AN210ZA
AN 210: Contemporary Cultures
Dr. Brice Obermeyer
Office: Butcher Ed. Cent., Rm 115D, Roosevelt Hall, Rm 212
Facebook Page: Dr. Obermeyer’s Anthropology Students

Course Description: Students will be introduced to the diversity of contemporary societies and the factors that have influenced their development. Emphasis will be placed on understanding our world from a cross-cultural and relativistic perspective.

Course Readings (Required): All of the readings for the course are included in the following text. This text is specifically designed for this course and there will be questions on the exams and quizzes on the readings from the text.

Obermeyer, Brice (ed)

Course Content: The course content including powerpoint lectures, videos, internet links and exams/quizzes will be available online.

Exams: There will be four non-cumulative exams and each is worth 100 points for a total of 400 points. The exams will consist of multiple choice and true-false questions and will only be available online until the date listed on the course schedule.

Quizzes: There will be 10 quizzes and each is worth 10 points for a total of 100 possible points. Multiple choice and True/False questions may be included on the quizzes and will only be available online until the date listed on the course schedule.

Course grading system:
(4) Exams X 100pts each = 400pts
(10) Quizzes X 10 pts each = 100 pts
Total 500pts

500-448 pts (100-89.6%) = A
447-398 pts (89.4-79.6%) = B
397-348 pts (79.4-69.6%) = C
347-298 (69.4-59.6%) = D
297-0 (59.4-0%) = F

NOTE: Sociology majors/minors and Anthropology minors MUST have a minimum grade of “C” in this class to satisfy his/her degree plans.

Academic Dishonesty: Academic dishonesty, a basis for disciplinary action, includes but is not limited to activities such as cheating and plagiarism (presenting as one’s own the intellectual or creative accomplishments of another without giving credit to the source or sources).
The faculty member in whose course or under whose tutelage an act of academic dishonesty occurs has the option of failing the student for the academic hours in question. The department chair should be advised of any action taken by the faculty member regarding academic dishonesty. The faculty member may consent to refer the case to other academic personnel for further action. Departments, schools and colleges may have provisions for more severe penalties than set forth above. Emporia State University may impose penalties for academic dishonesty up to and including expulsion from the university. The student has the right to appeal the charge of academic dishonesty in accordance with the university’s Academic Appeals policy and procedure as set forth in section 9A-04 of the Faculty Handbook.

Disability Services: Emporia State University will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students need to contact the Director of Disability Services and the professor as early in the semester as possible to ensure that classroom and academic accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. All communication between students, the Office of Disability Services, and the professor will be strictly confidential.

Faculty Initiated Student Withdrawal: If a student's absences from class or disruptive behavior become detrimental to the student's progress or that of the other students in the class, the faculty member shall attempt to contact the student in writing about withdrawing from the class and shall seek the aid of the office of the Vice President of Student Affairs to help insure contacting the student. The office of the Vice President of Student Affairs shall provide the student information about the existing appeals procedures. Upon receiving a written report from the faculty member, the Vice President of Student Affairs may initiate a student withdrawal from the class. None of the above implies or states that faculty members are required to initiate the student withdrawals for excessive absence.

A Note on General Education

There exists a sentiment about general education courses that such courses are those that each student must, “get out of the way.” However, I do not approach this course with such an attitude and I expect the same from my students.

I reiterate ESU’s commitment to providing a liberal education for all its students. One important component of this liberal education is the completion of all designated general education requirements. This general education core curriculum is the heart of the college experience at ESU and is integral to the student’s major program. The goals of this general education program reflect the mission of this institution and are common to all student programs, regardless of majors and career goals. The general education curriculum provides the intellectual background and skills necessary to be “an educated person,” as it improves and enhances quality of life.

