ANSC 124 - Cultural Anthropology - Bialecki [FA21]

Jump to Today

ANSC 124

Instructor: Dr. Jon Bialecki (jbialecki@ucsd.edu; jon.bialecki@gmail.com - **please do not use the CANVAS built-in messaging/emailing system, as there is no guarantee I will receive your message).**

First things first

ANSC 124 is a live course offered by the Anthropology Department of the University of California, San Diego (although it is designed to also allow for asynchronous and distance-learning options as well).

My job as the instructor of record for ANSC 124 is to introduce you to cultural-anthropological thought at a level appropriate for someone majoring in the discipline, or alternately to someone in a closely related field such as archeology, biological anthropology, or global health.

I am not paid to make your life more difficult than it need be, or to punish you for having important obligations to your own health and safety, to family, or to other people who are dear to you.

Working together, I believe we can have a successful and rewarding course. If you need special consideration due to medical, economic, housing, or psychological distress, or if elements of the course mechanics makes your life more difficult than a UCSD upper-division undergraduate college course typically would, ***please contact me as soon as you are comfortable doing so, and we will do what we can to make fitting accommodations for you***. This also pertains to any problems caused by disability. While this is not my first time engaging in distance learning, I am still learning how to tailor an online class that fits your needs. So, reaching out and letting me know about concrete difficulties caused by the course mechanics will be much appreciated, and may well help your fellow students as well.

Course Description

ANSC 124. Cultural Anthropology (4). This course introduces the concept of culture and the debates surrounding it. Cultural anthropology asks how people create meaning and order in society, how culture intersects with power, and how national and global forces impact local meanings and practices. Prerequisites: upper-division standing.

Prerequisites

The only prerequisite is upper-division standing.

Course Learning Outcomes

After the completion of this course, students will have an understanding of what cultural anthropology is; will have a familiarity with the history and development of the discipline; will know some of the most important critiques of cultural anthropology; and will be familiar with some of the alternatives to cultural accounts of human collectivities. Students will also be able to analyze ethnographic material and be able to make both theoretical and synthetic anthropological arguments based on ethnographic evidence.

Readings and assigned texts

There are two assigned books in this class: Harry G. West's *Ethnographic Sorcery*, published by the University of Chicago Press in 2007 (ISBN-10 : 0226893987; ISBN-13 : 978-0226893983), and Claude Lévi-Strauss's *The Way of the* Mask (ISBN-10: 029596636X ; ISBN-13 978-0295966366). These are both relatively inexpensive books, retailing at $21.00 and $22.95 respectively. *Ethnographic Sorcery* is also available as an ebook at lower rates, and both are very easy to find used; I have heard that there are possibly online copies available for free, though I discourage you from piracy. We will be using *The Way of the Mask* relatively early in the semester, though we only read the first part of it, and if you are reluctant to purchase both books, you may consider borrowing or sharing *The Way of the Mask.*

We will not be using West's *Ethnographic Sorcery* until the very last week of class, so there should be sufficient time to get a copy, but if you experience any difficulties, please contact me and I will see if I can assist you. We will be reading the entirety of *Ethnographic Sorcery*

Due to possible financial distress, and also due to distribution problems, there will be no other assigned books. All other readings will be available on the CANVAS page for this course; they will be articles, and occasionally chapters from larger texts. They will be in PDF format, and located on the CANVAS page for this class.

Distance Learning

While this is an in-person course, it is also designed so that it can be taken asynchronously, either for a period of time or for the entirety of the quarter. Video recordings of course lectures are available at https://podcast.ucsd.edu. All course material, other than the two assigned texts, will be distributed *via* Canvas; this includes the prompts for both the take-home, open-book examinations and final.

Office Hours

Office hours will by via Zoom; they are Friday, twelve to two pm Pacific Standard time, and by appointment. Links for the meetings will be sent in advance, via course email.

Course Assessment

Course assessment will have ***three components***. 1) Regular weekly bulletin board posts, 2) take- home, open-book essay mid-term exams, and 3) a final, take-home open-book exam. Each assessment will be equally weighted (1/4 of the total class grade for the bulletin board posts, 1/4 of the total class grade for the first take-home midterm exam, 1/4 of the total class grade for the second take-home midterm examination, and 1/4 of the total class grade for the final). There is also the possibility of extra credit.

