

ANTHROPOLOGY 3350F-650
Society and Culture I: Historical Perspectives
Department of Anthropology
Course Outline
Fall 2023

Version date: September 5, 2023

General Information:

Class day/time: Asynchronous online activities plus one hour of synchronous discussion on Tuesdays 7:00-8:00 pm

Instructor: Kim Clark

Credit Value: 0.5

Delivery Format:

This course includes both asynchronous online learning and a more interactive component via a synchronous (real time) discussion session on Zoom on Tuesday nights from 7:00-8:00 pm Ontario time.

Requisites:

Antirequisites: the former Anthropology 3301E.

Prerequisites: Registration in third or fourth year in any Anthropology module

Course Description:

For anthropologists, context is crucial for understanding social and cultural practices, whether we are studying artifacts from past human activities found in association with other forms of evidence, or more current cultural practices embedded in a social context. In this course, we turn an anthropological gaze on anthropology itself, exploring both a series of anthropological concepts and the social processes through which anthropological perspectives were actively produced, highlighting the importance of context.

This course provides us with an opportunity to ask questions like: What are the origins of our discipline? Who created it and why? Where (and when) were they from? How did they define what constitutes anthropological knowledge? How did they come to "know" what they (thought they) knew?

These broad questions will shape how we explore the history of some important anthropological theories about social organization, analyzing how anthropological concepts and categories have been constructed and reconstructed over time. We will do so by examining the work and lives of some foundational figures in anthropology from the late-19th to mid-20th centuries. We will read examples of their original (primary) work, in order to understand how particular kinds of anthropological questions or perspectives emerged out of the intersection of specific life circumstances and interests, intellectual networks and formation of schools of thought, and particular ethnographic circumstances in their political and historical contexts.

Some of the questions that guide this course are: How did the scholars studied understand what constitutes "society," and how it relates to "culture"? How did they

conceptualize the causes of social or cultural patterning? What were the implicit or explicit boundaries of their units of study? And how did all of this relate to important political and social issues of the day?

At the end of this course, you will have a deeper knowledge of where anthropology came from and how some of its central questions evolved over time. Many of the concepts we will examine shaped research and thinking across the subfields of anthropology.

Note: You will notice that many of the prominent scholars we will read are white(ish) men—it is part of the history of our discipline that some forms of knowledge and some kinds of scholars were systematically excluded or marginalized, an issue we will think about together over the semester. Frankly, it's not a very attractive part of the history of our discipline! Nonetheless, there is much to be learned from reading these scholars whose work was important both in anthropology and in society. For those interested in learning more about Black anthropologists in particular, I hope you will consider enrolling in the winter term special topics course Anthropology 3396B: Black Lives and Black Experiences—an exciting new course which will include an exploration of the experiences of Black anthropologists.

A full course schedule including a week-by-week breakdown of topics and assigned readings is available on the course OWL site.

Learning Outcomes:

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

- Interpret how anthropological knowledge is produced through the intersection of: particular historical moments and political contexts; personal histories and intellectual networks; and an engagement with the situations and people anthropologists encounter during their research.
- Appreciate the limits of anthropological knowledge by exploring how scholars came to know what they thought they knew, shaped by the conditions in which they were working.
- Analyze the underlying assumptions of anthropological writings and effectively communicate that analysis both orally (through participation in regular class discussions) and in written assignments.
- Work collaboratively with peers to develop shared understandings of class readings and to contribute to regular brief oral presentations on those themes.

Course Materials:

All of the readings for this course can be found in digital format through the "Course Readings" tool in the course OWL site, at no cost to students.

Note that the Course Readings service passes the readings through optical character recognition (OCR) software to render them accessible and searchable. If you encounter readings that are not formatted for accessibility, please bring this to my attention.

Evaluation:

Weekly activities – 40% of your final grade.

The following weekly activities are designed to keep you engaged with the material to deepen your learning.

Quizzes – 15%

12 brief weekly quizzes (with five true-or-false questions on the assigned readings) to assess reading comprehension, to be completed on OWL before our class discussion session on Tuesdays – top 10 marks counted at 1.5% each.

Brief OWL activities – 7.5%

12 brief exercises (that will take no more than a few minutes each week) that will engage you with the weekly topic in a non-graded format. You will earn 0.75% (three quarters of a point) towards your grade for each exercise you complete, up to 10 of them, for a maximum of 7.5% of your final grade.

Discussion Participation – 17.5%

Discussion questions on the readings will be posted in advance, and students should do the readings with the discussion questions in mind, making some notes for each answer. The discussion questions are designed to guide you in identifying the most important points in the readings, and to provide the opportunity to begin to explore the authors' underlying assumptions.

Students will be divided into discussion groups at the beginning of the course, and the groups will be reconfigured halfway through the term. Each student should come to the synchronous class session prepared to discuss any/all of the discussion questions. At the beginning of the Tuesday session, each discussion group will be assigned one of the questions, at random, to present to the remainder of the class. Following a 15-minute break-out group session where each discussion group will prepare their answer, the class will reconvene to discuss together the assigned questions and any other issues related to the week's topic that students wish to raise.

