INTRODUCTION TO CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY
ANTHROPOLOGY 1111
Course Syllabus – Fall 2010

Professor: Donna Chollett
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Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday. 10:30-11:30
and by appointment
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Course Objectives:
The objectives of this course are to examine the key concepts, methods, and theoretical orientations used by anthropologists. We will explore the unique manner in which anthropologists conduct fieldwork, as well as the range of sociocultural diversity and alternative forms of human organization, which anthropologists have documented. The course emphasizes anthropology's comparative perspective and provides a framework for cross-cultural comparison. Particular attention will be given to the contemporary world and how the forces of social change impinge on the diverse cultures that constitute the modern world. We will raise ethical questions regarding the fate and survival of indigenous peoples, with the central objective of developing greater appreciation and sensitivity toward cultural diversity. This course allows you the unique opportunity to develop an understanding of the forces of ethnocentrism, domination, and oppression of other cultures and subcultures and the intellectual competence to recognize, critique, and challenge them. You will be an important part of this course; your participation, ideas, and insights are encouraged.

Required Texts:


Supplemental readings as indicated
Course Requirements:

4 Exams (2 worth 50 points, 2 worth 40 points) will consist of multiple choice questions, covering 1) lectures, 2) supplemental readings, and 3) films. Exams are not comprehensive. **Exams must be taken at scheduled times unless arrangements are made in advance.**

4 Quizzes (25 points each) on the 4 ethnographies. Quizzes may consist of a mixture of multiple choice and open-ended questions. The four ethnographies are not covered on exams.

Readings on the course schedule should be completed before the beginning of each week. Students are responsible for all material and information given during lectures; your ability to apply lecture material on exams and quizzes will have a significant impact on the grade you earn for this course. Since lecture material is not covered in the textbooks, class attendance is essential and mandatory. 3 ½ % of the course grade will be deducted for each class missed. Students with more than five unexcused absences will be dropped from the course.

Students taking the course S/N must complete all course assignments and receive 70% of the course points to earn a passing grade. I reserve the right to assign an "F" to students who have accumulated enough points for an "S" yet who fail to complete all course requirements, including preparation for the 4th exam.

Incomplete grades for this course will be given only in unusual circumstances and when arrangements are made in advance. If an exception is made, no grade changes will be made after one semester. **Students must complete ALL** assigned work to pass this course.

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<th>Course Points:</th>
<th>Grading Scale:</th>
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<tr>
<td>4 Exams</td>
<td>A  93-100%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A-  90-92%</td>
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<td>4 Quizzes</td>
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<td>B    83-86%</td>
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<td>B-   80-82%</td>
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<td>C    73-76%</td>
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<td>C-   70-72%</td>
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<td>D+  67-69%</td>
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<td>D    60-66%</td>
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<td>F    59 &amp; under</td>
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The anthropology web site can be located at [http://www.morris.umn.edu/academic/anthropology](http://www.morris.umn.edu/academic/anthropology). The site contains information on the **anthropology major at UMM**, anthropology courses, course syllabi, and anthropology faculty. The link “Anthropology resources on the web” contains numerous links of interest to anthropology students; additional links on our cultural anthropology page (click Donna Chollett, then Introduction to Cultural Anthropology) allow you to explore many of the topics addressed in this course. Materials, video guides, and exam study guides for this course are listed on this page. Please visit and carefully examine the **exam study skills** link on our course web page before taking the first exam.

The University of Minnesota is committed to providing all students equal access to learning opportunities. Disability Services is the campus office that works with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. Students registered with Disability Services who have a letter requesting accommodations, are encouraged to contact the instructor early in the semester. Students who have, or think they may have, a disability (e.g. psychiatric, attentional, learning, vision, hearing, physical, or systemic), are invited to contact Disability Services for a confidential discussion at 320-589-6163 or freyc@morris.umn.edu. Additional information is available at the DS web site at [www.morris.umn.edu/services/dsoaac/dso](http://www.morris.umn.edu/services/dsoaac/dso).
Earning a college degree demands commitment and hard work. You have the privilege of pursuing an academic career and that should be given top priority as you progress through this semester. You are earning university credit for this course and are expected to approach the course by taking UMM academic standards seriously. You are responsible for compliance with all requirements as defined in this course syllabus. You are highly recommended to develop academic strategies for success, rather than succumb to a student culture that fosters “just getting by,” an assumption that your presence in class earns you a grade or degree, encourages students to miss classes, and presumes that an “A” grade is easily earned. You are here to excel—make that your priority! In that vein, your course contract establishes several requisites for class participation:

Keep up with class assignments:
- Complete assigned readings each week, rather than cramming before exams
- Complete all work on time; I do not accept late work except in special circumstances and by special, prior arrangement
- I will not give incomplete grades for this course; any student who has not completed all work on time will earn an “F” for the course
- In case of emergency, I will need a dated excuse; phone calls into campus clinic are not acceptable—you must be seen by a doctor or provide an administrator’s excuse

Approach this course in a scholarly manner:
- Read for insight, rather than for details
- Read to understand, not to memorize; the purpose of college education is to acquire knowledge that can be put to practical use in your daily and work life
- Accept the course requirements as a challenge, rather than a task that must be performed; college scholars are intellectually interested and seek to gain new knowledge about the world around them
- Challenge yourself as you read and learn; ask why what you are learning is significant and think critically about that significance
- Look for patterns, relationships, significances in lecture material, assigned readings and visual materials
- Approach learning as a process, rather than an end

Follow basic protocols for courtesy:
- Turn your cell phones and electronic devices off before class—they are disruptive!
- Be on time for class—if you arrive late, you not only miss important information, but disturb others; you are responsible for all material, including important announcements made at the beginning of class; remain in the classroom the entire period
- Attend all classes; you are registered in order to learn; when you are not in class, you are not learning and every class is important!
- Avoid chatting with your classmates or passing notes during lecture—it disturbs those around you and the professor
- Refrain from texting, surfing the web, reading, or doing work for other classes during class time
- Any student who sleeps during class will be counted absent
- Show respect to both the professor and your classmates, and for differing views

All of the above are expected behaviors for university students; please strive to make the best of your college career!
INTRODUCTION TO CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY  
COURSE SCHEDULE - ANTH 1111

WEEK #1, AUGUST 25-27: Introduction; the Concept of Culture  
SR – Body Ritual Among the Nacirema  
SR – An Outsider’s View of American Culture

Anthropology is a discipline noted for its holism, cultural relativism, and its comparative perspective. Students are introduced to the anthropological concept of culture. Anthropologists do not share agreement on the definition of culture, yet most agree on its central attributes—culture is learned, arbitrary, integrated, shared, transmitted from generation to generation, and adaptive. Ethnocentrism derives from being a member of a particular culture; how, then, can we use cultural relativism to understand other cultures? Idealist and materialist orientations toward the interpretation of culture will be explored.

WEEK #2, AUGUST 29 - SEPTEMBER 3: Anthropological Fieldwork and Methods  
SR – Rituals at McDonalds

Anthropologists study other cultures through ethnographic fieldwork—the study of a particular culture, and through ethnology—using cross-cultural comparisons to look for similarities and differences among cultures of the world. We will be interested in how anthropologists deal with culture shock and the methods they use in collecting and interpreting data. Participant observation is a hallmark of anthropological fieldwork, by which the anthropologist attempts to gain an emic understanding of the culture.

WEEK #3, SEPTEMBER 8-10: Anthropological Fieldwork and Methods, Continued  
Nisa – Introduction, Ch. 1-3  
SR – Kapluna Daughter

We will continue our discussion of anthropological fieldwork, using examples from actual fieldwork.

No class Monday, Labor Day

SR = Supplemental Required readings

NISA / !KUNG  
BAKAIIRI  
BEDOUIN  
RIGOBERTA MENCHU
This week we will begin an analysis of the various theories used by anthropologists, with particular attention to how they have influenced our understandings of culture in the past, and continue to do so. We will examine the roots of anthropological theory and the works of the evolutionists. Early anthropologists were often known as "armchair anthropologists" who gathered information from travelers' and missionaries' accounts. They formulated notions of cultural development using evolutionary theory. We will critically evaluate the social milieu in which this thinking developed and its implications for the world's cultures. We will see how Franz Boas, as a historical particularist, rejected evolutionary theory and stressed cultural relativism and fieldwork. Boas trained many of the well-known anthropologists, such as Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict, who founded the culture and personality school. This school emphasized enculturation, intra-cultural variation and inter-cultural variation, and developed the notion of cultural configurations. In evaluating the different theories, take note of both their strengths and their weaknesses.