This class is ***not*** graded on a curve.

1) Regular weekly bulletin board posts

Each week, students will be expected to make ***two substantive posts to the course's online discussion board***. Students are strongly encouraged to not just post questions or observations about course readings and lectures for the week, but to respond to posts made by other students; for this reason, substantive responses should be made. **Credit for weekly posts will be graded as pass/fail; but students who repeatedly make insightful, creative, generative, or original posts will be awarded extra credit.**

2) Take-home, open-book essay mid-term exams

This class will feature ***two*** take-home, open-book examinations. Here are the *tentative* dates for the exams

First mid-term examination
- Exam prompt(s) ***distributed*** on ***October 7th***

- Exam ***due*** by midnight, ***October 17th***

Second mid-term examination
- Exam prompt(s) *distributed* on ***November 4th***

- Exam ***due*** by midnight, ***November 14th***

Examinations should be turned in by uploading them to the ANSC 124 Canvas page. Since these are take-home examinations, we are relying upon adherence to the UCSD honor code to prevent any collaboration with other students that goes beyond merely studying together.

3) Final examination

The course ends with a take-home, open-book final examination, which will be very similar in format to the mid-terms. Here are the relevant dates regarding the final examinations

- Exam question(s) ***distributed*** on ***December 2nd***

- Exam due by ***9:59 pm on December 10th***

Examinations should be turned in by uploading them to the ANSC 124 Canvas page. Since these are take-home examinations, we are relying upon adherence to the UCSD honor code to prevent any collaboration with other students that goes beyond merely studying together.

Honor Code

As already mentioned, in all assessments, students will be expected to follow UCSD's honor code, which can be accessed online (**https://online.ucsd.edu/honor (https://online.ucsd.edu/honor%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)**).

Rules of Engagement (Netiquette)

It is important to recognize that the online classroom is still in fact a classroom, and you are expected to be professional, civil, and respectful when communicating with both your peers and your instructor. Whether you are posting to a discussion board, writing an email, or engaging in a ZOOM discussion during virtual office hours, be sure to adhere to the following rules of engagement:

Don't dominate the discussion. Definitely speak up and participate, but also give other students the opportunity to join in and speak up.

Never use offensive language. Avoid using vernacular and/or slang language. Avoid texting abbreviations (such as "u" instead of "you"). Present your ideas professionally.

Never make fun of someone's writing ability or ideas expressed.

Be mindful of how your statements will be received / interpreted by others. For example, don't write in ALLCAPS, as it can be interpreted as shouting.

Be cautious when using humor, as tone can easily be lost in an email or discussion post, and your message may be taken seriously or offensively.

Share tips with other students.

Think (and edit) before you push the Send button!

Finally, students are strongly encouraged to be sensitive to their colleagues' self-presentation of their gender, and also to any stated preferred pronouns.

Schedule of Readings

Thursday, September 23rd

Reading: Engelke, Matthew. 2018. "Introduction" and "Culture," from *How to Think Like an Anthropologist*.

Recommended Reading: Shah, Alpa. 2017. "Ethnography? Participant Observation, a potentially revolutionary practice."

Tuesday, September 28th

Readings: Geertz, Clifford. 1966. "The Impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of Man," from *The Interpretation of Cultures*.

Condemi Silvana and Franççois Savatier. 2019. "Culture, the Evolutionary Accelerator." from *A Pocket History of Human Evolution: How We Became Sapiens.*

Thursday, September 30th

Reading: Levi-Strauss, Claude. Part 1, from *The Way of the Masks*.

Tuesday, October 5th

Readings: Levi-Strauss, Claude. Part 1, from *The Way of the Masks* (continued)

Recommended Reading: Sahlins, Marshall. 1976. Pages 166-191. "La Pensee Bourgeoise: Western Society as Culture," from *Culture in Practice: Selected Essays.*

Thursday, October 7th

Readings: Mary, Douglas. 1966. "Introduction," Chapter 2 ("Secular Defilement"), and Chapter 3 ("The Abominations of Leviticus") from *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*.

