

ANTH 12A: Measuring Humanity

Culture and Ideas - Winter 2011

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Variation and diversity is the basis for both biological evolution and for cultural change. The first half of this course explored understanding how variation is produced and how selection acts on this variation as the basis of scientific approaches to understanding evolutionary processes. This class (12A) focuses on how communities, past and present, seek to understand and control variation through categorization. Cultures produce patterned – if often conflicting – ways to reduce the complexity of the world around them, creating categories. We take an anthropological perspective– asking how cultural frameworks have shaped the categories we use to understand variation.

While there are many topics we could view through this lens – how cultures categorize variation – we will take on two general sets of topics: how cultures deal with variation attributed to biology, and how cultures deal with complex social behaviors: war, sport, childhood, language, food/cuisine, cities/civilization.

12A: Winter 2011

Course Description: In this course, we will examine key topics in understanding cultures in the past and present. The specific goals of this course are: 1) to place development of key 'institutions' or categories within a cultural context to understand the history of key concepts in cultural variation; 2) to critically analyze how anthropological data have been interpreted and misinterpreted, and; 3) to analyze cross culturally and historically significant categories such as culture, war, sport, childhood, civilization, and language.

Course Requirements and Grades:

Attendance and participation: Attendance and participation is mandatory. You will not receive participation points if you miss lectures and student presentations. You may be called on to explain key concepts from the readings to the rest of the class. Come prepared, both by reading the material and thinking carefully about it, to explain the ideas presented.

Part of your participation grade (10%) will be bringing an article to class that addressed the topic of the day every Friday. Be prepared to discuss the article in relation to the day's topic.

In-class quizzes/ reading: A biweekly reading quiz will address the readings and may ask you to compare and contrast with previously discussed material. Quizzes may not be made up.

Presentation: During the course of the quarter, you and your project partner will present the results of your research on the assigned scenario/topic involving the measurement of humans (culture). As part of this presentation you will elicit questions and comments from the other students in the class, as well as provide discussion questions for them. What you learn in the presentation/discussion will be incorporated in your research paper. This is primarily an oral presentation but a few powerpoint pictures may be used to illustrate your topic.

Research project/ paper: Your research paper will be completed with your partner. Your research will address the Scenario you choose at the beginning of the quarter/sequence. You are expected to do your research in both popular cultural venues as well as academic journals and books (popular cultural sources are used for DATA, academic journals and books are used for analysis and interpretation). The goal of the project is to explore a particular cultural category, comparing and contrasting its 'content' among at least two different groups at different times. 10-15 pgs double-spaced plus bibliography. The references you cite should include at least 10 academic sources. You must meet with the instructor regularly to discuss your progress.

Readings: Readings are available through ERES. Students are required to complete assigned readings **prior to the date** they are assigned. Discussions over the readings will take place throughout the course. If you are unprepared for these discussions then participation points will be deducted from your final point total. **ERES password: culture**

