

**Introduction to Cultural Anthropology**  
ANTH S110 01, Yale University Summer Session B  
Summer 2017

Instructor: Hatice Nilay Erten  
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Office Hours: By appointment

Class Meetings: MWF 3.30-5.45  
Location: TBA

### **Course Description**

This course provides an introduction to the key themes, theories, and practices of cultural anthropology. Students will gain new analytical and methodological tools to critically consider cultural difference, social organization and social change. Topics include: Anthropological approaches to culture and society; ethnographic research methods and ethics; symbols, rituals and kinship; gender, class and race; health, illness, medicine and global connections.

### **Course Assignments and Grades**

25% Participation  
25% Discussion Questions  
25% Short Writing Assignments  
25% Final Project

#### *Class Participation*

I expect you to come to all class meetings. 25% of your grade is derived from class participation. This also requires informed participation: Please complete the required readings ahead of time and be prepared to raise questions, exchange ideas and fully participate in discussions. It's okay if you disagree with something from the readings, or with others' comments during discussion—understanding different interpretations is part of what anthropology is about. Different viewpoints and interpretations will help us think through our own opinions, and they are essential for an exciting and rewarding environment. Respectful disagreement can be productive for thinking through difficult issues, and this class is a safe space for sharing divergent viewpoints. Don't be afraid to talk, and always be respectful of others.

#### *Discussion Questions*

On everyday our class meets, students will post an open-ended discussion question about each article to open up a discussion on a concept or a phenomenon or to elaborate the discussions on readings. Students will post these questions to the forum on the course website by 12.00 noon. We will talk about what makes a good discussion question on the first day of class. I will draw on these questions in leading each day's discussion, and I may call on students to

explain or elaborate on their questions with the group. Please take time to think about the questions your classmates posted before class, and be prepared to engage in an active discussion about any and all questions submitted. These questions will be graded as timely good-faith efforts and are worth 25% of the final grade. Questions posted after 12:00 noon will not receive credit.

### *Short Writing Assignments and Final Ethnographic Project*

Over the course of the term, each student will work on a project of anthropological observation, participation, and analysis. Each student will be responsible for finding a research site and conducting short (approx. 30 minute) weekly fieldwork sessions in that location. This project will be carried out in stages, and students will share their research experiences with one another as they progress. The purpose of this project is to gain firsthand experience with some of the methodological challenges, ethical concerns, and analytical possibilities of conducting anthropological fieldwork. Students will complete short 1-2 pages (no more than 2 double-spaced pages) written assignments on a weekly basis drawing on data they gather using a range of ethnographic research techniques. The last short writing assignment is a rough draft of the final essay (see below for details). All short writing assignments are due each Sunday by 12:00 noon, and will be submitted electronically to the Drop Box on the course site on Canvas. They must follow the formatting instructions described below under “Course Policies.”

For the final ethnographic project, students will draw from the theoretical approaches, concepts, and themes highlighted in course lectures and readings to analyze the ethnographic material they collected for their short writing assignments. A detailed rubric for the final essays will be handed out and discussed in class before rough drafts are due. I will provide feedback on each student’s rough draft, and improvement will be strongly considered when calculating grades. Final essays will be 8-10 double-spaced pages, and must follow the formatting instructions described under “Course Policies.” **Printed hard copies of final essays are due in class on August 4.**

### **Course Policies**

Regular attendance is expected and absences must be accompanied with a valid excuse. Missing classes will significantly affect your overall grade.

Please come to class on time and do not leave early. Late arrivals and early departures are disrupting.

**Please note that the use of laptops, electronic tablets, phones, or other devices is NOT permitted during class.** It is important that we focus on our collective engagement without interruptions or distractions. To that end, I ask that students print all assigned readings before class, and bring a notebook and a pen

for taking notes. If you have a special circumstance that makes your laptop necessary for learning, please request an appointment to inform me about it.

Timely completion of assignments is important. Please remember, deadlines are deadlines. In accordance with Yale College policy, extensions will not be granted except under proven emergency conditions. Unexcused late work will be marked down by 1/3 letter grade for every day that it is late. (Example: a “B” paper becomes a “B-” paper if it is one day late, a “C+” if it is two days late, etc.)

Final course grades will be calculated as a percentage based on the ratio of total points earned to total points possible. Letter grades will be assigned as follows: A = 94-100; A- = 90-93; B+ = 87-89; B- = 80-83; C+ = 77-79; C = 76-73; C- = 72-70; D+ 69-68; D = 67-65; D- = 64-63.

