

ANTH 2A: CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Foothill College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
Effective Term:	Summer 2025
Units:	4
Hours:	4 lecture per week (48 total per quarter)
Advisory:	Not open to students with credit in ANTH 2AH.
Degree & Credit Status:	Degree-Applicable Credit Course
Foothill GE:	Area 4: Social & Behavioral Sciences
Transferable:	CSU/UC
Grade Type:	Letter Grade (Request for Pass/No Pass)
Repeatability:	Not Repeatable

Student Learning Outcomes

- Students will learn to recognize forms of discrimination, both explicit and implicit, incidental and institutionalized, constructively analyze such systems, and gain cultural competence in approaching, understanding and solving such inequities on a global, national, local, and interpersonal level.
- Students will have tools to better understand and appreciate the diversity of human behavior in small-scale and more complex societies, including their own, through an ability to recognize and articulate the characteristics and elements of culture, and the ways in which anthropologists study and explain the diversity of human behavior around the world.
- Students will expand their awareness of the peoples of the world, and the different ways of living and being in the world, through an exposure to a variety of ethnographic studies and cross-cultural explorations.
- Students will have a new set of skills to better understand and address conflicts and social issues by learning to apply anthropological methods and principles, particularly holism, recognizing ethnocentric biases, and practicing cultural relativism, to solve human problems on the local, regional and world scales.

Description

Introduction to the study of human culture and the concepts, theories, and methods used to understand different social and cultural systems, with an emphasis on appreciating human diversity. Topics include a cross-cultural exploration of: subsistence strategies; social, political, and economic organization; language and communication; marriage and kinship; religion; gender; ethnicity and race; social inequality; culture change; and the effects of colonialism and globalization. Focus is made on the application of anthropological perspectives to contemporary social issues.

Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Define the scope of anthropology and discuss the role of cultural anthropology within the discipline.
- Recognize the methods, theories, and perspectives used to study and understand human cultures, and explain the importance of the ethnographic method in the study of culture.
- Employ the relativist perspective while discussing cultural variation.
- Demonstrate an understanding of anthropological concepts including language and communication, economic systems, political organization, marriage and kinship, gender, race and ethnicity, and religion.
- Explain the interconnectedness of the economic, political, and sociocultural forces of globalization amongst diverse cultural groups.
- Recognize the value of applying anthropological perspectives, methods, and theories to solve contemporary social problems.

Course Content

- Introduction to anthropology as a discipline and the sub disciplines within anthropology
- In-depth understanding of cultural anthropology in a global age
 - Guiding principles of cultural anthropology
 - Holism
 - Avoiding ethnocentrism
 - Practicing cultural relativism
 - Etic vs. emic perspectives
 - Ethnology and ethnography
 - Cultural relativism dilemma
- Concept and characteristics of culture
 - Evolution of the first human cultures
 - Characteristics of culture
 - Shared
 - Learned
 - Symbolic
 - Integrated
 - Adaptive
 - Dynamic
 - Cross-cultural mis-cues
 - Processes of culture change
 - Rights and issues concerning indigenous cultures
- Theoretical approaches and methods used in cultural anthropology
 - Unilinear evolutionary approach (contributions and criticisms)
 - Historical particularism
 - Functionalism
 - Interpretive anthropology and postmodern approaches
 - Ethnography and ethnographic fieldwork methods
 - Ethics in anthropology
 - Applied anthropology
- Language and communication
 - Descriptive linguistics
 - Historical linguistics
 - Sociolinguistics
 - Linguistic relativism and the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis
- Making a living
 - Adaptation
 - Patterns of subsistence
 - Economic systems

- i. Production
 - ii. Forms of distribution and exchange
- d. Globalization
- 7. Political systems
 - a. Types of power
 - i. Authority
 - ii. Persuasion
 - iii. Coercion
 - b. Types of political organization
 - i. Band
 - ii. Tribe
 - iii. Chiefdom
 - iv. State
 - c. Social control
 - d. Maintaining order through law
 - e. Conflict and warfare
- 8. Marriage and kinship
 - a. Forms of marriage
 - b. Family and household
 - c. Kinship systems and terminologies
- 9. Sex, gender, and human sexuality
 - a. Difference between sex and gender
 - b. Gender identities
 - c. Variation in gender roles
 - d. Human sexuality
- 10. Religion and the supernatural
 - a. Anthropological approaches to religion
 - b. Rituals and ceremonies
 - c. Rites of passage
 - d. Magic and witchcraft
 - e. Functions of religion
 - f. Religion and cultural change
- 11. Globalization challenges
 - a. Effects of colonialism
 - b. World systems
 - c. Role of global corporations
 - d. Pollution and climate change
 - e. Overpopulation
 - f. Role of applied anthropology
- 12. Social stratification
 - a. Race and ethnicity, cultural construction of race, structural racism
 - b. Class
 - c. Caste

Lab Content

Not applicable.

Special Facilities and/or Equipment

When taught as an online or hybrid distance learning section, students and faculty need ongoing and continuous internet and email access.

Method(s) of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation may include but are not limited to the following:

Written assignments

1. Weekly reflections on readings
2. Term paper on field research and/or secondary source research based on ethnographic sources
3. In-class writing

Oral presentations

1. In-class discussion
2. Group presentations

In-class quizzes and exams

1. Quizzes
2. Mid-term exams
3. Final exam

Method(s) of Instruction

Methods of Instruction may include but are not limited to the following:

Lecture

Discussion

Cooperative learning exercises

Field work

Oral presentations

Representative Text(s) and Other Materials

Brown, Nina, et al., editors. Perspectives: An Open Invitation to Cultural Anthropology. 2nd ed. 2020.

Welsch, Robert L., and Luis A. Vivanco. Cultural Anthropology: Asking Questions About Humanity. 3rd ed. 2020.

Guest, Kenneth. Cultural Anthropology: A Toolkit for a Global Age, 4th ed.. 2023.

Guest, Kenneth. Cultural Anthropology: A Reader for a Global Age. 2017.

Brondo, Keri Vacanti. Cultural Anthropology: Contemporary, Public, and Critical Readings. 2019.

Types and/or Examples of Required Reading, Writing, and Outside of Class Assignments

1. Reading assigned texts, articles, or handouts, and studying class notes.
2. Doing various homework, including writing reading response essays and short papers.
3. Preparing an oral presentation or written research paper based on individual or group research or fieldwork.
4. Conducting research based on secondary sources.
5. Conducting ethnographic fieldwork in a local setting.

Discipline(s)

Anthropology