

Readings for Lavenda and Schultz and Articles in the Readings Package
Anthropology 1100
Winter 2008
Instructor: McIlwraith

Please read the chapters and/or articles prior to the classes in which the material will be discussed. These questions are meant to guide your reading and to highlight the ideas in each chapter that I find particularly significant.

Note:

L&S = Lavenda and Schultz

RP = Readings Package

Week 1: Introduction to Anthropology and Course (January 7, 9)

- L&S Chapter s1 & 2
- 1. Note the characteristics of each of the subfields of anthropology.
- 2. What is Ethnography?
- 3. Distinguish ethnocentrism from cultural relativism. What is the relationship between those two terms?
- 4. What is meant by saying that anthropology offers a 'holistic perspective'?
- 5. How do anthropologists define culture? What are its characteristics?
- 6. What is participant observation? What are its strengths and limitations?

Week 2: Anthropological Methods and Theory (January 14, 16)

- L&S Chapter 12 and Appendix

(Don't get hung up on the details of each theory here. Try to get a sense of the different approaches and how the scholars that used them were trying to understand human behaviour.)

1. How do anthropologists use theory?
2. What theory or theories seem most useful to you?
3. Create a chart showing the theories in the chapter and their characteristics.
4. Where do you put yourself in the debate about whether biology or culture determines human behavior?
5. What kinds of data do anthropologists collect?
6. Distinguish Emic and Etic categories.
7. Why aren't ethnographies taken 'at face value'?

- RP: Shakespeare in the Bush
- 1. Why is there so much misunderstanding between Bohannon and the Tiv where Hamlet is concerned? (Do the elders see Bohannon and her story as a threat to them?)
- 2. Is Bohannon forgetting her lessons about cultural relativity?
- 3. What do the Tiv mean by witchcraft?

Week 3: Economic Anthropology (January 21, 23)

- L&S Chapter 8
- 1. What is meant by the phrase 'subsistence strategies'?
- 2. What activities are included under the label 'foraging'?
- 3. What is the difference between extensive agriculture and intensive agriculture?
- 4. What kinds of property are owned by pastoralists?

Week 4: Exchange Systems (January 28, 30)

- L&S Chapter 8
- 1. List the differences between generalized and balanced reciprocity.
- 2. What is the relationship between the modes of exchange and subsistence strategies? Between modes of production and subsistence strategies?
- 3. Is balanced reciprocity the same as buying things in a store?
- 4. What do givers get out of redistribution systems?
- 5. What does it mean to be a consumer?
- RP: Too Many Bananas
- 1. What are the rules around giving gifts? (ie. Sketch out the patterns of sharing food in Kandoka Village.)
- 2. Is food being bought and sold?
- 3. What, ultimately, is achieved by giving food?

Weeks 5&7: Kinship (February 4, 18, 20)

- L&S 9 &10

Note: We will be particularly concerned with the Iroquios and the Eskimo systems of kinship terminology.

1. What is a system of kinship terminologies?
2. What do members of unilineal descent systems get out of membership? How are those benefits different in non-unilineal systems?
3. How does the textbook define marriage? Do you have any problems with their definition? Why is a single definition of marriage difficult?

Week 8: Political Anthropology (February 25, 27)

- L&S Chapter 7
- 1. What is power?
- 2. In popular culture, or everyday talk, what do bands and tribes refer to? What is a chief? How do anthropologists think about these concepts differently?
- 3. What is the relationship between means of subsistence and types of political organization?
- 4. What kinds of leaders do you see in bands, tribes, chiefdoms, and states?
- 5. Distinguish laws and norms.

Week 9: Social Stratification (March 3, 5)

- L&S Chapter 6
- 1. Associate subsistence means with different types of groups in society.
- 2. Characterize on-line chat rooms in terms of groups using anthropological concepts.
- 3. What is a caste system? How does it differ from a class system?
- 4. Do all cultures show social inequality?

Week 10, 11: Religion and Ritual (March 10, 12, 17)

- L&S 5
- 1. State a definition for religion. Why is it hard to come up with one definition?
- 2. How do anthropologists talk about the origin of religion?
- 3. What is a myth? Is that different than the way in which we talk about myths in everyday talk around town?
- 4. What is witchcraft and how/why does it work?
- RP: Consulting the Poison Oracle Among the Azande
- 1. What is an oracle?
- 2. How does the poison oracle work?
- 3. Who controls the oracle?
- 4. What kinds of questions can be asked of this oracle?
- RP: Body Ritual Among the Nacirema
- 1. Translate this story for us: who are the Nacirema and what are they doing?
- 2. Why has Miner written this account of Nacirema culture this way?
- 3. What is a ritual?

Week 12, 13: Language/Communication and Midterm II (March 26, 31)

- L&S: Chapter 3
- 1. Distinguish language from communication.

2. Can you communicate with yourself?
3. Should we care that languages change? Should we care if a language disappears or dies out?

Week 13, 14: Culture Change (April 2, 7)

- L&S 11

1. What kinds of theoretical approaches do anthropologists take to culture change?
2. How are acculturation, assimilation, and genocide similar and different?
3. **Should we care that cultures change? After all, don't all cultures interact and change? (Or, is the issue more about HOW cultures change?)**

- RP: Time (Hugh Brody)

1. What is Jimmy Field's story?
2. How is time understood differently by Brody and Field?
3. Is Brody's experience among the Dunne-za really a journey to a different world?
4. Should we care that Dunne-za culture is changing and disappearing?