All assignments should be written in clear, direct prose. They should be double-spaced with 12-point font and standard margins. Each page should include a header or footer with the student’s name and the page number. Papers should not exceed the assigned page count. Assignments submitted electronically should always be saved as Microsoft Word documents with standardized filenames according to the following format: Yourlastname.Assignment#.doc (For instance, “Erten.Assignment1.doc”)

Please follow the rules of academic honesty; do not plagiarize and cite correctly! If you have questions about how to use or cite material, please discuss them with me or refer to <http://yalecollege.yale.edu/content/cheating-plagiarism-and-documentation>.

### **Course Materials**

All assigned readings will be posted as PDFs to the Resources tab on the course site on Canvas. Since electronic devices are not allowed in class, students will be expected to print the readings before class. Printing services are available at numerous Yale libraries. Please visit [web.library.yale.edu/help/scanning-printing-copying](http://web.library.yale.edu/help/scanning-printing-copying) or ask a librarian for more information.

### **Office Hours and Consultations**

I am always happy to talk with you about the course, either via email or in person. Please make appointments to meet with me, and bring your ideas, questions, doubts, and/or rough drafts.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

## **Course Outline**

### **Monday July 3: Introduction.**

- No readings due.
- Film: BabaKiueria (28 mins.)

### **Wednesday, July 5: This Thing Called Culture**

- Miner, Horace. 1956. "Body Ritual Among the Nacirema." *American Anthropologist* 58:503-7.
- Bohannan, Laura. 1966. "Shakespeare in the Bush." *Natural History* 75: 28-33.
- Neale Hurston, Zola. 1990 [1935]. "Introduction" & "Chapter One." In *Mules and Men*. New York: Harper Perennial: 1-18.

### **Friday, July 7: Observing and Studying Culture: Fieldwork and Anthropology**

- "Arrival Stories" Selected excerpts from ethnographies by Theodore Bestor, Philippe Bourgois, Clifford Geertz, João Biehl, E.E. Evans-Pritchard, Bronislaw Malinowski, Laura Nader.
- Zheng, Tiantian. 2009. Introduction. In *Red Lights: The Lives of Sex Workers in Postsocialist China*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press:1-34.
- De León, Jason. 2015. "Documenting the Undocumented." In *The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail*. Oakland: University of California Press. Pp. 11-14.

### **Sunday, July 9: Assignment Due**

- Ethnographic Fieldwork Part 1: Research Site

### **Monday, July 10: Critical Engagements with Culture: Anthropology and Colonialism**

- Asad, Talal. 1985. Introduction. In *Anthropology and The Colonial Encounter*. London: Ithaca Press: 9-19.
- Gupta, Akhil., James Ferguson. 1992. Beyond "culture": Space, identity, and the politics of difference. *Cultural anthropology*, 7(1), 6-23.
- Foucault, Michel. 1990 [1978]. "Method." In *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, Volume one. New York: Vintage Books, pp. 92-102.

### **Wednesday, July 12: Symbols and Cultural Categories**

- Douglas, Mary. 2010 [1966]. "Introduction" and "Secular Defilement." In *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. New York: Routledge: 1-7 and 36-50.
- Ortner, Sherry. 1973. "On Key Symbols." *American Anthropologist* 75(5): 1338-1346.

### **Friday, July 14: The Ritual Process**

- Turner, Victor. 1967. "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period." In *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press: 93- 111.
- Davis-Floyd, Robbie. 2004. "One Year: The Stages of Pregnancy/Childbirth Rite of Passage", In *Birth as an American rite of passage: With a new preface*. University of California Press: 22-41.
- Beckham, Sue Bridwell. 2004, "The American Front Porch: Women's Liminal Space1." *Investigating Culture: An Experiential Introduction to Anthropology*: 64-73.

### **Sunday, July 16: Assignment Due**

- Ethnographic Fieldwork Part 2: Observation Fieldnotes

### **Monday, July 17: Kinship, Gift-Giving and Social Bonds**

- Marcel Mauss. 1967[1925]. Excerpts from *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*. New York: Norton, pp. 1-16, 37-41.
- Stack, Carol. 1975. "Swapping" and "Personal Kindreds." In *All Our Kin: Strategies for Survival in a Black Community*. New York: Harper & Row, pp. 32-61.
- Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 1989. Death Without Weeping: Has poverty ravaged mother love in the shantytowns of Brazil? *Natural History* 98: 8-16.

### **Wednesday July 19: Gender and Sexuality: Femininity and Masculinity**

- Martin, Emily. 1991. *The Egg and the Sperm: How science has constructed a romance based on stereotypes*.pp: 485-501.
- Fausto-Sterling, Ann. 1993. "The Five Sexes: Why Male and Female Are Not Enough," *The Sciences*: 20-24.
- Açıksöz, Salih. Can., 2012. Sacrificial limbs of sovereignty: disabled veterans, masculinity, and nationalist politics in Turkey. *Medical anthropology*

quarterly, 26(1), pp.4-25.

