SYLLABUS

COURSE:  ANTH 410 ETHICS IN ANTHROPOLOGY  
(Theory)

TIME:    Wednesdays 1:30-4:00 p.m., Spring Semester 2014

PLACE:   St. John 11, University of Hawai`i @ Manoa

INSTRUCTOR:

Dr. Les Sponsel, Professor Emeritus

Office:  Department of Anthropology, UHM, Saunders Hall 321
Hours:   Wednesdays 12:00-1:00 p.m. by appointment
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ORIENTATION

The seminar focuses on critically exploring the ramifications of this provocative assertion:

“Yet the ethics of anthropology is clearly not just about obeying a set of guidelines; it actually goes to the heart of the discipline; the premises on which its practitioners operate, its epistemology, theory and praxis. In other words, what is anthropology for? Who is it for?”  
(Pat Caplan, 2003, The Ethics of Anthropology: Debates and Dilemmas, p. 3).
Since late 2000, when the scandalous controversy surrounding Patrick Tierney’s book Darkness in El Dorado erupted regarding his serious allegations of a multitude of diverse violations of professional ethics by some researchers working with the Yanomami in the Venezuelan Amazon, several of the allegations since confirmed by independent investigations, there has been a substantial elevation in the level of information, discussion and debate about professional ethics in anthropology. This is demonstrated, for example, by the more than ten-fold increase in the number of sessions on ethics at the annual convention of the American Anthropological Association (AAA) sustained since 2000. Also, from 1950 to the present, more than 75% of all periodical articles on ethics in anthropology have appeared since 2000. In recent years, however, this controversy was superseded by another one involving anthropologists imbedded with military troops in the U.S. wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and beyond called the Human Terrain System (HTS) that some have criticized as mercenary anthropology. (One faculty member and several former students of this Department have been employed in HTS).

This seminar will survey the historical development of professional ethics in anthropology with special attention to its relationship with American hot and cold wars throughout the 20th century and into the present including the various involvements and failures of the AAA. The course will begin with a film about the case of anthropologist Alfred L. Kroeber at the University of California in Berkeley and Ishi, the supposed last surviving member of the indigenous Yahi culture, to illustrate ethical dilemmas in the colonial context of American anthropology many of which persist to this day. A special segment on the Darkness in El Dorado controversy will show several documentary films including “Secrets of the Tribe.”

The emphasis this semester will be on problems, issues, questions, and cases involving ethics in basic and applied ethnographic research including in advocacy anthropology and human rights work. The course format encompasses lectures, films, class discussions, individual student reports and panels, and possibly guests as resource persons. This course is reading, thinking, discussion, and debate intensive.

While the American Anthropological Association and other professional organizations in the discipline have established general ethical guidelines, they have yet to develop any strong sanctions for serious abuses, unlike the medical and legal professions that can revoke an individual’s
license for professional practice. Thus, the ethical conduct of an anthropologist ultimately remains largely a matter of individual morality and conscience in following the guidelines and other values. This situation is reinforced by the variety, complexity, and difficulty of many ethical concerns. Nevertheless, general agreement within the profession is apparent on many matters, especially some that are obviously just plain unethical and may be even immoral and in some cases illegal.

Every individual is regularly faced with ethical dilemmas and choices in their professional and personal life, and no one is perfect. This course will not preach to students about ethical and unethical conduct. However, it will further inform and sensitize students about such matters by providing numerous and diverse examples of ethical codes, cases, problems, questions, dilemmas, issues, discussions, debates, controversies, and scandals in historical perspective through intensive reading and discussion.

**FORMAT**

This course is primarily designed as a seminar for advanced undergraduate and graduate students, and most of all for majors in anthropology specializing in the cultural and/or applied subfield. Only serious students should take this course, because as a seminar it requires regular reading and active participation in class discussion, debates, individual reports, and panel discussions. Thus, this course is reading, thinking, and discussion intensive.

As a seminar the class meets one afternoon a week for 2.5 hours to allow sufficient time for penetrating analysis and discussion focused on selected materials and cases. The instructor will present an extensive background lecture and then subsequently only give some brief introductory lectures on cases, all with PowerPoint.

