Description: This course is designed to introduce students to the breadth and depth of anthropological inquiry into the meaning(s) of being human in the contemporary world. No prior experience in anthropology is assumed. The goals of the class are two-fold: to illuminate important contributions anthropologists past and present have made to the understanding of human cultures and societies and to give students some hands-on experience in the practices of research, reading and writing that shape anthropology’s characteristic textual product: the ethnography. We will read recent and historically important works on a broad selection of anthropological topics including, but not limited to, research methods and ethics; the culture concept; race and ethnicity; sexuality and gender; and kinship and the family. We will address key moments in the history of the field and conclude by assessing anthropology’s ability to contribute to understandings of today’s globalizing world. Ethnographic films and other video presentations will supplement lecture and discussion of case studies.

Books (Available for purchase at College Bookstore):

REQUIRED (4):

Anthropology 113, Fall 2011
INTRODUCTION TO SOCIO-CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY
Wednesdays and Fridays 1-2:15pm, SCCT G027

Instructor: Chris Vasantkumar, 244 KJ, cvasantk@hamilton.edu,
Office Hours: Wednesdays and Fridays 3:00-4:30 and by appointment
**Textbook:**  C. Kottak, *Mirror for Humanity* (7th edition, 2009, NB: older editions may also be acceptable, check with me before ordering).

**Other Key Texts:**

**RECOMMENDED:**

Other readings will be made available on-line via Blackboard/Electronic Reserve.

**Expectations and Requirements:**

1. **Show up.** Attendance at all class meetings is required. After the first few sessions, I will not be taking roll, but there will be periodic unannounced pop quizzes to gauge attendance. These quizzes will be part of your participation grade. No make-ups will be allowed. If you must miss a class meeting it is your responsibility to provide me with documentation of an unavoidable absence ahead of time. Students who have more than 3 unexcused absences from class will have their grade negatively impacted.

2. **Be prepared and engaged.** Complete assigned reading ahead of time and devote your full attention to class proceedings (i.e. be caffeinated if necessary). Also, please silence all cell phone ringers. Vibrate is fine. I reserve the right to mark you down if you appear consistently unengaged.

3. **Don’t Cheat:**

**Cheating** is defined as fraud, deceit, or dishonesty in an academic assignment, or using or attempting to use materials, or assisting others in using materials that are prohibited or inappropriate in the context of the academic assignment in question.

**Plagiarism** is defined as use of intellectual material produced by another person without acknowledging its source, for example:

- Wholesale copying of passages from works of others into your homework, essay, term paper, or dissertation without acknowledgment.
- Using the views, opinions, or insights of another without acknowledgment.
- Paraphrasing another person’s characteristic or original phraseology, metaphor, or other literary device without acknowledgment.

Y’all have an **HONOR CODE** here and I expect you to follow it
4. Complete all assignments on time. I will NOT accept late work no matter how much I might wish to. I will happily accept early work.

Grading and Assessments
Your grade in this class will be based on the following ingredients:

1. Attendance (measured by pop quizzes): 10%
2. Response Papers (3 papers @ 5% each =) 15%
3. Observation Assignment 10%
4. Halloween Fieldwork Assignment 20%
5. In-class Midterm Exam 20%
6. Final Paper (6-8 Pages) 25%

Important Dates:
- September 7: Observation Assignment Handed Out
- September 19 (MONDAY): Observation Assignment Due
- September 23: CLASS IN SCCT 3021
- October 7: Review for Midterm
- October 12: In-class Midterm
- October 13-16: FALL BREAK
- October 19: Fieldwork Assignment Handed Out
- November 7 (MONDAY): Fieldwork Assignment Due
- November 17-19: AAA Meetings in Montreal; No Class.
- November 19-27: THANKSGIVING BREAK
- November 30: CV in France; No Class
- December 2: CV in France; No Class
- December 14 (MONDAY): Final Paper Due

The Response Papers: You will be expected to submit three (3) Response Papers over the course of the semester. The class will be divided alphabetically by last name into three reading groups. These are listed in the course schedule below as RG I, RG II and RG III.

