Introduction to Cultural Anthropology

ANTH 2101
Ramy Aly & Hakem Al-Rustom
Fall 2016
ANTH 2101
Class: MR 10:05 – 11:25
Room: ALWALEED C153

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  2) Khamsa w-khmesah: Believing in the Unseen
  3) Why do we eat with our right hands?
  4) Can men also give birth?
  5) Culture and Politics - Why are so few people powerful and so many weak?
  6) Why might ‘das gift’ be the death of you?
  7) Is there a world without words?
  8) Did ‘I’ choose that? The structure agency debate
  9) The craft and public role of Anthropology
About the Course:

This course introduces students to the field of socio-cultural anthropology. We discuss ten topics that constitute some of the major debates in the field, and ultimately we ask the general question: *What makes human beings human?* The readings seek to go beyond major misperceptions about humans and their cultures especially the perceived dichotomy of *nature* versus *culture*. This dichotomy is debated while engaging with ethnographies in the following areas: the human body, gender roles, birth and death, racial and identity politics, as well as introducing students to the disciplines subfields such as the anthropology of religion, politics, economics, and kinship. The second half of the course poses the general question of *why do human have cultures?* Is culture uniquely human? And finally, the relationship between culture and language is shaping the human experience of ‘making of history’. The course investigates the ways in which anthropologists understand human ‘nature’ as being universal while human ‘cultures’ is variant. We conclude the course with a discussion on the public role of anthropology and anthropologists.

In this introductory course we will explore the basic concerns and practices of cultural anthropology engaging key themes in the discipline. We will explore what cultural anthropology is and what it can offer; we will look at kinship, religion, the body, politics, power, systems of exchange, language and expression, structure and agency, gender, race, class. We will end the course by looking at the craft of anthropology and how some anthropologists are increasingly engaging in the process of ‘giving back’ and ‘taking sides’ in order to tackle local and global inequalities.

Course Objectives

• To identify the basic principles and themes of social and cultural anthropology.
• To question our basic assumptions about what is unique of human beings, if any!
• To understand how anthropologists collect, analyse, and write about the social world.
• To be acquainted with participant observation as way to collect data and ethnographic writing as a way to represent the social world.
• To be shocked, surprised, and inspired, to think outside of our cultural box!
Learning Outcomes for Secondary Level Core Curriculum courses:

Upon completion of their secondary level (Humanities and Social Sciences, Arab World Studies, and Global Studies) courses, students will achieve the following learning outcomes:

1. **Knowledge and Attitudes:** Students will engage in inquiry through a discipline in the humanities and social sciences and demonstrate an appreciation of diverse perspectives and a more nuanced understanding of different aspects of local, regional and global culture.

2. **Critical Reading and Thinking:** Students will analyze, question and reflect on a variety of texts, developing insights on multiple perspectives and coming to well-researched conclusions about complex issues.

3. **Written and Oral Communication / Information Literacy:** Students will formulate effective analyses and arguments and express them in written and oral forms, using responsible research and documentation practices, giving consideration to audience and context.

4. **Teamwork:** Students will develop effective interpersonal skills to enable reflective listening, constructive conversation, and collaboration toward a shared goal.

5. **Ethics and Civic Engagement:** Students will examine issues of social and ethical importance both within their communities, and regionally / globally, extending their learning from the classroom to engaged action with beneficial impact, accompanied by informed and critical reflection.

Course Assessments and Evaluation:

Summary of Assessments and Credits:

1. Seminar Participation 20%
2. Mid-term literature review 20%
3. Ethnographic Field note Wadi Natrun Monastery 15%
4. Ethnographic Field note Islamic Shrines 15%
5. End-of-Term Mini-Ethnography 30%

1. **Seminar Participation and attendance**
   - Weighting: Participation – 20%

This course is a combination of lectures and discussions, which means that attendance and active participation in class is important to creating an active and engaging learning experience. **While attendance is not formally assessed you will automatically fail this course**
if you miss 7 classes during the term (should your absence have no legitimate and evidenced grounds). You can access the University attendance policy.