Discussion participation will be assessed halfway through the term, and again at the end of the course. Part of your discussion grade will be assigned by the members of your group at the end of each six weeks, and part of it will be based on your self-assessment of your contributions to the group. I may adjust grades if necessary to ensure consistency across groups. (Additional guidance will be posted on OWL about how to evaluate discussion group members, and how to be a productive member of a group.) Discussion participation will make up 8.75% percent of the grade for each six weeks, totaling 17.5% across the course.

Writing Assignments (two short essays and one final take-home exam) – 60%

In addition to the above weekly activities, there are also writing assignments that will give you an opportunity to reflect on your learning at key points over the course. Writing assignments are an excellent way to organize your thoughts about the course material and practice your analytical and communication skills. They are also essential to meeting the requirements of this course's essay designation.

Two writing assignments – 35%

You are expected to complete two relatively short writing assignments of about 1500 words each during the term. The two papers will together be worth 35% of your grade. The exact weighting of each of them will be determined by how well you do on them, so it will be finalized at the end of the term. Your writing assignment that earns the higher grade will be worth 20% and the one with the lower grade will be worth 15%.

One final take-home exam – 25%

The final take-home exam will be due at a time determined by the Registrar's Office during the December exam period. Students will be provided with instructions for this assignment two weeks ahead of the due date.

Submission target date and grace period: For the two essays (but not the final take-home exam), there will be a target date for submission (which will be on a Friday evening before midnight) and then a 48-hour grace period (ending on Sunday night before midnight) within which assignments can still be submitted without penalty. (While OWL will indicate the essay is late if it is submitted past the Friday night date, you will not be penalized for submitting during the grace period.) While some students prefer a Friday deadline so they can do other activities on the weekend, others may feel they need the weekend to complete their assignments. This submission window gives you an

opportunity to manage your time and various commitments in the way that works best for you.

Late days bank: In addition to the grace period, each student can access a “late days bank” of three extra days in total to submit their two writing assignments past the end of the grace period. With the removal of the Self-Reported Absence policy by the university, this gives students an opportunity to submit work late when they need to do so, without having to provide any documentation or any explanation. You just have to complete this [online form to “withdraw” from the late days bank](#) so I know when to expect your essay.

If you use all three days for your first assignment, then you will not have any left for the second assignment, so just use what you need. Of course, with submission of appropriate documentation to your Academic Counsellor, additional academic considerations are possible. This late days bank is just to give you the freedom to deal with unexpected circumstances without having to submit documentation or an explanation.

I also encourage any students who need additional support to contact me to let me know what they need in order to be successful in meeting the learning outcomes for an assignment and/or for the course.

Course Specific Statements and Policies

Writing assignments: As an essay-designated course, the two writing assignments and the final take-home exam in this course must all be submitted, and two of these three assignments must receive passing grades in order to pass this course.

The writing assignments in this course are designed to help you meet the course learning outcomes. They give you an opportunity to go back over the readings, deepen your understanding of them both in relation the readings for other weeks and to the contextual information shared in the weekly lessons, gather evidence to support your analysis, and communicate that analysis.

Accessibility: This course is designed with accessibility and flexibility in mind. You can miss two of the Weekly OWL Activities, and your two lowest Quiz grades will be dropped. The course OWL site, recorded lectures and course readings are formatted for accessibility. The combination of asynchronous learning and synchronous Zoom discussions is designed to accommodate students with a range of different schedules and situations, while still including interactive learning. There is also flexibility in how students can participate in the weekly discussions. For the two writing assignments (but not the final take-home exam) there will be both a 48-hour grace period after the submission target date and, for use when you need it, a “late days bank” that you can withdraw days from without the need for any explanation or documentation. I welcome other suggestions for how to make the course more accessible to you. One way to provide those suggestions is via the course survey (see link on OWL); you can also reach out to me by email.

Institutional Statements and Policies

All students should familiarize themselves with Western's current [Academic Rights and Responsibilities](#) policies in the Academic Calendar. Such items include accommodations for students with disabilities, religious holidays, consideration for medical illness, academic appeals, plagiarism and scholastic offences, and code of student conduct.

Policies on Written Work: All required papers may 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.

Policies around the permissible use of AI tools will be clarified in the context of specific writing assignments in this course. You will find that information included with the assignment instructions on OWL. Generally, though, use of these tools is intended to enhance the learning experience by providing access to diverse information sources. However, it is essential that students critically evaluate the obtained information, exercise independent thinking, and engage in original analysis to synthesize and develop their own ideas, arguments, and perspectives. **All students are expected to uphold academic integrity by appropriately attributing all sources of information and avoiding plagiarism. Essays and writing assignments should reflect the student's own thoughts and independent written work.**

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.

Academic Consideration for Student Absences: For students who have missed, or will miss, any course work, whether it be for medical related or non-medical related reasons, please read the details and instructions on "[What is Academic Consideration](#)".

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

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

Religious Accommodation: Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

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