

Introduction to Anthropology

Spring 2021

Tuesday & Thursday – 8:15 to 9:30

1 credit

This course will take place online synchronously.

Sessions will be recorded and significant aspects of class will be asynchronous to ensure ease of access for everyone.

Instructor's information

Dr. Michael Polson

Email (Outlook):

Course meeting Zoom link:

Personal zoom room (this is where all office hours will take place):

Office hours:

Tuesday 1:30-2:30

Thursday: 2:30-3:30

If these times do not work, please contact me to make an appointment at another time.

More about me: www.michaelpolson.com

What is this course about?

This course will introduce students to the field of socio-cultural anthropology and the broader study of human experience. Anthropology has traditionally explored how humans make sense of and engage with their everyday worlds. In the past several decades, anthropology has developed an intensive focus on power and inequality, as the field has been called to reckon with its historical entanglement with colonial domination. This course continues in that tradition. Anthropology, at its best, upends master models of human behavior and accepted common sense. Rather, commonsense and human behavior are continually being produced and reproduced through the actions we take. The basic assumption of this course is that society, knowledge, and reality itself is produced through the struggle of people as they seek to define, understand and control the world around them.

This course is broken into several units so as to present a wide understanding of anthropology's application and purpose. We will attend to the distinctive conceptual approach of anthropology, its methods, key debates and critical insights. As we do this, we will touch on numerous topics, which are not exhaustive but simply indicative of what anthropology has to offer.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Understand the basic methods and approaches that anthropology uses to assess the world.

- Grasp and use key insights that anthropological approaches have produced.
- Practice thinking and doing anthropology through mini projects, critical analysis of a book-length ethnography, and applying anthropology to your life and the world.

This course fulfills the requirement for Social-Scientific Thought (SSRQ). It can also be credited toward fulfillment of the Anthropology major and minor.

What required texts, materials, and technologies will I need?

There are no required readings for this course. Several of the readings, however, come from the following book, which you may wish to purchase for future reference. I recommend this for anthropology majors who may want a topical reference to various anthropological fields.

Exotic No More (Second Edition): Anthropology for the Contemporary World. Ed. Jeremy MacClancy. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2019. (\$10 e-book; \$30 paperback)

I intend to put all other readings online as accessible PDFs and will try to arrange to have accessible PDFs (or ebook) from *Exotic No More* made available for course reserves.

Students should also have access to the following technologies, available from [Davidson T&I](#). Please contact them for assistance and resources to get access and training. Other platforms and programs may be used:

Zoom

Hypothes.is

Google Chrome

Google Drive (docs, spreadsheets, slides etc.)

We will determine a communication and posting forum collectively (Slack, Facebook private group, Moodle etc.)

Course format

Generally, the course will include:

- One to two course readings and/or materials per class (see below)
- synchronous sessions that consist of:
 - a brief check-in on logistical concerns
 - parking lot
 - a rotating synopsis and small group facilitated discussion from designated groups
 - large group convening
- for those not attending synchronous sessions, a period (prior to next class) to respond to reading and discussion questions/class videos.

Requirements and Grading

Grading is broken down as follows:

1) **Reading Groups– 15% of final grade** (*asynchronous/synchronous*)

Social Reading: During the semester you will be part of a social reading group on the Hypothes.is platform. Every class period, you should post 3 comments or responses to others. At least one post must be an original comment (not just a response to others).

These must be done before class.

In generating comments and responses, focus on the following elements:

- identifying the article's core argument;
- identifying critical supporting evidence for that argument and/or key concepts;
- and one of the following:
 - ask a question about the piece (if there is something unclear);
 - make a connection/comparison/contrast to other pieces we have read.

Evaluations for Reading Group

- This element is graded on the basis of completion (not qualitative grading).
- You may miss up to 4 classes worth of posts (16 posts) with no grade penalty.
- At the end of the semester, this means you should have posted *68 responses*.

2) **Class Discussion & Presentation – 16% of final grade (4% x 4 presentations)**

During most class periods, you (as part of a small group) will give a brief 3-4 slide presentation on the day's reading. When there are more than one readings assigned, choose the first reading listed (videos do not count) or feel free to do both/all. I recommend you meet with your small group to discuss the reading and generate the presentation collectively. Each presentation should have a rotating lead presenter, who is responsible for making it all happen. People attending asynchronously should still be actively engaged with the group. The presentation should be done on Google Slides and should be set to "Share" with users at Davidson. You should post the slides to the appropriate place on Moodle. The slides should do the following:

- 1) Identify the core argument.
- 2) Explain how the author build that argument. What evidence is used and what concepts does the author use?
- 3) 2-3 answerable questions that derive from the reading, related "Applying Anthropology" posts (see below), current events, etc. Feel free to use outside materials that can be reviewed quickly for discussion purposes.

