



ANTH 102 (DE): Introduction to Socio-Cultural Anthropology

Instructor: Professor EJ Sobo
esobo@mail.sdsu.edu

Date: Summer 2010
May 27 – July 7

Class Location: Online via Blackboard

Office Hours: TBD

This syllabus is intended to guide us through the course. However, circumstances can change and so I reserve the right to change the syllabus as needed to ensure that we fulfill the objectives of the course. You will receive full and fair notification regarding any such changes.

Distance or Online learning Prerequisites: The prerequisite for this course is **total** online or distance learning preparedness. Take SDSU's 'readiness survey' (https://sunspot.sdsu.edu/pls/webapp/survey.hybrid_learning.main) and **prepare your computer for the course** as per the instructions contained in the orientation letter that all enrolled students receive about one week prior to the first day of class.

If you enrolled at a later date, follow the simple instructions available to you in the 'Day 1' folder.

- Depending on your current computer set-up, you may need to get **speakers** or a headset, and download (for free) all necessary software, including the latest versions of: Adobe's **Acrobat Reader** and **Flash Player**, **QuickTime Player**, and **Java**.
- Download Mozilla's **Firefox** if you are using Explorer (Explorer does not work well with Blackboard).
- You also may need to learn how to use Blackboard. Go to: <http://its.sdsu.edu/blackboard/student/>

Course Focus

This course asks what culture is, how it emerged, and what it enables us humans to do. We will explore the diverse ways that culture is expressed around the world, as well as the common threads that link all cultures and define the human experience. We also will examine some of the methods that anthropologists use to document and analyze culture and some of the theories that have been applied to explain it.

After taking this course, you will be able to more fully understand and explain differences in the ways that various groups of people organize and give meaning to their lives. You will have compared your own culture and mainstream US culture with other cultures, past and present, and so will have come to see that our lives are just as 'interesting' as those of 'the other'.

The course is directly relevant to our quest to understand the historical and contemporary basis for the present diversity of human lifeways, and to preserve as well as benefit from the richness of this diversity. Each culture answers the challenges of human existence in different ways—in ways that make sense given that culture’s context—and each has something of value to teach or lend us as we struggle to carve out a meaningful life in 21st century America.

Overview of how the course ‘works’

Organization

The course is organized into several sections, each with subsidiary lessons or ‘modules’ followed by an online test. Simply go to Blackboard, enter the relevant section (starting with 1), and **work through the modules** by completing **assigned reading (including videos, etc.)** in the order presented. At the end of each module, you will complete some ‘**learning and self assessment activities**’ such as quick quizzes or reflective writing to *spot-check* your learning. Then, on the designated testing day, take the **section test**, and turn in your **writing assignment** (a brief report or essay, the parameters for which will have been provided at the beginning of the relevant section of the course). Afterward, simply move on to the next section (the sections also may be called ‘parts’).

Please note that although **you may work at your own pace within a given section**, making this course ideal for anyone with a complicated schedule, **you must complete all work by midnight on the closing dates provided**. *This arrangement keeps students on track and ensures that the workload entailed in this course—for you, for me, and for our TA (if we have one)—is evenly distributed for the entire duration of our time together.*

Technological Issues

This is an online course. Information technology or IT challenges can—and will—come up. Be prepared for them.

Please be assured that if and when problems occur on the SDSU end, you will not be penalized. However, when problems occur on your end, the story is different: **You are responsible for your computing needs**; student IT problems are not an acceptable excuse for non-completion of work. When problems occur on your end, you must fix them. You can **go to the Student Computing Center in Love Library for help; call (619) 594-3189; or email scc@rohan.sdsu.edu**. Unfortunately, I cannot provide IT support.



Documentation

This is an online course. You can work at your own pace from week to week, so long as you complete assigned work by our set deadlines. **You can work where you want, when you want.** However, *because* this is an online

course, we won't have any time together during which I can lay out instructions for you verbally. That means we have to rely heavily on course documents such as this one.

This and the schedule provide for you a detailed map of the course and a plan for success as you move through the semester with me. I say 'with me' because I am going to be here with you every step of the way and I value highly teacher-student interaction. The documentation simply **anticipates and answers questions students will have about the course** so that they don't need to be asked, saving you time and protecting you from the anxiety that can accompany vague instructions.

