

Humans and Culture

ANTH 1010/UGEC 1681

Spring 2021

Lecture: Wednesday 12:30-2:15

Tutorials: Wednesday 2:30-3:15, 3:30-4:15, another time as well

Teacher: Gordon Mathews, NAH 410, cmgordon@cuhk.edu.hk

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This course is designed to teach you what cultural anthropology is all about in today's world. We begin by looking at how cultural and social anthropologists do anthropology, focusing on ethnography and theory. We then explore, in turn, the relation of culture to biology and environment, to language, to family, gender, and life-course, to economics, to power and politics, and to religion. We then look at ethnicity and nation, examine globalization and what it means, and consider global anthropology and the future of anthropology.

The course objectives (learning outcomes) are to enable you to:

- a) acquire a broad understanding of what cultural anthropology is and the fields and topics anthropology explores, and
- b) begin to think in an anthropological way and be able to use in a basic way anthropological ideas in analyzing the world.

The course will be graded as follows:

--take-home midterm examination (30%): 6 pages, handed out Feb. 24, due March 10

--take-home final examination (50%): 9 pages, handed out April 14, due May 7

--class participation (20%)

The take-home midterm and final exams will focus on your comprehension of the readings, videos, and lectures. These exams will require you to synthesize what you have learned in thinking more deeply about anthropological questions.

One book partially used in the course is J. Spradley and D. McCurdy (eds), *Conformity and Conflict: Readings in Cultural Anthropology*, (14th edition). We also read from *Sapiens*, an on-line journal devoted to anthropological topics. We also read from other books, and newspaper and magazine articles as well, so that you will be able to see the relevance of what we are studying to a broad range of issues in contemporary life. Readings for the course are available on Blackboard.

Students are required by university policy to submit all papers to VeriGuide (the Chinese University Plagiarism Identification Engine System). Please check the website <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/> for more information on how to submit papers through VeriGuide.

The class is scheduled to be mixed mode. However, because covid-19 is continuing, the class will be only on Zoom until the pandemic dies down and we can have in-class instruction as well. This will hopefully happen at some point not far into the semester. On Zoom, you are strongly encouraged to show your face!

Grade Descriptors

A Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes, through work that has creatively synthesized course materials and key ideas, to the extent that you show a depth of understanding as great as my own. Your arguments in your work are logical and cohesive, the discussion is well-organized, and the writing is clear. All relevant course materials have been fully utilized in your work, and additional material as well has been used from your own research.

A- Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes, through work has creatively synthesized course materials and key ideas. Your arguments in your work are logical and cohesive, the discussion is well-organized, and the writing is clear. All relevant course materials have been fully utilized in your work, and perhaps additional material as well from your own research.

B+ Substantial performance on all learning outcomes. Your arguments in your work are largely logical and cohesive, the discussion is generally well-organized, and the writing is clear. Most relevant course materials have been fully utilized in your work. There are areas for improvement with respect to building a cohesive argument, organizing the discussion, communicating clearly, and/or identifying relevant evidence and using all course materials, but by and large you have turned in good, solid work.

B Satisfactory performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall satisfactory performance. Your arguments in your work are somewhat logical and cohesive, the discussion is somewhat well-organized, and the writing is somewhat clear. Much relevant course materials have been fully utilized in your work. There are areas for improvement with respect to building a cohesive argument, organizing the discussion, communicating clearly, and/or identifying relevant evidence.

B- Adequate performance on all learning outcomes, OR satisfactory performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall largely adequate performance. Your arguments in your work are partially logical and cohesive, the discussion is partially organized, and the writing is somewhat clear. Some relevant course materials have been fully utilized in your work. There are areas for improvement with respect to building a cohesive argument, organizing the discussion, communicating clearly, and/or identifying relevant evidence.

C+ Adequate performance on the majority of learning outcomes. Your written work shows some effort, but course materials have not been sufficiently engaged. The argument and the writing is not clear, and/or there is less than full evidence for statements and claims made. There are areas for improvement with respect to building a cohesive argument, organizing the discussion, communicating clearly, and/or identifying relevant evidence.

C, C- Barely adequate performance on a number of learning outcomes. These grade will be awarded to students who have missed a large number of classes and have failed to use course materials in their written answers.

Jan. 13: Introduction: What is Anthropology?

- Robert H. Lavenda and Emily A. Schultz, "Anthropology," in *Core Concepts in Cultural Anthropology*, 5th edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2013), p. 1-13
- Newspaper and Magazine Articles: Nicholas Casey, "Thousands Once Spoke His Language in the Amazon. Now, He's the Only One" (*New York Times*, Dec. 26, 2017); "When Culture Clashes with Covid-19" (*MIT News*, June 25, 2020).

Jan. 20: Fieldwork and Ethnography

- James P. Spradley and David W. McCurdy, "Ethnography and Culture," in J. Spradley and D. McCurdy (eds), *Conformity and Conflict: Readings in Cultural Anthropology*, 14th edition (Essex: Pearson New International Edition 2014), p. 14-20.
- E. E. Evans-Pritchard, "Introduction," *The Nuer*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940), p. 1-15
- Gordon Mathews, "Introducing Chungking Mansions," "My Own Involvement," *Ghetto at the Center of the World: Chungking Mansions, Hong Kong* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), p. 7-13, 50-55.