You will be assigned a reading group the first week of classes. Due dates for each group’s responses are as follows:

Reading Group I: 9/8, 9/29, 11/3
Reading Group II: 9/15, 10/20, 11/10
Reading Group III: 9/22, 10/27, 12/8

Please post your responses to the class Blackboard Discussion Group (I will send an email to let you when this is up and running). The deadline is 9pm (11pm on movie nights), but the earlier you post them, the better.

The Response Papers consist of two parts:
First, a section comprised of a sentence or two on each of these 6 topics:

1. The main argument of the reading(s)/film(s) in question (What is the author saying?)
2. The impact or importance of this argument (Why should we care?)
3. The relationship of this piece to other readings for the week or class as a whole (How does it fit?)
4. What quotation (or scene/moment) from this piece sums up its contribution/impact most succinctly? (Give us the quote and tell us where it’s from)
5. How do you feel about this reading/film (Was it compelling? Was it intelligible? Couldn’t keep your eyes open?)
6. Propose two thoughtful discussion questions to be covered in class.

And second, a 1-2 page written response that incorporates some form of critical reflection upon (not just summary of) the week’s readings or films. There are several ways to approach this task: raise questions prompted by the readings or lectures, identify especially difficult or generative passages, respond to specific questions that I may give you ahead of time, relate the readings to what you observe around you, link the readings to something happening in the real world, struggle with a particular concept or respond personally. You should treat these as mini-essays. Feel free to be creative, but please organize your arguments carefully and base your response on course materials.

Sharing your reading notes with your classmates will foster engagement between students and help us all to draw connections between the readings, the lectures and the real world. Submitting your notes on Thursday evening will allow us to read your notes before class meets the next afternoon. I expect you to have read your classmates notes before you come to class.

Gold Star for the Day:
Based on entirely subjective criteria, the gold star system is my way of rewarding contributions that go above and beyond the usual. Especially thoughtful, creative or well argued work may be awarded a gold star. While reading responses and asking good questions in class are the usual avenues for getting gold stars, course-related articles or links posted to Blackboard may also be eligible. There is no limit to the number of possible winners per week. Rewards are on the following basis (stars are cumulative; i.e. they don’t go away after you use them):

3 Gold Stars: Drop lowest Response Paper grade
6 Gold Stars: 2 day extension on project of your choice
9 Gold Stars: +3 overall extra credit or 1 excused absence from class.

COURSE PLAN:
Week 1
F 8/26 Introduction and Logistics

Week 2
W 8/31 What is Anthropology Anyway?
1492, Participant-Observation, The Ethnography
2. Text Ch. 1
Rec. Erickson and Murphy (E&M) 21-40.
R 9/1 Film: “Tales from the Jungle,” 7pm SCCT G041

F 9/2 Fieldwork I

Arrival Stories; Myths, Practices, Histories; The Ethnographer’s Magic

2. F. Merlan, Caging the Rainbow, 1-47.
Rec. E&M 41-57, 90-92, 100-111.

Week 3

W 9/7 Fieldwork II

Ethics, Biases, the Unexpected, Building Rapport, Finding One’s Feet

Read: 1. Text Ch. 3, “Ethics and Methods.”
2. R. Lee, “Eating Christmas in the Kalahari” (pp. 183-188).

NOTE: Reading on E-reserve, not from NISA book

OBSERVATION ASSIGNMENT HANDED OUT IN CLASS

R 9/8 Film “Shackles of Tradition,” 7pm SCCT G041

R 9/8 11PM RG I-1 (Reading Group I, First Response Paper Due via Blackboard)

F 9/9 What is Culture? I-The Boasians

Boas, Holism, Cultural Relativism, Is Anthropology a science?

Read: 1. Text Ch. 2, “Culture.”
2. S. Silverman “The Boasians and the Invention of Cultural Anthropology” in One Discipline Four Ways.

Week 4

W 9/14 Other Schools of Thought: British Social Anthropology

Anarchy Brown, Cape Wearing, the Natural Science of Society


R 9/15 Film “Strange Beliefs,” 7pm SCCT G041

R 9/15 11PM RG II-1

F 9/16 What is Culture? II-E.E.E.-P., Geertz and Interpretive Anthropology

Webs of Significance, Historians and Scientists, Turtles all the way down
Rec.E&M, 131-141.

