

**Department of Anthropology**  
**ANTHROPOLOGY 1025F-650**  
**Introduction to Sociocultural and Linguistic Anthropology**  
**COURSE OUTLINE**  
**Fall 2023**

*Version date: Sept 13, 2023*

**Instructor and course information:**

Instructor: Dr. Jeremy Trombley

Email: jtrombl@uwo.ca

Credit Value: 0.5

Antirequisites: Anthropology 1021A/B

Prerequisites: None.

Use of Owl: This course will take place entirely online facilitated by Western's online course management program. All course content, assignments, and discussions will be available on the course management system.

**Course Description:**

This introductory course offers an examination of an anthropological approach to the study of humanity. Taking into account the diversity of human experience across time and space, this course will emphasize two subfields of anthropology: sociocultural anthropology, which focuses on variation in social and cultural systems including kin-ship, politics, identity, economics, and belief systems; and linguistic anthropology which explores the role of lan- guage use, transmission, and symbolism in culture and social life. This course is intended to provide students with a comparative and critical framework with which to understand contemporary social issues such as race, gender, communication, and economic inequality and will include discussions of the historical legacy of anthropology as a discipline.

The structure of the course consists of online instruction, and as such, includes content that will be shared virtu- ally on OWL on a weekly basis. Content for each week will be released on Sundays.

**Learning Outcomes:**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify the methodology, concepts, and approaches used in the anthropological study of humanity.
2. Apply critical thinking and analytical skills to representations of human and cultural diversity.
3. Reflect on the connections between diverse social processes (economic and political systems, language, social organization, ontologies, etc).
4. Reflect on the purpose and usefulness of anthropological practice in the world.

5. Illustrate how language and culture influence each other.
6. Critically examine sociocultural contexts in which particular varieties of language are used.
7. Describe the relationship between language and identity in political and cultural terms.
8. Demonstrate how linguistic practices are linked to social meaning and categories such as race, gender, ethnicity, and class.

### **Course Materials:**

Monaghan, John and Peter Just. 2000. *Social & Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press.

The course text is available online via [Western's Library](#).

In some weeks, and this is especially true for the linguistic anthropology section of the course (Weeks 3-6), short article readings, blog posts and videos will be assigned. These additional materials will be made available for download through the Course Readings tool on the course's OWL site.

*Registered students will be able to access additional course readings through the course site in OWL before the first day of class.*

### **Evaluation:**

Discussion Activities	30%
Quizzes	20%
Cultural Research Paper	20%
Linguistic Research Paper	20%
Final Exam	10%

### **Discussion Activities – 30%**

There will be a series of discussion activities during the course that will require you to engage with the course materials and concepts and interact with other students. These will be short posts online reflecting on how anthropological concepts learned in the course relate to your own experiences.

### **Quizzes – 20%**

Each week starting on week 2 you will be complete a quiz that tests your comprehension of course concepts and topics. These will consist of short answer questions, multiple choice, and true/false. Each quiz will be worth 2% and the lowest two grades will be dropped.

### **Essays 40%**

Students will write two short (~800 word) essay. The first will issues in cultural anthropology, topics to be discussed in class. The second will examine the relationship between language and culture, topics to be discussed in class

### **Final Exam 10%**

The final exam will be a take home exam consisting of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions and will take place during the examination period at the end of the term.

### **Late Policy for Assignments**

There will be a 2% reduction of the assignment grade for each day that an assignment is late (including weekends and holidays). Unless accommodation is granted, assignments that are not handed in within 10 days of the due date (including weekends and holidays) may receive a grade of zero.

### **Academic Statements and Policies:**

#### **Academic Rights and Responsibilities**

All students should familiarize themselves with Western's current [Academic Policies in the Academic Calendar](#) which include, but is not limited to, academic consideration for medical illness, accommodation for religious holidays, academic appeals, academic accommodation for students with disabilities, as well as scholastic discipline.

#### **Course Specific Conditions Required to Pass this Course:**

In order to pass this course students must pass the essay assignments regardless of the numerical grade for the course.

#### **Accommodation Policies:**

No accommodations will be granted retroactively more than 10 days after an assignment's due date or a missed quiz or test. Please see your academic counsellor immediately if you will be seeking accommodations based on medical or compassionate grounds.

