

**Department of Anthropology**  
**Anthropology 2222G – Debates in Sociocultural Anthropology**  
**Course Outline**  
**Winter 2024**

*Version date: Jan 19, 2024*

This is an introduction to the foundations of anthropology that offers an overview of key concepts and methods in the discipline. The course focuses especially on certain key debates in the discipline – an approach that allows us to consider different perspectives on topics of common concern, and that demonstrates how the "foundations" of anthropology are continually being revisited, questioned and renegotiated in ways that are essential to maintaining anthropology's vitality and relevance.

**Course Information**

Mode of delivery: In person

Credit value: 0.5

Antirequisites: None

Prerequisites: None

**Course Instructor**

Dan Jorgensen

Office Hours: M 1:30 – 2:30; Th 9:30 – 11:30, *or by appointment*

[dwj@uwo.ca](mailto:dwj@uwo.ca)

**Marking Breakdown**

*20% -- Reading Quizzes (10 quizzes @ 2% each)*

- At the start of 10 classes (i.e., taking place within our weekly timeslot), students will be given a short quiz concerning assigned readings. Will take no more than 5 minutes.

*20% -- Midterm (in class on February 14)*

- To be completed in class. Short answer and short essay format.

*25% -- Essay (due in class on March 27)*

- Details to be discussed in class.

*35% -- Final Exam (During Exam Period)*

- Date to be determined. PLEASE NOTE THAT YOU SHOULD NOT PLAN TO BE AWAY FROM CAMPUS DURING THE EXAM PERIOD.

## **Learning Outcomes**

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

- Identify key debates relevant to the historical and ongoing development of anthropological thinking.
- Appreciate the role that debate plays in anthropological (and all scholarly) thinking and practice.
- Effectively evaluate and communicate alternative approaches to key topics in the field of anthropology.

## **Course Policies (please read carefully)**

1. Students are responsible for ALL assigned readings unless notified otherwise by the instructor.
2. Attendance of classes is expected. Students should keep in mind that they may be tested on ALL material that is covered in class (including videos and research presentations). This will generally include a good deal of material that is not covered in course readings. If students are unable to attend a class, they are expected to obtain notes from a classmate.
3. Students are allowed to use laptop computers in class, but only for purposes related to the course. The instructor will ask students using laptops or other technology for non-course related purposes to leave the class.
4. Assignments and essays are due on the dates listed in this outline. Any late assignments or essays will be penalized at a rate of 5% / working day late.
5. Students should retain copies of all material handed in. Please note that the instructor does not accept primary responsibility for assignments or essays submitted outside of class time or office hours. In all cases, copies of material submitted should be retained by the student.
6. All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detections software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted 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.
7. All term assignments must be submitted prior to the beginning of the exam period. Any work that is outstanding at this point will receive a grade of 0.
8. ANY ACTS OF PLAGIARISM WILL RESULT IN A GRADE OF 0 ON THE RELEVANT ASSIGNMENT/ESSAY AND AN F IN THE COURSE.

## **Required Book**

***What is Anthropology?*** by Thomas Hylland Eriksen

Available in the bookstore. Students are required to source additional weekly readings (below) online. All additional readings are required and are freely available through a Western-networked computer.

## CLASS SCHEDULE AND READINGS

### Week 1 – January 10 – Introductions

Topic	Readings
The structure and logic of the course	Read this syllabus
Why anthropology?	<i>What is Anthropology?</i> pp.3-18.

### Week 2 – January 17 – Foundations

Topic	Readings
Ethnography and theory	<i>What is Anthropology?</i> pp.19-79.
Reciprocity and kinship	<i>What is Anthropology?</i> pp.83-116.

### Week 3 – January 24 – Making Connections

Topic	Readings
Human worlds	<i>What is Anthropology?</i> pp.117-151.
Identities	<i>What is Anthropology?</i> pp.152-165.

### Week 4 – January 31 – Invented Traditions?

Topic	Readings
Creating pasts and identities	Keesing, R. (1989) "Creating the past: custom and identity in the contemporary Pacific." <i>The Contemporary Pacific</i> 1: 19-42.
Says who?	Trask, H.-K. (1991) "Natives and anthropologists: the colonial struggle." <i>The Contemporary Pacific</i> 3: 159-67.
Tradition and (in)authenticity	Jolly, M. (1992) "Specters of inauthenticity." <i>The Contemporary Pacific</i> 4: 49-72.

