

# **Introduction to Cultural Anthropology (ANTH 120)**

Spring 2015 – Western Kentucky University

Web Course (**Syllabus Subject to Change**)

Note: This course will be delivered through electronic Blackboard. It is your responsibility to make sure you have access to a reliable computer that is compatible with Blackboard. Technology problems should be directed to the WKU computer helpdesk: 745-7000.

**Instructor:** Michael Rodgers

**E-Mail:** [michael.rodgers@wku.edu](mailto:michael.rodgers@wku.edu)

**Office Hours:** I will check my e-mail at least once a day, 7 days/week. I will try to respond to all questions/problems within 36 hours of initial contact. Face-to-face meetings can be scheduled by appointment and completed via Skype. Refrain from e-mailing me more than once in a 24 hour period.

## **Course Objectives:**

Through a combination of lectures, discussions, and films students will learn about theories, research methods, and key concepts in cultural anthropology. Cross-cultural readings will help students appreciate the wide range of cultural practices which exist, as well as to enhance student understanding of basic methods and concepts in the discipline. Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, which is an introduction to the cross-cultural study of human behavior and society and covers topics that include language, religion, subsistence, and kinship, fulfills the General Education Category E (World Cultures and American Diversity) requirement. It will assist students in attaining the following General Education goal:

- an appreciation of the complexity and variety of the world's cultures.

Course objectives support these General Education goals in the following ways:

- identifies both the similarities and cross-cultural variation in social institutions and cultural practices through readings, lectures, discussions, and/or videos describing diverse societies and comparing and contrasting their cultural beliefs and social institutions.
- conveys the value of recognizing ethnocentric bias and utilizing cultural relativism in order to better understand and appreciate cultural diversity through readings, lectures, discussions and/or videos explaining ethnocentric bias and cultural relativism and then by applying these concepts to culture-specific materials presented in class.
- describes how aspects of social identity such as class, gender, ethnicity and race are constructed differently cross-culturally and may affect the individual and his/her role and status in the community through readings, lectures, discussion and/or videos describing how and why aspects of social identity may affect an individual's place in society.

This course can also be used to fulfill a requirement for the **Colonnade Program Explorations Subcategory B: Social and Behavioral Sciences**.

Upon successful completion of the course, students will:

ANTH 120 INTRODUCTION TO CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY OBJECTIVES	EXPLORATIONS – SOCIAL/BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES OBJECTIVES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify relationships among cultural anthropology, anthropology, and other social and behavioral sciences</li> </ul>	1. demonstrate knowledge of at least one area of the social and behavioral sciences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evaluate and apply major conceptual, theoretical, and methodological contributions of cultural anthropology, including ethical conduct and applied research</li> </ul>	3. apply knowledge, theories, and research methods, including ethical conduct, to analyze problems pertinent to at least one area of the social and behavioral sciences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>describe general patterns in social organization, including the role of cultural diversity and its significance in human society</li> </ul>	5. understand and demonstrate how at least one area of the social and behavioral sciences conceptualizes diversity and the ways it shapes human experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>apply cultural anthropology concepts to contemporary issues such as racism, sustainability, and health</li> </ul>	7. integrate knowledge of at least one area of the social and behavioral sciences into issues of personal and public importance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>recall and explain general characteristics and concepts of anthropology and cultural anthropology</li> </ul>	9. communicate effectively using the language and terminology germane to at least one area of the social and behavioral sciences

This course counts as an elective in the major in Popular Culture Studies and a requirement in the Social Studies Major.

**Required Texts:**

- Eller, Jack David  
2012 Cultural Anthropology: Global Forces, Local Lives. 2nd Edition. Routledge Press.
- Johnson, Paul Christopher  
2007 Diasporic Conversions: Black Carib Religion and the Recovery of Africa. University of California Press.
- **Additional readings will be assigned each week. Every week these must be accessed under the additional readings tab. Often Discussion questions will be based on these readings**
- **PPT Lectures:** PowerPoint lectures will be posted weekly. They can be found under the Lectures tab.
- **Videos:** Videos will be very important to this class. Make sure to check weekly under the videos tab for new posts. Student may be tested on videos so watch them carefully and take notes. Discussions may often be based on videos.

