

HUNTER COLLEGE  
ANTHC 101  
**INTRODUCTION TO CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY**

Section LEC-01 \*Autumn 2014

Mon/Thu 8:10-9:25A

ROOM: West Building W714

**PROFESSOR**

Dr. Leo Coleman

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Office Hours: THU 10:00a-11:30a, and by appointment

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

This course provides students with an introduction to the themes and methods of American cultural anthropology. Through close readings of ethnographic texts, and engagement with core theoretical and critical debates which have shaped the sub-field of cultural anthropology since its founding in the early twentieth century, students will acquire a well-rounded sense of the cultural equipment which all humans share and the range of cultural, linguistic, and social diversity, and be able to analyze particular forms of human thought, expression, and social order. Among the questions we will address are: What is culture, and how it is created and maintained across generations? How and why do human societies exchange goods, organize consumption and celebration, and how do these activities provide both material goods and meaningful order for everyday life? How does individual experience relate to broader patterns of belonging, including ethnicity and nationality, and to ideas about race, gender, and culture? What are the relations between practical knowledge, culture, and scientific or technological efficacy? How have recent technological and political transformations (often called “globalization”) affected the experiences of peoples in different parts of the world? Finally, what is the role of the human past and “traditions” in meeting contemporary challenges? What does anthropology tell us about the risks and opportunities for individuals and societies alike in our interconnected and mobile world of cultures? Class materials will be based on ethnographic case-studies from diverse places around world, including small-town Yemen, island life in Melanesia, urban Brazil, rural India, and New York City, among others, as well as including anthropologists’ reports from life on the road and amidst transnational migration.

**COURSE MATERIALS**

**AND USER’S GUIDE TO THE READINGS:**

Three REQUIRED Books—one textbook and two ethnographies—are available for purchase at Shakespeare and Co., and also widely available through online retailers, as well as being on reserve at the Hunter College library. *Cultural Anthropology* is also available as an E-book, though I recommend (but do not require) that you get a paperback copy of the textbook. A paper copy of each ethnography is required.

TEXTBOOK: Guest, Kenneth J. 2014. *Cultural Anthropology: A Toolkit For A Global Age*. New York: Norton. ISBN: 978-0-393-92957-7

**ETHNOGRAPHIES:**

Meneley, Anne. 1997. *Tournaments Of Value: Sociability And Hierarchy In A Yemeni Town*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. ISBN: 0-8020-0883-6.

Xiang Biao 2006. *Global "Body Shopping": An Indian Labor System In The Information Technology Industry*. Princeton UP. ISBN: 9781400836338.

All other readings are available in COURSE MATERIALS on the Blackboard site for this course. I STRONGLY SUGGEST that you print out copies of each reading whenever practicable, and take notes while reading them. You should also keep notes of the lectures and films watched in class.

**ASSESSMENT STRUCTURE:**

Assessment will be based on regular attendance at lectures, timely completion of assignments, and graded in-class quizzes and exams. The Final exam will be *cumulative and comprehensive*.

Pop Quizzes and Attendance	10%
Field/Writing Assignments (2)	20%
First Exam	20%
Midterm	20%
Final Exam	30%
TOTAL	100%

**POLICIES AND NOTICES:****Policy on Electronic Devices:**

In order to ensure attentive participation in lecture, use of electronic devices, laptops, and e-readers is **not allowed** during course time.

**Attendance:** Because of the participatory and reflexive nature of the knowledge sought in this class, attendance and engagement with the lectures are expected and required. Should you have to miss class for any reason, you should make arrangements to share lecture notes and discuss what you missed with a class colleague. Any student who needs to miss class for religious observance or other valid reason should contact the instructor in advance for alternative arrangements. More than three unexcused absences from lecture will result in the reduction of the final grade.

**Late Work:** Work turned in late without a documented excuse will receive a deduction from full credit (up to 10%/day).

**Make-Up Exams:** In most circumstances there will be no make-ups allowed of exams and quizzes administered in class. If you need to miss an in-class quiz or examination please make every effort to contact me ahead of time ([leo.coleman@hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:leo.coleman@hunter.cuny.edu)) to notify me.

**Grading Scale:**

The following grading scale will be used for conversion of letter to numerical grades:

A	=	93-100
A-	=	90-92
B+	=	87-89
B	=	83-86
B-	=	80-82
C+	=	77-79
C	=	73-76
C-	=	70-72
D+	=	67-79
D	=	60-66
F	=	0-59

**Academic Integrity:** Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures.

**Disability Statement:** In compliance with the American Disability Act of 1990 (ADA) and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Hunter College is committed to ensuring educational parity and accommodations for all students with documented disabilities and/or medical conditions. It is recommended that all students with documented disabilities (Emotional, Medical, Physical, and/or Learning) consult the Office of AccessABILITY, located in Room E1214B, to secure necessary academic accommodations. For further information and assistance, please call: (212) 772- 4857 or (212) 650-3230.