Evaluation for Discussion/Presentation

- This element is based on completion of the previous elements.
- Group assignments only work when we all actively participate! Please do your share. With each presentation, ask yourself: Have I done as much as others? If not, step it up!
 - *That said:* I encourage you to talk to me if some group members do not participate. If I hear this from more than one person, I will be in direct touch with the person in question.

3) **Two mini-projects – 24% (12% each)** (synchronous/asynchronous)

In lieu of a midterm, you will complete two mini-projects. I will give three opportunities in the semester to complete such a project, so you can choose which you do depending on your schedule. This gives you a chance to practice anthropological methods and thinking. I will post detailed assignment directions on Moodle. Late assignments will affect your grade unless you communicate with me otherwise *before* the due date.

4) **Applying Anthropology Gallery Posts – 12% (4% each)** (asynchronous)

Three times throughout the semester, you should put up a post that relates course material either to your life or a real-world phenomenon. This may be a photograph (by

yourself or in the world), a vignette/narrative from your life, a description of an event, a news article, an instagram post, or...really, anything that illuminates how we might see the concepts “in here” operate “out there.” The posts should include a specific reference to an article we have read and a quote from that article. There will be five deadlines throughout the semester for you to turn these in based on the readings *on that unit*. You can pick any three you want to respond to and you may submit them anytime during that unit. We will discuss some of the posts in class on the due dates and/or during other classes (so please only post items you are comfortable discussing). There are no late submissions for this— just pick the next deadline.

Evaluation for Applying Anthropology

- Evaluation is based on meeting the criteria above (i.e. outside material, engagement with reading, specific quote)

5) **Participation – 8% of final grade** (*synchronous/asynchronous*)

For students attending class online synchronously, I will be assessing participation. This does not necessarily mean talking a lot, but rather, making timely and insightful contributions and giving active attention during class time. As much as possible, please leave camera on.

For students attending asynchronously, generate and share a Google doc with the professor. This doc will contain responses to the readings and/or class period. Responses are due by 11:59pm of the next day and should be sent via Moodle (e.g. Wednesday at 11:59PM for a Tuesday class). Responses should be 250 words max. You will:

- EITHER respond to questions or discussions that emerged during class (with a note on how they relate to the reading)
- OR respond to directly to the reading by identifying the core argument, detailing how that argument develops, note key concepts that result, and offer at least one reflection on the reading (e.g. its relevance, problems, questions it raises)

You are allowed up to 3 unexcused “absences” (either synchronously or asynchronously). After that, you should make up for missed classes by following the directions for “asynchronous” attendance above.

NOTE: All class sessions will be recorded and posted on Moodle. If for some reason, class recordings are not available, please post a reading response (“OR” option above).

6) **Ethnography Report – 25%** (*synchronous/asynchronous*)

Halfway through the semester, you will pick a book-length ethnography off of a list of recommended titles. Based on your choices, I will make up small reading groups and designate a few class periods for you to meet for “book group” with a few guiding questions. (You are welcome to reschedule at other times if you prefer.) I will post a rubric for the final paper as well as a scaffolded outline of the components and format it should follow.

What are the course policies?

Communications

I am available by email. I will make every effort to reply to you within 36 hours. If you don’t hear from me after that period, please follow up!

I am available for office hours (Tuesday 1:30-2:30 and Thursday 2:30-3:30). I encourage you to sign up for slots for these hours—to discuss ideas, review papers and grades, talk about class, and so on. I would love to talk to each of you individually at least once but this is not mandatory. I am also available to meet outside of my set office hours if they do not work for you. Just get in touch with some proposed times.

Also, please visit the Moodle site often for updates. I will be posting updates and announcements there. When they are particularly urgent, I will send those announcements via email.

An Invitation: Student Support in Times of Covid-19

This is a unique time we are living through. All of us are dealing with different life circumstances. I am here to support you in any way I can, though I will not always have the skills or capacities to do so. I am more than happy to have flexibility around modifications to help you benefit from and complete the course, should you need them. Please do not hesitate to bring your concerns to me!

Respect, Open Minds, Critical Minds

A prerequisite to this course is an open mind and an ability to listen to others. We will be discussing many issues, some of which likely affect people in the classroom deeply. Keep in mind: we are all products of different experiences. Sometimes unearthing the assumptions that anchor those experiences can be upsetting, inspire passions, and challenge deeply set ideas. Because of this, it is important that we collectively create a space in which different ideas and expressions can be heard, discussed, and, from time to time, change us. Please respect each other by listening and not reacting in a hurtful or rash manner. Please be aware of the kinds of space you occupy in the classroom relative to other students. If offering critique, please be constructive. If we all do this, we will find an open reception for our own thoughts.