As a result of completing the general education program, graduates of Emporia State University will be knowledgeable of our pluralistic society; be able to think with breadth and comprehension, to communicate effectively, to understand what it means to be human, and to function with skill and knowledge in the everyday world.
AN 210 course objectives are consistent with the general education curriculum:

**General Education Curriculum**

1. Develop proficiency in written and oral communication, and in mathematical computation, reasoning and problem solving. Graduates of ESU must achieve proficiency in basic skills. Our goal is to significantly raise the basic skills of Emporia State University students.
2. Learn the basic concepts and principles, the history, and the mode of inquiry of the various general education disciplines: the fine arts, history, literature and philosophy, the social behavioral sciences, and the life and physical sciences.
3. Learn how to make connections between the disciplines within the general education curriculum, apply knowledge from the perspective of these disciplines, think critically, analyze issues, and clarify values.
4. Understand cultural diversity in the contemporary world, and increase their awareness and acceptance of similarities and contrasts in people of different cultures, nationalities, religions, races, and genders.
5. Develop a commitment to scholarship, intellectual curiosity, lifelong learning and the life skills necessary to function as healthy and effective citizens.

**AN210 Course Objectives**

1. Students will learn to understand global issues from a cross-cultural perspective which will provide a more balanced view of our contemporary world.

2. The student will learn the concepts basic to cultural anthropology and the ways in which anthropologists collect and analyze data on contemporary cultures.

3. Anthropological study draws on multiple disciplines (eclectic) to understand the human condition in its entirety (holism). Lectures will encourage students to think critically about social issues from an eclectic and holistic perspective.

4. The course will explore how people in different cultures worldwide relate socially and how these relationships are understood anthropologically.

5. The student will learn to apply anthropological concepts to everyday observations and experience.
Contemporary Cultures  
Course Schedule  
6/27/2016 – 8/05/2016

6/27 – Course Introduction and Orientation

**Module 1: Anthropology: Cross Cultural Study of Culture and Language (6/28-7/6)** – this module will present an overview of the ways in which anthropologists develop theories, or explanations, for culture by using a cross-cultural, comparative and relativistic approach.

**Learning Objective 1** (6/28-6/30): Anthropology and the Study of Culture – this lesson provides an introduction to the Anthropological approach and the four-fields of Anthropology. The lesson describes each field with an emphasis placed on the unique methods of each field and the evidence that each uses to develop theories that help us better understand and explain human culture in all societies.

**Readings:** Culture and Ethnography, Using Anthropology

**Assessments by 6/30: Quiz #1**

**Learning Objective 2** (6/30-7/3): Culture – this lesson provides the anthropological definitions of culture and society and an overview of the characteristics of culture, the barrel model for culture and the four ways in which cultural change takes place.

**Readings:** Culture Change and Applied Anthropology, Eating Christmas in the Kalahari

**Assessments by 7/3: Quiz #2**

**Learning Objective 3** (7/4-7/6): Language – this lesson will describe the foundational relationship that exists between language and culture. The theory of linguistic relativity, and the use of two linguistic (1. sociolinguists and the study of dialects and descriptive linguistics and the documentation of a language) are examined to illustrate the ways in which anthropologists study language.

**Readings:** Language and Communication, Conversation Style: Talking on the Job

**Assessments by 7/6: Exam #1**
Module 2: Environment, Infrastructure and Social Structure (7/7-7/18)- this module will examine the integrated and patterned relationships that exist between a societies’ subsistence systems and economic system; and the way in which they are organized into certain types of political systems and kinship systems.

Learning Objective 4 (7/7-7/9): Subsistence Strategies and Economic Systems – this lesson will define and describe the characteristics of the four different types of subsistence systems and two different types of economic systems that are combined by humans in order to adapt to their given environment. Examples of societies that practice each combination will be described to illustrate each.

Readings: Ecology and Subsistence, The Hunters: Scarce Resources in the Kalahari
Assessments by 7/9: Quiz #3

Learning Objective 5 (7/10-7/12): Political Systems – this lesson will define, describe and provide examples of the four types of political systems in which human societies are organized. The patterns that exist between each type and a societies subsistence and economic systems will also be described.

