

ANT 2000 Introduction to Anthropology

Section: U05 & U06

In Person

Fall Term 2026

Course Meeting Information

U05 Monday/Wednesday: 2:00 – 3:15 Ziff 150

U06 Monday/Wednesday: 3:30 – 4:45 PC 431

Professor Information

Hannah Borenstein

Contact: hborenst@fiu.edu

Office Hours: Monday 12-2 PM, SIPA 318

By appointment

Course Description and Purpose

In this course, we'll be exploring human beings - from our very beginnings as a species, to our earliest forms of culture - to our modern incarnations in the contemporary world. We'll examine human biological and cultural variation, the history (and pre-history) of our social structures, human language, and all of those features which truly make the human species unique - and yet, show us how intimately connected we are with the rest of the world.

Course Goals

This class is a part of the University Core Curriculum (UCC). This course satisfies the following UCC requirement for Social Science Group One: Students will demonstrate the ability to examine behavioral, social, and cultural issues from a variety of points of view. Students will demonstrate an understanding of basic social and behavioral science concepts and principles used in the analysis of behavioral, social, and cultural issues, past and present, local and global.

UCC Category Description

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Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

Student learning outcomes allow faculty to assess the level of proficiency in content knowledge and skills that their students acquire in a course.

If the objective meets a special designation, you will see the code after the objective:

University Core Curriculum: UCC
Gordon Rule Writing: GRW
Global Learning: GL
Civic Literacy: CL

- Define the major fields of Anthropology and their specializations.
- Gain familiarity with some of the major debates in anthropology throughout the decades.
- Understand the methods anthropologists use to analyze how various groups of people organize and make sense of the world around them.
- Critically reflect on their own biases and worldviews (UCC).
- Consider how others bring their own worldviews to their research and understanding of culture (UCC).
- Demonstrate knowledge of the interrelatedness of local, global, international, and intercultural issues, trends, and systems. (GL – Global Awareness)
- Conduct a multi-perspective analysis of local, global, international, and intercultural problems. (GL - Global Perspective)
- Demonstrate willingness to engage in local, global, international, and intercultural problem solving. (GL - Global Engagement)

Assignments

Class Participation (20% of the grade)

Good participation does not have to mean that you have total command of the material for that day's class. Good participation means contributing comments, reflections, and questions that keep our discussion moving and actively working with your classmates during group exercises. There will be frequent small group break out discussions. Your participation grade will reflect your contributions to these discussions that help move the class forward.

Writing Assignments (15% of the grade)

There are two different types of writing assignments in this class. The first are reading checks – these will be done in class, handwritten, on a reading assigned before the class. The aim here is to prove that you have read the text and that you can reflect upon it. The second is a tiered assignment using AI. Further instructions for each assignment will be provided on Canvas.

Group Assignment (10% of the grade)

You will be broken up into small groups to work on a small research project about a commodity. For the project you will work with your group to do some basic research into an objects' production and consumption and write a set of questions that an anthropologist could pose for future research. As a group you will present your research to the class in brief presentations.

Ethnography Assignment/Presentation (15% of the grade)

Your ethnography assignment will consist of two parts. The first (and larger) part will be a written mini-ethnography (3-4 pages) after conducting participant observation research of your own. You will then share your experience and findings with the class in brief 5-minute presentations.

Assessments

Quizzes (2, worth a total of 10% of the grade)

There are 3 quizzes that cover the readings, films, and lecture materials, each of which is worth 5% of your grade. Each quiz will consist of 5-10 multiple choice questions and 1-2 open-ended questions that can be answered in 3-4 sentences. A study guide is provided for each quiz to help you know what you should be paying attention to in the readings and films, and the questions on the quiz will be identical or nearly identical to those on the study guides. Quiz questions will also come from class lectures.

Midterm (10% of the grade)

The midterm exam will include multiple choice, matching, true/false questions, and short answer questions.

Final (20% of the grade)

The final exam will include multiple choice, matching, true/false questions, short answer questions, and one short essay.

AI Rules and Regulations: Unless explicitly stated, AI is not allowed on written assignments or assessments.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Introduction to Anthropology

I. Foundational Concepts

Week 1: August 24 & 26 What is Anthropology? / Culture Concept

Monday:

Introduction

Wednesday:

Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, 1-19.