Jan. 27: The Meanings of Culture

- Robert H. Lavenda and Emily A. Schultz, "Culture," in *Core Concepts in Cultural Anthropology*, p. 16-32
- Robert H. Lavenda and Emily A. Schultz, "Theory in Anthropology," in *Core Concepts in Cultural Anthropology*, p. 218-241 (skim)
- Horace Miner, "Body Ritual Among the Nacirema," *American Anthropologist*, 1956 58(3): 503-507

Feb. 3: Culture, Biology, and the Environment

- Marvin Harris, "Culture and Nature," "Murders in Eden," "The Industrial Bubble," in *Cannibals and Kings* (New York: Random House, 1977), p. 3-7, 11-25, 271-284
- Yuval Noah Harari, "Were We Happier in the Stone Age?" (*The Guardian*, Sept. 5, 2014)
- Video: "Plague to Coronavirus: How Pandemics Have Transformed History" (2020: 11:00)

Feb. 12: Culture, Language, and Symbols

- Guy Deutscher, "Whorf Revisited: You Are What You Speak," in J. Spradley and D. McCurdy (eds), *Conformity and Conflict: Readings in Cultural Anthropology*, p. 59-66
- Deborah Tannen, "Conversation Style: Talking on the Job," in J. Spradley and D. McCurdy (eds), *Conformity and Conflict: Readings in Cultural Anthropology*, p. 71-78
- Newspaper Article: John H. McWhorter, "How Dare You Say That? The Evolution of Profanity." (*Wall Street Journal*, July 17, 2015)

Feb. 17: Lunar New Year Vacation

Feb. 24: Culture and Family/Gender/Lifecourse

- Arlie Hochschild, "Marriage in the Stalled Revolution," in *The Second Shift*, (Avon, 1989), p. 11-21
- Yeon Jung Yu, "The Moral Code of Chinese Sex Workers," *Sapiens*, 29 June 2017
- Helen Fisher, "Is the Pandemic Slowing Down Love?" *Sapiens* podcast, 12 Nov. 2020

(Hand out take-home midterm: due March 10).

March 3: Culture and Economics

- Lee Cronk, "Reciprocity and the Power of Giving," in J. Spradley and D. McCurdy (eds), *Conformity and Conflict: Readings in Cultural Anthropology*, p. 129-134
- Gordon Mathews, "The Flipside of Counterfeit Goods." *Sapiens*, 15 July 2016
- Linda E. Sanchez, "Facing COVID-19 as an Undocumented Essential Worker," *Sapiens*, 3 Dec. 2020

March 10: Culture, Power, and Politics

- Marvin Harris, "Life Without Chiefs," in J. Spradley and D. McCurdy (eds), *Conformity and Conflict: Readings in Cultural Anthropology*, p. 257-266.
- Katherine Hirschfeld, "Rules of the Underworld," *Sapiens*, 20 May 2016
- Justin Lau, "When Harmony Silences Resistance," *Sapiens*, 27 Nov. 2019

March 17: Culture, Religion, Worldview

- Stanley A. Freed, Ruth S. Freed, "Taraka's Ghost," in J. Spradley and D. McCurdy (eds), *Conformity and Conflict: Readings in Cultural Anthropology*, p. 283-290
- Gordon Mathews, "Accounts of Religious Seekers, Implications," in *The World in Guangzhou: Africans and Other Foreigners in South China's Global Marketplace*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), p. 184-193
- Video: "Machines playing God: How A.I. will overcome humans" | Max Tegmark (2018: 5:14)

March 24: Culture, Ethnicity, and Nationality

- Niko Besnier and Susan Brownell, "Your Olympic Team May Be an Illusion," (*Sapiens*, 4 August 2016).
- Gordon Mathews, "The Hong Kong Protests in Anthropological Perspective: National Identity and What it Means." (*Critique of Anthropology* 40(2), 2020: 264-269).
- Alison Smale and Melissa Eddy, "Migrant Crisis Tests Core European Value: Open Borders," (*New York Times*, Aug. 31, 2015).

March 31: Reading Week: No lecture

April 7: Culture and Globalization

- Theodore C. Bestor, "How Sushi Went Global," in J. Spradley and D. McCurdy (eds), *Conformity and Conflict: Readings in Cultural Anthropology*, p. 323-334
- Barbara Fraser, "The Perils and Privileges of an Amazonian Hallucinogen," *Sapiens*, 3 Aug. 2017.
- Yuval Noah Harari, "Civilization: There is Just One Civilization in the World," in *21 Lessons for the 21st Century*, (New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2018), pp. 93-109
- Video: "Plague to Coronavirus: How Pandemics Have Transformed History" (2020: 11:00)

April 14: Anthropology Around the World

--Bošković, Aleksandar and Thomas Hylland Eriksen, "Introduction: Other People's Anthropologies." In Aleksandar Bošković, ed. 2008. *Other People's Anthropologies: Ethnographic Practice on the Margins*. New York: Berghahn Books, pp.1-19

