

# ANTH 110 - Cultural Anthropology

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Office Hours – Wed. 2:00-3:00PM  
CCC 413 or by appointment

**Course Description:** This course introduces students to the basic concepts, debates, and methods of cultural anthropology. Culture frames the way people perceive, understand, experience, relate to, and respond to the social and physical worlds around them. Cultural anthropology invites us to think critically (meaning with curiosity and careful analysis, and not necessarily with criticism) about practices and beliefs that we assume to be obvious, normal, logical, or inevitably right in our everyday lives. Through lectures, group discussions, films, reading and writing, students will explore how anthropologists do their work (participant observation); how the history and development of the discipline influences models of human behavior (theory); and how anthropologists make sense of cultural differences and similarities (cross-cultural perspective). The course pays particular attention to social and political organization, economics, health and illness, kinship, spiritual and religious beliefs, globalization, power & inequality, and the formation of individual and group identities.

## Learning Outcomes:

At the end of the course students will be able to:

- define the major concepts and methods used by cultural anthropologists to investigate and compare how people live in particular places and how they organize, govern, and create meaning.
- explain the methodological principles and significance of holism, relativism, and participant observation.
- use ethnographic case studies (text and film) to critically examine the socio-political and economic circumstances that influence human ways of life, identity, and create conflict.

## Required Texts:

- Textbook (rental): *Essentials of Cultural Anthropology* – Garrick Bailey & James Peoples;  
*Wisdom Sits in Places* – Keith Basso
- Ethnographies (purchase): *The Latehomecomer: A Hmong Family Memoir* by Kao Kalia Yang

## In-Class Videos:

- *Off the Verandah* (history of anthropology)
- *Strange Beliefs: Sir Edmond Evans Pritchard* (participant observation, witchcraft)
- *The Nuer* (human ecological relations and beliefs among African pastoralists)
- *Cannibal Tours* (culture change, tourism, neocolonialism in New Guinea)
- *Skin Deep* (class, identity, ethnicity, race, and British youth culture)
- *Trinkets and Beads* (ethnic minorities, globalization, native agency)
- *Crop to Shop* (food systems and globalization)

## Course Expectations and Requirements

### **Attendance and Courtesy:**

*Attendance is required.* Failure to regularly attend class and participate in discussions may result in a failing grade. Attendance is essential because exam questions will cover in-class lecture material, films, discussion group activities, and analysis of reading assignments. I do not share my lecture notes; however you are welcome to ask classmates for notes. There are no make-up sessions for films. If you miss a film, you should arrange to see the film on your own by visiting the UWSP library.

**IMPORTANT: Using mobile devices, texting, working on non-class material or other extraneous activities are not allowed during class. Computers, smart phones and other devices MUST BE PUT AWAY during class, i.e. not accessible! Anyone observed using a mobile device during class (unless asked to do so) will be penalized 5 points without warning. Penalty points will be posted on D2L.**

### **Exams:**

There will be an in-class midterm exam during Week 8 and the final exam schedule is listed below. The **midterm exam** will draw from all class material covered prior to that date including lectures, readings, films, and group discussions. The **final exam** will cover all material since the midterm, but will also require some integration of material from the entire course and in particular both ethnographies. Both midterm and final are worth 50 points each.

### **Grading: The course is graded using a 200-point system**

- Midterm exam (50 points)
- Final exam (50 points)
- One 5 page critical essay on *either* the ethnography by Yang or Basso due Week 13 (20 points)
- One 2 page analysis papers on your choice of films before the midterm due Week 7 (10 points)
- MWV paper – 2 page reflection paper on Making Whiteness Visible documentary (10 points)
- Small group discussion activities, reflections, and quizzes – 12 for 5 points each (60 points)  
NOTE: DISCUSSION ASSIGNMENTS and QUIZZES CANNOT BE MADE UP UNLESS ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE AT LEAST 48 HOURS IN ADVANCE. THIS IS PART OF YOUR CLASS ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION. IF YOU MISS CLASS, YOU LOSE DISCUSSION POINTS REGARDLESS OF THE REASON!
- Extra Credit – one 5 point extra credit option will be offered during the term.
- *\*Paper Instructions:* A guide to written assignments and grading rubric are posted on D2L.

### **Writing Expectations:**

Good writing and critical thinking are the two most important skills with which you can leave a liberal arts education at UWSP. For this reason, essay assignments in this course are intended to improve your writing and help develop clear expression of thought. Please note that a critical essay is *not* a summary; instead your essays should present the results of your reading, thinking, analysis, and writing. Your essays must have a *point* (synonymous with thesis or purpose statement). Your purpose statement should succinctly encapsulate the purpose of your essay and contain meaningful terms such as show/claim/argue or demonstrate. Importantly, your essay must be supported by evidence drawn from course material. Further information about college writing and a guide to written assignments are posted on D2L. Please review this material.