Required Learning Resources (required readings/media)

'Learning Resources' for this course—the materials that you are *required* to read, view, etc.—include *one textbook, one ethnographic memoir, and numerous online readings, videos, and interactive Web sites*. The books are as follows:



1. *INTRODUCING CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY* (4th edition), by Roberta Lenkeit. It is published by McGraw-Hill Higher Education. You may purchase a subscription to the book via the McGraw-Hill Website (see Blackboard) for \$31.75. Alternately, you may buy the book at our bookstore or online elsewhere. When I last looked on Amazon, the price ranged from \$40.74 - \$66.40.
2. *MONIQUE AND THE MANGO RAINS*, by Kris Holloway (2007, Waveland Press). New, the book lists at about \$18. When I last looked, Amazon's price was \$12.89.

You will need the books right away, at the start of the course. The books have been ordered by KB BOOKS and the SDSU bookstore. KB Books (5187 College Ave.; 287-2665) will give an extra discount if you mention my name and "paperless coupon," or present this syllabus. Aztec books (SDSU's bookstore; <http://www.sdsu bookstore.com/>) will offer free shipping for online students; the discount will be taken at the end of the transaction.

You will access all other learning resources via Blackboard: Each lesson module has a 'Learning Resources' set that includes clickable URLs for the required readings (etc.).

Grades

A. Components of final grade. Below, the three components of the final grade are listed. More general grading information is provided in the section that follows.





All work, including tests, must be completed or submitted *on time* to count toward your grade. Times as stated refer to San Diego or **Pacific Standard Time**. This is the time standard used by Blackboard's internal clock. *Our standard 'deadline' time is **midnight** or 24:00 hours.*

Accommodations for religious observances must be cleared at least **two weeks prior** to the holiday in question, as per SDSU's religious observance policy.

1. Learning & Self Assessment Activities (10%).

As you become familiar with our Blackboard Web site, you will come to see that, in each module, after the learning resources (readings, etc.) have been presented, there is a section called 'learning & self-assessment activities'. The activities section contains 'low stakes' activities such as ungraded or practice mini-quizzes that ask you to apply, practice, or otherwise demonstrate and self-assess what you have just learned. The aim of completing these activities is to gain practice and hone understanding so that you do as well as possible on the graded work you will submit (reports and tests).

These activities do 'count' toward your final grade but rather than to grade them on some kind of ranked scale, points are awarded simply for completion (as long as a *good faith effort* has actually been demonstrated on your part). The activities are worth one point each. Completing the activities is important because doing so prepares you to do well on tests and papers.

Each module's activities must be completed by midnight on Friday of the relevant week. Points will only be given for activities completed on schedule.

2. **Writing Assignments / Reports (5% each, or 25% in total).** Each student will write five brief (250 word) reports (essays, papers) over the span of the course. Report topics or questions, which change every semester, generally will require students to relate or apply core concepts to our ethnographic text or 'real life'. Detailed instructions for the reports, including regarding topics, due dates, submission processes, and grading rubrics that may be used¹, will be provided via our Blackboard Website. They will be 'pushed' to students at the appropriate time (in the relevant 'Part' of the course).

Reports must be submitted by midnight on Friday of the relevant week. Reports may be submitted early. Grades will not be given to reports not submitted on schedule.

In regard to course writing assignments, please note: By taking this course, you agree that required writing assignments will be submitted for 'textual similarity review' to Safe Assign™ for the detection of plagiarism when the professor specifies that this is to be done. All assignments submitted to Safe Assign™ for review will be included as source documents in SDSU's institutional Safe Assign™ archive. You may remove personally identifying information from your assignment prior to submission.

¹ A rubric is a specific plan for point distribution and grade calculation. Use it in designing your statement.

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. **At a minimum, a plagiarized writing assignment will receive an F.** Depending on the case, an F in the course also may be awarded.

3. **Section Tests (65 %).** Students will complete an online test at the end of every section (part) of the course. The last section is a review section only: That final section test is comprehensive or cumulative, covering key concepts used throughout the course. However, it is the same length as a typical section test, and worth the same proportion of the final grade.