--Gordon Mathews, "East Asian Anthropology in the World." *American Anthropologist* 2015, pp. 364-379

(Hand out take-home final: due May 7)

April 21: The Future and Anthropology

--David W. McCurdy, "Using Anthropology," in J. Spradley and D. McCurdy (eds), *Conformity and Conflict: Readings in Cultural Anthropology*, p. 323-33

--Amber Dance, "Can Anthropologists Propel Astronauts Toward Mars?" (*Sapiens*, 31 July 2019)

--Yuval Noah Harari, "Equality: Those Who Own the Data Own the Future," in *21 Lessons for the 21st Century* (New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2018), pp, 73-81

--Gideon Lasco, "What If There Is Life on Venus?" *Sapiens*, 22 Oct. 2020

Readings Required or Recommended

Bonvillain, Nancy. 2007. *Women and Men: Cultural Constructs of Gender*. 4th edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Bošković, Aleksandar, ed. 2008. *Other People's Anthropologies: Ethnographic Practice on the Margins*. New York: Berghahn Books.

Bourgois, Philippe. 2003. *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio*. Second edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Crewe, Emma, and Richard Axelby. 2013. *Anthropology and Development: Culture, Morality and Politics in a Globalized World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cronk, Lee. 1999. *That Complex Whole: Culture and the Evolution of Human Behavior*. Boulder CO: Westview.

Diamond, Jared. 1998. *Guns, Germs and Steel: A Short History of Everybody for the Last 13,000 Years*. London: Vintage.

Diamond, Jared. 2005. *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or to Survive*. London: Penguin.

Diamond, Jared. 2012. *The World Until Yesterday: What Can We Learn From Traditional Societies?* London: Penguin.

Erickson, Paul A. and Liam D. Murphy, eds. 2006. *Readings for a History of Anthropological Theory*, 2nd edition. Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press.

Erickson, Paul A. and Liam D. Murphy. 2003. *A History of Anthropological Theory*. Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press.

- Eriksen, Thomas Hylland. 2002. *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*, 2nd edition. London: Pluto Press.
- Eriksen, Thomas Hylland. 2004. *What Is Anthropology?* London: Pluto Press.
- Eriksen, Thomas Hylland. 2016. *Overheating: An Anthropology of Accelerated Change*. London: Pluto Press.
- Evans-Pritchard, E. E. 1940. *The Nuer*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Evans-Pritchard, E. E. 1976. *Witchcraft, Magic and Oracles Among the Azande*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Geertz, Clifford. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
- Goodale, Mark, ed., 2009. *Human Rights: An Anthropological Reader*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Hannerz, Ulf. 1996. *Transnational Connections*. London: Routledge.
- Harari, Yuval Noah. 2011. *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*. London: Vintage.
- Harari, Yuval Noah. 2016. *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*. London: Vintage.
- Harari, Yuval Noah. 2018. *21 Lessons for the 21st Century*. New York: Spiegel & Grau
- Harris, Marvin. 1977. *Cannibals and Kings*. New York: Random House.
- Inda, Jonathan Xavier and Renato Rosaldo, eds. 2008. *The Anthropology of Globalization*, 2d edition. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Lambek, Michael, ed. 2002. *A Reader in the Anthropology of Religion*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Lavenda, Robert H., and Emily A. Schultz. 2013. *Core Concepts in Cultural Anthropology*, 5th edition. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Lewellen, Ted. C. 2003. *Political Anthropology: An Introduction*, 3rd edition. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey.
- Mathews, Gordon. 1996. *What Makes Life Worth Living? How Japanese and Americans Make Sense of Their Worlds*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Mathews, Gordon. 2011. *Ghetto at the Center of the World: Chungking Mansions, Hong Kong*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mathews, Gordon. 2017. *The World in Guangzhou: Africans and Other Foreigners in South China's Global Marketplace*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mathews, Gordon, Eric Kit-wai Ma, and Tai-lok Lui. 2008. *Hong Kong, China: Learning to Belong to a Nation*. London: Routledge.
- Mintz, Sidney, 1985. *Sweetness and Power*. London: Penguin.

Moore, Jerry D. 2012. *Visions of Culture: An Introduction to Anthropological Theories and Theorists*, 4th edition. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.

O'Connor, Paul. 2012. *Islam in Hong Kong*. Hong Kong University Press.

Perry, Richard J. 2003. *Five Key Concepts in Anthropological Thinking*. Upper Saddle River NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Salzmann, Zdenek. 2007. *Language, Culture and Society: An Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology*, 4th edition. Boulder: Westview Press.

Spradley, James P. and David W. McCurdy, eds. 2014. *Conformity and Conflict: Readings in Cultural Anthropology*, 14th edition. Essex: Pearson New International Edition.

Stone, Linda. 2006. *Kinship and Gender: An Introduction*, 3rd edition. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Wilk, Richard R. 2007. *Economies and Cultures: Foundations of Economic Anthropology*. 2d edition. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Yamashita, S., J. Bosco, and J. S. Eades, eds. 2004. *The Making of Anthropology in East and Southeast Asia*, New York, Berghahn.