

# ANT 252

## Cultural Anthropology

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### General Description

#### Course Objectives

Six fundamental objectives underlie our work in this course:

- to become acquainted with the diversity of peoples, places, and cultures that make up our global village
- to learn about our own sociocultural system by studying other sociocultural systems
- to learn some of the methods and theories anthropologists have developed for learning about and explaining the hows and whys of human behavior
- to improve your analytic and research skills
- to become familiar with some applied, practical anthropological perspectives and skills
- **to have some fun while we are doing the above.**

#### Organization of the Course

Cultural anthropology studies the social and cultural behavior of contemporary societies and cultures all over the world, and it is comparative and broad in scope. Cross-cultural comparison lies at the heart of its scientific methodology. This will be reflected in the reading material assigned for this course.

The organization of the course is similar to that in most anthropology departments within American universities. Not only will the course focus on the lifeways of small, non-industrialized societies, but it will also examine intensively the patterns of behavior of our own complex society. In this way, we can better understand how humans come to be alike in so many ways and yet also dissimilar in many respects. The course also draws upon a vast amount of information learned

from the study of a large number of societies. Anthropology is a current, vital, and relevant field that will be valuable to those who study it seriously. At the same time, it is a very interesting field because of cross-cultural study. Anthropologists are justifiably famous for discovering interesting types of behaviors all over the globe. This course makes those studies relevant to you personally. The additional readings (besides the main textbook) attempt to give you some very interesting examples of the diversity of human behavior and why that diversity is important to understand and maintain.

## **Text and Other Materials**

The following materials are required for the course:

- Ferraro, Gary, *Cultural Anthropology—An Applied Perspective*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition (2003). This is the main textbook for the course.
- Chagnon, Napoleon, *Yanomamo*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition (1997)
- Barnes, Virginia Lee, and Janice Boddy, *Aman: The Story of a Somali Girl* (1994).
- Course pack for ANT 252: Cultural Anthropology. This is a collection of readings to be assigned throughout the course.

You may purchase the text and materials from the Higher Grounds bookstore at the Friday Center using the book order form in this manual, or online at <https://www-s3.ais.unc.edu/HigherGrounds/>. You may also use inter-library loan to borrow books from the North Carolina State University library, and as a student enrolled in this course you have borrowing privileges at a number of libraries in the University of North Carolina system. In this course, the texts generally will be referred to by the last name of the author, and the readings in the course pack will be referred to by author and title.

This material was selected to provide information about a broad diversity of societies and cultures—from small-scale to large-scale, rural to urban, north to south, and east to west. The required supplementary readings are assigned not only because they are pertinent illustrations of material in Ferraro, but also because they represent examples of anthropological research, and are interesting readings in themselves. You are not

expected to have a detailed knowledge of the supplementary books, except for basic concepts derived from Ferraro. It is essential, however, that you have an intensive exposure to whole works that exemplify the type of research and theory that occupy cultural anthropologists

*Tips for your reading*

When they are assigned, read through the required materials the first time for enjoyment. If you feel that you need to read anything a second time, do so. Your first read-through will give a better framework from which to judge those aspects of the book on which you will want to concentrate. The scope and meaning of anthropology is best conveyed by reading about many different societies. The nature of the material is quite different from that found in math, chemistry, or accounting texts; therefore, you need to adjust your expectations accordingly. Even the principal text, Ferraro's *Cultural Anthropology—An Applied Perspective*, has many extended examples that should make your reading more enjoyable, and probably more relaxed.

In selecting the readings for the course, we looked for works that are not only educational and interesting but also readable, enjoyable, and as inexpensive as possible. We also wanted to find examples of anthropological studies in societies that were remote and exotic, as well as some that were close and familiar. Anthropology is a comparative discipline that assumes that by studying radically different societies, we can gain a better understanding of our own society. We believe that the text and supplemental readings for the course will enable you to better understand the nature of the humanity we share with our fellow men and women, neighbors and strangers.

*Yanomamo* is a book that gives an example of what anthropology has traditionally been about. For a period of well over twenty years, Chagnon studied a remote Amazonian society. Not only does this book exemplify fieldwork undertaken in the traditional scientific approach in anthropology, but it also demonstrates that knowledge gained from the study of distant and different societies and people provides us with rich lessons for better understanding of our own society. *Aman* is the vivid personal narrative of a Somali girl's life as told to an anthropologist. This collaborative work

represents the humanistic, rather than scientific, tradition in anthropology. The course pack readings help provide variety and breadth. They introduce the works of anthropologists employing different approaches in describing, analyzing, or interpreting aspects of the human experience in a wide spectrum of societies.

We hope that you will enjoy reading the material as much as we have and will share, by the end of the course at least, the enthusiasm we have in discovering ourselves and others through the work of anthropologists. Anthropology has something to offer all who have the desire to unlock their minds and open them to the wonderment of our human heritage.

*Suggestions for study*

Each lesson has a set of notes that introduces you to the content of the lesson. Read these notes before you begin the text readings so you can acquire some knowledge of what is to come and what to be watching for. Once you have completed the text readings, return again to the notes and reread them. This practice will help you to organize your ideas and summarize what you have learned from the readings.

If you find material in the notes or in the readings that you cannot understand or if you wish to learn of additional readings on any topic or culture, please let your instructor know. The instructor will be glad to respond to any inquiries you might have. The *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* is a very helpful resource and it can be found in many major libraries. Do not hesitate to use a dictionary for any unfamiliar vocabulary.

Try to be as concise and accurate as possible when completing the essays in your written assignments. The answers need not be long—usually up to one page—but they should adequately cover the material. Use your own words in answering and **avoid repeating material from the texts**. Try to be as creative as possible. If you have any questions about the written assignments, write a note and send it along with the answers, or send a note to your instructor at any time.

**Grading and**

Seventy-five percent of your grade will be from the average of the grades you receive on the written assignments. A numerical

**Final Exam**

grade will be given to the written assignments and to the final exam.

The final exam will consist of seventy-five multiple-choice questions and five essay questions. It will cover all of the readings and other material in the course. Each multiple-choice question will be worth one point and each essay question will be worth five points. The exam itself will count at least 25 percent of your final grade. However, in order to pass the course, **you must pass the final exam.**

Your final grade will be converted to a letter grade according to the following scale:

90 or higher.....	A
80–89.....	B
70–79.....	C
60–69.....	D
Below 60.....	F

Once again, if you have any questions about the foregoing, or any part of the course, do not hesitate to let your instructor know.