A major part of keeping an open mind is to check assumptions about your classmates. Some may have grown up in the United States, while others have not. Some may have grown up wealthy, others poor. Some in cities, others in rural places. Some in communities of color, some in all-white surroundings. Some may be queer, or straight, or not have a sexuality at all. Some may have had the opportunity and exposure to be intensely politicized while others are being exposed to politics for the first time. You cannot know these things at a glance. Therefore, no matter where you are in your academic or political trajectory, challenge your assumptions about your classmates and what you think you might know about them.

Just as we each bring valuable (and necessarily limited) perspectives to the class, the authors of the readings do the same. Please disagree with them. That said, also understand that each author is not simply an individual but is speaking within and as the result of a larger social process of sharing, deliberating, discussing, and arguing in collective learning environments like this one.

Finally we live in a society—and are enmeshed in a language—that privileges the binary of male and female. This is despite the increasing understanding that there is a wide range of gender diversity in the world. To de-center the privileging of a male/female binary, to challenge the everyday assumptions we make about gender, and to give space for a diversity of genders in the classroom, I propose that when referring to other people we either utilize their name or, if in the third person, by “they” or “their.” We do this all the time already (“Have you seen the waiter?” “I don’t know where they went.”), so this should not be a major challenge. If it does feel like a challenge, please imagine the types of impositions binaristic he/she language has upon transgender,

genderqueer, or non-binaristic people. That said, since this course is online, please feel free to clarify your pronouns in your Zoom handle (name and pronouns).

Attendance and Punctuality

Online attendance is not required. However, to receive credit for online attendance, you should be logged in and ready to go at the start of class (10:50AM). I will be signed in a few minutes early as often as possible to field any logistical questions and just to chat. Join me! If you are more than 20 minutes late (or if you have technical difficulties that bar you from being in more than 55 minutes of our 75 minute class), you are still welcome to join but I ask that you submit an “asynchronous” response (detailed in “Participation” under grade) to account for the day’s participation.

You are allowed to miss 3 unexcused classes with no penalty. After that you should submit an asynchronous response to class (see “Participation” grade above). I understand these are exceptional times, so please be in communication if events are keeping you from consistent attendance.

Preparation

Come to class, synchronously or asynchronously, prepared. This means:

- Read /view/listen to all the required readings included on this syllabus.
- View any posted lectures.
- Have the readings (and slides, if applicable) open during class periods.
- Check the Moodle site and/or your email at least by the night before class for any additional items I may want you to look over.
- Have assignments when they’re due.

Date	Class topic/unit name	Pre-class work for students	Assignments due
1-26		Review Syllabus & Say Hello!	
1-28	Culture & Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MacClancy, Jeremy. "Introduction: Taking People Seriously" in <i>Exotic No More</i>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019. 1-18 Miner, Horace "Body Ritual Among the Nacerima" in <i>Annual Editions 07/08</i>. Dubuque, Iowa: McGraw Hill, 2007. 175-177. 	
2-2	Culture & Power	Bourgois et al "Coming of Age in the Concrete Killing Fields of the US Inner City" in <i>Exotic No More</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019. 19-42.	Discussion Group 1
2-4	Culture & Power	Sylvain, Renee. "Disorderly Development: Globalization and the Idea of "Culture" in the Kalahari" <i>American Ethnologist</i> . 32(3): 2005. 354-370.	Discussion Group 2
2-9	Culture & Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dana Ain-Davis. 2003. What Did You Do Today?: Notes from a Politically Engaged Anthropologist. <i>Urban Anthropology</i>. 32(2). Abu-Lughod, Lila. 2002. "Do Muslim women really need saving? Anthropological reflections on cultural relativism and its others." <i>American anthropologist</i> 104, no. 3: 783-790. 	Discussion Group 3
2-11	Culture & Power (and Anthropology of Science/ Medicine)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sarah Horton and Judith Barker. 2009. "'Stains' on their self-discipline: Public health, hygiene, and the disciplining of undocumented immigrant parents in the nation's internal borderlands," <i>American Ethnologist</i>, Vol. 36(4): 784-798. Shah. It's Time to Tell a New Story About Coronavirus – Our Lives Depend on It. <i>The Nation</i>. July 14, 2020. https://www.thenation.com/article/society/pandemic-definition-covid/ 	-1 st Applying Anthropology Post Due (1/26 – 2/11) - Unit Review
2-16	Science and Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emily Martin. 1991. The Egg and the Sperm: How Science has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles. <i>Signs</i>.16(3): 485-501. Fortun, Mike and Kim Fortun. "Anthropologies of the Sciences." in <i>Exotic No More</i>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019. 241-264. 	Discussion Group 4
2-18	Gender & Sexuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pascoe, CJ. "'Dude, You're a Fag': Adolescent Masculinity and the Fag Discourse." <i>Sexualities</i> 8(3): London, 2005. 329-346. Blank H. 2012 The Invention of the Heterosexual. <i>Salon</i>. https://www.salon.com/2012/01/22/the_invention_of_the_heterosexual/ 	Discussion Group 1
2-23	Gender & Sexuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Najmabadi, Asfaneh. 2008. "Transing and Transpassing Across Sex-Gender Walls in Iran" <i>Women's Studies Quarterly</i>. 36 (3&4): 23-42. 	-Discussion Group 2

