

ANTH 2AH: HONORS 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 2A.
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

- Apply core anthropological principles—including holism, cultural relativism, and the critique of ethnocentrism—to evaluate contemporary social issues in local, national, and global contexts.
- Recognize and articulate the characteristics and elements of cultural systems in the creation of societies past and present.
- Understanding of the diversity of human lifeways by analyzing ethnographic examples and comparing cross-cultural perspectives.

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. As an honors course, this is a full thematic seminar with advanced teaching methods focusing on major writing, reading, and research assignments, student class lectures, group discussions and interactions.

Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Define the scope of anthropology and discuss the role of cultural anthropology within the discipline.
2. 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.
3. Employ the relativist perspective while discussing cultural variation.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of anthropological concepts, including language and communication, economic systems, political organization, marriage and kinship, gender, race and ethnicity, and religion.

5. Explain the interconnectedness of the economic, political, and sociocultural forces of globalization amongst diverse cultural groups.
6. Recognize the value of applying anthropological perspectives, methods, and theories to solve contemporary social problems.

Course Content

1. Introduction to anthropology as a discipline and the sub disciplines within anthropology
2. In-depth understanding of cultural anthropology in a global age
 - a. Guiding principles of cultural anthropology
 - i. Holism
 - ii. Avoiding ethnocentrism
 - iii. Practicing cultural relativism
 - b. Etic vs. emic perspectives
 - c. Ethnology and ethnography
 - d. Cultural relativism dilemma
3. Concept and characteristics of culture
 - a. Evolution of the first human cultures
 - b. Characteristics of culture
 - i. Shared
 - ii. Learned
 - iii. Symbolic
 - iv. Integrated
 - v. Adaptive
 - vi. Dynamic
 - c. Cross-cultural mis-cues
 - d. Processes of culture change
 - e. Rights and issues concerning indigenous cultures
4. Theoretical approaches and methods used in cultural anthropology
 - a. Unilinear evolutionary approach (contributions and criticisms)
 - b. Historical particularism
 - c. Functionalism
 - d. Interpretive anthropology and postmodern approaches
 - e. Ethnography and ethnographic fieldwork methods
 - f. Ethics in anthropology
 - g. Applied anthropology
5. Language and communication
 - a. Descriptive linguistics
 - b. Historical linguistics
 - c. Sociolinguistics
 - d. Linguistic relativism and the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis
6. Making a living
 - a. Adaptation
 - b. Patterns of subsistence
 - c. 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
 4. Completion of handouts applying concepts
- Group and/or individual oral presentations
1. In-class discussion based on primary source readings, such as journal articles in *American Anthropology* or *Current Anthropology*

2. Group presentations

In-class quizzes and exams

1. Quizzes

2. Mid-term exams

3. Final exam

Field-based research project

1. Students may be required to develop and carry out a field-based research project utilizing ethnographic fieldwork methods

2. Students may be required to research a contemporary culture through ethnographic sources

Method(s) of Instruction

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

Lecture

Seminar-style discussions

Active learning exercises

Independent and group 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.

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.

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

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.
6. Students may be required to read longer, more complex journal articles in cultural anthropology and/or full-length ethnographies.

Discipline(s)

Anthropology