Your participation will be assessed on the basis of your preparedness during seminars, your contribution to discussions and group activities. You should expect to work in groups during seminars, you will be asked summarize readings and present the main issues raised to other students.

Participation counts for 30% of the credits available in this course. **You will be divided into 6 reading groups at the beginning of the course.** Each seminar session contains assigned readings. If your group has an assigned reading for a seminar you will be responsible for presenting, discussing, and analyzing your assigned reading during the seminar. If you are not assigned a reading you will still be expected to actively engage with the material by asking questions and creating debate. **Each time you participate in a seminar by being able to discuss your readings and or raise question or points of discussion, you will accrue credits towards your participation grade**

Each time you attend a seminar without having done any reading or prepared any notes to bring to the discussion you will forfeit credits available for participation.

**PLEASE NOTE**

Mobile phone are not allowed in the classroom under any circumstances. Please turn them off or put them on silent before the class begins.

Mobile phones may not be put on desks, please put them in your bag, pocket, or on the floor if necessary. Students who use their mobile phones while the class in session will be warned once. If you persist in using your phone you will be asked to leave.

Repeated late entry into the classroom after the lecture or class discussion has started distracts our flow. If you are repeatedly late you will be warned once. If you persist in being late you will not be allowed into the class in future.

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2. Mid-term literature review
   • Weighting: 20%
   • Due: 23:59 via Turnitin
   • Word Length: Minimum 1,500, Maximum 2,500 words

Assignment: choose one of the topics we have covered so far in the course and provide a literature review of no less than 4 items (i.e. an academic article, a book or book chapter and/or a film)

The aim of a literature review is to show your reader (your tutor) that you have read, and have a good grasp of the literature covered in the course so far. Literature reviews are also a central component of any piece of academic writing and so this assessment is intended to give you an opportunity to practice academic writing.

Your review should do more than simply describe what others have published in the form of summaries, it should take the form of a critical discussion, showing insight and an awareness of differing arguments, theories, approaches and examples. You should compare and contrast different authors' views on an issue or different settings

3 & 4. Fieldtrips and Ethnographic Field notes assignments

(Wadi Natrun Monsataries and Islamic Shrines in Cairo).

• Weighting: 30% (15% x 2)
  Trip Dates: 1) Wadi Natrun: Saturday 15th October
  2) Islamic Shrines: Saturday 12th November

• Field note due dates:
  1) Wadi Natrun Saturday 22nd of October via Blackboard
  2) Islamic Shrines: Saturday 19th of November via Blackboard

• Word length – minimum of 1500 words.

We will be going on two fieldtrips during the term. The first will be to the Monasteries of Wadi Natrun in the Governorate of Al-Beheira. The second trip will be to a number of shrines and Mausoleums in Islamic Cairo. These trips are designed to give you an opportunity to observe some of the issues that we covered in the Anthropology of religion like rituals and ‘rites of passage’. Your ethnographic field note should include a discussion of aspects of the trip relevant to the course and must include reference to literature that you think is relevant to the experience itself. You will be required to bring a notebook and pen to take notes during
these trips. You may also take pictures where appropriate and you are encouraged to reflect on the experience and interview each other.

**Guidance for writing field notes:**

After each of these fieldtrips you will be asked to write a field note. Your field notes will go towards your end of term mini Ethnography.

Field notes are fun to write; I invite you to be artistic and creative. This is not your typical argumentative essay, which has a specific structure. This is your piece of art this semester. Imagine yourself a storyteller – perhaps a novelist or a playwright. You woke up early on a Saturday morning, took a long trip to the monastery, and then walked within it and interacted with other ‘tourists’ (to the place) and with some of those who worked there. Now you are sitting in front of your screen (or perhaps notebook). Describe to your audience (perhaps imagine them as a young sibling, a grandparent, or a friend) this rich experience. Take us on a tour of this place. Don’t be afraid of using first-person pronouns (I, we, etc.) or second-person pronouns (you, your, yours, etc.) as you weave your tale. Try to think back of some of the stories you read/heard/watched and enjoyed – what was it about these stories that you liked? What literary techniques/styles did the creator(s) use? What particular characterizations remain vivid in your memories (e.g.: particular smells or emotions from the stories, particular words)?

