

Anthropology 1100-001
Winter 2012

Readings Questions
Assignment Handouts

Anthropology 1100

Questions for Barker's *Ancestral Lines*

Chapter 1: Fieldwork Among the Maisin

1. Where do the Maisin live? How do they make their living?
2. Why does Barker want to study the Maisin? What is the topic of his research?
3. What is Barker's 'arrival story'?
4. What is tapa? Why does Barker use it as a central metaphor for the book?
5. What does Barker say participant-observation entails?
6. What is ethnographic research? What methods does Barker use to answer his research questions?

Chapter 2: Making a Living

1. What economic system do the Maisin practice? (What is their mode of production?) How does it work?
2. How is the work 'gendered'?
3. How is the garden related to spiritual activities?
4. Why is reciprocity so critical to life in Uiaku?
5. Is, as Barker wonders, the giving of gifts in Uiaku "calculating and harsh"?

Chapter 3: The Social Design

1. What is meant by the term 'age cohort'?
2. How are Maisin lives like tapa cloth?
3. Why is it considered bad to be alone in Maisin culture?
4. What are the expectations of boys, girls and men, women?
5. Does Maisin culture allow women any political power?
6. What kind of descent system is found in Uiaku?
7. What are the three levels of groups in place in Uiaku?

Chapter 4: The Spiritual Realm

1. What is the place of Christianity in Uiaku? In other words, what is the relationship between Christianity and traditional spirituality?
2. What is Maisin cosmology?
3. What does Barker mean by sorcery? Do the Maisin mean the same thing?
4. What happened to Mona? How do the Maisin explain it?
5. Do traditional beliefs, Christianity, and science conflict for the Maisin?

Chapter 5: Community

1. According to Barker (and anthropologists in general) what two concerns overlap when community is studied?
2. What is community?
3. What is the basis of the Maisin legal system? Is it traditional? Based on something else?
4. What is meant by being 'big' in Maisin culture?
5. Is this place politically egalitarian? (What kind of political system is in place here?)

Chapter 6: Cultural Change: Tapa and the Rainforest

1. What choice(s) do the Maisin have to make in this chapter?
2. Who are the players in the logging disputes? Chart them out.
3. What problems at home do the Maisin face when joining NGOs to stop logging?
4. What is the role of tapa in the dispute over the rainforest?
5. What is MICAD and how does it play into the rainforest dispute?
6. What is meant by friendship in Uiaku?

Anthropology 1100

Questions for Ember and Ember

Note: The questions are provided in the order the chapters are used in the course.

Chapter 1: Importance of Anthropology

1. How do the authors define anthropology? Is there anything missing?
2. What are the four fields of anthropology? How are they similar, or, what makes them all part of the study of anthropology?
3. What is a theory? Why is a theory useful to the anthropologist?

Chapter 2: The Study of Culture

1. How do the authors define culture? What's missing? Is there anything in the definition that is unnecessary?
2. What characteristics of culture do the authors emphasize?
3. What is ethnocentrism? Why is it a problem for the anthropologist?
4. What is cultural relativism? Why is it necessary for the anthropologist? Can it be a problem?
5. What methods do anthropologists use to study culture?
6. What are the characteristics of participant-observation?

Chapter 4: Economics

1. What kinds of activities constitute food collection?
2. What kinds of activities constitute food production?
3. What is the difference between horticulture and agriculture?
4. What kinds of property are owned by pastoralists?
5. How is land valued by foragers? Agriculturalists?

6. What is meant by reciprocity?
7. List the differences between generalized and balanced reciprocity.
8. What is the relationship between 'exchange' and 'production' of food?
9. Is balanced reciprocity the same as buying things in a store?
10. What do givers get out of redistribution systems?

Chapter 7: Marriage, Family, and Kinship

1. How does the textbook define marriage? Do you have any problems with their definition? Why is a single definition of marriage difficult?
2. What is the incest taboo? Why does it seem to exist in all cultures?
3. What is a descent system? What does it do for members?

Chapter 9: Religion and Magic

1. State a definition for religion. Why is it hard to come up with one definition?
2. How do anthropologists explain the origin of religion?
3. Is the term 'supernatural' useful? Why or why not?
4. What is magic? How is it different (or the same) as sorcery and witchcraft?
5. What is the difference between a shaman and a priest?
6. How do religions change?