All missed work must be made up by the end of the exam period in the applicable term.

#### **Accessible Education**

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. Please see [Accessible Education](#) for information.

#### **Academic Integrity - Statement on Plagiarism:**

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing. It is also a scholastic offence to submit the same work for credit in more than one course. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence.

All required papers will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and [Turnitin.com](#).

### **Weekly Topics and Readings:**

(Note – this is a tentative schedule. Any additions or adjustments made to it will be announced in advance in class and on OWL.)

## **Week 1 – Introductions**

### **Week 2 – What is Anthropology?**

*Overview of the course and an introduction to anthropology and the two major fields we will explore – sociocultural anthropology and linguistic anthropology. Topics to be discussed include: What is culture/ How do social relations shape our lives? How are beliefs, behaviours, practices, and habits learned and socially transmitted?*

Readings: Monaghan and Just. *Social & Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction*, “Chapter 2: Bee Larvae and Onion Soup: Culture,” pp. 34–52.

### **Week 3 – How Do We Do Anthropology?**

*Focus on the methods and approach of anthropology, especially ethnographic fieldwork and participant observation. Topics to be discussed include: Methods, questions, and concepts in sociocultural anthropology; History and development of this approach; Examples of anthropological research, etc.*

Readings: Monaghan and Just. *Social & Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction*, “Chapter 1: A Dispute in Donggo: Fieldwork and Ethnography,” pp. 13–33.

### **Week 4 – Where Do We Come From?**

*Focus on anthropological approaches to the explanation of human behaviour and to the analysis of social relations. Topics to be discussed include: social change, history, culture, and human “nature”; kinship, family, friendship, and social reproduction; life cycle; critique of social evolutionism and development paradigms.*

Readings: Monaghan and Just. *Social & Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction*, “Chapter 3: A Brief Encounter: Society,” pp. 53–74; **and** “Chapter 4: Fernando Seeks a Wife: Sex and Blood,” pp. 75–88.

## **Week 5 – Who Are We and Why Does It Matter?**

*How do we think of ourselves and others? Where do our social identities come from? Topics to be discussed include: tradition, history, and custom; social identities; cultural differences; ideas of race, ethnicity, class, gender, the self, and community.*

Readings: Monaghan and Just. *Social & Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction*, "Chapter 5: La Bose Becomes Bakar: Caste, Class, Tribe, Nation," pp. 89–106.

## **Week 6 – What Do We Need and What Do We Want?**

*What is the economy and how is it connected to other aspects of social and cultural life? What are gifts and commodities? Topics to be discussed include: value; gift giving; commodities and markets; the social life of things; money; exchange, time, labor, debt; needs, wants, and desires; understanding capitalism as a historical, social, and cultural system.*

Readings: Monaghan and Just. *Social & Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction*, "Chapter 6: A Feast in Nuyoo: People and Their Things," pp. 107–119.

## **Week 7 – What Does Anthropology Matter?**

*An anthropological perspective can help us explain social life in new ways and can help denaturalize and decolonize our taken-for-granted ideas, attitudes, and beliefs. Topics to be discussed: cultural relativism; explanatory power; critique; decolonization; the history, role, and importance of the social sciences.*

Readings: Monaghan and Just. *Social & Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction*, "Chapter 7: A Drought in Bima: People and Their Gods," pp. 120–130; and "Chapter 8: Nanuu Maria Gets Hit By Lightning: People and Their Selves," pp. 131–143.

## **Week 8 – What is Linguistic Anthropology"**

*What is the relationship between language and culture? What is linguistic anthropology? Topics to be discussed include: Research areas in linguistic anthropology; research methods; the similarities and differences between sociocultural and linguistic anthropology and between linguistic anthropology and linguistics; the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis and the issues of linguistic relativity and linguistic determinism; and the connections between language and culture.*

Readings:

- Light, Linda. 2017. "Language." In *Perspectives: An open Invitation to Cultural Anthropology*. Edited by N. Brown, L. Tubelle de González and T. McIlwraith, pp. 1-2, 12-14;
- Boroditsky, Lera. 2009. "How Does our Language Shape the Way We Think?" Edge. November 6, 2009.