The way in which you should integrate the course material (theories, other concepts and ideas) should be fluid. Both theory and your experience in the monastery should converse with one another in this story you’re presenting, rather than be separated. What is it that struck you most in this visit, and how might the readings we read help you in thinking through it? All of this should be part of the flow of the story – think of yourself as transported in time and place to discuss your visit to the monastery with, for instance, Amira Mittermaier, Fiona Bowie, Maurice Bloch, Marcel Mauss, or Evans-Pritchard. What would you say and how would they reply back?

**In summary, your field note needs to do the following:**

1) Be written in the first person and provide the reader with an understanding of the experience from your perspective
2) It must contain enough description of the place, people and the stories you hear that a reader can be transported to the place and the experience through your writing.
3) It must make links between the experience and the issues, literature and debates that we have been covering in the course.

**You must read at least one of the following guides to writing field notes**


5. End-of-Term Mini-Ethnography

- Weighting: 30%
- Due: Thurs’ 23/05
- Maximum Word Length: 3,500 words via Turnitin

Assignment: Build upon your field notes from Wadi Natrun Monastaries and Islamic Shrines in Cairo to produce a mini-ethnography that engages with a theme of your choice.

Our visits to Wadi Natrun Monastaries and Islamic Shrines in Cairo will be the basis of your end of term mini-ethnography. These trips have multiple dimensions. You might write about ritual and rites of passage, the notion of belief, the unseen and how religion should be understood. You may focus on religion and politics or gender; the possibilities are endless. Your task is to revisit your field notes from these two trips to produce mini-Ethnography.

A common type of research and writing activity in anthropology is the ethnographic assignment. Ethnography is a first person account of a group of people. By the time you get to this part of the course you will have become more familiar with this genre of research and writing.

Your mini-ethnography will merge your Wadi Natrun and Al-Hussein ethnographic field notes with debates from the literature you have been reading throughout the course. This is a simple exercise. Think about what interested you most about the fieldtrips use your own voice and observations and reflect your interest through the literature and themes that engage you the most.

The aim of the papers is demonstrate that you can write in the ethnographic style but also that you understand key concepts, issues and texts around that relate to your chosen theme and that you are able to write and comment critically upon them using relevant literature. You should aim to strike a balance between ethnographic description and analysis of literature and debates. You should aim to structure your discussion logically, and strike a balance between concepts, case studies and your own opinions.

- Use a minimum of 6 pieces of literature
• Use formal language
• Adopt and use a recognized referencing convention.
• Do not quote from lectures

A detailed ‘Grading Rubric’ is available below; you must read the grading rubric in order to understand how you are being assessed and how and why marks are awarded. It is your responsibility to read the grading rubric. The grading rubric can be found at the end of this document.

**Note:** late submission of assignment costs you a drop of a letter grade for each day you are late.

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Grading rubric for written work and term papers

Basis on which marks are awarded for term papers:

1. Knowledge & understanding
2. Breadth and depth of reading
3. Analytical skills & critical thinking
4. Use of relevant examples, case studies and ethnographies
5. Writing skills (logical organization/structure & appropriate language)
6. Accurate referencing and citation

Grade   Points   OUTSTANDING
A        4.0        
A-       3.7        EXCELLENT

Such marks are given for EXCELLENT to OUTSTANDING work. The work will exhibit excellent levels of knowledge and understanding comprising all the qualities stated below, with additional elements of originality and flair. The work will demonstrate a range of critical reading that goes beyond that provided on reading list. Answers or essays will be fluently written and include independent argument that demonstrate an awareness of the nuances and assumptions of the question or title. Essays will make excellent use of appropriate, fully referenced examples.