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Burnett V. 2016. Bathroom Debate Complicates Town's Acceptance of a Third Gender. <i>New York Times</i>. June 22. Access here: https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/23/world/americas/mexico-muxes-bathroom-debate.html 	
2-25	Gender, Kinship and Intersectionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leith Mullings. 2002. Households Headed by Women: The Politics of Class, Race and Gender. <i>The New Poverty Studies Reader</i>. Goode J & Maskovsky J, Eds. 37-56. Bjork-James, Sophie. "White Sexual Politics: The Patriarchal Family in White Nationalism and the Religious Right." <i>Transforming Anthropology</i> 28, no. 1 (2020): 58-73. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2nd Applying Anthropology Post Due (2/16 – 2/25) - Unit Review
3-2	Race	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Karen Sacks. 1994. How Did Jews Become White Folks? <i>Race</i>. Gregory S & Sanjek R, Eds. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. 78-102. Buck, Pem Davidson. 2001. <i>Worked to the Bone: Race, Class, Power, and Privilege in Kentucky</i>. New York: Monthly Review Press. 11-33. 	Discussion Group 3
3-4	NO CLASS	SEMESTER BREAK 1	
3-9	Race	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harrison, Faye. "Unraveling Race for the Twenty-First Century" in <i>Exotic No More</i>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019. 77-104. 	Discussion Group 4
3-11	Race	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kromidas, Maria. 2004. "Learning War/Learning Race: Fourth-grade Students in the Aftermath of September 11th in New York City." <i>Critique of Anthropology</i> 24(1):15-33. Watch Dr. Helen Cho speak on "Examining Race: The Non-Existence of Biological Race": https://www.dropbox.com/s/dkr20oez1oum8z1/GMT20200925-193110_Examining-1600x800.mp4?dl=0 (access off this website: https://first.inclusivepedagogy.org/events/) 	- Discussion Group 1
3-16	Race & Migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> De Genova, Nicholas. "The "migrant crisis" as racial crisis: Do Black Lives Matter in Europe?." <i>Ethnic and Racial Studies</i> 41, no. 10 (2018): 1765-1782. Watch video by Jason De Leon here https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qG1uuAEG99c&feature=emb_logo and peruse his website here: https://www.jasonpatrickdeleon.com/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -3rd Applying Anthropology Post Due (3/2 – 3/16) - Unit Review
3-18	Migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ruben Anderson. The Anthropological Borderlands of Global Migration. In <i>Exotic No More</i>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019. 177-192. Kwong, Peter. 2001. Poverty Despite Family Ties in <i>The New Poverty Studies: The Ethnography of Power, Politics and Impoverished People in the United States</i>. New York: NYU Press. 57-78. 	Discussion Group 2

