

ANTH 1220 Cultural Anthropology

Course Syllabus

Course description

The *Undergraduate Calendar* of The University of Manitoba describes ANTH 1220 as follows:

The comparative study of human societies and cultures, including language, economic and political organization, family and kinship, ritual and belief systems, cultural stability and change. Students may not hold credit for ANTH 1220 (or 076.122) and any of: ANTH 1221 (or 076.122), ANTH 1520 (or 076.152), or the former 076.120.

This course will provide you with a basic introduction to cultural anthropology and will broadly survey the central concepts, theories, and empirical findings of the subdiscipline. We will cover the major subfields of cultural anthropology with an emphasis on the comparative study of contemporary cultures. Over the next few months you will learn to understand and appreciate the wide array of cultural differences that have developed throughout the world and gain new insights into the patterns and dynamics of your own cultural traditions.

Anthropology literally means the study or science of the human race and, accordingly, falls within the social sciences. It treats all aspects of human experience, thought, and behaviour in every part of the world from our origins to the present day. Thus our interests include and cut across those of economics, political science, psychology, sociology, and many of the humanities and natural sciences as well. The general breadth of subject matter encourages quite a diversity of research activities, but all anthropologists are united by a unique common framework of theory and method. We understand human behaviour, institutions, and beliefs from the perspective of the culture concept. (Culture is understood as the learned body of knowledge, belief, and custom that people use to organize their natural and social environments.)

The diverse subject matter of anthropology is divided into four subdisciplines: physical anthropology, cultural anthropology, archaeology, and linguistics. Cultural anthropology deals with cultures of contemporary peoples and attempts to record and explain cross-cultural regularities and variations. Cultural anthropology is further subdivided by specialization and theoretical orientations that focus on specific institutional subsystems—social organization, subsistence, economy, politics, and religion—each of which will constitute a unit within this course.

Sub disciplines and Specialization within Anthropology



Course objectives

The instructional content, readings, and assignments for this course are designed to give you an overview of the whole subdiscipline of cultural anthropology and its specializations. You will be provided with the resources and skills to:

- define and describe the main principles of the anthropological description and analysis of human behaviour and culture including:
 - central concepts widely used in the discipline,
 - technical terms used for formal description of cultural institutions, and
 - basic ethnological (theoretical) schools;
- apply anthropological concepts and theories to specific ethnographic (cultural) examples and case studies;
- evaluate competing theoretical positions;
- develop “cultural sensitivity,” a knowledge and appreciation for the complexities and values of cultural orientations other than your own;
- view and evaluate your own cultural background from a comparative perspective; and
- pursue more advanced and specialized courses in cultural anthropology.

Course materials

The following required materials are available for purchase from the [University of Manitoba Bookstore](#). Please order your materials immediately, if you have not already done so. See your [Distance and Online Education Student Handbook](#) for instructions on how to order your materials.

Required

Texts

Bonvillain, Nancy and Brian Schwimmer (2009). *Cultural Anthropology, Canadian edition* Pearson Canada

Heider, Karl. (1997). *The Grand Valley Dani: Peaceful warriors* (3d ed.). Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

The Bonvillain and Schwimmer text is devoted to a full survey of the concepts, subfields, and comparative findings of cultural anthropology.

The Heider text is an ethnographic case study, which is to be read in conjunction with the general text to give detailed empirical illustration of the main points and concepts.

Videos

Dead Birds: The video link is available in Unit 7. An overview of this video is available by clicking on the following link "[Dead Birds Overview](#)".

Course outline

1. Introduction
 - a. The culture concept
 - b. Method and theory in cultural anthropology
2. Language and culture
 - a. Characteristics of human languages
 - b. Phonology—the sounds of language
 - c. Grammar
 - d. Semantics
 - e. Sociolinguistics
 - f. Historical linguistics
3. Subsistence systems
 - a. Environment, technology, and culture: Analytical perspectives
 - b. Foraging
 - c. Pastoralism
 - d. Horticulture
 - e. Intensive agriculture
 - f. Industrial society
4. Kinship and social organization
 - a. Introduction to kinship and social organization
 - b. Kinship systems overview
 - c. Kinship fundamentals
 - d. Kinship descent systems
 - e. Kinship terminology
 - f. Marriage systems
 - g. Kinship residence rules
 - h. Nonkinship-based modes of organization
5. Social Distinction and Hierarchy
 - a. Gender
 - b. Age
 - c. Wealth
6. Economy
 - a. Introduction: Basic units and processes
 - b. Theories of economic behaviour

- c. Systems of exchange
 - d. Spheres of the economy
 - e. Dani economic organization
7. Politics
- a. Principles of political analysis
 - b. Political structures
8. Ritual and religion
- a. Defining religion
 - b. Forms of religion
 - c. Theories of religion

Evaluation and grading

You will be required to submit quite a few assignments for this course, but they are all designed to be short and offer the advantage of ensuring that you don't let too much of a workload accumulate and that you receive frequent feedback about your progress. There is a mix between identifications (short essays), multiple choice tests, online discussion topics, and a final examination.

Please check the Course Schedule for assignment due dates.

Distribution of marks

8 Multiple choice tests (2 points each)	16%
3 Discussion topics (4 points each)	12%
5 Short essays (8 points each)	40%
Final examination	32%
Total	100%

Final Exam

The final exam will be conducted at the University of Manitoba, Fort Garry campus or at an alternate location off-campus. **All students must declare an exam location.** The Registrar's Office is responsible for scheduling the final exam. Once finalized, the exam date and time information will be posted on the University of Manitoba Exam site.

Grading scale

The following grade ranges will apply:

Grade	Range
A+	90-100
A	80-89
B+	75-79
B	70-74
C+	65-79
C	60-64

D	50-59
F	<50

Please note: All final grades are subject to departmental review.

Plagiarism, cheating, and examination impersonation

You should acquaint yourself with the University's policy on plagiarism, cheating, and examination impersonation as detailed in the General Academic Regulations and Policy section of the University of Manitoba *Undergraduate Calendar* or you may refer to Student Affairs at <http://www.umanitoba.ca/student>.

Distance and Online Education (DE) Student Resources

In your course website there are links for the following:

- Contact Distance and Online Education Staff
- Distance and Online Student Handbook
- Distance and Online Education Website

Acknowledgements

Content specialist:	Brian Schwimmer, Ph.D. Department of Anthropology Faculty of Arts University of Manitoba
Instructional designer:	Cheryl McLean, M.Ed., Ph.D. Bonnie Luterbach, M.Ed. Distance and Online Education University of Manitoba
Webmaster:	Abba Tregabov, M.Sc. Janice Miller, M.Sc. Distance and Online Education University of Manitoba
Desktop publisher:	Lorna Allard Distance and Online Education University of Manitoba

Copyright © 1998, 2011.

All rights reserved. No part of the material protected by this copyright may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or otherwise without the prior written permission from the copyright owner.

University of Manitoba, Distance and Online Education

[Copyright © University of Manitoba, Distance and Online Education.](#)

[Distance and Online Education uses Google Analytics](#)