Chapter 8: Political Life

1. 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?
2. What is the relationship between modes of production and types of political organization?
3. What kinds of leaders do you see in bands, tribes, chiefdoms, and states?
4. Distinguish laws and norms.

Chapter 5: Social Stratification

1. Do all cultures show social inequality?
2. Associate modes of production with different types of groups in society.
3. Distinguish egalitarian societies from ranked and class-based societies.
4. Are egalitarian societies truly possible?
5. How is race different from ethnicity?
6. Why does inequality appear in human history?

Chapter 3: Language and Communication

1. Distinguish language from communication.
2. What is required for communication to occur?
3. Can you communicate with yourself?
4. How do writing systems represent poorly sound systems?
5. What is the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis? Where do you stand?
6. Should we care that languages change? Should we care if a language disappears or dies out?

Chapters 10 & 12: Culture Change and Applied Anthropology

Note: Read Chapter 12 with an eye to learning about the different applications of anthropology.

1. Distinguish invention from discovery.
2. How does diffusion work?
3. How are acculturation, assimilation, and genocide similar and different?
4. **Should we care that cultures change? After all, don't all cultures interact and change? (Or, is the issue more about HOW cultures change?)**
5. What ethical issues are involved in doing applied anthropology? (Doesn't applied anthropology violate the goal of being culturally relative?)
6. What are human rights? (Doesn't the idea of universal human rights violate the principles of cultural relativity?)

Anthropology 1100-001 Winter 2012 Chapter Review Assignments Review #1 Due: January 23; Review #2: March 12
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Introduction

This course requires that you read an ethnography called *Ancestral Lines* by UBC anthropologist John Barker. Each chapter relates directly to the themes and lectures of the course. As such, this ethnography is meant to complement your textbook which has a limited number of extended examples of cultural activities and behaviors.

For these two assignments, you are required to summarize 2 chapters of your choice (one from each half of the term). Specific details of what to include in the reviews are given below.

Administrative Details

Review #1 is due in class on January 23. For Review #1, you must review one of chapter 1, 2, or 3 from *Ancestral Lines*.

Read all chapters. Do not review all of them.

Review #2 is due in class on March 12. For Review #2, you must review one of chapter 4, 5, or 6 from *Ancestral Lines*.

Read all chapters. Do not review all of them.

Each review is worth 10% of your total grade. If your submission is late, you will lose 1 point / week (10%) starting after the class in which the assignment is due.

Specific Requirements

Reviews are limited to 500 words or about two pages double spaced. Do not exceed this limit. It is conceivable that your review will be shorter than this. Your review must be written in sentences and paragraphs. Please indent your paragraphs. Do not write a one page paragraph; they are very difficult to read. It is not necessary to use a cover page but please put your name on the top of your paper. Get someone to proof-read your paper.

Suggested Process

1. Read the chapter.
2. Note or highlight interesting features of the text in the margins. These features might relate to: the 'content' of the chapter, or what is being described by Barker; the position and role of the anthropologist; the way in which the chapter is written; questions that the chapter raises for you. Your observations may be about other things too.

3. On a piece of scratch paper, write out the main points and arguments made in the chapter. What is the chapter about, and what are the major conclusions? Write out in skeleton form how each argument is developed and how a larger conclusion is reached.
4. Now that you have identified the main points, write an outline of your short summary. Tip: in making the outline, be analytical, not chronological. That is, do not reproduce each point as it is written chronologically in the chapter. This always obscures the larger argument. Instead, think of how the main points are related and try to integrate them into your paragraphs.

Write Up

Write a 500 word review of the chapter. Your review must include:

- a. A statement of what the chapter is about (ie. the summary).
- b. A note about how the chapter relates to the class or to anthropology in general. How does it match up with lectures and/or the textbook.
- c. A question that the chapter raises for you and a potential answer to the question. The question must be generated by the chapter and answered with reference to the chapter. (Note: do not use the questions I have given you as your questions! Do not ask a question that Barker answers directly.)

I could imagine your summary will have three paragraphs, each one dealing with the above points. Expect to write more than one draft as you prepare this work.