### Week 5 – February 7 – Reconsidering culture

Topic	Readings
Has the concept of culture run out of steam?	Abu-Lughod, L. (1991) "Writing against culture." IN: <i>Recapturing Anthropology</i> , J. Fox, ed., pp. 137-54. Santa Fe: School of American Research. Ortner, S. (1995) "Resistance and the problem of ethnographic refusal." <i>Comparative Studies in Society and History</i> 37: 173-93. Brightman, R. (1995) "Forget culture: replacement, transcendence, relexification." <i>Cultural Anthropology</i> 10: 509-46.

## Week 6 – February 14 – MIDTERM EXAM – 2 HOURS IN-CLASS ONLY

### READING WEEK FEBRUARY 17 - 25

## Week 7 – February 28 – Local culture and Christianity

Topic	Readings
Rupture, or continuity?	Douglas, B. (2001) "From invisible Christians to Gothic theatre: the romance of the millennial in Melanesian anthropology." <i>Current Anthropology</i> 42: 615-50. Robbins, J. (2003) "On the paradoxes of global Pentecostalism and the perils of continuity thinking." <i>Religion</i> 33 (3): 221-31. Scott, M. (2005) "'I was like Abraham: notes on the anthropology of Christianity from the Solomon Islands." <i>Ethnos</i> 70: 101-25.

## Week 8 – March 6 – Indigeneity and the Environment (I)

Identities and the politics of nature	Hames, R. (2007). "The ecologically noble savage debate." <i>The Annual Review of Anthropology</i> 36: 177-90. Tsing, A. (1999) "Becoming a tribal elder and other green development fantasies." IN: <i>Transforming the Indonesian Uplands</i> , T. Li, ed., pp. 157-200. New York: Routledge. Chao, S. (2019) "Wrathful ancestors, corporate sorcerers: rituals gone rogue in Merauke, West Papua." <i>Oceania</i> 89: 266-83.
---------------------------------------	--

## Week 9 – March 13 – Indigeneity and the Environment (II)

Topic	Readings
Identities and the politics of nature	Solway, J. (2009). "Human rights and NGO 'wrongs': conflict diamonds, culture wars and the 'Bushman question'." <i>Africa</i> 79: 321-46. Sylvain, R. (2014). "Essentialism and the Indigenous politics of recognition in Southern Africa." <i>American Anthropologist</i> 116: 251-64. Jackson, J. (1995) "Culture, genuine and spurious: the politics of Indianness in the Vaupés, Colombia." <i>American Ethnologist</i> 22: 3-27. Vincent, E. and T. Neale (2017) "Unstable relations: a critical appraisal of indigeneity and environmentalism in contemporary Australia." <i>The Australian Journal of Anthropology</i> 28: 301-23.

## Week 10 – March 20 – Gendered Voices

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>
Some Melanesian examples...	Kulick, D. (1993) "Speaking as a woman: structure and gender in domestic arguments in a New Guinea village." <i>Cultural Anthropology</i> 8: 510-41. Jorgensen, D. (2007) "Changing minds: hysteria and the history of spirit mediumship in Telefolmin." IN: <i>The Anthropology of Morality in Melanesia and Beyond</i> , J. Barker, ed., pp. 113-30. Aldershot: Ashgate. Malbrancke, A.-S., (2019) "Making the Baruya great again: from glorified great men to modern suffering subjects?" <i>The Australian Journal of Anthropology</i> 30: 68-83.

## Week 11 – March 27 – Dark Anthropology (ESSAY DUE IN CLASS THIS DATE)

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>
Debating Dark Anthropology	Robbins, J. (2013) "Beyond the suffering subject: toward an anthropology of the good." <i>Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute</i> 19: 447-62. Ortner, S. (2016) "Dark anthropology and its others." <i>HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory</i> 6 (1): 47-73. Wardlow, H. (2019) "With AIDS I am happier than I have ever been before." <i>The Australian Journal of Anthropology</i> 30: 53-67.

## Week 12 – April 3 – Summing Up

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>
	Sahlins, M. (1999) "What is anthropological enlightenment? Some lessons of the Twentieth Century." <i>Annual Review of Anthropology</i> 28: i-xxiii. Fassin, D. (2013) "Why ethnography matters." <i>Cultural Anthropology</i> 28: 621-46. Ortner, S. (2019) "Practicing engaged anthropology" <i>Anthropology of This Century</i> <a href="http://aotcpres.com/author/sherry-ortner/">http://aotcpres.com/author/sherry-ortner/</a> Luhmann, T. (2023) "Anthropology as spiritual discipline." <i>American Ethnologist</i> <a href="https://doi.org/10.1111/amet.13244">https://doi.org/10.1111/amet.13244</a>

~ End ~