Grade   Points   VERY GOOD
B+       3.3        
B        3.0        
B-       2.7        

A mark in this range is indicative of good to VERY GOOD work that holds great promise for future standards. Work of this quality shows a good or very good level of knowledge and understanding of relevant course material. It will show evidence of reading a wide diversity of material and of being able to use ideas gleaned from this reading to support and develop arguments. Essay work will exhibit very good writing skills with well-organized, accurate footnotes and/or a bibliography that follows the accepted ‘style’ of the subject. Arguments and issues will be illustrated by reference to well documented, detailed and relevant examples. There should be clear evidence of critical engagement with the objects, issues or topics being analysed.
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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>GOOD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>SATISFACTORY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>PASS</td>
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**A mark in the C+ and C range is indicative of GOOD or SATISFACTORY.** Work of this quality will show clear knowledge and understanding of relevant course material. It will focus on the essay title or question posed and shows evidence that relevant basic works of reference have been read and understood. The work will exhibit sound essay writing and/or analytical skills. It will be reasonably well structured and coherently presented. Essay work should exhibit satisfactory use of footnotes and/or a bibliography. Arguments and issues should be discussed and illustrated by reference to examples, but these may not be fully documented or detailed.

**Work in the lower register of C will be considered a PASS.** However, it will show limited knowledge and understanding of relevant course material. It will show evidence of some reading and comprehension, but the essay or answer may be weakly structured, cover only a limited range of the relevant material or have a weakly developed or incomplete argument. The work will exhibit weak essay writing or analytical skills. It may be poorly presented without properly laid out footnotes and/or a bibliography.

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<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>CONDITIONAL PASS</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>UNSATISFACTORY</td>
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**A mark in this range is indicative that the work is below, but at the upper end is approaching, the standard required at this stage of the degree program.** This will be because either the work is too short, is very poorly organized, or is poorly directed at the essay title or question asked. It will show very limited knowledge or understanding of the relevant course material and display weak writing and/or analytical skills. Essay work will exhibit no clear argument, may have very weak spelling and grammar, very inadequate or absent references and/or bibliography and may contain major factual errors.

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>FAIL</td>
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**A mark in this range is indicative that the work is far below the standard expected.** This will be because either the work is far too short, is badly jumbled and incoherent in content, or fails to address the essay title or question asked. It will show very little evidence of knowledge or understanding of the relevant course material and may exhibit very weak writing and/or analytical skills.
## Course schedule