And, your mark will be based on the level of success at completing each of a, b, and c.

Tips

The three 'Cs':

Comprehensiveness: the summary should summarize all of the main points of the chapter. Your mark will be lower if important points are missing. Pay attention to the details, but make sure they are used in support of the main points and they do not cause the reader to lose focus on the main themes of the chapter.

Clarity: try to cover the main points in the limited space, without vague or imprecise language. Use straightforward and direct language, like you were explaining each point to a classmate.

Cogent organization and writing: organize your summary points and use good essay structure. Use topic sentences for each paragraph and make sure order of each paragraph makes sense. (The structure of these reviews is already provided for you, above.)

(Kudos to Dr. John Alderete, SFU Linguistics.)

Anthropology 1100-001
Ethnographic Observation Exercise I
Due in class February 6, 2012

Anthropology demands the open-mindedness with which one must look and listen, record in astonishment and wonder that which one would not have been able to guess.

-Margaret Mead

Introduction

This assignment is designed to give you the opportunity to make observations of a 'cultural scene' as an anthropologist would and to try out a key method of anthropological research for yourself. You will be required to write a short description of your chosen scene and then to make a comment on those observations. This assignment also provides you with some of the materials you will require for completing your essay assignment, due later in the term.

Recommended Process: Summary

1. Choose a cultural scene, one which has some human activity (see below). This process will be discussed in class. Keep in mind that you will have to repeat the observations of this scene for your essay later in the term.
2. Observe your scene for 15 minutes and no more.
3. Make short notes as you observe your scene, or, if making notes is impossible during your observation, make short, point form notes immediately after your observation is over.
4. Fill out your notes once as soon as possible after your observation is done.
5. Complete a short write-up of 3 pages. Your write-up will describe the scene and make a comment about it.

Recommended Process: Detailed Instructions

1. Choosing a Cultural Scene

Choose a scene that is contained in a small area and has a definite focus of human activity. These scenes need not be fancy or complicated ... you will get enough information for the write-up while watching just about any activity.

Also, you must choose a scene that you can return to again. Your essay assignment later in the term will involve revisiting the scene, observing it again for 15 more minutes, and making comparisons with your original observation. This requirement should encourage you to observe a public place or activity.

I STRONGLY suggest you choose a scene that you are not directly involved in, OR, do not know much about. Choosing an unfamiliar scene will make this assignment easier for you. Typically, the people who do poorly on this assignment observe the place that they work because work places are too familiar to people and they make assumptions about what they have seen.

Examples of Possible Ethnographic Scenes

- The coming and going of shoppers in a mall
- Getting on and riding the bus
- Buying coffee at a coffee shop
- Crossing at a cross-walk

Examples of Difficult or Challenging Ethnographic Scenes

- A family party or party with friends: This would be difficult because as a primary participant, you will find it very hard to sit back and observe what is going on around you.
- Scenes discovered while traveling: It will be hard to return to do a similar observation again.
- The place that you work: Almost always, you can not put aside what you already know about the scene. This results in conclusions about the scene that are not based on observations you made during your 15 minute time period.

PLEASE NOTE: Do not choose scenes that are likely to have children as their focus. This includes daycares, parks, or playgrounds. Clearly many scenes will have situations in which the observation of children is unavoidable, such as at a mall, but we do not have approval of the College's Ethics Committee to study scenes where children are the primary participants. Please talk to me if you have any concerns in this regard or are unsure if your scene will focus on children's behavior.

(If your completed observation is of children, you will be penalized with a lower mark and you will have to choose a new scene for the second assignment.)

2. Observation

Observe your scene discreetly for about 15 minutes. In many cases, the easiest way to do this is to find a place to sit quietly and then to simply watch what is going on. Please do not talk to people or interview people during this time.

3. Note taking

Take notes in a small notebook. If it is possible to make notes during your observation, do so, but do not find yourself so focused on taking notes that you do not watch what is going on. Your notes should include:

- Information about the scene itself – who is there, lighting, physical description, etc.
- Information about what you saw people doing

You must submit your notes along with your write-up on the assignment due date. I will return the notes with your graded assignment.