Test #	Dates	Coverage	Potential percent of final grade
Test 1	6/4-5	Part 1	13%
Test 2	6/11-12	Part 2	13%
Test 3	6/18-19	Part 3	13%
Test 4	6/25-26	Part 4	13%
Test 5	7/2-3	Part 5	13%
Test 6	7/6-7	Cumulative	13%

Test values and ‘window frame’ dates are indicated in the table above. The lowest test grade will be dropped so that tests will account, in total, for 65% of your final grade. However, every test must be taken. No test (including the final) may be purposefully skipped.

Test dates and times: Tests will be ‘open’ for only the **36-hour period or window extending from noon on Friday until 24:00 or midnight on Saturday.** Please clear your calendars now to ensure that you are available for every test.

Although you may begin testing any time within the testing window, you will receive a set number of minutes to complete the test once you have opened it, and tests must be completed in one sitting. Blackboard provides a test timer, which starts when you begin a test. The timer does not stop your test when your time runs out. However, Blackboard does not grade tests submitted after time runs out. Unfortunately, then, **any test-taker who takes more than his or her share of time will receive an ‘F’** for the effort.

Tests consist mainly of multiple choice questions but you also may find fill-in, matching, and the like. Questions directly reflect (are written based on) our specified **learning outcome objectives**, the topics/terms found at the start of each module. The questions will be written so that they are mainly amenable to computerized grading (your ability to demonstrate learning in prose will be assessed through the writing assignments described above—not the timed tests).

Although you can certainly access your notes and our learning resources while taking each test, the **tests are not intended to be open book exams.** Approach our tests just like you would approach an exam you might take sitting in a classroom. In other words, 'know your stuff'. **Any student who cheats will receive an F for the course.**

On each test, **each student will receive a randomly generated subset of questions drawn from a large pool of questions**, so that no two tests are alike. While you therefore will not be asked about every single topic and term, the questions you do receive 'spot check' your comprehension and thereby provide us with an excellent measure of your total grasp of all course materials / objectives.

As part of Test 1, you will agree (pledge, take an oath) that you will take all examinations by yourself, without the unauthorized assistance of others in any way, shape, or form. If you have any questions about SDSU's policy regarding cheating, see p.13 of this SDSU policy document:

http://senate.sdsu.edu/policy/policy_file.pdf or <http://senate.sdsu.edu/policy/pftoc.html>. See also <http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/srr/academics1.html>.

Crashed tests. This is an online course. Technology problems can and will arise. Now and then, they arise during testing. Having said that, there are steps you can take to ensure against this. The course has a number of practice tests built in to occur prior to your first 'real' test and so you will have ample time to troubleshoot. **You are expected to have all anticipatable technological problems sorted out prior to the first 'real' test.**

If your test crashes for unanticipated reasons, **let me know right away** through an email to esobo@mail.sdsu.edu. Follow the instruction provided for you on Blackboard, which in summary say: *tell me exactly what happened, and check back regularly for my response. Do not abandon the test or your email.* Wait for my instructions. And remember: I need ample notice to reset a test. I often cannot do it in the last hour.

Although I may 'reset' crashed tests for retaking, the decision to do so is at my discretion. The circumstances in which a given test crashes will be taken into account as I decide on the appropriate course of action.

Finally, please note: the Blackboard system is busiest in the hour prior to any deadline. It can even lock up and lock you out. So do not wait until the last minute or even the last few hours to take your test.

In the event that I cannot be at the computer to monitor progress and problems during a testing window, makeup tests will be offered the following **Monday**, without exception.

Missed tests (make-ups): Because tests are taken online and because your lowest test grade will be dropped, make-ups will only be permitted in the direst of unexpected and unanticipated circumstances (e.g., hospitalization, extradition), provided that appropriate and legitimate documentation has been supplied. In other words, **take all of your tests when they are due.** *The Monday after the exam is the default day for makeups* in the rare cases when they are warranted.



Test scoring. Blackboard scores ‘objective’ tests immediately. Each test’s point score is converted to a percentage by dividing the points earned by the total possible points available (i.e., the number that could have been earned; the perfect score). Letter grades are derived from that percentage. So, for example, a student who earns 30 points on a 40 point test, or 75% of the points available, earns a C on that test (see below). Grades are released as soon as possible, after justifiable makeups (if any) have been taken care of and test problems (if any) have been resolved.

B. Results

Grade calculations. All scores in this course are converted to percentages. The table here shows how we move from a percentage to a letter grade and then a grade point figure. *This process is applied not only to the tests, reports, and accrued activity point totals but to the final grade as a whole.* Please be advised that we do not automatically round up (e.g., 79.5% = C+ while 80% = B-).

