

# **Introduction to Cultural Anthropology**

## **Course Syllabus, ANTH 120 (sections 751 & 752)**

Web Course  
Dr. Lori Roe  
Spring 2011

**This course will be delivered through 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.**

### **I. Instructor Contact Information**

Email: lori.roe@wku.edu  
Office: No office on WKU campus.

How to contact Dr. Roe:

- Please email me. I will check my e-mail at least once a day, Monday through Friday, except on school holidays. Please contact me via e-mail if you have questions, concerns, or comments about the course.

### **II. Course Objectives**

Through a combination of required readings and videos, discussion board postings, a written paper, and assessments students will learn about theories, research methods, and key concepts in cultural anthropology. Cross-cultural readings will help students appreciate the diversity of cultural practices and beliefs in the world today. Readings, discussions, and assignments will enhance student understanding of anthropological concepts. In addition, students will be asked to think and write holistically about cultural issues relevant to our local and global communities.

Upon successful completion of the course, students will

- understand key concepts relevant to cultural anthropology.
- understand major theoretical contributions of anthropology.
- recognize and understand general patterns in social organization.
- have an increased appreciation and respect for the value of cultural diversity.

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:

- identify both the similarities and cross-cultural variation in social institutions and cultural practices through readings and discussions describing diverse societies and comparing and contrasting their cultural beliefs and social institutions.
- convey the value of recognizing ethnocentric bias and utilizing cultural relativism in order to better understand and appreciate cultural diversity through readings and discussions explaining ethnocentric bias and cultural relativism and then by applying these concepts to culture-specific materials presented in class.

- describe 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 and discussions describing how and why aspects of social identity may affect an individual's place in society.

### III. Course Materials

#### 1. TEXTBOOK:

Peoples, James and Garrick Bailey

2009 *Humanity: An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition. Wadsworth Cengage Learning. ISBN: 978-0-495-50874-8

2. Ethnography. An ethnography is an in-depth anthropological book about a society's cultural beliefs and practices. You will need to obtain an ethnography (check-out from library, purchase, borrow) and write a report about the ethnography. I will provide a list of suggested ethnographies. You can choose an ethnography that is not on the list, but I must approve your choice.
3. Additional required readings and websites are available on Blackboard.

### IV. Course Policies

- ***Check the course website (electronic Blackboard) regularly*** to read announcements, participate in discussion boards, read articles, watch videos, and complete assignments and exams.
- **Check the course calendar for due dates and times.**
- Students are expected to complete all assignments by stated deadlines. ***Late Assignments:*** I will subtract 5% of the total points possible on the assignment for each weekday the assignment is late. ***I will not accept assignments that are more than 5 weekdays late.***
- ***Exams must be taken within the allotted timeframe.*** However, if you think you have a legitimate reason for re-scheduling an exam, let me know as soon as possible, and I will consider allowing you to take it early or late.
- Exams are open note and open book, but they are timed. Review readings and notes before you start an exam and have your notes handy while you take the exam. ***Consulting with anyone other than the course instructor about specific test questions and answers is considered cheating.***
- By the second 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.
- ***Students are expected to adhere to the honor code and plagiarism rules of Western Kentucky University.*** Students will receive no credit 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.

## V. Determination of Course Grade

Your grade will be based on the following:

Two online exams	70 points
Two essay question assignments	70 points
Participation in class discussion boards	20 points
Ethnography review essay	<u>40 points</u>
	200 points total

Instructions for assignments and tests are available in Blackboard.

Final course grade:

A = 180 – 200 total points

B = 160 – 179 total points

C = 140 – 159 total points

D = 120 – 139 total points

F = 119 or fewer total points

## VI. Schedule of Topics

1. Unit 1: Anthropology and Culture
  - a. What is Anthropology?
  - b. Culture
  - c. The Development of Anthropological Thought
  - d. Anthropological Methods
2. Unit 2: Language, Subsistence, and Economics
  - a. Culture and Language
  - b. Subsistence and Economics
  - c. Exchange in Economic Systems
3. Unit 3: Marriage, Kinship, Enculturation, and Gender
  - a. Marriages and Families
  - b. Kinship and Descent
  - c. Enculturation and the Life Course
  - d. Gender in Comparative Perspective
4. Unit 4: Political and Social Organization, Religion, and Art
  - a. Organization of Political Life
  - b. Social Inequality and Stratification
  - c. Religion and Worldview
  - d. Art and the Aesthetic
5. Unit 5: Anthropology and the Global Community
  - a. Globalization
  - b. Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflict
  - c. World Problems and Applied Anthropology