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1) 1st Sept</td>
<td>Introduction ‘Why Anthropology?’ + Housekeeping (L)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2) 5th Sept</td>
<td><em>Khamsah w-khmesah</em>: Believing in the Unseen (L)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3) 8th Sept</td>
<td>Geertz’s symbols, moods and motivations: what is religion? (S)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4) 12th Sept</td>
<td>Mythology and Spiritual Ecologies (S)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thurs 15th Sept</td>
<td>Eid Adha 13/09 – 16/09 (H)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5) 19th Sept</td>
<td>Ritual and rites of Passage (S)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6) 22nd Sept</td>
<td>Why do we eat with our right hands? (L)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>7) 26th Sept</td>
<td>Left vs. Right and Up vs. Down (S)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8) 29th Sept</td>
<td>Can men also give birth?! Kinship, Marriage, Society (L)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mon 3rd Oct</td>
<td>Islamic New Year (H)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Thurs 6th Oct</td>
<td>Armed Forces Day (H)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>SUNDAY 9th OCT</td>
<td>MID-TERM LITERATURE REVIEW DEADLINE (A)</td>
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<td>9) 10th Oct</td>
<td>Kinship, Marriage and Society (S)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10) 13th Oct</td>
<td>The Couvade (S)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>SATURDAY 15th OCT</td>
<td>FIELDTRIPT TO WADI NATRUN MONASTARIES (F)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>11) 17th Oct</td>
<td>Why do humans have culture? (L)</td>
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<td>12) 20th Oct</td>
<td>Why are so few people powerful &amp; so many weak? (L)</td>
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<td>SATURDAY 22nd OCT</td>
<td>SUBMISSION OF MONASTARY FIELDNOTE</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>13) 24th Oct</td>
<td>Functionalism, Colonialism, Eurocentrism and Asad’s reply to Geertz (S)</td>
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<td>14) 27th Oct</td>
<td>Can we separate religion from Politics (S)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>THURSDAY 27th OCT</td>
<td>DEADLINE TO DROP COURSE</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>15) 31st Oct</td>
<td>Surveillance, and the State (S)</td>
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<td>16) 3rd Nov</td>
<td>Why might “das gift” be the death of you? (L)</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>17) 7th Nov</td>
<td>The Value of Life and Body (S)</td>
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<td>18) 10th Nov</td>
<td>Ownership, Commodity and Capitalism (S)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>SATURDAY 12th NOV</td>
<td>FIELDTRIPT TO ISLAMIC SHRINES (F)</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>19) 14th Nov</td>
<td>Is there a world without words? (L)</td>
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<td>Week 13</td>
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<td>20) Thurs 17\textsuperscript{th} Nov</td>
<td>How language shapes us (S)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SATURDAY 19\textsuperscript{th} NOV</td>
<td>SUBMISSION OF ISLAMIC SHRINES FIELDNOTE (A)</td>
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<tr>
<td>21) Mon 21\textsuperscript{st} Nov</td>
<td>On Language (S)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs 24\textsuperscript{th} Nov</td>
<td>Thanksgiving (H)</td>
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| Week 14 |  
|---|---|
| 22) Mon 28\textsuperscript{th} Nov | MINI ETHNOGRAPHY Q&A AND PLANNING |
| 23) Thurs 1\textsuperscript{st} Dec | Did ‘I’ choose that? The Structure Agency debate (L) |

| Week 15 |  
|---|---|
| 24) Mon 5\textsuperscript{th} Dec | Class, Race, Gender and AIDS in Haiti (S) |
| 25) Thurs 8\textsuperscript{th} Dec | The Craft and Public Role of Anthropology (L) |

| Week 16 |  
|---|---|
| Mon 12\textsuperscript{th} Dec | (Prophets Birthday H) |
| 26) Thurs 15\textsuperscript{th} Dec | Anthropology and Activism (S) |

| TUESDAY 20\textsuperscript{th} DEC | SUBMISSION OF MINI ETHNOGRAPHY |
1. Keep Calm and Do Anthropology

In this introductory section we look at where Anthropology sits in relation to other social sciences and ask the question, ‘why Anthropology?’ We will also look at the history of Anthropology as a field of study and focus on how the discipline evolved. In so doing we will look at early ideas about human evolutionism and chart the way in which Anthropology has changed from being the study of ‘the other’ to probing the distinction between ‘self’ and ‘other’. We will come across the ‘nature versus culture’ debate and the politics of representation, two central themes that will stay with us throughout the course.

Overview

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Details and instructions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 Sep</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Introduction ‘Why Anthropology?’ House keeping</td>
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Background readings on Anthropology:


Film on the history of Anthropology

Ishi the Last Yahi
Written by Anne Makepeace, directed by Jed Riffe and Pamela Roberts. Rattlesnake Productions (1992) 00:56: 00 min
2. ‘Khamsah w-khmesah’: Believing in the Unseen

Religion has been one of the most central and controversial features of Anthropological research, over the past 200 years. Religion often gets caught up in political controversies and debates about modernity and traditionalism, however in this section of the course we will take a brief look Mythology, Spiritual Ecology, Rituals and the ‘Rites of Passage’ which expose the very social and cultural grounds on which beliefs rest. We will do so by considering how people from diverse cultures have created belief systems based on their natural environments and how the ‘evil eye’ straddles a wide range of cultures and religions as a protective metaphor. We will also look at how ritual and rites of passage are central to people ways of experiencing life-cycle as well as religious and non-religious forms of communal life.