Every student is expected to actively participate in class discussions on a regular basis. The instructor may also call on individuals in class. Engaging in class discussions with clear, concise, and relevant comments, criticisms, and questions is a most important component of class participation and learning.

In this class anyone is welcome to say or write anything with only
three restrictions---it is relevant, polite, and concise. This includes respecting the sensitivities of others and allowing others space to join in the 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 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.

**OBJECTIVES**

The four primary goals of this course are to:

1. provide a systematic, thorough, and in-depth survey of the development of professional ethics in American cultural anthropology and its sociopolitical contexts from its inception to the present;

2. increase information, awareness, sensitivity, and responsibility of students regarding matters of professional ethics in anthropology;

3. familiarize students with the available literature, videos, and internet resources on this indispensable subject [see resources on Laulima course website]; and

4. facilitate each student in pursuing his or her own interests in a particular ethical case or issue in anthropology.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

1. Students will be able to identify and discuss the main points in professional ethics in the history of American cultural and applied anthropology.

2. Students will be able to demonstrate the historical influence of American wars and politics in the development of professional ethics in anthropology.

3. Students will acquire information and develop skills to demonstrate improved ability to cope with ethical dilemmas and make decisions
regarding appropriate ethical conduct.

4. Students will be able to demonstrate a general knowledge of the most important resources for this subject.

**GRADE**

The final course grade will be calculated as follows:

- 20% class discussion;
- 30% individual report or panel presentation of one case study book (ideally illustrated by PowerPoint);
- 10% mid-term journal (due March 12);
- 20% final journal (due May 12); and
- 20% final take-home essay examination (due May 12).

The guidelines for these exercises are located after the Schedule near the end of this syllabus as appendices. Any written exercises should be sent to the instructor as email attachments.

Regular attendance is imperative. Students are expected to stay for the entire class period (1:30-4:00). Attendance will be taken at the beginning and again at the end of each class meeting. One whole letter grade will be deducted from the final course grade for every two unexcused absences.

Students are expected to arrive in class on time, remain attentive throughout the entire period, and avoid conversation or other behavior that distracts other students and the instructor. Cellular phones should be turned off before class and remain so throughout the period. Students who wish to use a laptop computer, iPad, or other electronic device in class must email the instructor a copy of their notes after each class to prove that they are paying attention and not using the device for something else. Students who fall asleep in class will be considered absent for the whole period. Any plagiarism will be rewarded with failure of the entire course and reported to the Dean for appropriate disciplinary action.
Extra credit is possible through a substantial critical book review essay based on one or more of the course textbooks and/or case study books listed in the full schedule below or in other resources on the Laulima website. The instructor must approve any extra credit projects in advance.

**READINGS**

Every student is required to carefully read and then discuss in class the chapters assigned in the full schedule from each of these three indispensable textbooks (prices listed from Amazon.com):


Each student must select a fourth book (case study) for an individual or panel presentation in the discussion of ethical issues in cultural anthropology for a particular American war (see full schedule below). This will be an integral component of an in-depth study of the specifics of four particular cases, whereas the three textbooks survey the subject in general.

These additional books are recommended, but optional:


Israel, Mark, and Iain Hay, 2006, *Research Ethics for Social Scientists*:


Some additional articles and chapters will be assigned. Other readings are recommended in the instructor’s Oxford Bibliography Online “Ethics in Anthropology,” 2006 and 2009 course syllabi, and other resources posted on the Laulima course website.

Schedule (brief)

January 15 Orientation and film Last of His Tribe
   22      Historical Overview (PowerPoint lecture)
   29      Yanomami films
February 5 Darkness in El Dorado Controversy film Secrets of the Tribe
   12 Human Terrain System film
   19      Overview – discuss Whiteford and Trotter textbook
   26      Ethical issues in anthropology during World War II
March 5      continued
   12 Ethical issues in anthropology during Vietnam War
   19      continued
   26      SPRING RECESS
April 2      Ethical issues in the Darkness in El Dorado controversy
   9       continued
   16      continued
   23      Ethical issues in the Human Terrain System
   30      continued
May 7       continued
   12      FINAL JOURNAL AND ESSAY EXAMINATION DUE
**SCHEDULE (full)**

**January 15 Orientation**

Film: Video: *Last of His Tribe* (1992, 90 min.)

