

**CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY, Anthropology 101**  
**Bates College, Autumn Semester 2012**

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OFFICE HOURS: MTW 2:00-4:00  
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MWF at 8:25 Anthropology 101A

Final: Thursday, December 13, 8:00am

MWF at 11:00: Anthropology 101B

Final: Friday, December 14, 8:00am

Anthropology 101 is an introduction to social or cultural anthropology, the study of human behavior in the context of culture. Or better cultures because the anthropological assumption is that every society has its own sense of what is moral and what is not, what is attractive and what is not, what is edible and what is not. As a discipline, cultural anthropology assumes that that study of culture is the study of difference or otherness.

The scientific goal of cultural anthropology is understanding the different ways the societies of the world have gone about the business of being human. The humanistic goal is entering on the journey to the self by way of the detour of the other.

Traditionally cultural anthropologists tried to understand societies faraway from the kinds of places where anthropologists themselves (and the people who read anthropological accounts) lived. That separation has not been true for a long time. The world is all jumbled up nowadays, and difference begins at the end of our noses, not at the border of our country.

The task nowadays, to quote Clifford Geertz, is "to enlarge the possibility of intelligible discourse between people quite different from one another in interest, outlook, wealth, and power, and yet contained in a world where tumbled as they are into endless connection, it is increasingly difficult to get out of each other's way."

**REQUIRED BOOKS**

Achebe, Things Fall Apart  
Weiner, The Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea  
Ramdya, Bollywood Weddings  
Kolker, The Immigrant Advantage

**RESERVE READINGS**

Miner, "Body Ritual among the Nacirema," electronic reserve.  
Bohannon, "Shakespeare in the Bush," paper reserve.  
Gawande, "The Score: How Childbirth went Industrial," New Yorker, pp. 57-67, electronic reserve.  
Jordan, "Buscando La Forma: An Ethnography of Contemporary Mayan Childbirth", in Jordan, Birth in Four Cultures, pp. 15-44, paper reserve.  
Davis-Floyd, "The Technocratic Model", in Birth as an American Rite of Passage, pp. 44-72, paper reserve.  
Basso, "Wisdom sits in Places, pp. 53-90, and "Afterword," from Feld Senses of Place, paper reserve.  
Lyons and Samatar, "Anatomy of State Collapse," in Somalia, pp. 7-24, paper reserve.  
Bestemann, "Hard Hair: Somali Constructions of Goshu Inferiority," in Unraveling Somalia, pp. 113-131, paper reserve.  
Finnegan, "New in Town: The Somalis of Lewiston," New Yorker, pp. 46-68, electronic reserve.  
Lindkvist, "The Reach and Limits of Cultural Accommodation," pp. 1-59, paper reserve.

Besteman webpage, "The Somali Bantu Experience: From East Africa to Maine," <http://www.colby.edu>, type in "wiki" in the dialogue box at upper right side of homepage, and scroll down to "The Somali Bantu Experience."

## **TOPICS AND READINGS**

September 5                      The Course

September 7                      Miner, "Body Ritual among the Nacirema," electronic reserve.

### **1. The Nature of Anthropological Inquiry: The Concept of Culture, Cultural Relativity, Ethnocentrism, The Poetics and Politics of Culture, Men and Women Together and Apart**

September 10                      Miner, "Body Ritual Among the Nacirema," electronic reserve.

September 12                      **Short ethnographic paper due, discussed in class**

September 14                      Bohannon, "Shakespeare in the Bush," paper reserve.

September 17                      Achebe, Part One.

September 19                      Achebe, Part Two.

September 21                      Achebe, Part Three.

### **2. An Ethnographic Approach to Social Life: The Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea, Birth and Death, Women and Work, Symbolic Action, Exchange**

September 24                      Weiner, The Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea, introduction and chapters 1 and 2.

September 26                      Weiner, chapters 3, 4, and 5.

September 28                      Weiner, chapters 8, 9, and 10.

October 1                              Video: The Trobrianders, shown in class, read chapters 6 and 7.

