological studies look like. With that in mind, films and slide presentations will contribute greatly to our class material and your understanding of key concepts in cultural anthropology. I will introduce each film and provide questions to encourage you to connect what you see with what we discuss in the lectures. After the film we will discuss the questions as a class, or you will discuss the questions together in small groups. As a group, you may be asked to present some of your findings to the class informally.

Note: The viewing and analysis of films and the discussion sessions are as important as the lectures and readings. Questions on each exam will be geared to the films and you might see some of the discussion questions appear as short answer questions on the tests.

We will use anthropological films as a way to ‘experience’ another culture without actually going there. You should be aware, however, of some quirks and problems associated with visual anthropology and recording of cultures on film. Some of these issues relate to you and how you see visual representations. Others relate to problems with the media itself.

Here are some issues, warnings, and things to watch for in every film or slide presentation you see:

1. *Anthropological videos are not made as entertainment.* I am showing the presentations for their value as teaching aids. You may enjoy the film, or, you may not enjoy the film ... in either case, it would be helpful for the discussions if you could explain how you feel and why.

2. *Watch for biases.* (This is key and will come up in your discussions.) Anthropologists and the video makers (usually not one and the same!) are products of their own cultures. They will have the same sorts of biases that are apparent in any fieldwork research. At the same time, some films have more direct biases, and you need to watch for them.

Some films are limited in scope and their presentations of single aspects of a culture may frustrate you ... Other films are old, and they may be narrated in old styles, use gendered language, etc.

3. *How are people portrayed or described?*

Are the people in the films described as ‘others’ in contrast to ‘Western’ society? Or, do the films portray the merits of the culture shown in its own terms?

4. *What is going on outside the frame of the film?*

Remember, films are edited for all sorts of reason including content, emotion, story, or time. What might be on the cutting room floor? What happened right beside the action you see? How does that impact the presentations you see?

5. *Generally, what is the film about and how does it tie into the lecture from today?*

When watching the films, note the connections between topics in the lecture and examples from the films. What do you learn about British Columbia, its people, cultures, politics?