SYLLABUS

COURSE: ANTH 152 (3) Culture and Humanity (3 credits)

PLACE: Physical Sciences 217, University of Hawai`i @ Manoa

TIME: 1:30-2:15 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays, Spring 2010

INSTRUCTOR:

Dr. Leslie E. Sponsel, Professor
Director, Ecological Anthropology Program and
Spiritual Ecology Concentration

Office: 317 Saunders Hall
Office hours: 2:30-3:30 p.m. Tuesdays or by appointment
Office phone: 956-8507
Email: sponsel@hawaii.edu

Links:

Ecological Anthropology Program UHM
http://www.anthropology.hawaii.edu/Programs/Specializations/Ecological%20Anthropology/index.html

Faculty Profile
http://www.anthropology.hawaii.edu/People/Faculty/Sponsel/index.html

Research Project: “Spiritual Ecology, Sacred Places, and Biodiversity Conservation”
http://www.anthropology.hawaii.edu/Projects/Spiritual%20Ecology/

Homepage
http://www.soc.hawaii.edu/sponsel/
ORIENTATION

“So much depends on our conception of human nature: for individuals, the meaning and purpose of our lives, what we ought to do or strive for, what we may hope to achieve or become; for human societies, what vision of human community we may hope to work toward and what sort of social changes we should make. Our answers to all these huge questions depend on whether we think there is some “true” or “innate” nature of human beings. If so, what is it? Is it different for men and women? Or is there no such “essential” human nature, only a capacity to be molded by the social environment- by economic, political, and cultural forces?” (Stevenson, Leslie, and David L. Haberman, 1998, Ten Theories of Human Nature, New York, NY: Oxford University Press, p. 3).

How do people differ culturally, why, and so what? Cultural anthropology is the humanistic science that researches, documents, interprets, explains, and celebrates human cultural diversity and unity. Culture may be viewed as a system of ideas, actions, and their material products that structure the relations among people in a particular society and their relations to their natural environment, the supernatural, and other societies.

This course surveys cultural anthropology and its subject matter, including concepts such as culture, cultural relativism, ethnocentrism, and reflexivity, and phenomena such as particular cultures, adaptations, diversity, universals, change, and globalization. The history, theories, methods, data, interpretations, explanations, and achievements of cultural anthropologists are systematically surveyed in this course. In particular, the Robbins textbook focuses on fundamental questions such as: Is it possible to see the world from the perspective of other cultures? Why is religion a cross-cultural universal? How do individuals defend their identities when they are threatened? Why are societies characterized by inequalities? How do societies construct meaning and justifications for collective violence?
There are three secondary themes in this course:

1. understanding American culture through the eyes of anthropologists from other societies using the textbook edited by DeVita and Armstrong;

2. ecological approaches in cultural anthropology; and

3. the anthropology of religion and especially spiritual ecology.

The instructor will discuss his field research among the Yanomami of the Amazon, and more recently in Thailand. Also, he will talk about the culture and ethics of the society of anthropologists based on his observations as a participant observer in seven universities in four countries.

FORMAT

This class will integrate a succession of PowerPoint lectures, discussions of the assigned chapters in the two textbooks, illustrative videos, and other course materials to systematically survey the subfield and subject matter of cultural anthropology. Some guest mini-lecturers on field research and a panel discussion on American culture will be integrated into the course, the latter including two authors from the second textbook.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Through a succession of surprise quizzes by the end of the semester successful students will have demonstrated that they have progressively gained:

1. a better understanding of cultural anthropology as a subfield of anthropology, including its main concepts, theories, methods, questions, problems, issues, and achievements;

2. a greater appreciation of the cultural diversity and unity of humankind as well as the practical consequences of these phenomena;

3. a better understanding of American culture as viewed through the eyes of anthropologists from other cultures;
4. a greater facility in applying cultural anthropology to better understand and to think more critically about contemporary sociopolitical issues in society and the world; and

5. an increased familiarity with aspects of the special topics of ecology, religion, and peace from the perspective of cultural anthropology.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

Students are expected to arrive to class on time and to remain attentive for the entire period without any interruptions (1:30-2:45). Students are expected to avoid regular conversation or other behavior that distracts other students and the instructor. No extraneous reading material may be used during the class period. Students who repeatedly fall asleep in class will receive a grade reduction each time. The final course grade will be reduced for any inattentive or disruptive behavior.