Key themes:
*Anthropology of religion, mythology, spiritual ecology, magic, rituals, initiations, rites of passage*

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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5 Sep</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td><em>Khamsah w-khmesah</em>: Believing in the Unseen (RA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>8 Sep</td>
<td>Seminar</td>
<td>Geertz’s symbols, moods and motivations: what is religion?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>12 Sep</td>
<td>Seminar</td>
<td>Mythology and Spiritual Ecologies</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>19 Sep</td>
<td>Seminar</td>
<td>Ritual and rites of Passage</td>
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Class 2 (Lecture): Background Reading on the Anthropology of Religion:


Class 3 (Seminar): Geertz’s symbols, moods and motivations: what is religion?

Everyone reads:


Class 4 (Seminar) Mythology and Spiritual Ecologies

Background

Group A

Group B
doi: 10.1525/aa.1999.101.1.68

Group C

Films on Spiritual Ecology and Magic

Witchcraft among the Azande - Disappearing World Series.
André Singer and John Ryle, Granada Television (1981)
00:52:00 min

Water - The Religious Dimension
Written by Terje Dale; produced by Terje Dale, NRK, in History of Water, 3 (Oslo, Oslo State: Nordic World, 1997), 49:10 mins

Spirits of Defiance: The Mangbetu People of Zaire

The Spirit of Haiti
Jacques Holinder, Telefilm Canada and City TV Nemesis Production (1992) 01:12:25 min

Class 5 (Seminar): Ritual and ‘Rites of Passage’

Everyone reads:

Further reading:

A van Gennep - The Rites of Passage ch2 & 3 – see also ‘Rites of Passage’ in the International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences


Films on ritual, ‘rites of passage’ and initiations

**Return to Belaye: A Rite of Passage**
Written by Amy Flannery; directed by Amy Flannery; produced by Michael Ford and Amy Flannery. (Watertown, MA: Documentary Educational Resources (DER), 2002), 1:20:00 mins

**El Sebou’: Egyptian Birth Ritual**
Written by Ph.D. Fadwa El Guindi, 1941-; directed by Ph.D. Fadwa El Guindi, 1941-; produced by Ph.D. Fadwa El Guindi, 1941-, in Egypt (Watertown, MA: Documentary Educational Resources (DER)), 27:29 mins

**The Red Bowmen**
Written by Alfred Gell, 1945-1997 and Chris Owen; directed by Chris Owen; produced by Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies (Watertown, MA: Documentary Educational Resources (DER), 1983), 58:00 mins
3. Why do we eat with our right hands?

How ‘natural’ are our bodies really are? How do we ascribe meaning to our bodies and the world? Marcel Mauss states that there is nothing called ‘natural behaviour.’ Every action we do with our bodies has the imprint of what we’ve learned from our culture: from feeding to washing, from repose to movement and sex. While this learning happens differently depending on one’s society, our bodies share common organic and physiological characteristics abilities and also limitations. We take the two ethnographic examples to debate the human body between what is natural and what is biological: the first being of the right and left hand usage in different societies (are we right-handed because we are left-brained, or left-brained because we are right handed?). The second is from a Gypsy community in Britain that divides the body between the upper and lower, rather than left and right.

**Key themes:** Body and cosmology, embodiment, nature and culture

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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>22 Sep</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
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**Class 6 – (Lecture): Why do we eat with our right hands**

**Background reading on embodiment:**


Class 7 –(Seminar): Left vs. Right and Up vs. Down

Everyone


OR

4. Can men also give birth?!

In this section we discuss the social lives of human beings. Ethnographic evidence shows that ‘life’ could start before or after the biological birth. Anthropologists have argued that biological birth is preceded by parenthood roles, and birth is followed by ‘initiation’ rituals; both to incorporate the newly born into the social life of her/his society. We extend our analysis of the nature vs. culture debate, to examine human kinship in light of both biological and cultural understanding, and parenthood to biological and spiritual? We take the two ethnographic examples, the first is that of the initiation rites, and the second example is that of the Couvade, where husbands experience pregnancy symptoms similar to that of their wives.