This week we will contrast the work of American anthropologists with the British anthropologists—Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown and their functionalist and structural-functionalist approaches to understanding human culture. Like the historical particularists and culture and personality school, British anthropologists rejected evolutionism, yet their approach is quite distinct from their counterparts in the Americas. Much of their fieldwork was conducted in a colonial context and emphasized positivist methods. How human societies adapt to their environment was of special interest to the neoevolutionary researchers, such as Julian Steward and Leslie White, and to the cultural materialist perspective of Marvin Harris. Marxist anthropologists take class structure and conflict into account. We will learn how these theoretical perspectives were applied in understanding and explaining diverse types of subsistence systems.

This week we begin our comparison of hunting and gathering, horticulture, pastoralism, peasant production, and industrial agriculture as subsistence strategies and evaluate how well different societies have adapted to their environments. We will also develop an understanding of how the cultural, economic, political, and belief systems are interconnected with the type of subsistence strategy. Adaptation to the environment is stressed and we will look at both the constraints of the environment and the idea of environmental possibilism. Hunting and gathering was the predominant way of making a living for 99% of human history; the few remaining foragers are now being forced out of existence. Why are hunters and gatherers referred to as "the original affluent society"? Hunting and gathering is the way of life traditionally followed by the people represented in Nisa: The Life and Words of a !Kung Woman.
WEEK #7, OCTOBER 4-8: Subsistence Strategies: Horticulture

The Bakairí Indians – Ch. 1-4
SR – Spin-Doctoring the Yanomamo

Analysis of subsistence strategies continues with emphasis on the distinctive features of horticultural societies and how these influence forms of social organization. Slash-and-burn, or swidden, horticulture requires frequent moving of fields, yet can be adaptive in a forested environment. We will look at the impact of a sedentary or semi-sedentary way of life, the dependence on crops, and inter-village rivalry that often characterizes horticultural societies. As you begin reading about Bakairí swidden horticulturalists of the Brazilian Amazon, we will study the Yanomami, the Kayapo, and controversies surrounding anthropological studies of these groups.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 4 - QUIZ ON NISA

WEEK #8, OCTOBER 11-15: Political Systems

The Bakairí Indians – Ch. 5-7
SR – Cannibalistic Revenge in Jalé Warfare

Are humans violent by nature? Whether aggressiveness is inherent in human nature raises important questions for political organization and social control. Anthropologists have shown how the type of leadership and means of social control varies from society to society. We will look at challenges to leadership and leadership roles in Bakairí culture as social change ensues. Traditional anthropological analysis of political systems has, however, received broad criticism. We will evaluate the heuristic utility of analytic categories such as bands, tribes, chiefdoms, and states and critique the misuse of these typologies. We will then use the comparative perspective to ask whether there are societies where warfare and violence are absent and study different theories of warfare to better understand political process. Anthropologists offer different interpretations on the presence of warfare among societies such as the Yanomami; we will analyze the implications for such interpretations for the societies studied. Later in this course we will explore state repression of peasants in Guatemala and Mayan peasants’ relationship to the political system.

WEEK #9, OCTOBER 20-22: Economic Systems

The Bakairí Indians – Ch. 8-11
SR – The Impact of Money on an African Subsistence Economy

Are humans by nature driven by a desire to accumulate and maximize their resources? In gaining an anthropological understanding of economic systems, we will evaluate formalist and substantive approaches, with special emphasis on production, exchange, and consumption in non-industrial societies. We will look at case examples to illustrate and expand on this debate, for example, the Kula Ring of the Trobriand Islanders, the Tiv spheres of exchange, and the Kwakiutl potlatch. In analyzing these diverse forms of exchange, we will gain greater appreciation for the interconnectedness between economics and the cultural, social, political, and belief systems of the societies studied.

No class Monday, Fall Break
WEEK #10, OCTOBER 25-29: Subsistence Strategies: Pastoralism

Veiled Sentiments – Ch. 1-2

Pastoralists depend on herding animals as an adaptive strategy. They may be sedentary or nomadic. In pastoral societies, kinship becomes an important form of social organization. We will also be concerned with the conflicts between nomadic pastoralists and the nation states within which they live. Modern governments have made powerful efforts to turn nomadic pastoralists into sedentary farmers. This fact is illustrated in the textbook Veiled Sentiments, on the Bedouin pastoralists.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 25 – EXAM II (all materials, weeks 5 through 9)  
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27 – QUIZ ON THE BAKAIRI INDIANS OF BRAZIL

WEEK #11, NOVEMBER 1-5: Subsistence Strategies: Pastoralism, continued

Veiled Sentiments – Ch. 3-5  
SR – Drought Follows the Plough  
SR – The Failure to Encapsulate

Veiled Sentiments illustrates a formerly nomadic group of Bedouin pastoralists. Like many pastoralists around the world, governments have made every effort to sedentarize them. As we will examine a variety of pastoral societies, students will come to understand, through lecture and readings, the socially and environmentally destructive impact of sedentarization. Yet, some pastoralists have resisted in an attempt to preserve their cultures.