### *Late Policy*

All assignments are expected on time. Late papers will not be accepted unless you negotiate this with me *at least 48 hours in advance*. In-class discussion assignments are to be completed *in class* unless otherwise stated. If you miss discussions or quizzes, you miss the points (see above).

### *Plagiarism Policy*

In keeping with the policy of this university, plagiarism (using other people's thoughts or words without acknowledging the source) is unacceptable and can lead to a failing grade in the course. The minimum penalty for a violation of academic integrity is a failure (zero) for the assignment. In addition, all infractions will be reported to the university and entered into the student's file. For more information please refer to: <http://www.uwsp.edu/regrec/Pages/ferpaStudent.aspx>

### *Disability Resources*

If you are in need of any special accommodations or resources, please contact me in private.

## Course Schedule


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\*Note: Look for supplemental readings and videos posted weekly on D2L. **All required readings must be completed for the week indicated.**

### **Week 1** – September 6

Welcome to class and course mechanics


The anthropological perspective

 Required readings: Essentials pp. 1-18; Yang - Chapters 1-2 (pp. 1-38)

### **Week 2** – September 11-13

Introducing cultural anthropology


Film – *Off the Verandah* (history of anthropology)

 Required readings: Essentials pp. 19-37; Yang - Chapters 3-5 (pp. 39-90)

### **Week 3** – September 18-20

Encountering difference


Fieldwork, participant observation, and the holistic perspective

 Required readings: Essentials pp. 81-104; Yang – Chapters 6-7 (pp. 91-128)

### **Week 4** – September 25-27


Health, healing, and religion - Part I

Film - *Strange Beliefs: Sir Edmond Evans Pritchard* (participant observation)

 Required readings: Essentials pp. 250-256; Yang – Chapters 8-9 (pp. 131-179)

### **Week 5** – October 2-4


Health, healing, and religion – Part II

 Required readings: Essentials pp. 257-272; Yang – Chapters 10-11 (pp. 180-210)

### **Week 6** – October 9-11


Environment and culture


Film - *The Nuer* (human-ecological relations and beliefs among African pastoralists)

 Required readings: Essentials pp. 105-135; Yang – Chapters 12-14 (pp. 213-248)

### **Week 7** – October 16-18

Economic anthropology and social organization

 Required readings: Essentials pp. 137-157; Yang – Chapter 15 + Epilogue (pp. 249-274)

 **First film paper due (Wednesday) submit hardcopy in class + upload to D2L**

**Week 8** – October 23-25

Tie up loose ends before for Midterm

✓ **In-class Midterm Exam (Wednesday)**

📖 Required readings: Basso pp. Preface-36

**Week 9** – October 30- November 1

Kinship

📖 Required readings: Essentials pp. 159-185; Basso pp. 37-70

**Week 10** – November 6-8

Language and culture

📖 Required readings: Essentials pp. 39-61; Basso pp. 71-104

Film - *Cannibal Tours* (culture change, globalization, ethnocentrism in New Guinea)

✍️ **Submit ethnographic paper proposal in class (Wednesday)**

**Week 11**– November 13-15

Ethnicity, conflict, and globalization – Part I

📖 Required Readings: Basso pp. 105-152

★ *Extra Credit Writing in the Social Sciences Workshop – Details TBA*

✍️ **D2L Assignment – *Making Whiteness Visible* (Due as upload to D2L by Friday, November 17, 10:00PM)**

**Week 12** – November 20-22

Ethnicity, conflict, and globalization – Part II

Film - *Skin Deep* (identity formation, ethnicity, race, and British youth culture)

📖 Required readings: Essentials pp. 212-230

**Week 13** – November 27-29

Systems of equality and inequality

Film – *Trinkets and Beads* (native agency, ethnic minorities, neocolonialism, globalization)

📖 Required readings: Essentials pp. 273-290

✍️ **Ethnography paper due (Wednesday) submit hardcopy in class + upload to D2L**

**Week 14** – December 4-6

The modern world

📖 Required readings: Essentials pp. 231-249

Film – *Crop to Shop* (globalization, food systems, social justice, and the environment)

**Week 15** - December 11-13

Neoliberalism

Putting it all together

👉 **Final Exam Schedule:**

**Section 1 – Friday, December 22, 12:30PM – 2:30PM**