		TOPICS	READING	ASSIGNMENTS
		Back to 'culture' (cultures)		
Jan 3	M	Defining culture		
Jan 5	W	Measuring us	Miner 1956	
Jan 7	F	Historical views on 'culture' in anthropology & Article discussion	Aristotle <i>Politics Book 1</i>	See handout exercise* Article discussion; Scenario choice
		'Getting' culture?		
Jan 10	M	How do we 'measure' modern cultures	Salzmann & Rice 2011: Chaps 2 &3	
Jan 12	W	What is culture and when did we get it? (become human?) ...and how do we know?	Wong 2005; Potts 2004	
Jan 14	F	Discussion		QUIZ; Article discussion What is evidence for modern human behavior?
Jan 17	M	HOLIDAY		
		How do we measure language?	What is language? How does it relate to culture?	
Jan 19	W	How do we know about language(s) before writing?	Cartmill 1998 Kottak 2007 Chap 6: Language and Comm	EXTRA CREDIT: 5:00-6:00 pm Kennedy Commons – Historical Archaeology – Lee Panich
Jan 21	F	How do we use language to measure culture? (sociolinguistics)	Plato: Cratylus	PROJECT Outline due Article discussion – how does language define our reality?
		Measuring childhood		
Jan 24	M	What is childhood?	Small 1997; Baxter 2005 Chap 3	
Jan 26	W	Children of the past	Bower 2007; Baxter 2005 Chap 4	
Jan 28	F	Discussion	Who are children?	QUIZ; Article discussion
		The measure of food		
Jan 31	M	2 groups' presentations		
Feb 2	W	Food revolutions (how do we know?)	Leonard 2002; Gibbons 2007	
Feb 4	F	How does food define relationships?	Appadurai 1988	PAPER DRAFT
Feb 7	M	2 groups' presentations		
Feb 9	W	Discussion	How does food define who we are?	Article discussion
		When is a city a city?		
Feb 11	F	What is a city? An anthropological view...	Low 1996	QUIZ
Feb 14	M	2 groups' presentations		
Feb 16	W	When is a city? Ancient cities	Cowgill 2004; Aristotle: the Politics Book VII: X;	EXTRA CREDIT: 5:15-6:15 pm Kennedy Commons; Hylkema: Santa Clara archaeology
Feb 18	F	Discussion	What is the relationship between cities and states?	Article discussion
Feb 21	M	HOLIDAY		
Feb 23	W	2 groups' presentations		

		What is war?		
Feb 25	F	Old war	LeBlanc 2003; von Clausewitz [2007] excerpts	VIDEO: <i>Sun Tsu's The Art of War (04954)</i> QUIZ
Feb 28	M	2 groups' presentations		
Mar 2	W	New war	Richards 2004	Article discussion
		The rules of the game – 'sport'		
Mar 4	F	Where did sport come from?	Sands 1999; skim Golden 1988;	
Mar 7	M	2 groups' presentations		PAPER due
Mar 9	W	How does culture shape sport? What is the role of sport in culture?	Wagtendonk 2000; Gmelch 2006;	<i>VIDEO: Trobriand Cricket 53 min</i>
Mar 11	F	WRAP UP: How do the categories we create culturally shape our behavior?	Wolf 2001 (Perilous Ideas: Race, Culture, People)	QUIZ; Article discussion (sport or Wolf)

GRADING:

Participation: 20%

In class quizzes/ reading: 35%

Presentation: 15%

Research project/ paper: 30%

In ANTH 12A, each student will:

C&I goals:

- 1) Gain an understanding of global cultures, arts, and humanities and demonstrate increased understanding of the complexity of cultural categories (reading quizzes).
- 2) Apply critical thinking via class discussion within particular cultural contexts (using primary sources) in order to compare and contrast how cultural categories are used/defined/reshaped at different times and in different places (Project Discussion and Final paper)
- 3) Gain a perspective (biocultural, historical, and cross cultural) on the current understandings of the topics discussed and by reading both anthropological and primary sources related to human 'universal' categories, students will question and evaluate the similarities and differences between present and past cultural categorization, and its relevance for the future. (final projects, article discussion, Final Project discussion).

This course fulfills the Santa Clara University Core Curriculum Culture and Ideas 1 and 2 requirements.

Learning Objectives for Cultures & Ideas 2

1. Make connections between the cultures and objects, texts, ideas, issues, and/or events examined in C & I 1 and 2. (Global Cultures, Arts and Humanities)
2. Demonstrate increased understanding of the complexity and/or larger contexts of the cultures examined. (Global Cultures, Arts and Humanities)
3. Question and/or evaluate the effects cultural understanding has on the interpretation of the objects, texts, ideas, issues, and/or events central to the two courses. (Critical Thinking).
4. Question and evaluate both shared and diverse human experiences so that they recognize similarities and differences across cultures as well as historical periods. They will comprehend the relevance of the past to their understanding of the present while coming to understand the perspective of their own cultural assumptions and values. (Perspective).

Anthropology (relevant) goals and objectives

- a) Students will be introduced to the diversity of past and present cultures in which humans have lived. This includes recognition of the varied social, cultural, and biological forces that shape human society and variation.
- b) Students will be introduced to how anthropologists have applied their knowledge and skills to address major human issues.