Turner, Victor. 1967. "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage*" from *The Forest of Symbols.*

Recommended Reading: Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Person, Time, and Place in Bali" from *The Interpretation of Cultures.*

Tuesday, October 12th

Readings: Geertz, Clifford. 1972. "Deep Play: Notes on A Balinese Cockfight" from *The Interpretation of Cultures.*
Roseberry, William. 1982. "Balinese Cockfights and the Seduction of Anthropology."

Thursday, October 14th

Readings: Evans-Pritchard, E-E. 1937. "The Notion of Witchcraft Explains Unfortunate Events" from *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande.*

Comaroff, Jean and John Comaroff. 1999. "Occult economies and the violence of abstraction: Notes on the South African postcolony."

Tuesday, October 19th

Readings: Csordas, Thomas. 1990. "Embodiment as a Paradigm for Anthropology."

Thursday, October 21st

Readings: Sherry Ortner. 1974. "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" In *Woman, Culture and Society.*

Strathern, Marilyn. 1987. "An Awkward Relationship: The Case of Feminism and Anthropology."

Tuesday, October 26th

Readings: Abu-Lughod, Lila. 1985. "Honor and the Sentiments of Loss in a Bedouin Society."

Brenner, Suzanne. 1996. "Reconstructing Self and Society: Javanese Muslim Women and 'The Veil'"

Thursday, October 28th

Readings: Mahmood, Saba. 2001. "Feminist Theory, Embodiment, and the Docile Agent: Some Reflections on the Egyptian Islamic Revival."

Mahmood, Saba. 2001. "Rehearsed Spontaneity and the Conventionality of Ritual: Disciplines of Salat."

Tuesday, November 2nd

Readings: Das, Veena. 2012. "Ordinary Ethics."
Robbins, Joel. 2012. "Cultural Values"
Mattingly, Cheryl. 2013. "Moral Selves and Moral Scenes: Narrative Experiments in Everyday Life."

Thursday, November 4th

Reading: Wagner, Roy. 1981[1975]. "The Power of Invention" from The Invention of Culture

Tuesday, November 9th

Readings: Strathern, Marilyn. 1994. "Cutting the Network."
Gell, Alfred. 1999 "Strathernograms, or, the Semiotics of Mixed Metaphors"**Reading:** Wagner, Roy. 1981[1975]. "The Power of Invention" from *The Invention of Culture*.

Tuesday, November 16th

Readings: Latour, Bruno. 2009. "Perspectivism: Type or Bomb?"
Descola, Philipe. 2006. "Beyond Nature and Culture."

Vilaça, Aparecida. 2005. "Chronically Unstable Bodies: Reflection on Amazonian Corporalities."

Recommended Readings: Viveiros de Castro, Eduardo. 1998. "Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism." Bessire, Lucas and Bond, David. 2014. "Ontological Anthropology and the Deferral of Critique."

Willerslev, Rane. 2013. "Taking Animism Seriously, but Perhaps Not Too Seriously?"

Thursday, November 18th

Readings: Kohn, Eduardo. 2007. "How dogs dream: Amazonian natures and the politics of transspecies engagement."

]Tsing, Anna. 2012. "Unruly Edges: Mushrooms as Companion Species for Donna Haraway."

Tuesday, November 23rd

Latour, Bruno. 1992. "Where are the Missing Masses? The Sociology of a Few Mundane Artifacts."

Tuesday, November 30th

Reading: West, Harry. 2008. Ethnographic Sorcery [First half of book]

Thursday, December 2nd

Reading: West, Harry. 2008. Ethnographic Sorcery [Second half of book]

Course Summary:

Date	Details	Due

View Course Stream
View Course Calendar
View Course Notifications

To Do

Audiovisual update
Sep 27 at 12:36pm

We have found where ...
Sep 28 at 8:22am

First discussion thread ...
Sep 29 at 9:49am

Lecture Outline Posted
Sep 29 at 2:09pm

COVID exposure notic...
Sep 30 at 11:52am

October 2021

26	27	28	29	30	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	1	2	3	4	5	6

Course assignments are not weighted.

You are currently logged into Student View

Resetting the test student will clear all history for this student, allowing you to view the course as a brand new student.

Reset Student
Leave Student View