WEEK #12, NOVEMBER 8-12: Kinship

Veiled Sentiments – Ch. 6-8  
SR – When Brothers Share a Wife  
SR – Uterine Families and the Women’s Community

In this unit we will be interested in the diverse forms of marriage and family and how they function in different societies. Why do people take multiple spouses? Marry their cousins? Descent groups are a primary form of social organization in many societies. Why do some societies reckon descent only through the male line, or the female line? We will analyze how different systems of kinship relate to subsistence strategies and the functions they serve in different societies. Students will be introduced to the kinship charts used by anthropologists. As we explore kinship systems, we will come to realize the rationale behind these various ways of organizing kinship. This unit will help you to understand the kinship relations encountered in Veiled Sentiments.

WEEK #13, NOVEMBER 15-19: Belief Systems

You will view a film on the world view of the Hopi people and how this reflects their belief system

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 15 – EXAM III (all materials, weeks 9 through 12) + QUIZ ON VEILED SENTIMENTS
WEEK #14, NOVEMBER 22: **Subsistence Strategies: Agriculture & Peasants**

*I, Rigoberta Menchú* – Ch. 1-11  
SR – Milpa Logic and Wealth Differentiation

We contrast sustainable agriculture with the deforestation created by modern agriculture, thus we will critically analyze this issue with regard to sustainability of the earth’s environment. Today, industrial agriculture is transforming the nature of land use throughout the world. The green revolution will be discussed as a force of industrial agriculture. Many agricultural societies are characterized by the presence of peasants. Anthropologists study peasant societies and are interested in the fate of peasants in a rapidly transforming world. We will examine the different theoretical perspectives applied to the understanding of peasants through the works of Redfield, Kroeber, Foster, Chayanov, Wolf, and others. Some scholars argue that peasants are disappearing through proletarianization, or alternatively, by becoming capitalist producers; others argue that they continue to resist the encroachment of capitalist forces. We will look at the historical basis for the development of peasant societies, relations of power with state systems, and the current plight of peasants as they cope with economic crises. A significant feature of peasant society is its relationship to the broader social structures of the state. Particular attention will be given to peasants in Mexico. Your ethnography, *I, Rigoberta Menchú* presents a peasant society in Guatemala and the struggle of these Mayan people against the repressive military government.

No class Wednesday or Friday, Thanksgiving Break

WEEK #15, NOVEMBER 29 - DECEMBER 3: **Testimonio Literature & The Culture Wars**

*I, Rigoberta Menchú* – Ch. 12-22  
SR – I, Rigoberta Menchú and the “Culture Wars”

The discipline of anthropology has faced several significant methodological, theoretical, and ethical challenges. Among these are Derrick Freeman’s refutation of Margaret Mead’s defining ethnography and the scandal of Napoleon Chagnon’s characterization of the Yanomami people, covered elsewhere in the course. This week we examine a third issue, testimonio literature upon which the book *I, Rigoberta Menchú* is based. As you read this book we will analyze David Stoll’s restudy of Guatemalan Mayan peasants and examine the implications of “truth-telling” in anthropological accounts. Students will disagree on the outcome of the culture wars that ensued over these ethnographies, but you should strive to sharpen your critical thinking skills.

WEEK #16, DECEMBER 6-10: **Social Change and Cultural Survival**

*I, Rigoberta Menchú* – Ch. 23-34  
SR – Why People Can't Feed Themselves  
SR – The Guaraní: The Economics of Ethnocide

All cultures must change in order to adapt to their changing environments. We will look at the mechanisms of cultural change, giving particular attention to the ethnocentric notion of “modernization” and how development, the activities of multinational corporations, world hunger, and structural violence have affected different societies. We will study specific examples of genocide and ethnocide and how these processes relate to the fate of indigenous peoples. These topics raise issues concerning assimilation and the resurgence of ethnicity in the contemporary world.

FINAL EXAM – TUESDAY, DEC 14, 8:30-10:30 AM (all materials weeks 13 through 16)  
+ QUIZ ON *I, RIGOBERTA MENCHU*