Week 5
MONDAY 9/19, 5PM OBSERVATION ASSIGNMENT DUE
W 9/21 What Culture Isn’t
Hot & Cold Societies, People Without History, Border-crossings

R 9/22 11PM RG III-1

F 9/23 Kinship and the Family ¡CLASS IN SCCT 3021 TODAY!
In-laws and Out-laws, “What’s Love got to do with It?”
Read: 1. Text Ch.7, “Families, Kinship and Marriage.”
2. D Schneider, American Kinship, selections.
3. Shostak, Nisa, Chs. 5,6,7

Week 6
W 9/28 Kinship and Ideas of Biological Relatedness
The Nurture of Nature, The Natural as Cultural, “My Uncle is my Father?!”

R 9/29 9PM RG I-2

F 9/30 Belonging and Exclusion I (Race)
Imagining Boundaries of Blood; Race beyond Skin Color
Read: 1. Text. Ch. 11, “Ethnicity and Race.”

Week 7
W 10/5 Belonging and Exclusion II (Space)
Politics and Poetics of Space, Light Side/Dark Side, Caging the Rainbow
Read: 1. Merlan, Ctr. Ch. 2,3,4.

F 10/7 REVIEW FOR MIDTERM
Week 8
W10/12 MIDTERM
F 10/14 FALL BREAK; NO CLASS

Week 9
W 10/19 Gender
_bodies and roles, definitions and practices_

Read: 1. Text. Ch. 8, “Gender.”
2. K. Hansen, *Salaula*, Ch. 9 “Clothing Gender and Power.”
3. Shostak, *Nisa* Ch. 4,8,9,11,12.
FIELDWORK ASSIGNMENT HANDED OUT IN CLASS

R 10/20 Movie: “Sex: Unknown,” 7pm SCCT G041
_R 10/20 11PM RG II-2_

F 10/21 Sex
_looking natural, surgical interventions, bodily ambiguity_


Week 10
W 10/26 Anthropological Approaches to Religion and Secularism
_magic, science, religion, spirits in a material world, the problem of belief_

Read: 1. Text. Ch. 9, “Religion.”

_R 10/27 9PM RG III-2_

F 10/28 Halloween: Ritual and Folklore
_witchcraft, sorcery, pumpkins_

Week 11
W 11/2 Understanding Change

 *Avoiding the pitfalls of romanticism and whiggishness*

 **Read:**
2. Merlan, *CtR*, Ch. 6, 7.

R 11/3 Film: “Starting Fire With Gunpowder,” 7pm SCCT G041

**R 11/3 11PM RG I-3**

F 11/4 Authenticity and Essentialism

 *Do Cultures Vanish? Why do we often act as if they do?*

 **Read:**
1. J. Clifford, “The Pure Products Go Crazy”
3. Text. Ch. 13 “Global Issues Today”

Week 12

**MONDAY 11/7, 5PM FIELDWORK ASSIGNMENT DUE**

W 11/9 A World in Motion I

 *Development and the Fourth World*

 **Read:**
   *Rec. E&M, 145-171*

R 11/10 Film: “!Nai,” 7pm SCCT G041

**R 11/10 11PM RG II-3**

F 11/11 A World in Motion II

 *Globalization, Mobility, Migration*

 **Read:**
1. Text. Ch. 10 “The World System and Colonialism.”
2. Appadurai “Difference and Disjuncture in the Global Cultural Economy”

Week 13

W 11/16 Economic Anthropology I

 *Beyond the Market, Cultural Topographies of Wealth*

 **Read:**
1. Text. Ch. 5, “Making a Living.”

F 11/18 CV in Montreal; **MOVIE TBD** [“Mardi Gras: Made in China”]
**Week 14**
W 11/30 CV in France; NO CLASS.
F 12/2 CV in France; NO CLASS.

**Week 15**
W 12/7 Economic Anthropology II
*Friction in the Commodity Chain, Raw Fish on the Fly*

**Read:**

Recommended: Bestor, “Sushi Goes Global.”

**R 12/8 9PM, RG III-3**

F 12/9  Power, Positionality, Partiality: Up (to) the Anthropologist?
*Anthropology as Practice of Writing, Politics of Representation, Studying Up*

**Read:**

**Wednesday December 14, 2011, 11:59PM FINAL PAPER DUE**