*Readings and due dates on this syllabus are subject to change with notice. Please consult the syllabus on Blackboard for the most current course schedule.*

## LECTURE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1	Thu, Aug 28	<i>Overview: Four Key Terms: Culture, Exchange, Encounter, &amp; Power</i>
<b>FIELD ASSIGNMENT: VISUALIZING ANTHROPOLOGY</b>		
Visit American Museum of Natural History <b><u>BEFORE 1st EXAM</u></b>		
WEEK 2	Mon, Sep 1 Thu, Sep 4	<b>LABOR DAY, no class</b> <i>Introduction: Culture/Cultures/Cultural</i> CA: Chapter 2: "Culture" (Esp. pp 33-49, 57-62). Ruth Benedict, "The Diversity of Cultures" (1934). <b>Recommended: Raymond Williams, "Culture," in <i>Keywords</i></b>
WEEK 3	Mon, Sep 8 Thu, Sep 11	<i>The Fieldwork Tradition and Cultural Relativism</i> CA: Chapter 3, "Fieldwork and Ethnography" IN CLASS FILM 9/8: "Franz Boas" ( <i>Odyssey</i> /WNET)
WEEK 4	Mon, Sep 15 Thu, Sep 18	<b>1st EXAM</b> { <i>Elementary Forms and Dynamic Objects</i> Mauss, "The Gift" pp. 1-19 Kuper, "The Illusion of Primitive Society"

WEEK 5 Mon, Sep 22 *Competition and Reciprocity*  
Anne Meneley, *Tournaments of Value*, SKIM introduction  
and READ Chapters 1-2 (pp. 3-59, inclusive).

**NB: First Assignment (CULTURAL OBJECT) Due in Class Sep 22**

Thu, Sep 25 **NO CLASS**

WEEK 6 Mon, Sep 29  
Thu, Oct 2

*Kinship I: Ways of Connecting, Solidarity, Corporateness*  
CA: Ch. 10, Kinship, Family, Marriage (pp. 349-371)  
Meneley, *Tournaments*, Chs. 4 and Conclusion  
**RECOMMENDED: Meneley, Ch. 7.**

WEEK 7 Mon, Oct 6

*Kinship II: Relatives are Always a Surprise!*  
IN CLASS FILM: *A World Without Fathers or Husbands.*  
Blavier, Eric and Thomas Lavachery, dirs., 2001

Thu, Oct 9 CA: Ch. 10, "Kinship, Family, Marriage": pp. 374-381

WEEK 8 Mon, Oct 13 **NO CLASS**

Thu, Oct 16 **MIDTERM EXAM IN CLASS**

WEEK 9 Mon, Oct 20  
Thu, Oct 23

*Ceremonies and Rituals: Sexuality and Religion*  
CA: from Chapter 9, "Sexuality," pp. 320-336  
AND from Ch. 15, "Religion," pp. 576-586  
Marcel Mauss, "Body Techniques"

WEEK 10 Mon, Oct 27  
Thu, Oct 30

*Purity and Danger: Health and Illness*  
CA: Chapter 16, "Health and Illness," pp. 619-642  
Mary Douglas, "Purity and Danger"

WEEK 11 Mon, Nov 3

*Health, Illness, and Inequality*  
Ethan Watters, "The Organ Detective,"  
*Pacific Standard* 2014  
CA: Chapter 16, "Health and Illness," pp. 642-653  
CA: Chapter 3, pp. 73-77 (Re-read)  
(about *Death Without Weeping*)

Thu, Nov 6 IN CLASS FILM: *Drugs or Magic?* (Helene Basu, 2010)

WEEK 12	Mon, Nov 10 Thu, Nov 13	{ <i>Global Exchange: Economy and Migration</i> CA: Chapter 12, "Global Economy" Xiang Biao, <i>Global Body Shopping</i>
WEEK 13	Mon, Nov 17 Thu, Nov 20	{ Xiang Biao, <i>Global Body Shopping</i> CA: Chapter 7: "Ethnicity and Nationalism"
WEEK 14	Mon, Nov 24	{ <i>Social Change and Personal Experience (Culture and Personality, Updated)</i> Isabelle Clark-Deces, "The Wrongness of Kin," from <i>The Right Spouse</i> RECOMMENDED: Ruth Benedict, "The Individual and the Pattern of Culture"
	Thu, Nov 27	<b>THANKSGIVING</b>
WEEK 15	Mon, Dec 1	Sandhya Shukla, "Harlem's Pasts in Its Present," in <i>Ethnographies of Neoliberalism</i> .
	Thu, Dec 4	<b>NO CLASS (AAA Professional Meetings)</b>
WEEK 16	Mon, Dec 8 Thu, Dec 11	<i>Cultural Lives of Technology and Development</i> Joe Masco, "Desert Modern"

**NB: 2nd assignment (CULTURE AND SUBJECTIVITY) due Mon Dec 8 in class.**

WEEK 17 Mon, Dec 15 – LAST CLASS MEETING

**FINAL EXAM AS SCHEDULED BY REGISTRAR.**