4. Filling out your notes

When your fifteen minutes are up, leave the scene. In a quiet place, fill out your notes. Be sure to include more details about the topics above. At this time, you should start to think about themes, patterns, or conclusions in what you saw.

Note: This step is critical. Not only is it a key component of any anthropologist's activities, you will need to use these notes later in the term when you do your second observation. If the notes of your original observation are poor, it will be difficult for you to compare your second observation with this first observation.

5. Write-up and Submissions

Your write-up is limited to 750 words or three pages, double spaced. Do not write more even though you might be able to. In your write-up, you should discuss the following things and your papers will be graded based on this list:

- What you did. This may be a simple statement of where you went, how you set up to do your observation, and perhaps why you made those decisions.
- A general description of the scene. These are taken from your notes and should give me enough to understand what you were seeing.
- What you saw people doing. These are taken from your notes as well. This is the heart of your description and should provide me with the details of how the people you saw were involved in the scene you were observing.
- A general conclusion about what you saw. This conclusion might be as simple as a detailed comment on the activity like something you never realized about the scene you observed. *This requirement is key for a good grade*, as this exercise is about observing a scene and commenting on it. It is more than just description. Keep in mind, however, that your comment does not have to be earth shattering ... it may be fairly straightforward and mundane while still moving your paper from observation and description towards analysis.

You will need to make decisions about how much to tell me and what is important about your scene. It may not all be important.

A complete assignment includes your write-up (#5 above) and your field notes (#4 above).

Other Notes

- This is an observation exercise only. Do not interview people involved in the activity. Participate enough to allow you to fully observe the scene. This may mean that you simply choose a seat in or near your scene and watch what happens for the fifteen minute period.
- Do not feel that you need to make a startling conclusion or observe something completely radical. A lot of anthropological observation is based simply on careful and detailed description of what most of us otherwise take for granted.
- I can not say it enough: Your conclusion must be based on something you saw during the observation period. If you know more about your scene than you saw during the 15 minutes, you can not use it.
- Your text has a discussion of participant observation. Also, your week two lecture notes will help you with examples of how anthropologists think about ethnographic observations.
- You do not need to conduct any library research to complete this assignment.
- Good writing counts and poor or sloppy writing will result in a lower grade. This means that your paper should be written in paragraphs with topic sentences, complete sentences, and a thesis to give the text direction. If you are unclear about how to compose this assignment please discuss it with me or contact academic services at the college. Please have someone proof read your write-up for spelling and grammatical accuracy.
- You can email me to discuss your choice of cultural scene or your write-up anytime. I will respond promptly. If you want me to look over your write-up I am willing to do so during office hours.

Due Date, Late Papers, and the Value of the Assignment

This assignment is due on February 6. Consider completing the observation in the first couple of weeks of term so that if you run into problems you can discuss them with me.

This assignment is worth 20% of your grade and it will be marked out of 20. If you hand it in after class time on February 6, it is considered late and you will lose 1 point out of 20 per week late (5%).

Marking Feedback for Observation Assignment #1
Due February 6, 2012; Worth 20 Points

Name: _____

Introduction includes:

- A brief statement of what you did.
- A direction for the paper indicating what your conclusion will be.

Main paragraphs include:

- A general description of the scene, taken from your notes.
- What you saw people doing. These are taken from your notes as well.

Concluding paragraph includes:

- A general conclusion about what you saw. Does the conclusion move your paper from observation and description towards analysis?

Style and Expression; Other

- Is the paper grammatically correct? Is it clearly written? Is it concise?
- Are the observation and its results interesting, useful, or unique?
- Are the Fieldnotes attached? Useful and thorough?
- Late? (-1 point/week starting after class, February 6)

Anthropology 1100-001
Ethnographic Observation Exercise II
Due at the Beginning of Class April 2, 2012

Introduction

In this assignment, you are expected to expand upon your ethnographic observations by including analysis using key terms and ideas in anthropology. You are required to repeat your initial ethnographic observation and then discuss both observations with reference to two concepts from our course.

Process

1. Visit the ethnographic scene you visited earlier in the term and repeat your 15 minute observation. Make notes about the scene during and after your observation.
2. Identify two concepts in the course which can help you explain what you saw in your observation.
3. Write an essay with the following components: 1) a comparison of your two observations; 2) definitions of 2 concepts from the class related to your observations; and, 3) the application of the concepts to your observation to help explain what you saw.
4. Submit essay and field notes.

