

Introduction to Anthropology
Tuesday and Thursdays 1:30-4:30pm
Location: Sachem 110

Instructor: Faith Macharia

Email: Faith.macharia@yale.edu

Office Hours: Wednesday 1:00pm-4:00pm (and by appointment)

Course Description:

What is anthropology? What do anthropologists do? And how can anthropology help us understand our everyday life? This course introduces key anthropological concepts and theories that explore the complex interactions between individuals, social groups, structures, objects and patterns. Through a focus on social cultural specificity, students will develop critical and analytical tools to understand how people create meaning in everyday life. Class material and assignments will familiarize students with ethnographic fieldwork methods and various domains of social and cultural anthropology including, social organization, economic and social exchanges, material culture, political systems, the body and place.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:

1. Participation and Attendance (20%)

Students should come prepared to actively participate in small group and whole class discussions. Active participation is a demonstration of your grasp of the material and engagement with your classmates. Students are required to be respectful of one another and to thoughtfully respond and give attention to each speaker. Class attendance is mandatory.

2. Observation Assignment 15%

For this activity, students will: (1) select a public space on or close to campus; 2) spend ½ hour observing this environment; 3) write down your observations (Additional details will be posted on the Course website)

3. Object Analysis (25%)

This assignment requires you to explore material culture by analyzing an object of interest that you have physical access to. This analysis will develop your observational, analytical and interpretive skills in identifying and describing an object's form, function and interpretation. By "reading" objects as "text" you will offer interpretations of their sociocultural meanings in their use, value or consumption. Instructions: Choose an object of interest that you have physical access to. Describe its form, context, function and interpretation. Include images or illustrations if possible and write a 750-word analysis.

4. Reading Reflections (40%)

Students will submit two reflections on the texts and discussions from the week (due Friday after the course meets by 5pm). These reflections should include key ideas or themes emerging from the readings and discussion, connections to previous materials, and questions or ideas the readings provoked.

Academic Integrity: Please refer to Yale’s policies on academic honesty and integrity found here, <https://ctl.yale.edu/writing/using-sources/understanding-and-avoiding-plagiarism/what-plagiarism>. Cheating and plagiarism, including inserting AI generated material without proper attribution will be considered a breach of academic integrity. The goal of this class is to introduce you to anthropological concepts and get you to engage with the process of learning new information and methods to develop your critical thinking and writing skills.

Late Assignments: Please make every effort to turn work in on time. That said, if you are struggling, let me know ahead of time so we can make alternative arrangements or find you the support that you need.

Office Hours: You are welcome and encouraged to come to office hours. You are also welcome to contact me via email if you have any questions, feedback on the class or conversations about issues of interests. I will make every effort to respond to emails received on Monday-Friday within 24 hours.

Accessibility and accommodations: Please reach out if you have a documented disability that may affect your academic experience. The university’s Resource Office on Disabilities facilitates accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Beyond the schools resources, I invite you to contact me about your learning needs, and if you feel that you would benefit from learning support for other reasons or concerns that make learning difficult.

Course Schedule:

Week 1: Introduction

July 1st: What is Anthropology?

Watch Tracy Heather Strain, Zora Neale Hurston: Claiming a Space, 2023.

- Thomas Erikson, *Small Places, Large Issues* (1995) Chapter 1-3 “Anthropology: Comparison and Context, A Brief History of Anthropology, Fieldwork and Ethnography.”
- Carole McGranahan (2020), *Anthropology as Theoretical Story Telling*. (Introduction)

July 3rd: Ethnography and Interpretations of Culture

- Geertz, Clifford. Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese cock flight
- Geertz, Clifford. 1971. Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture. In *The Interpretation of Culture* (3-30). New York: Basic Books.
- Goffman, Erving. 1959. *The Presentation of Self*. New York: Anchor Books. (Selection: “Introduction”)

Friday, July 11th: Observation Assignment DUE

Week 2: Reflexivity, Voice and Ethics

July 8th: Point of View and Ethics

- Tami Navarro, Bianca Williams, and Attiya Ahmad, (2013), "Sitting at the Kitchen Table: Fieldnotes from Women of Color in Anthropology":
- Geertz, Clifford. (1983) "From the Native's Point of View.". 73- 93

July 10th: Voice

- Lila Abu-Lughod (1991) "Writing Against Culture"
- Zora Neale Hurston, (1928) "How it Feels to Be Colored Me."
- Kirin Narayan,(1993) "How Native Is a "Native" Anthropologist?"

Friday, July11th: Reflection 1 Due

Week 3: Human and Non-Human

July 15th: Body and Ritual

- Mary Douglas. (1966) Purity and Danger. (Introduction, Ch.1 Ritual Uncleanness, Ch.2Secular Defilement.)
- Miner, Horace. (1956) "Body Ritual Among the Nacirema." American Anthropologist 58 (3):503-507.
- Katherine Bowie. (1997) Rituals of National Loyalty: An Anthropology of the State and the Village Scout Movement. (Chapter one) "Magic and Mayhem: Of Ritual and Class," and chapter six, "From Humor to Hysteria: Turning Villagers into Subjects,"

July 17st: Nature, and the non-human

- Eduardo Kohn. (2013) How Forest Think (Introduction + Chapter 1)
- Vanessa Agard Jones, (2012) "What the Sands Remember"

Friday, July18th: Reflection 2 Due

Week 3: Structures and Agency

July 22nd: History and Power

- Scott, James. (1998) Seeing Like A State. (Introduction and Chapter 1)
- Micheal-Rolph Trouillot. (1995) Silencing the past. (Introduction)

July 24th: Capitalism and Economies

- Mark Weiner. (2013) "Consumer Culture and Participatory Democracy: The Story of
◦ Coca-Cola During World War II."
- Karen Ho, (2009) Liquidated. (Introduction and Chapter 2 "Wall Street's Orientation: Exploitation, Empowerment and the Politics of Hard Work)

Friday, July 25th: Reflection 3 Due

Week 5: Material Culture

July 29th: The Body

- Joan Entwistle. (2000) Fashion and the Fleshly body: Dress as embodied practice
- Sophie, Woodward and Tom Fisher. 2014. "Fashioning Through Materials: Material Culture, Materiality and Processes of Materialization." Critical Studies in Fashion & Beauty 5(1): 3-23
- Emma Tarlo. 1996. "Introduction." In Clothing Matters: Dress and Identity in India, 1-21. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

July 31st: Ordinary Life

- Danielle Miller. (1954) Blue Jeans: The Art of the Ordinary. (Ch. 5 Ordinary)
- Peter Stallybrass (2019). Worn Worlds
- Jason De León. 2013. "Undocumented migration, use wear, and the materiality of habitual suffering in the Sonoran Desert." Journal of Material Culture 18 (4):321-345.

Friday July 25th: Object Analysis Due + In Class Presentations