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Class Time: Tu/Th 2:30-4 (Baxter B125)
Office Hours: By appt at your convenience
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WINTER 2020
ANTHROPOLOGY 14: INTRODUCTION TO CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Cultural anthropology is concerned with understanding similarities and differences across human societies and cultures around the world. What similarities are driven by underlying universals of human nature versus differences due to the rich context of cultural evolution that provides each society with its uniqueness? Many of these questions are now also at the forefront of other fields in social science, and for this reason we will read the works of many non-anthropologists who are addressing the subject matter of anthropology, but often using different methods, including experiments.

Cultural anthropology is strongly associated with the method known as participant observation. Typically, a cultural anthropologist sets out to live in a foreign society for a year or more and becomes immersed in that society. The anthropologist usually learns the language, may live with a local family, and generally attempts to understand a society from the insider's perspective, while at the same time maintaining the objectivity and analytical perspective of an outsider social scientist. To get the flavor of in-depth anthropological fieldwork and insight, we will read a true classic in anthropology, which is actually an ethnographic novel: *Return to Laughter*. This book is a remarkably frank account of the life of an anthropologist in the field as she navigates the real world manipulations of accomplished political actors operating in a landscape embedded in a culture of witchcraft, among other shared beliefs. Its subject matter is timeless.

In the first third of this course, we will explore the diversity of human forms of subsistence and the social and political organizations that we find among them. We begin with the earliest form of human society, hunters and gatherers, and then explore horticulturalists who use only simple digging tools, pastoralists who are often nomadic and live primarily off their herds, and intensive agriculturalists whose higher productivity made urban society possible.

In the second two thirds of the class we will consider many of the issues that have captured the attention of anthropologists from its beginnings as a discipline, but which are no less intriguing to us today in their modern forms. For example, the U.S. is currently seeing a resurgence in tribalism, and this has brought to the fore much discussion of race, ethnicity, and the assimilation of immigrant groups. We see many of the same issues emerging in Europe and much of the rest of the world, highlighting how current these long-standing research topics in anthropology are today. Are the tribalistic undertones of this national debate different from those that we usually associate with less developed societies such as those in Africa, Asia, and Latin America? What are the evolutionary roots of such beliefs and what consequences can we expect from such a resurgence?

Does the language we speak affect how we perceive the world? Are the forms of social organization and the kinship systems in which we grow up linked to our economic performance? Do our political institutions and religious practices constrain our level of economic development? Why do we find gender inequality in almost all societies? If social norms matter for things people wish to socially engineer, such as human rights and economic development, how do they change? This is a sampling of the questions we will be analyzing.

READINGS

Books

Bowen, Elenore (1954) *Return to Laughter*. New York: Doubleday.

Articles--go to moodle

Password: ensminger

- Alvard, Michael S., (1998) "Evolutionary Ecology and Resource Conservation", *Evolutionary Anthropology*, 7 (2):62-72.
- Banerjee, Abhijit, Esther Duflo, Nathanael Goldberg, Dean Karlan, Robert Osei, William Pariente, Jeremy Shapiro, Bram Thuysbaert, and Christopher Udry, (2015), "A multifaceted program causes lasting progress for the very poor: Evidence from six countries," *Science* 348 (6236):1260799-1-16.
- Blurton Jones, Nicholas G., (1987) "Tolerated theft, suggestions about the ecology and evolution of sharing, hoarding and scrounging", *Social Science Information*, 26(1):31-54.
- Deutscher, Guy, (2010) "Crying Whorf", in *Through the Language Glass: Why the World Looks Different in Other Languages*, pp. 129-156.
- Efferson, Charles, Sonja Vogt, Amy Elhadi, Hilal El Fadil Ahmed, and Ernst Fehr, (2015), "Female genital cutting is not a social coordination norm: New data from sudan question an influential approach to reducing female genital cutting," *Science*, 349 (6255):1446-1447.
- Ensminger, Jean and Jetson Leder-Luis, (n.d.) "Measuring Strategic Data Manipulation: Evidence from a World Bank Project", unpublished manuscript.
- Fershtman, Chaim, and Uri Gneezy, (2001) "Discrimination in a Segmented Society: An Experimental Approach", *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, February 2001:351-377.
- Fukuyama, Francis, (2018) "Against Identity Politics: The New Tribalism and the Crisis of Democracy," *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2018: 90-114.
- Henrich, Joseph and Jean Ensminger *et al*, (2010) "Markets, Religion, Community Size, and the Evolution of Fairness and Punishment", *Science*, 327 (5972):1480-1484.
- Henrich, Joseph, Steven J. Heine, and Ara Norenzayan, (2010), "The weirdest People in the world?", *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 33(2-3):61-83.
- La Ferrara, Eliana, Alberto Chong, and Suzanne Duryea, (2012) "Soap Operas and Fertility: Evidence from Brazil," *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 4(4): 1-31.
- Lansing, Stephen and John H. Miller, (2005) "Cooperation, Games, and Ecological Feedback" Some Insights from Bali", *Current Anthropology*, 46 (2): 328-334.
- Mackie, Gerry, (1996), "Ending Footbinding and Infibulation: A Convention Account", *American Sociological Review*, 61(6):999-1017.
- Nisbett, Richard E. and Dov Cohen, (1996) *Culture of Honor: The Psychology of Violence in the South*, Chapter 4, Westview Press.
- Norenzayan, Ara, and Azim F. Shariff, (2008), "The Origin and Evolution of Religious Prosociality," *Science*, 322: 58-62.
- Paluck, Elizabeth Levy, Hana Shepherd, and Peter M. Aronow, (2016), "Changing climates of conflict: A social network experiment in 56 schools," *PNAS*, 113(3): 566-571.
- Schulz, Jonathan, Duman Bahrami-Rad, Jonathan Beauchamp, and Joseph Henrich, (2019), "The church, intensive kinship, and global psychological variation," *Science*, 366(707): 1-12.
- Tankard, Margaret E., and Elizabeth Levy Paluck, (2017), "The Effect of a Supreme Court Decision Regarding Gay Marriage on Social Norms and Personal Attitudes," *Psychological Science*, 28(9): 1334-1344.