Detailed Instructions

1. Re-visit your ethnographic scene and conduct a 2nd 15 minute observation.

You are not required to go to the exact place at the exact time ... but in your write-up you will need to describe to me how the two observations you did were similar and different.

2. Identify 2 Concepts from the Course

In choosing your concepts, pick two that relate to your observation and/or conclusion. Choose the concepts from the text book or the lectures. Some concepts that might be useful to you are listed on the study sheet for test 1. Also, you may use concepts from the text book that we have not yet discussed. I am happy to discuss up-coming concepts with you if you want to use them. Possible concepts include:

- culture (tricky ... talk to me)
- subsistence activities
- groups
- influence, power
- norms, laws
- shaming, guilt
- cultural relativity – absolute, critical (tricky ... talk to me)
- exchange
- reciprocity
- ritual (tricky ... talk to me)

3. Write the Essay

Your essay should be written in sentences and paragraphs, double-spaced, and be a minimum of five pages and a maximum of 7 pages (1200-1500 words).

In your write-up, you should include the following details. I will use these four points as a guide for marking your essay.

1. A short summary of what you did for your two observations. This can be a short paragraph reminding me of where you went and what you did. Please note any differences in your methods, such as a change in time of day, location of the scene, etc.
2. Tell me about the similarities and differences between the two observations – in what you saw.
3. Introduce the two concepts you use to understand what you saw. This would probably include a general definition of the concepts.
4. Apply the concepts to the scene. Explain to me how the concepts apply to the **observations and conclusions** you made. A successful connection between the concepts and the observation includes the characteristics of the concept and how the observation exhibited those characteristics.

4. Submit Essay and Field Notes (Due Date)

This assignment is due at the beginning of class on April 2. Please submit your field notes along with your paper. This assignment is worth 20% of your grade and it will be marked out of 20. If you hand it in after class time on April 2, it is considered late and you will lose 1 point out of 20 (5%). No papers are accepted after April 11.

Other Notes and Suggestions

- Add a general introduction and conclusion, thus making this a more ‘traditional’ style essay. Your thesis statement would likely relate to the concepts you used.
 - eg. “In this essay, I describe how people buy coffee, I define the concept of norms and rituals, and I explain why coffee buying is a ritual with specific norms of behaviour.”
- It is helpful to me if you state the concepts that you will use in your introduction.
- Be sure to use the two concepts to explain what you saw and not how you felt about the observations.
- Your conclusions in the essay do not have to be the same as your conclusions in the first assignment. I would expect that you will notice different things the second time and your conclusions may change as a result. Of course, your observations and conclusions might not change at all.
- You do not need to conduct any library research to complete this assignment.
- Good writing counts and poor or sloppy writing will result in a lower grade. Please have someone proof read your write-up for spelling and grammatical accuracy.
- If you would like me to review a draft of your essay for general content, please submit a hard copy to me by class time on March 26 (or earlier). Please include your email address. I will email you back with general comments before the assignment is due.

Marking Feedback for Observation Assignment #2
Due April 2, 2012 (Worth 20 Points)

Name: _____

Introduction includes:

- A brief statement of what you did for both observations noting differences in methodology.
- A direction for the paper indicating your analytical terms and suggesting what your conclusion will be. This is your thesis.

Main paragraphs include:

- A comparison of the two observations and scenes through a discussion of similarities and differences.
- An introduction and/or definition of the two concepts you use to understand what you saw.
- The application of the two concepts to the scene. A successful connection between the concepts and the observations.

Concluding paragraph includes:

- A restatement of the connection between your concepts and your observations.
- A general conclusion that is drawn from what you saw.

Style and Expression; Other

- Is the paper grammatically correct? Is it clearly written? Is it concise?
- Does the paper use topic sentences for paragraphs? Is it organized effectively for easy reading?
- Are the observation and results interesting, useful, or unique? Are the examples useful, appropriate?
- Are the Fieldnotes attached? Useful and thorough?
- Late? (-1 point/week starting after class, April 2)