Class 8 – (Lecture): Can men also give birth?! Law & Order: Kinship, Marriage, Society.

Background reading on kinship:

Class 9 (Seminar): Kinship fictions and alliances

Everyone

OR

Class 10 – (Seminar): The Couvade

Everyone

AND

Films on Marriage and kinship

Marriage Egyptian Style

Her Name Came on Arrows: A Kinship Interview with the Baruya of New Guinea
Written by Allison Jablonko, Marek Jablonko and Stephen Olsson; produced by Allison Jablonko, Marek Jablonko and Stephen Olsson; interview by Maurice Godelier, 1934–1982 (Watertown, MA: Documentary Educational Resources (DER), 1982), 26:00 mins

A Father Washes His Children
5. Culture and Politics - Why are so few people powerful... and so many people weak?

Anthropologists do not assume that the study of politics is solely located in formal political institutions as in the case with political science; the political for anthropologists is everywhere. This section introduces ways in which anthropology have studied political organizations from tribal societies to modern states by looking at sources of legitimacy, colonialism, and the foundations of the anthropology of the states (violence, surveillance, and secularism).

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Class 11- Lecture: Why do humans have Culture?

Bring to the lecture: You will be required to submit (by hand) a one page summary of:

Essential readings on Culture


Class 12 – (Lecture): Anthropology of Politics

Background readings on Political Anthropology

Lewellen, “The Development of Political Anthropology” in Political Anthropology: An Introduction. Chapter 1

Key theoretical readings:


Class 13 – (Seminar): Functionalism, Colonialism, and Eurocentrism

Everyone reads:
Talal Asad’s Reply to Geertz

Class 14 – (Seminar): Can We Separate Religion from Politics?

Everyone

AND

OR
Further readings:

Class 15  - (Seminar): Surveillance and the State


OR

6. Why might “das gift” be the death of you?

Understanding economic processes has been central to anthropological enquiry. For anthropologists, economics, exchange and markets are fundamentally cultural spheres where day-to-day ideas, practices and meanings are realized. One of the most enduring debates has revolved around the difference between objects exchanged as gifts and objects exchanged as commodities in different cultures. It is no coincidence that in Germany ‘the gift’ is literally ‘poison’. Gifts are almost never given without the expectation of reciprocity or self-interest. Are we capable of giving pure gifts?

Gift and commodity exchange expose a huge diversity of exchange systems all with their own practical and moral processes. We will use our understanding of this debate as a springboard into the anthropology of economic processes. This will take us through the ideas like alienation, the biography of commodities, how people make commodity exchange meaningful and how the ascendance of capitalism has bought with it a broad range of cultural responses and strategies in cultures around the world.

Key words: Economic Anthropology, gift and commodity exchange, spheres of exchange, organs and fetuses as commodities, economics of the everyday, witchcraft, moral economies.

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Class 16 - (Lecture): Why might “das gift” be the death of you?...The Anthropology of Exchange

Background texts on systems of exchange:


Vol.41(2), pp191-224


**Class 17 – (Seminar): The value of life and body**

**Group A and B**

**Group C**

**Group D and E**

**Group F**

**Films on the body and exchange**
Class 18 (Seminar): Ownership, Commodity and Capitalism

Group A, B and C

Group D, E and F

Further reading


Films on gift and commodity exchange:

The Child the Stork Brought Home
Written, produced and directed by Gillian Goslinga-Roy (Watertown, MA: Documentary Educational Resources (DER), 2000), 59:00 mins

Transplant
BBC 2011
The Feast
Written and produced by Napoleon Chagnon, and Timothy Asch, (Watertown, MA: Documentary Educational Resources (DER), 1970), 29:00 mins

Fish is Our Life

Consumed – Inside the belly of the beast
Slackjaw Films and Journeyman (2011) 00:52:32 min
7. Is there a world without words?