Note: Please make sure to have the correct edition of each book. They are available at the WKU bookstore or through various on-line vendors such as amazon.com or half.com. Different editions do not necessarily contain the same information and are sometimes organized differently

**Course Requirements:**

The material in this course consists of assigned readings (generally a chapter from the text and articles that address the topic at hand will be assigned per week), a discussion board posting, an e-mailed assignment, and a 2 exams delivered through blackboard. You may also be required to do some web-based work that might include viewing film clips or reviewing a website to find pertinent information.

**Discussion Boards:** Discussion boards take the place of classroom discussions for this course, meaning that your participation in them is critical both to your success in the class and the learning process for the class as a whole. Discussion board posts are meant to be a place for thoughtful reflection of the material, as well as a place to ask both theoretical and content-oriented questions. That being said, your participation in the posts is critical to your success in this course. Students are expected to participate in Discussions Boards at least once per week, excluding weeks with exams.

Please note the following rules in regards to posting on Blackboard:

1. In terms of earning points...

- comments such as “I agree” or “good point” will not count at all
- comments which simply re-word something already stated without adding **substantial** content will not count
- if your response is not on topic, I may or may not give you points
- you will not automatically earn any points for making a posting; the exact points you earn will be based on how relevant, substantial, and insightful your comments are.

2. Discussion questions may include more than one question. Answer each question with ***at least 1 paragraph but not more than 3 paragraphs*** in which you present an idea(s) and explain it (them). Don’t overwhelm the reader (me and your classmates) with information, but do make sure you’re saying something substantial and relevant.

3. Exact directions for postings may vary weekly; make sure you read the directions first.

4. Etiquette:

- no profanity
- do not post in all caps (it comes across as shouting)
- respect yourself
- be respectful and sensitive to other points of view and ideas
- remember that anyone and everyone in class may read your response

I reserve the right to not only not award the possible discussion points but to also take additional points away from your overall course grade if you blatantly insult and berate others or otherwise show poor on-line etiquette.

**Assignments:** Assignments will be given throughout the semester. Assignments are designed to help you use the information in the unit to think about the world around you. Assignments are generally short written pieces (one to two pages), but they **MUST** be written in proper English, with proper grammar and punctuation. **Occasionally**, assignments will consist of several questions that can be answered in less than a paragraph. If I **EXPLICITLY** ask for an **OUTLINE**, complete sentences are not required, but you must properly format your work in a way that makes your argument clear. In this sense, assignments often require that you use your writing skills to successfully plan, develop, and organize your argument. The use of proper grammar, punctuation, and the ability present your data in an organized fashion count toward your assignment grade. Assignments must be turned into SafeAssign. A link to SafeAssign will be present under the Assignment prompt.

**Exams:** Do readings when assigned (or earlier). ***Take notes summarizing main points*** (and page numbers) as you read. Exams are open note, open book, but they are timed and you may only attempt each Exam one time. Review reading notes before you start a Exam and have them

(and the texts) handy while you take it. Doing readings on time and having notes handy should also assist you in providing better, more thoughtful responses to assignments and discussion board postings. I may post study questions and term lists about readings to help you better understand and think about ideas in course materials.

### **Course Policies:**

I reserve the right to make changes to the course and syllabus at any time as I deem necessary.

Completing readings and assignments, as well as participation in discussion board, is critical to success in this course. Students are expected to regularly check the course website (electronic Blackboard) to find assignments, check grades, participate in assigned discussions, and to share information with other students and the instructor.

Students are expected to complete assignments by stated deadlines. I will accept ***one*** late assignment and ***one*** late discussion board posting without penalty. Subsequent late assignments and/or discussion board postings, regardless of the cause, will reduce your final grade by 1 point per late assignment. This does not include Exams; ***Exams must be taken within the allotted time-frame.*** There will be no exceptions, so make sure to take your Exam within enough time.