October 3                              Weiner review

### **3. Birth as a Cultural Practice: Culturalizing a Natural Event, Birth and Hospitals, the Economics of Birth, the Mayan example**

October 5                              Gawande, "The Score: How Childbirth went Industrial", New Yorker, pp. 57-67.

October 8                              Discussion with Chris Gillis, Lewiston midwife

October 10	Jordan, "Buscando La Forma", pp. 15-44.
October 12	Davis-Floyd, "The Technocratic Model", pp. 44-72.
October 15	<b>Hour Examination</b>
October 17-21	Autumn Recess

#### **4. Marriage as Culture, Transnationalism and Media, Culture as Imaginative Process**

October 22	
October 24	Ramdya, <u>Bollywood Weddings</u> , chapters 1, 2, and 3.
October 26	Ramdya, <u>Bollywood Weddings</u> , Chapters 4 and 5.
October 29	Person and Caste
October 31	Culture and Media
November 1	<b>Marriage Paper Due</b>

#### **5. Refugees: People without Places, the Human Cost of a Global Problem, Somalia**

November 5	Lyons and Samatar, "Anatomy of State Collapse," in <u>Somalia</u> , pp. 7-24.
November 7	Besteman, "Hard Hair: Somali Constructions of Goshu Inferiority," in <u>Unraveling Somalia</u> , 113-131, paper reserve.
November 9	Finnegan, "New in Town: The Somalis of Lewiston," <u>New Yorker</u> , pp. 46-58, electronic reserve.
November 12	Video: <u>Rain in a Dry Land</u> , shown in class.
November 14	Discussion with a person from Lewiston's Somali Community
November 16	Lindkvist, "The Reach and Limits of Cultural Accommodation," reserve. pp. 1-59, and
November 17-25	Thanksgiving recess
November 26	Bestemann webpage ( <a href="http://wiki.Colby.edu">http://wiki.Colby.edu</a> ). Scroll down to "Somali Bantu Experience."
November 28	<b>Refugee Paper due</b>

#### **6. Ethnicity, Migration, Diasporic Identities, Communities among other Communities**

November 30	Diasporas
December 3	Kolker, <u>The Immigrant Advantage</u> , pp. 1-101
December 5	Kolker, <u>The Immigrant Advantage</u> , pp. 102-214.
December 7	Reading Day

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1. Class attendance and participation in class discussions (15%). I value what students have to say and will try to encourage everyone to voice their opinions. I am not very good at drawing out people who do not raise their hands. Help me out--raise your hand. Regular and thoughtful contributions to class discussions will raise a student's grade. You cannot do so without finishing the readings on time. Quiet people will not be penalized; people who do not come to class will be; and people who chatter with their neighbor during class will be treated with extreme prejudice.

**I am uncomfortable with students' taking notes on their laptops or hand-held devices—from a professor's perspective a class is a community, short-lived and intentional, but still a community. Working on a laptop draws you away from participating in that community (in a way that taking notes does not). Please don't use a laptop in class unless you have some special need and have talked to me first.**

2. An hour examination, worth 25%, and three short research papers, each worth 10%.

3. Final Examination (30%).

4. Short research papers (the ones due September 12, November 1 and 28). I have scheduled days in class for group discussion of the research papers— on the dinner table, marriage, and refugees. Your contribution is worth 10% of the final grade. Please bring your contribution in written form so I can see it in the event we do not get to discuss it in class. Your written discussion should be brief--three typewritten pages or so--and handed in after class. The paper should begin with your response to readings and proceed onwards to your research—which can come by way of library research, the internet, or ethnographic interview. I will explain what I have in mind by way of a handout as the dayccc approaches.

I regard films and videos as part of the curriculum. You need to make yourself responsible for the videos and films just as with readings and lectures. Expect to find questions on the final examination regarding the films and videos you have seen. Take notes on what you see.

All students are responsible for reading and understanding the Bates College statement on academic honesty, crediting of sources, and plagiarism.