With the percentage system, as opposed to the curve system, it is possible for every student who knows the material to earn an A. However, on the off chance that the percentage system is not adequately differentiating students, an altered grading method will be applied. You will be notified of any changes.

Percentage	Letter Grade	Grade points
0-59.9 %	F	0
60-63.9 %	D-	0.7
64-66.9 %	D	1
67-69.9 %	D+	1.3
70-73.9 %	C-	1.7
74-76.9 %	C	2
77-79.9 %	C+	2.3
80-83.9 %	B-	2.7
84-86.9 %	B	3
87-89.9 %	B+	3.3
90-93.9 %	A-	3.7
94-96.9 %	A	4
97-100 %	A+	4

Grade feedback and queries. Grades are posted on Blackboard as soon as they are available. At that time, you may **click your score for personalized feedback**, when available (e.g., on tests). Grades are very carefully determined and checked prior to being accepted into or entered in the Grade Book record. I take assessment of student performance very seriously and would rather we ‘get it right the first time’ than rush and make errors. But if you do find an error or have a question, please feel free to ask about it. It pleases me greatly to raise grades when warranted. On the flip side, pushing for points when they are not warranted is disrespectful to me, your fellow students, and yourself—so please avoid it. Reconsideration, if requested, may take your entire test and, in some cases, your entire record into account and may result in lower as well as higher grades.

Online Office Hours

Students who prefer more interaction can plan to participate in online office hours (see p.1 for schedule). Attendance is not required for online office hours; however, it is highly encouraged.



In our online meetings, I will address any questions you have about course material (**good questions submitted beforehand will earn you extra credit**; for details, see Blackboard). I also will sometimes have planned activities to run through with you, to help deepen your comprehension of core concepts. The orientation office hours, and others if and as appropriate, will be archived for student replay later.

Communicating with the Prof



SDSU does not share your phone number or address with me. **The only way that I can communicate with you is via email.** It is your responsibility to ensure that you can receive email from Blackboard. **Make sure that your email address within the system is correct.** Some email systems block Blackboard mailings as if they are spam. Either fix this, or get an SDSU email account (go to: <http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/newstudacct.shtml>.)

When sending me email, you **must include your first and last name in the subject line.**

Email is often answered upon receipt. However, you must **allow for a 24-hour turnaround** (not including weekends). Email does sometimes go awry: If you do not hear back from me in due time, please try again with a different heading (in case the original was recognized as spam) and/or call me.

Ground Rules for our Time Together

Students and teachers have obligations to each other. Successful teaching and learning depends to a great degree on honoring these obligations.

Here is what I expect from students: Having made your informed choice to become a member of this class, you will enter every class module and give your full attention to the material there. You will complete and submit all required work on time. You will treat everyone in the class, including the professor, with the respect due to all human beings. (If someone in our class is treating you disrespectfully, you will alert me immediately.) You acknowledge that previous academic preparation (e.g., writing skills) will affect your performance in this course. You acknowledge that your perception of effort, by itself, is not enough to justify a distinguished grade. You will not plagiarize or otherwise steal the work of others. You will not make excuses for your failure to do what you ought. You will accept the consequences of your actions.

If you have any questions about SDSU's policy regarding cheating, see p.13 of this SDSU policy document: http://senate.sdsu.edu/policy/policy_file.pdf or <http://senate.sdsu.edu/policy/pftoc.html>. See also <http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/srr/academics1.html>.

Here is what students can expect from me: I will treat you with respect. I will know your name and treat you as an individual. I will prepare and monitor every class module with care. I will manage the class in a professional manner; that may include educating you or other students in appropriate behavior. I will keep careful records of your on-line activity, performance, and progress. I will return your graded work quickly, with feedback, as appropriate. I will allow extensions or make-ups only for students with valid excuses that I have personally confirmed. I will pursue the maximum, policy-implicated punishment for plagiarism, cheating, and other violations of academic integrity. I will make myself available to you for advising. I will maintain appropriate confidentiality concerning your performance. I will provide you with professional support and write recommendations if appropriate. I will be honest with you. I will support your efforts at learning. *Your grade will reflect the quality of your work and nothing else.*