Readings: Reciprocity and the Power of Giving, Life Without Chiefs, The Founding Indian Fathers
Assessments by 7/12: Quiz #4

Learning Objective 6 (7/13-7/15): Families and Descent Systems – this lesson will define, describe and provide examples of two types of families and three types of descent systems. The patterns that exist between each type and a societies subsistence and economic systems will also be described.

Readings: Kinship and Family, Family and Kinship in Village India, Uterine Families and the Women’s Community
Assessments by 7/15: Quiz #5

Learning Objective 7 (7/16-7/18): Marriage, Incest and Postmarital Rules of Residence – this lesson will define, describe and provide examples of three types of marriage and incest beliefs; and four types of postmarital rules for residence. The patterns that exist between each type and a societies’ subsistence and economic system will also be discussed.

Readings: Mother’s Love: Death Without Weeping, Polyandry: When Brothers Take a Wife
Assessments by 7/18: Exam #2
Module 3: Superstructure 7/19-7/27 – this module describes five forms of social group identity (Race, Ethnicity, Nationality, Gender and Religion) that exist in all societies. Each lesson describes how each are socially constructed aspects of a societies superstructure that are created as a result of the patterns that exist between a societies subsistence and economic system and the resultant cultural beliefs that legitimize each different type of infrastructure.

**Learning Objective 8** (7/19-7/21): Race, Ethnicity and Nationality – this lesson defines and describes the characteristics of racial, ethnic and national group belonging. This description will explain how and why each is a different, yet socially constructed (and not biologically determined) component of a societies’ superstructure.

**Readings:** Mixed Blood

**Assessments by 7/21: Quiz #6**

**Learning Objective 9** (7/22-7/24): Gender - this lesson defines and describes the characteristics of sex, gender and gender stratification. This description will explain how and why gender is socially constructed (and not biologically determined) and gender stratification is determined by the division of labor in a societies infrastructure and not by biological or sex difference between males and females.

**Readings:** Heading Home: Women, Work and Identity in America, Symbolizing Roles: Behind the Veil

**Assessments by 7/24: Quiz #7**

**Learning Objective 10:** Religion (7/25-7/27) – this lesson defines and describes Religion and how it is different and separate from science. Revitalization Movements and Rites of Passage are also described to demonstrate how religions, as indispensable social institutions, function to maintain social cohesion and social control as well relieve anxiety during times of uncertainty.

**Readings:** Religion, Magic and Worldview, Body Ritual among the Nacirema

**Assessments by 7/27: Exam #3**
Module 4: Modern World System and Contemporary Societies (7/28-8/05) – this module defines and describes the structure of the Modern World System and colonial relationships that exist between societies in the core and those in the periphery. The implications for a selection of contemporary societies is also included.

**Learning Objective 11** (7/28-7/30): Colonialism and the Modern World System – this lesson describes the three structural levels of the Modern World System and relationships between each level. The origin and colonial development of the Modern World System will also be described.

**Readings:** Globalization, Cocaine and the Economic Deterioration of Bolivia, Malawi Versus the World Bank

**Assessments by 7/30: Quiz #8**

**Learning Objective 12** (7/31-8/02): Postcolonialism – this lesson defines postcolonialism and describes how it is a different form of colonialism that has developed in the post-World War II era. The example of the United States’ relationship with Iraq is described to illustrate postcolonialism.

**Readings:** The Kindness of Strangers

**Assessments by 8/02: Quiz #9**

**Learning Objective 13** (8/03-8/05): Global Challenges and Anthropology – this lesson reviews three examples of societies in our modern world system to demonstrate how anthropology can be used to solve certain structural problem in the modern world system. This lesson also describes how an anthropological perspective on global issues can provide a more informed understanding of some of the problems that exist in the modern world system.

**Readings:** Cross-Cultural Law: The Case of the Gypsy Offender, Medical Anthropology: Improving Nutrition in Malawi

**Assessments by 8/05: Quiz #10**

**Assessments by 8/05: Exam #4**

*This Course Schedule is subject to change and such changes will be announced by email or through the facebook page for this course.*