So if birth, death, identity, race, ethnicity, even our biological body are subject to social constructs, so what is it that makes us human? What explains the fact that as one species we have a wide variety of cultures? Are human beings the only species with culture and if so “Why do we have culture?” What makes us different from other species? What are the mechanism of creating, sustaining, and transmitting culture? Could culture exist without language? Is language uniquely a human phenomenon?

Key words: Cultural variability and transmission, uses of language,

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Class 19 – (Lecture) So is there a world without words?

Background Readings:


Class 20 – (Seminar): How language shapes us

Groups A, B, & C
"Keepin' It Real": White Hip-Hoppers' Discourses of Language, Race, and Authenticity by Cecilia Cutler Journal of Linguistic Anthropology, 12/2003, Volume 13, Issue 2

Groups D, E, & F

Class 21 – (Seminar): On Language

Everyone

Films about language and communication

The Compulsive Communicators – Life on Earth
Sir David Attenborough, BBC (1979) 00:54:04 min
Available via blackboard

Tighten the Drums: Self-Decoration Among the Enga
written by Chris Owen; directed by Chris Owen; produced by Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies (Watertown, MA: Documentary Educational Resources (DER), 1983), 58:00 mins

Languages Lost and Found: Speaking & Whistling the Mamma Tongue
8. Did ‘I’ choose that? The structure agency debate

Contemporary lifestyles emphasize the notion of individuality, but to what extent can we emphasize our individuality within cultural systems and hierarchies? In this section of the course we consider the yet unresolved debate about structure and agency. We will ask a series of controversial questions about our status as individuals and look at some of the most prominent social axes of power like gender, religion, race, caste and class, and globalization to try and consider the extent to which our agency as individuals is marked by the local and global cultures in which we live.

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Class 22 – (Planning): Mini Ethnography Q&A and Planning

Class 23 - (Lecture): Did ‘I’ choose that? The Structure and Agency debate

Background readings on structure and agency:


Class 24 – (Seminar): Class, Race, Gender and AIDS in Haiti

Everyone

Further readings


8. The Craft and Public Role of Anthropology.

Anthropologists often argue that their field stands apart from other social sciences because of the unique insights that participant observation and ethnographic fieldwork provide. Anthropologists also maintain that people’s everyday lives and practices are a legitimate form of knowledge about the world, but how do anthropologists produce that knowledge?

Many Anthropologists are increasingly turning away from the idea that anthropology should be disengaged science. By ‘taking sides’ some Anthropologists believe that they can make effective interventions with and on behalf of the people that they live and work with. This controversial development within the field blurs the line between social science and activism and leaves us asking whether ‘public’ or ‘engaged’ anthropology can be a force for good or the end of the discipline as we know.

Key themes: Writing ethnography, Is anthropology art or science? Observation or activism?

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Class 24 – (Lecture): The Craft and Public Role of Anthropology

Background reading
Everyone

OR

Further reading on writing ethnography


Films on Fieldwork and the politics of representation:

- **A Man Called "Bee": Studying the Yanomamo**
  Written, produced and directed by Timothy Asch and Napoleon Chagnon, (Watertown, MA: Documentary Educational Resources (DER)), 40:00 mins

- **When Visitors Come**
  Written by Rina Sherman; directed by Rina Sherman; produced by Rina Sherman, in Ovahimba Years Project (Watertown, MA: Documentary Educational Resources (DER), 2006), 30:00 mins

- **In Search of the Hamat'sa: A Tale of Headhunting**
  Written by Aaron Glass, fl. 2004; directed by Aaron Glass, fl. 2004 (Watertown, MA: Documentary Educational Resources (DER), 2004), 33:00 mins

Class 25 – (Seminar) Anthropology and Activism

**Groups A and B**

**Groups C and D**
Groups E and F

AND


Further reading


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