Wiessner, Polly, (2002) "Hunting, healing, and *hxaro* exchange: A long-term perspective on !Kung (Ju/'hoansi) large-game hunting", *Evolution and Human Behavior*", 23: 407-436.

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

Class attendance is required, as is class participation in discussions. These discussions should be fun and engaging, and they often are because your interpretations of the readings provoke lively debates.

If you are a student who has difficulty attending classes every week, and/or difficulty completing readings before class, this is not a good fit for you and I strongly urge you to find an alternative class.

Please do not use any electronic devices in class. Convincing experimental research demonstrates that hand written class notes are a far more effective way to process information and better allow for engagement in the discussions of the moment, which are central to this class.

Note that this course subscribes to the HSS guidelines on plagiarism, which are spelled out at the following site: <https://www.hss.caltech.edu/academics/avoiding-plagiarism>.

EVALUATION OF STUDENTS

This class may only be taken for a letter grade, and it is not possible to change to pass/fail later in the term for any reason. Your grade will be calculated as follows:

- 25%: Very short quizzes (5 minutes, 1 question) on the class readings. Your worst quiz score will be dropped, but note that there are no excused absences. If you miss more than 1, put extra effort on the exams to compensate.
- 35%: First exam (covers section 1 of the course)
- 40%: Second exam (covers section 2 of the course, but will assume knowledge of key terminology and concepts from section 1)

There will be two take-home essay exams that cover class lectures, discussions, and readings.

The key to benefitting from and succeeding in this class is to debate the readings in class, take thorough class notes, and ask questions in class to clarify anything you do not understand.

EXAM POLICY

Exams cannot be rescheduled, so please check that you can work this schedule around your other demands this term. I regret that I can make no exceptions regarding late exams.

To prepare for exams, you are advised to thoroughly review all of your class notes and readings carefully before beginning an exam. Be sure to master key terminology and theoretical arguments. During the exams you will not be allowed to use any materials whatsoever—no class notes, no readings, and no internet. No cooperation or collaboration of any sort with other students will be allowed from the time you or your colleagues have opened the exams until they are returned. Each student will work completely independently on their essay responses. Discussion, collaboration, and review of class notes with fellow students prior to any of you seeing the exam questions is of course encouraged.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Section 1: Introduction to Anthropology and the Diversity of Human Social, Cultural, and Political Systems

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS TO BE COMPLETED
TU Jan 7	INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE	
TH Jan 9	THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE AND CULTURE	Henrich, Heine and Norenzayan
TU Jan 14	CULTURAL EVOLUTION AND LANGUAGE	Alvard; Deutscher
TH Jan 16	FORAGING	Wiessner; Blurton Jones
TU Jan 21	HORTICULTURE, PASTORALISM, AND INTENSIVE AGRICULTURE	Lansing and Miller Begin Bowen
TH Jan 23	ORMA PASTORALISTS—SLIDES	Continue Bowen
TU Jan 28	POLITICAL SYSTEMS AND THE ORIGIN OF THE STATE	Continue Bowen
TH Jan 30	DISCUSSION OF <u>RETURN TO LAUGHTER</u>	Finish Bowen
SAT Feb 1	FIRST EXAM (COVERING SECTION 1 MATERIAL) IS DISTRIBUTED IN CLASS FIRST EXAM DUE BY <u>NOON SATURDAY</u> (email to: jensming@hss.caltech.edu) Look for email confirmation that I received it.	

Section 2: Specialized Topics within Cultural Anthropology

TU Feb 4	KINSHIP, MARRIAGE AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION (1) (FIRST EXAM RETURNED IN CLASS AND DISCUSSED)	No reading
TH Feb 6	KINSHIP, MARRIAGE AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION (2)	Mackie (Discuss next class)
TU Feb 11	KINSHIP, MARRIAGE AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION (3) Note: We will discuss both Mackie and Efferson today.	Efferson
TH Feb 13	CROSS-CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY GENDER	Schulz et al; Nisbett and Cohen Chapter 4
TU Feb 18	RELIGION AND WITCHCRAFT	Norenzayan and Shariff
TH Feb 20	ETHNICITY, RACE, ASSIMILATION AND TRIBALISM (1)	Fershtman and Gneezy
TU Feb 25	ETHNICITY, RACE, ASSIMILATION AND TRIBALISM (2)	Fukuyama

TH Feb 27	ECONOMIC ANTHROPOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT: RANDOM CONTROLLED TRIALS	Banerjee <i>et al.</i> (2015)
TU Mar 3	CASE STUDY: CORRUPTION CASE STUDY: FAIRNESS IN CROSS-CULTURAL EXPERIMENTS	Ensminger and Leder-Luis Henrich and Ensminger
TH Mar 5	CHANGING SOCIAL NORMS	Tankard and Paluck 2017; Paluck, Shepherd, and Aronow 2016
TU Mar 10	CONCLUSIONS	La Ferrara, Chong and Duryea
	SECOND EXAM (COVERING SECTION 2 MATERIAL) IS DISTRIBUTED IN CLASS	
MON Mar 16	SECOND EXAM DUE BY <u>5PM MONDAY MAR 16TH</u> (email to: jensming@hss.caltech.edu) Look for email confirmation that I received it.	