ANTH291: Culture and Mind
Tuesday/Thursday 2:30 – 3:52
SWMU 117
Spring 2013

Course description and goals

This course is an introduction to the field of psychological anthropology. Psychological anthropologists seek to understand the relation between the personal and the social. As such, the field is an interdisciplinary endeavor to uncover what is universal and particular in human behavior and social organization and to question theoretical assumptions about “culture” and “mind.” The foundational concepts, theories, and methods of psychological anthropology will be examined across a broad range of topics, including religion, childhood, labor, and mental health and illness, in settings as different as a Japanese preschool, a Brazilian favela, and Palo Alto, CA.

Course goals include: (1) to understand psychological anthropology’s core concepts and methods by engaging with course readings and films and participating in class discussions, (2) to challenge commonly-held explanations of human behavior by synthesizing course readings and relating them to your own lives, (3) to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the claims and assumptions surrounding them by debating the material’s primary claims, assumptions, and limitations, and (4) to apply anthropological theory to phenomena that you encounter in your own life through close analyses of the course readings and your research project.

Contact information
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Office hours
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1 – 2 p.m.

Readings

Readings will be discussed on the day they are assigned and should be brought to class. Most of the readings can be found in electronic format on Moodle. The reading schedule is provisional, and any changes will be announced in class and online in advance. There are also three books available for purchase in the bookstore.


Exams

The midterm will be a mix of short answer and essay questions. You will be tested for content from the lectures, readings, films, and class discussions. It is open-book.

The final will not be cumulative. It is take-home and will be due at 6:30 p.m. on May 7.

Research project

Students will conduct a series of person-centered ethnographic interviews related to course themes and write a 10-15 double-spaced page paper profiling their interviewee. Workshops will be periodically held throughout the semester. Further details will be discussed in class.

Papers should both be turned in class on the due date and submitted to Turn It In via the course Moodle site. Assignments that are turned in one day late will lose 10% of their overall score. There is an additional 5% penalty for each additional day the paper is late. No assignments will be accepted a week after the due date.

Discussant role

Students will work in pairs to lead one discussion of selected chapters from an assigned book. Teams should arrange to meet with me at least a day prior to the discussion to finalize their preparation.

PCQs

PCQ stands for Pros, Cons, and Questions. Students will post a list of three pros, cons, or questions about the readings on the course Moodle forum before noon on the day the readings are assigned. PCQs can be in any combination of pros, cons, or questions. This must be done fifteen times throughout the semester to receive full credit. PCQs about readings that one has been scheduled to lead discussion of will not count.

Although brief, PCQs should demonstrate critical thinking about the topic through providing examples, application, and connections. Those that do not will be flagged the first time and will not receive credit thereafter. Students are encouraged to read each other’s PCQs. Considered responses to them can contribute up to five points.

PCQs are designed to keep reading on track, to prepare students for discussion, and to give discussants (whether students or myself) ideas on how to best guide discussion.
Participation and professionalism

The development of critical thinking skills is one of the most tried-and-true ways to achieve the course goals, and to that end there will be multiple formats for you to demonstrate your mastery of the course material. The most important of these (in my opinion) are the seminar-style discussions we will be regularly having, and I expect you will take part in your own and each other’s intellectual advancement.

Please be conscientious of your fellow students and your instructor by avoiding all forms of electronic communication (e.g. texting, emailing, and instant messaging) during class. Other forms of disruptive behavior (e.g. consistent tardiness, talking to each other during lecture or films, etc.) will also negatively affect your participation grade.

Extra credit

There is no extra credit for this course. #YOLO.

Grading breakdown

- Midterm (20%)
- Final (20%)
- Research project (30%)
- Discussant role (5%)
- PCQs (15%)
- Participation and professionalism (10%)

Cheating and plagiarism

Integrity of scholarship is essential for an academic community. The University expects that both faculty and students will honor this principle and in so doing protect the validity of University intellectual work. For students, this means that all academic work will be done by the individual to whom it is assigned, without unauthorized aid of any kind.

Writing center

Bucknell’s writing center is an excellent resource to improve your writing. Services are free. http://www.bucknell.edu/x3990.xml

Students with disabilities

Bucknell welcomes students who have disabilities and wish to participate in the academic and professional opportunities available in the community. Students requesting accommodations and services due to disabilities should let me know within the first two weeks of class.
Schedule

1/17 Introduction

1/22 Nature vs. Nurture, or the Individual in Society

1/24 Psychoanalysis
  • Freud, parts I-IV

1/29 Psychoanalysis (continued)
  • Freud, parts V-VIII

1/31 Culture and Personality

2/5 Methods

2/7 Childhood

2/12 Childhood (continued)
  • “Japan”
  • “China”
  • “United States”

2/14 Religion
  • Luhrmann, chapters 1 and 2

2/19 Religion (continued)
• Luhrmann, chapters 3 and 4

2/21  Religion (continued)
• Luhrmann, chapters 6 and 7

2/26  Religion (continued)
Interview workshop #1
• Luhrmann, chapter 8

2/28  Midterm

3/5  Emotion

3/7  Emotion (continued)
Interview workshop #2
Guest lecture: Julia Cassaniti (Washington State University)

3/12 & 3/14  Spring break

3/19  Emotion (continued)

3/21  Emotion (continued)
Film: Disordered States

3/26  Emotion (continued)

3/28  Mental health and illness
Interview workshop #3


4/2 Mental health and illness (continued)

4/4 Mental health and illness (continued)
Film: 40 Years of Silence (dir. Robert Lemelson)

4/9 Gender

4/11 Gender (continued)

4/16 Gender (continued)
- Illouz, chapters 1 and 2

4/18 Politics
Interview workshop #4
- Illouz, chapter 4

4/23 Politics (continued)
- Illouz, chapters, 5 and 6

4/25 Presentations

4/30 Presentations