Before the first week of class students should identify AT LEAST one alternative means of access to a computer should their primary computer suddenly become unavailable (e.g. public library, school computing facilities, a friend's computer, etc.). ***Losing access to a computer will not be considered a legitimate excuse for not completing assignments.*** For this reason, I strongly urge you not to wait until the last minute to complete assignments.

When you e-mail the instructor, write a professional e-mail. Professional e-mails include a salutation (for our purposes here, it can be as simple as "hello"), a clear statement of the problem and/or question using **complete sentences**, and your name at the bottom. Not only is this good practice for the future, but clear communication is critical to learning. If you do not clearly communicate to me, I cannot clearly communicate to you.

Students are expected to adhere to the honor code and plagiarism rules of Western Kentucky University. Students will receive a 0 for any assignment on which he/she cheated. In addition, I may report your actions to the administration for further sanction.

Students may not reproduce this course in any fashion.

In compliance with university policy, students with disabilities who require accommodations

(academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services in DUC A-200 of the Student Success Center in Downing University Center. Please DO NOT request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services.

**Grading:**

Discussion Boards: 30%

Assignments: 30%

Midterm Exam: 20%

Final Exam: 20%

Final grades will be determined based on the following scale:

**A:** 90-100%    **B:** 80-89%    **C:** 70-79%    **D:** 60-69%    **F:** 0-59%

**Schedule: \*\*All times noted below are Central Time\*\* (Subject to Change)**

**Note: Check Announcements regularly as well as the Assignments and Additional Readings/Video page. You will find additional readings and assignments are posted at the beginning of each week. Discussion Boards must be visited on a weekly basis as well.**

**Week 1: January 26**

- Readings: Eller 1
- Weekly PPT. Lecture
- Exercises and any Additional Readings as Assigned on Blackboard

**Week 2: February 2**

- Readings: Eller 2
- Weekly PPT. Lecture
- Exercises and any Additional Readings as Assigned on Blackboard

**Week 3: February 9**

- Readings: Eller chapter 3
- Weekly PPT. Lecture
- Exercises and any Additional Readings as Assigned on Blackboard

**Week 4: February 16**

- Readings: Eller chapter 4
- Weekly PPT. Lecture
- Exercises and any Additional Readings as Assigned on Blackboard

**Week 5: February 23**

- Readings: Eller chapter 5
- Weekly PPT. Lecture
- Exercises and any Additional Readings as Assigned on Blackboard

**Week 6: March 2**

- Readings: Eller chapter 6
- Weekly PPT. Lecture
- Exercises and any Additional Readings as Assigned on Blackboard
- Midterm Exam

**Week 7: March 9**

- Spring Break!!!

**Week 8: March 16**

- Readings: Eller chapter 7
- Weekly PPT. Lecture
- Exercises and any Additional Readings as Assigned on Blackboard
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**Week 9: March 23**

- Readings: Eller chapter 8
- Weekly PPT. Lecture
- Exercises and any Additional Readings as Assigned on Blackboard

**Week 10: March 30**

- Readings: Eller chapter 9
- Weekly PPT. Lecture
- Exercises and any Additional Readings as Assigned on Blackboard

**Week 11: April 6**

- Readings: Eller chapter 10
- Weekly PPT. Lecture
- Exercises and any Additional Readings as Assigned on Blackboard

**Week 12: April 13**

- Readings: Eller chapter 11
- Weekly PPT. Lecture

- Exercises and any Additional Readings as Assigned on Blackboard
- Ethnography: pages 1-59

**Week 13: April 20**

- Readings: Eller chapter 12
- Weekly PPT. Lecture
- Exercises and any Additional Readings as Assigned on Blackboard
- Ethnography: pages 60-124

**Week 14: April 27**

- Readings: Eller chapter 13
- Weekly PPT. Lecture
- Exercises and any Additional Readings as Assigned on Blackboard
- Ethnography: 125- 185

**Week 15: May 4**

- Readings: Eller chapter 14
- Weekly PPT. Lecture
- Exercises and any Additional Readings as Assigned on Blackboard
- Ethnography: 186-246

**Week 16: May 11**

- Final Exam
- Weekly PPT. Lecture