Learning Objectives & Outcomes

Anthropology 102's overall learning outcome objectives

On completing the course, and using examples, students should be able to:

- ✓ Define *anthropology* and *holism*;
explain the role of socio-cultural anthropology in the context of the discipline.
- ✓ Explain and apply the ethnological or *comparative approach* to various socio-cultural phenomena to demonstrate its value
- ✓ Differentiate between *emic* and *etic* perspectives;
demonstrate how each can be used to enhance our understanding of cultural variation.
- ✓ Define the *ethnographic genre*; enumerate and explain some basic *ethnographic field methods*, including *participant observation*.
- ✓ Define and illustrate the difference between ethnocentrism and cultural relativism;
acknowledge and identify some of the assumptions inherent in one's own cultural frame of reference that may bias how one understands other cultures.
- ✓ Define, identify assumptions inherent in, and apply selected theoretical perspectives to various socio-cultural phenomena. Perspectives will include but are not limited to:
 - Evolutionary
 - Ecological / Materialist
 - Functionalist
 - Interpretive / Constructivist
- ✓ Demonstrate familiarity with basic focal areas in socio-cultural anthropology;
compare and contrast different expressions of these across cultures;
predict how varied forms of each will affect daily life in particular cultural contexts;
demonstrate holistic connectivity between selected focal areas in particular cultural contexts.
Basic topics will include but are not limited to:
 - Ethnicity
 - Gender
 - Language
 - Kinship & marriage
 - Life stages
 - Economy/exchange
 - Religion / supernatural
 - Medicine / health
 - Culture change / interaction

- Subsistence mode
- Dispute resolution
- Domination/inequality
- ✓ Apply basic concepts of socio-cultural anthropology *self-reflexively* to one's own culture
- ✓ Demonstrate the value of *applied* socio-cultural anthropology to contemporary real-world problems.

Crosswalk to course content and detail-level outcome objectives

Section-specific learning outcome expectations are detailed in the *Lesson-by-Lesson Schedule* (which exists as an appendix to this document). **They are repeated again at the start of each online lesson module.**

In addition to listing all course resources and activities (and relevant due dates) the Schedule also lists all key concepts and terms, and contains important calendar information. The Schedule therefore serves not only as an overall tool to help keep us on track but also as a **study guide** for the course as a whole.

Take some time now to have a look at the Schedule and to acquaint yourself with how it works. You should print out the Schedule (and this syllabus) for easy reference.

Please note that this course is not only an **upper division course** but it also serves as a **theory course** within the undergraduate anthropology degree. Therefore, you can expect to learn (and will be expected to be able to identify and describe) several anthropological theories during our time together.

General Education Outcomes expected

Anthropology 102 is a General Education course; as such it helps in “providing the breadth of knowledge necessary for meaningful work, life-long learning, socially responsible citizenship, and intellectual development.... in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing world.... Through [GE], students will acquire knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world that will enable them to engage significant questions, both contemporary and enduring.” As a GE course, Anthropology 102 is structured to encourage students in developing seven essential capacities -- i.e., the ability to:

1. Construct, analyze, and communicate arguments;
2. Apply theoretical models to the real world;
3. Contextualize phenomena;
4. Negotiate differences;
5. Integrate global and local perspectives;
6. Illustrate relevance of concepts across boundaries;
7. Evaluate consequences of actions.

This course is one of nine courses that you will take in General Education Foundations. Foundations courses cultivate skills in reading, writing, research, communication, computation, information literacy, and use of technology. They furthermore introduce you to basic concepts, theories and approaches in a variety of disciplines in order to provide the intellectual breadth necessary to help you integrate the more specialized knowledge gathered in your major area of study into a broader world picture.

This course is one of two Foundations courses that you will take in the area of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Upon completing this area of Foundations, you will be able to:

- 1) explore and recognize basic terms, concepts, and domains of the social and behavioral sciences;
- 2) comprehend diverse theories and methods of the social and behavioral sciences;

- 3) identify human behavioral patterns across space and time and discuss their interrelatedness and distinctiveness;
- 4) enhance your understanding of the social world through the application of conceptual frameworks from the social and behavioral sciences to first-hand engagement with contemporary issues.

Course objectives were prepared in light of the university's criteria for cultural diversity courses in general education. Among other things, "The course must have a primary focus on non-dominant perspectives, cultures, views, and traditions." This course does so.