

# **Anthropology 1: Introduction to Cultural and Social Anthropology**

## **Stanford University, Winter 2023**

### **Description**

This course introduces basic anthropological concepts and presents the discipline's distinctive perspective on society and culture. The power of this perspective is then illustrated by examining several important contemporary social and political issues through an anthropological lens.

**Professor:** James Ferguson

**Office Hours:** By appointment, Room 300-212

### **Requirements:**

Enrolled for 3 credits:

Attend all lectures and do required reading

Midterm exam, 40%

Final exam, 60%

Enrolled for 4 credits:

Attend all lectures and do required reading

Midterm exam, 35%

Final exam, 55%

Attend discussion sections

Participation and assignments in sections: 10%

Enrolled for 5 credits:

Attend all lectures and do required reading

Midterm exam, 30%

Final exam, 50%

Attend discussion sections

Participation and assignments in sections: 10%

Fieldwork exercise (observation or interview): 10%

### **Section Leaders:**

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# **Anthropology 1: Introduction to Cultural and Social Anthropology**

## **Introduction**

Read: Matthew Engelke, "Introduction"

G. K. Chesterton, "On Certain Modern Writers and the Institution of the Family"

*Lecture One (1/10): Introduction to the Course*

*Lecture Two (1/12): Anthropos: A Counterscience*

## **Part One: The Basic Concepts of Anthropology**

### **Perspective**

"All the world is queer save thee and me, and even thou art a little queer."

-- Robert Owen

Read: Engelke, "Chapter 2: Civilization" (begin)

*Lecture Three (1/17): Points of View: Remapping a Taken-for-granted World*

### **Difference and Domination**

"Anthropology emerged less as a science of human nature than as the study of the damage done by one part of mankind to another (and thereby to all humanity)."

-- Johannes Fabian

"The purpose of anthropology is to make the world safe for human differences."

-- Ruth Benedict

Read: Engelke, "Chapter 2: Civilization" (continue).  
The Nuer, "Introductory"

*Lecture Four (1/19): Imperialism and Knowledge*

*Lecture Five (1/24): The White Man's Burden?*

### **Culture**

"[Culture is] a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which people communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life."

-- Clifford Geertz

"The seeing eye is the organ of tradition."

-- Franz Boas

Read: Clifford Geertz, "The Impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of Man"  
Engelke, "Chapter 1: Culture" (RECOMMENDED)  
The Nuer, Chapter 3 ("Time and Space")

*Lecture Six (1/26): The Concept of Culture*

### **Social structure**

"Society is not a mere sum of individuals. Rather, the system formed by their association represents a specific reality which has its own characteristics."

-- Emile Durkheim

"A particular social relation between two persons (unless they be Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden) exists only as part of a wide network of social relations, involving many other persons, and it is this network which I regard as the object of our investigations"

-- A. R. Radcliffe-Brown

Read: The Nuer, Chapter 4 ("The Political System")  
Victor Turner, "Betwixt and Between"

*Lecture Seven (1/31): Social Structure*

**Ethnography, fieldwork, and representation**

"Social anthropology has one trick up its sleeve: the deliberate attempt to generate more data than the investigator is aware of at the time of collection."

-- Marilyn Strathern

"When I was a young student in London I thought I should get a few tips from experienced fieldworkers before setting out for central Africa. I first sought advice from Westermarck. All I got from him was "don't converse with an informant for more than twenty minutes because if you aren't bored by that time he will be." Very good advice even if somewhat inadequate. I sought instruction from Haddon, a man foremost in field research. He told me it was really quite simple; one should always behave like a gentleman. Also very good advice. My teacher Seligman told me to take ten grains of quinine every night and to keep off the women. The famous Egyptologist, Sir Flinders Petrie, just told me not to bother about drinking dirty water as one soon became immune to it. Finally I asked Malinowski and was told not to be a bloody fool."

-- E.E. Evans-Pritchard

Read: Liisa H. Malkki, "Tradition and Improvisation in Ethnographic Field Research"

*Lecture Eight (2/2): Fieldwork, Participant Observation, Ethnography*

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**In-class midterm review, Tuesday, February 7**

**\*\* MIDTERM EXAM: Thursday, February 9**

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## **Part Two: Anthropological Perspectives on Contemporary Issues**

### **Abortion**

Read: Faye Ginsburg, *Contested Lives* (Chapters 1, 5-6, 8-12, Epilogue).

*Lecture Nine (2/14): Personhood*

*Lecture Ten (2/16): Abortion and Cultural Categorization*

*Lecture Eleven (2/21): Common Ground? The System at War with Itself*

### **Gender/Sex and Marriage**

Read: Clifford Geertz, "Common Sense as a Cultural System"  
Kath Weston, *Families We Choose* (Chapters 2 and 5).

*Lecture Twelve (2/23): "Between a Man and a Woman"*

*Lecture Thirteen (2/28): The Possibilities of Marriage*

## **Immigration**

Read: Benjamin Madley, "Reexamining the American Genocide Debate: Meaning, Historiography, and New Methods." *The American Historical Review* 120 (1): 98-139. (2015).

Seth Holmes, *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies* (Chapters 1-4, 6)

*Lecture Fourteen (3/2): California and its Immigrants*

*Lecture Fifteen (3/7): Movement and Membership*

## **Policing and Violence**

Read: Laurence Ralph, *The Torture Letters* (Introduction, Part 1, Part 4, Conclusion and Epilogue).

*Lecture Sixteen (3/9): Violence, Police, and the State*

*Lecture Seventeen (3/14): Abuse, Activism, and Anthropology*

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## **Conclusion**

*Lecture Eighteen (3/16): Defending Difference? Culture in a World of Inequality*

## Required Books

Matthew Engelke, How to Think Like an Anthropologist

E. E. Evans-Pritchard, The Nuer

Faye Ginsburg, Contested Lives

Kath Weston, Families We Choose

Seth Holmes, Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies

Laurence Ralph, The Torture Letters