3-23	Economic Anthropology (Labor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carrier, James. Economy. In <i>Exotic No More</i>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019. 137-150. What is a gift economy? Watch here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EaxjxICgahc&feature=emb_logo 	Discussion Group 3
3-25	Economic Anthropology (Debt)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brett Williams. 2001. What's Debt Got to Do with It? <i>The New Poverty Studies</i>. Goode J & Maskovsky J, Eds. New York: New York University Press. 79-102. The Cliff and the Jubilee: On David Graeber's <i>Debt</i>. <i>Los Angeles Review of Books</i>. Access here: https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/the-cliff-and-the-jubilee-on-david-graebers-debt/ 	Discussion Group 4
3-30	Economic Anthropology (Labor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharryn Kasmir. The Saturn Automobile Plant and the Long Dispossession of US Autoworkers. In <i>Blood and Fire: Toward a Global Anthropology of Labor</i>. 203-249. Watch this video on Marxist economics: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b2h7NWpyfkE&feature=emb_logo 	- Discussion Group 1
4-1	NO CLASS	<i>Pick book and start reading!</i>	
4-6	Economic Anthropology (Poverty)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> J Goode & J Maskovsky. The New Poverty Studies. <i>The New Poverty Studies</i>. Goode J & Maskovsky J, Eds. New York: New York University Press. SKIM: 1-10, READ: 10-17. <u>Available online on Google Books</u> Skim this article from Mead (1992): https://www.city-journal.org/html/new-politics-poverty-non-working-poor-america-12694.html Read article from Insider Higher Ed, 2020: https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/07/28/leading-voice-welfare-reform-accused-racism 	Discussion Group 2
4-8	NO CLASS	SEMESTER BREAK 2	
4-13	Economic Anthropology (Poverty)	Dickinson, Maggie. "Working for food stamps: Economic citizenship and the post-Fordist welfare state in New York City." <i>American Ethnologist</i> 43, no. 2 (2016): 270-281.	-Author Talk with Dr. Dickinson -4 th Applying Anthro Post Due (3/23 - 4/13)
4-15	Environmental Anthropology	Jesse Goldstein. Selections from <i>Planetary Improvement: Cleantech Entrepreneurship and the Contradictions of Green Capitalism</i> . Pp.1-9, skim 10-16, 63-92.	-Unit Review
4-22	Environmental Anthropology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment & Anthropology: Socio-Natures in a Politicized World. In <i>Exotic No More</i>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019. 209-222. 	Discussion Group 3
4-27	Environmental Anthropology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Norgaard, Kari Marie. "'We don't really want to know'" environmental justice and socially organized denial of global warming in Norway." <i>Organization & Environment</i> 19, no. 3 (2006): 347-370. 	Discussion Group 4 -Unit Review

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Julie Cruikshank. 2012. Are Glaciers Good to Think With? : Recognising Indigenous Environmental Knowledge. 22(3): 239-250 	
4-29	COURSE REVIEW		5 th Applying Anthro post due (4/15-4/29)
5-8			<i>Final Ethnography Paper Due</i>

- Assignments are due at the beginning of class.
- Figure out a system for taking notes during class and stick to it.
- When attending synchronously, please pay attention. You do not have to stare deeply into the screen at all times, but please be sitting upright (and comfortably), have a clear workspace (on your computer or on a physical desk), and place your phone on airplane mode (unless you need it for accessing sites/apps relevant to class).

Davidson College Honor Code

Each Davidson student is honor bound to refrain from stealing, lying about College business, and cheating on academic work. Stealing is the intentional taking of any property without right or permission. Lying is intentional misrepresentation of any form. Cheating is any practice, method, or assistance, whether explicitly forbidden or unmentioned, that involves any degree of dishonesty, fraud, or deceit. Cheating includes plagiarism, which is representing another's ideas or words as one's own. Each student is responsible for learning and observing appropriate documentation of another's work. Each Davidson student is honor bound to report immediately all violations of the Honor Code of which the student has first-hand knowledge; failure to do so is itself a violation of the Honor Code.

<http://www.davidson.edu/about/distinctly-davidson/honor-code>

Access and Disability Services Accommodations

The college welcomes requests for accommodations related to disability and will grant those that are determined to be reasonable and maintain the integrity of a program or curriculum. To make such a request or to begin a conversation about a possible request, please contact the Office of Academic Access and Disability Resources, which is located in the Center for Teaching and Learning in the E.H. Little Library: Beth Bleil, Director, bebleil@davidson.edu, 704-894-2129; or Alysén Beaty, Assistant Director, albeaty@davidson.edu, 704-894-2939. It is best to submit accommodation requests within the drop/add period; however, requests can be made at any time in the semester. Please keep in mind that accommodations are not retroactive.

Other resources you should keep in mind include:

Campus Police	704-894-2178 or 911
Dean of Students Office	704-894-2225
Student Health/Counseling	704-894-2300
Chaplain's Office	704-894-2423
Georgia Ringle, Health Educator	704-894-2902
Town of Davidson Police	704-892-5131

ASSIGNMENT

Pick one from this site: <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/series/responding-to-an-unfolding-pandemic->

Pick one post from each site and be prepared to report and discuss:

<https://culanth.org/fieldsights/editors-forum/covid-19>

<http://somatosphere.net/?s=Covid> (search term: COVID)

OR

<https://anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/1548744x/2020/32/2>

[asian-medicines-and-covid-19](#)

<https://anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/1548744x/2020/32/2>