All electronic devices including cell and iphones must be turned off before class and remain so throughout the entire period. The use of laptop computers is not allowed in this class, unless a copy of the class notes is sent to the instructor as an email attachment for each period after it is used.

In this class anyone is welcome to say or write anything with only three restrictions--- it is relevant, concise, and polite. This includes respecting the sensitivities of others and allowing others an opportunity to join in any class discussion. Although it will become obvious that the instructor has his own perspective, ultimately there is no “party line” in this course. In fact, students are encouraged to politely and constructively disagree with the instructor, course material, and each other whenever they wish to do so. Ultimately, the instructor does not really care what students think; however, he does care very deeply that they think in an informed and critical manner.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Reasonable accommodations can be arranged for persons with some disability by visiting the KOKUA Program in QLCSS 013 or by phoning them at 956-7511 or 956-7612.

GRADE

The final grade for this course will be based on eight surprise quizzes over the chapters in the textbooks and other course materials (80%), and on a comprehensive final examination comprised of questions selected from the quizzes (20%). Because of the size of the class the quizzes will only include objective questions, no essays.

Regular attendance is imperative because surprise quizzes will be given over the required reading and other class materials, and no make-ups for missed quizzes will be given. However, one quiz will be dropped, the one with the lowest grade.

No research papers are required for this course. However, extra credit may be earned by writing essays (each about one-page typed single-spaced) in response to lectures, chapters, and/or videos. These should be only reactions, not summaries. Five such essays may elevate a border line grade, and ten may elevate the grade to the next higher level. Extra credit may also be earned by finding relevant YouTube videos to illustrate course material and emailing the link to the instructor. Another more ambitious alternative for extra credit is a research report based on library and/or fieldwork, but the topic must be approved by the instructor in advance.

Any student caught cheating on a quiz or in other ways will automatically fail the entire course and be reported to the Dean for administrative action.

REQUIRED READINGS

Students are required to thoroughly read these two textbooks:


No additional reading will be assigned. However, optional reading can be pursued from citations in the two textbooks and the attached Resource Guide (pp. 9-25). The Resource Guide reflects the particular subject matter and foci of this course, and it should also be especially useful for majors including for other courses.

**SCHEDULE**

**January**

12 T  Orientation, Film: “Anthropology: Real People, Real Careers”

14 Th  Film: “To Find the Baruya Story” (VHS 1677)

19 T  “Culture and Meaning” (Robbins Chapter 1)

21 Th  Understanding Ourselves (DeVita and Armstrong pages xi-xvi and Chapters 1-3)

26 T  Lecture: Ecological Approaches in Cultural Anthropology

28 Th “The Meaning of Progress and Development” (Robbins Ch. 2)

**February**

2 T  Distant Mirrors (Chs. 4-7)

4 Th  “Globalization, Neoliberalism, and the Nation-State” (Robbins Ch. 3)
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<tr>
<td>9 T</td>
<td>Film: “Contact: Yanomami Indians of Brazil” (VHS 4962)</td>
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<td>11 Th</td>
<td>Lecture: Research Trends with the Yanomami of the Amazon</td>
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<td>16 T</td>
<td>Distant Mirrors (Chs. 8-11)</td>
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<td>18 Th</td>
<td>“The Social and Cultural Construction of Reality” (Robbins Ch. 4)</td>
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<td>23 T</td>
<td>Film: “The Goddess and the Computer” (VHS 4047)</td>
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<td>25 Th</td>
<td>Lecture: Spiritual Ecology</td>
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**March**

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<tr>
<td>2 T</td>
<td>Distant Mirrors (Chs. 12-15)</td>
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<td>4 Th</td>
<td>“Patterns of Family Relations” (Robbins Ch. 5)</td>
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<td>9 T</td>
<td>Film: “Warriors of the Amazon” (VHS 18554)</td>
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<td>11 Th</td>
<td>“The Construction of Identity” (Robbins Ch. 6)</td>
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<td>16 T</td>
<td>Distant Mirrors (Chs. 16-19)</td>
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<td>18 Th</td>
<td>Film: “Becoming American” (VHS 7060)</td>
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**SPRING RECESS** - No class meeting on March 23 and 25.