Horace Miner, *Body Ritual Among The Nacirema*

Week 2: Aug 31 & September 2: Methods & Ethics

Monday:

Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description," excerpts.

Orin Starn, *Ishis's Brain* "Introduction."

Wednesday:

Elizabeth Chin, *My Life With Things: The Consumer Diaries*, pp. 3-4, 98-106.

George Gmelch, "Native Anthropology: Studying the Culture of Baseball," 105-119.

***Reading Check #1**

Week 3: Sept 7 (No Class) & 9 Evolution & Archaeology

Monday:

No Class – Labor Day

Wednesday:

Jeremy Da Silva, *First Steps* "How We Walk"

Open Stax, 1.1, "The Study of Humanity," 1.2 "The Four-Field Approach," 2.1

"Archaeological Research Methods," 2.2 "Conservation and Naturalism."

***Reading Check #2**

Week 4: Sept 14 & 16 Culture Race, Ethnicity

Monday:

Lee Baker, *From Savage to Negro*, Introduction (1-9), Chapter 1 (11-25)

Zora Neale Hurston, *Mules and Men*

***AI Assignment Part 1 Due**

Wednesday:

***Quiz #1**

Week 5: Sept 21 & 23: Language and Communication

Monday: Edward Sapir, *An Introduction to the Study of Speech*, excerpts.

***AI Assignment Part 2 Due**

Wednesday:

Influencer Creep

***Reading Check #3**

II. Exchange, Circulation, Mobility

Week 6: Sept 28 & Sept 30 Gift/Economic Exchange

Monday:

Marcel Mauss, "Giving and Exchange as Alternative Economy and Social Bond [1925].

Prestation, Gift and Potlatch; Distribution of the System. In *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*. New York: Norton: 3-5, 17-45.

Wednesday:

Karl Marx *Das Kapital*, excerpts.

Emily Guendelsberger, *On the Clock: What Low-Wage Work Did to Me and How It Drives America Insane*, pp. 3-79.

Week 7: Oct 5 & 7 Kinship & Potlatch

Monday:

Kinship and Gender, “Gender, Reproduction, and Kinship,” pp 1-25.

Indira Arumugam, “Kin But Not Kind: An Anthropologist Among ‘Her People.’”

***AI Assignment Part 3 Due**

Wednesday:

Ongka’s Big Moka

Week 8: Oct 12 & 14 Midterm and Food Systems

Monday: **Midterm**

Wednesday:

Sydney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, selections.

Hanna Garth, *Food in Cuba*, “Introduction: In Pursuit of Adequacy” (1 – 27).

Week 9: Oct 19 & 21 Globalization/Migration

Monday:

Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*,

Benjamin Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

Wednesday:

Jason De Leon *Land of Open Graves*, “Introduction.”

***Reading Check #4**

Week 10: Oct 26 & 28 Technology

Monday:

Michel Foucault, “Panopticism,” (195-218).

Darren Byler, *In the Camps: China’s High-Tech Penal Colony*, (10-37).

Wednesday:

Quiz #2

III. Specialized Directions

Week 11: Nov 2 & 4 Games & Sports

Monday:

William Kelly, *The Sports World of the Hanshin Tigers*, “Introduction.”

Wednesday:

No readings

Week 12: Nov 9 & Nov 11: TBD

Monday: TBD

Wednesday:

No Class – Holiday

Week 13: Nov 16 & 18 Group Presentations

Monday: **Group Presentations**

Wednesday: **Group Presentations**

Week 14: Nov 23 & 27 Design Anthropology

Monday:

Wendy Gunn, Ton Otto, and Rachel Charlotte Smith, *Design Anthropology*, Selections.

Graeme Wood, “Anthropology Inc.” *The Atlantic*

Guest Speaker, Chris Daley, UX Designer for Google (Ph.D., Cultural Anthropology)

Wednesday: No Class – Thanksgiving

Week 15: Nov 30 & Dec 2: Presentations

Monday:

Final Presentations

Wednesday:

Final Preparation

Week 16:

Final Exam