NOTE: You will read the chapter "Language" by Linda Light a few pages at a time, depending on the week. Check the page numbers for each week in the syllabus and begin reading at the first new section heading on the page (not always at the top of the page). Stop reading at the end of the section (not always at the bottom of the page). This reading contains a helpful glossary at the end, to which you should refer throughout the semester.

## **Week 9 — How Does Language Work?**

*How does language function to allow us to communicate and share meaning? Topics to be discussed include: the design features of language; sign, signifier, signified; arbitrariness; iconicity; linguistic knowledge; grammar, lexicon, and language use; linguistic competence and communicative competence; aspects of language as a system, from sounds to shared meanings.*

Readings:

- Light, Linda. 2017. "Language," pp. 2–11;
- Jose, Johnson M. 2015. "The Difference Between Animal and Human Communication." *Owlcation*. December 7, 2015;
- Barchas-Lichtenstein, Jena. 2015. "Beyond Reference." *Everyday Linguistic Anthropology*. December 29, 2015.

## **Week 10 — How is Language Used to Accomplish Social Goals?**

How do we do things with words? How do we use language to accomplish social actions? Topics to be discussed include: Speech act theory and analysis; promises and other performatives; Grice's maxims and the cooperative principle; Presuppositions and assumptions; indexicality and intertextuality; and linguistic resources and inequality.

### Readings:

- Cameron, Deborah. 2016. "On Banter, Bonding and Donald Trump." *Language: A Feminist Guide*. October 9, 2016;
- Barchas-Lichtenstein, Jena. 2015. "Words Have Flavors: Indexicality, Heteroglossia, Intertextuality." *Everyday Linguistic Anthropology*. December 18, 2015.

## **Week 11 — How Do Language Ideologies Unite and Divide People?**

How do languages differ? Who do languages shape how we think? How are linguistic differences used to unite and divide people? Topics to be discussed include: Language ideologies; acquisition of linguistic resources and the problem of inequality; language varieties, including standard and non-standard language; intersubjectivity and the linguistic market; language and social differences; and how we talk about how other people talk.

### Readings:

- Light, Linda. 2017, "Language," pp. 11–12;
- Barchas-Lichtenstein, Jena. 2015. "Can Language Be 'Good' or 'Bad'?" *Everyday Linguistic Anthropology*. December 4, 2015;
- Barchas-Lichtenstein, Jena. 2017. "Let's Stop Demonizing 'Filler Words'." *Everyday Linguistic Anthropology*. February 27, 2017;
- Martin, Katie. 2018. "How 'Sounding White' Helps Get You Ahead—on Film and in Real Life." *Slate*. July 20, 2018.

## **Week 12 — How Are Identities Constructed Through Language?**

*How does language relate to, and help construct, social identities? Topics to be discussed include: Linguistic diversity and language endangerment; multilingualism; communities of practice; various (linguistic) identities, such as ethnicity, gender, sexuality, race, class, profession, roles, stances, or nationality; and stereotypes and prejudices.*

### Readings:

- Light, Linda. 2017. "Language," pp. 15-18;
- Fattal, Isabel. 2018. "Why Do Cartoon Villains Speak in Foreign Accents?" *The Atlantic*. January 4, 2018;
- Barchas-Lichtenstein. 2015. "The Linguistic Construction of Terrorists." *Everyday Linguistic Anthropology*. December 3, 2015.

## **Week 13 — What Does Linguistic Anthropology Offer?**

*What do we do with linguistic anthropology? Topics to be discussed include: the importance of linguistic anthropology to anthropology as a whole; language and culture, again; professional applications of linguistic anthropology, such as language revitalization, policy, communication technologies, AI, translation and interpretation, language planning; everyday applications of linguistic anthropology, such as language awareness, language prejudice, language ideologies, and tools for language description and analysis.*

Readings:

- Ahearn, Laura. "The Research Process in Linguistic Anthropology." In *Living Language: An Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology*. Wiley Blackwell. Chapter 3, pp. 52-68;
- Shulist, Sarah. 2019. "Language, Accommodation, and the View from Whiteness." *Anthropology As ... Life, the Universe, and Anthropology*. February 4, 2019.

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