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<td>30 T</td>
<td>“The Cultural Construction of Social Hierarchy” (Robbins Ch. 7)</td>
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April

1 Th   Film:  Mini-Dragons II: Thailand (VHS 10571)

6 T   Lecture:  War and Ethics in Anthropology

8 Th Lecture:  Military Anthropology and the Human Terrain System

13 T   “The Cultural Constructions of Violent Conflict” (Robbins Ch. 8)

15 Th  Lecture:  The Alternative of a Nonkilling Worldview, Values, Attitudes, and Actions

20 T   Film: “In the Light of Reverence: Protecting America’s Sacred Lands”

22 Th Lecture:  Sacred Places and Pilgrimages

27 T  Lecture:  Monks, Caves, Bats, and Forests in Thailand

29 Th Film: “Renewal: Stories from America’s Religious-Environmental Movement”

May

4 T   Lecture:  The Meaning and Significance of Culture and Cultural Anthropology in the World Today

11 T Final Examination (noon-2:00)
RESOURCE GUIDE

GENERAL


REFERENCE WORKS


**HISTORY AND THEORY**


Harris, Marvin, 1999, *Theories of Culture in Postmodern Times*, Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.


BIOGRAPHIES OF ANTHROPOLOGISTS


METHODS


Handwerker, W. Penn, 2001, Quick Ethnography, Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.


ETHICS


**CONTROVERSIES**


COLONIALISM


ECOLOGY


**RELIGION**


**SPIRITUAL ECOLOGY**


Tucker, Mary Evelyn, with Judith Berling, 2003, Worldly Wonder: Religions Enter Their Ecological Phase, La Salle, IL: Open Court Press.

SACRED PLACES


WAR AND PEACE


YANOMAMI


AREA STUDIES


Heath, Dwight B., ed., 2002, Contemporary Cultures and Societies of Latin America: A Reader in the Social Anthropology of Middle and South America, Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, Inc.


Sponsel, Leslie E., 2000, Endangered Peoples of Southeast and East Asia: Struggles to Survive and Thrive, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
APPLIED AND ADVOCACY ANTHROPOLOGY


PUBLIC ANTHROPOLOGY


CAREERS IN ANTHROPOLOGY


**MISCELLANEOUS**


**PERIODICALS**

Abstracts in Anthropology

American Anthropologist
Annual Review of Anthropology
Anthropology Today
Critique of Anthropology
Cultural Anthropology
Cultural Survival Quarterly
Current Anthropology
Dialectical Anthropology
Ethnology
Human Ecology
Human Organization
Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture
Journal of Anthropological Research
Man
Reviews in Anthropology
Worldviews: Environment, Culture, Religion

WEB SITES
American Anthropological Association (AAA) http://www.aaanet.org
Anthropology Biography http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/information/biography
Anthropology and Environment Section, AAA http://www.canth.org
Anthropology in the News http://anthropology.tamu.edu/news/

Anthropology Index Online http://aio.anthropology.org.uk/aio/ (also available through UHM Hawai`i Voyager Catalog)

AnthroSource http://www.aanet.org (also available through UHM Hawai`i Voyager Catalog)

Center for Global Nonkilling http://www.nonkilling.org

Cultural Survival http://www.culturalsurvival.org

Department of Anthropology UHM http://www.anthropology.hawaii.edu


Forum on Religion and Ecology http://fore.research.yale.edu/

National Association for the Practice of Anthropology (NAPA) http://practicinganthropology.org

Public Anthropology http://www.publicanthropology.org

Savage Minds: Notes and Queries in Anthropology http://savageminds.org

Society for Applied Anthropology http://www.sfaa.net/

Survival International http://www.survivalinternational.org

Theory in Anthropology http://www.indiana.edu/~wanthro/theory.htm

INSTRUCTOR’S LINKS

Ecological Anthropology Program UHM http://www.anthropology.hawaii.edu/Programs/Specializations/Ecological%20Anthropology/index.html
Faculty Profile
http://www.anthropology.hawaii.edu/People/Faculty/Sponsel/index.html

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Research Project: Spiritual Ecology, Sacred Places, and Biodiversity Conservation
http://www.anthropology.hawaii.edu/Projects/Spiritual%20Ecology/