### **Friday July 21: At the Intersections: Race, Class, Gender, Ethnicity**

- Goldstein, Donna, 2013. "Color-Blind Erotic Democracies, Black Consciousness Politics, and the Black Cinderellas of Felicidade Eterna" in *Laughter Out of Place: Race, Class, Violence, and Sexuality in a Rio shantytown*. Univ of California Press: 102-134.
- Chin, Elizabeth. 1999. Ethnically correct dolls: toying with the race industry. *American Anthropologist*, 101(2), 305-321.
- Abu-Lughod, Lila. 2002. Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? *Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others*. *American Anthropologist* 104 (3):783-790.

### **Sunday, July 23: Assignment Due**

- Ethnographic Fieldwork Part 3: Participant Observation or Interview

### **Monday July 24: Structural Violence and Social Suffering**

- Farmer, Paul. 1996. On Suffering and Structural Violence: A View from Below. *Daedalus*,125(1), 261-283.
- Bourgois, Philippe I., and Jeffrey Schonberg. 2009. "Introduction" and "Chapter 1" in *Righteous Dopefiend*, Univ of California Press: 1-44.

### **Wednesday July 26: Health, Illness and (Bio)medicine**

- Joralemon, D. 2006. "What's So Cultural about Disease?" in *Exploring Medical Anthropology*. Pp. 1-15.
- Gordon, Deborah R. 1988. "Tenacious Assumptions in Western Medicine." In *Biomedicine Examined*, Margaret Lock and Deborah R. Gordon, eds. Pp. 19-43.
- Lock, Margaret. 2003. "Medicalization and the Naturalization of Social Control." In Ember, Carol R., and Marvin Ember, eds., *Encyclopedia of Medical Anthropology*. vol. 1, *Health and Illness in the World's Cultures*, pp. 116-125.
- Lock, Margaret and Patricia Kaufert. 2001. "Menopause, Local Biologies, and Cultures of Aging." *American Journal of Human Biology* 13: 494-504.

### **Friday July 28: Neoliberalism, The State and Citizenship**

- Greenhouse, Carol J.,2012. ed. "Introduction" in *Ethnographies of Neoliberalism*. University of Pennsylvania Press: 1-12

- Goldstein, D.M., 2005. Flexible justice: neoliberal violence and 'self-help' security in Bolivia. *Critique of Anthropology*, 25(4), pp.389-411.
- Fisher, J. A. 2007. Coming Soon to a Physician Near You: Medical Neoliberalism and Pharmaceutical Clinical Trials. *Harvard Health Policy Review* 8(1), 61–70.
- Rose, Nicolas. and Novas, Carlos. 2007. Selections from "Biological Citizenship", in *Global Assemblages: Technology, Politics, and Ethics as Anthropological Problems* (eds A. Ong and S. J. Collier), Blackwell Publishing.

### **Sunday, July 30: Assignment Due**

- Ethnographic Fieldwork Part 4: Rough Draft of Ethnographic Essay

### **Monday July 31: Anthropology Goes to Wall Street**

- Ho, Karen. 2009. Ch. 1: "Biographies of Hegemony: The Culture of Smartness and the Recruitment and Construction of Investment Bankers." In *Liquidated: Ethnography of Wall Street*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 39-72.

### **Wednesday August 2: Connections between the Local and the Global**

- Wolf, Eric. 2010 [1982]. "Introduction," In *Europe and the People Without History*. Berkeley, University of California Press, pp. 3-23.
- Collins, Jane. 2003. "Tracing the Threads of a Global Industry" and "Local Labor and Global Capital." In *Threads: Gender, Labor, and Power in the Global Apparel Industry*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 1-26 and 150-182.

Film Screening (evening): *The Last Train Home*, 82 minutes. 2010. Director: Lixin Fan

### **Friday August 4: Conclusion: Public Anthropology, Ethics and Ends of Research**

- Abadie, Roberto. 2011. "Organs Watch: Possibilities and Perils for Public Anthropology." *American Anthropologist* 113 (1): 146-147
- Gomberg-Muñoz, Ruth. 2013. "2012 Public Anthropology Year in Review: Actually, Rick, Florida Could Use a Few More Anthropologists." *American Anthropologist* 115(2): 286-296.
- Maximilian Forte, 2011. "The Human Terrain System and Anthropology." *American Anthropologist* 113(1): 149–53.