Discussion: Identifying the ethical issues and continuities into the present

Recommended:


Rose, Deborah Bird, 2005, *Reports from the Wild Country: Ethics for Decolonization* [Australian Cases], Sydney, Australia: University of New...


Films:

*Ishi: The Last Yahi* (VHS 9383, 57 minutes)

*The Last Tasmanians: Extinction* (VHS 425, 62 minutes)

**January 22   Historical Overview** (PowerPoint lecture)

Required reading for this and next few sessions:

American Anthropological Association, 2014, Committee on Ethics


Fluehr-Lobban 2003 - “Introduction” and Ch. 1.

Fluehr-Lobban 2013 – Chapter 1.


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**January 29  Yanomami films**

*Warriors of the Amazon* (1996, 56 minutes)
*Contact: The Yanomami Indians of Brazil* (VHS 4962, 28 minutes)
*Yanomami: From Machetes to Mobile Phones* (2012, 57 minutes)

Required reading:


Recommended:

AAA Committee on Ethics, 2002, "Briefing Papers on Common Dilemmas Faced by Anthropologists Conducting Research in Field Situations" [link]


Film: *Yanomami Homecoming* (VHS 9860, VHS 17918, 36 minutes)


February 5 Darkness in El Dorado Controversy film *Secrets of the Tribe* (98 minutes)

Required reading:

Fluehr-Lobban 2003 – Chapter 4.


Recommended:

*www.unomaha.edu/jrf/Vol14no1/sundance_2010.htm*.


Smith, Richard, 2013 (December 9), “Should Scientific Fraud Be A


February 12 film **Human Terrain System**

Recommended:

Movie: Avatar


February 19 General Overview

Whiteford and Trotter textbook (entire book--- Preface, Chs. 1-7, and Epilogue--- with individual chapter assignments for presentation in discussion)

Recommended:

AAA Commission on the Engagement of Anthropology with the US Security and Intelligence Communities, October 14, 2009

(Also search AAA and Google websites for other information).


Linguistic Society of America

National Association for the Practice of Anthropology
http://practicinganthropology.org/about/ethical-guidelines/

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

Films:

*The Belmont Report* (VHS 5118, 29 minutes)

*Research Methods for the Social Sciences* (VHS 19240, 33 minutes)

February 26  Ethical issues in anthropology during World War II

Required reading:

Fluehr-Lobban 2013 – Ch. 2

Recommended:
Film: *Protecting Human Subjects Training* (online via Hawai`i Voyager Catalog of Hamilton Library)


Mandler, Peter, 2013, *Return from the Natives: How Margaret Mead Won WW II and Lost the Cold War*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.


David H. Price Homepage [extensive resources on anthropologists and war] [http://homepages.stmartin.edu/fac_staff/dprice](http://homepages.stmartin.edu/fac_staff/dprice)

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**March 5 continued**

Required reading:

Fluehr-Lobban 2003 – Ch. 2.

Recommended films:

*The Nuremberg Trials* (DVD 9866, 60 minutes)

*Heart of the Matter: The Legacy of Nuremberg* (VHS 16786, 50 minutes)

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March 12 Ethical issues in anthropology during Vietnam War

Required reading:
Fluehr-Lobban 2003 – Ch. 3.

Recommended:


March 19  continued

Required reading:

Fluehr-Lobban 2013 – Chs. 3, 6
Fluehr-Lobban 2003 - Ch. 7 [skim]

Recommended:


Arbor, MI: Pluto Press.

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**March 26  SPRING RECESS**

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**April 2  Ethical issues in the Darkness in El Dorado controversy**

Film: *The Yanomama: A Multidisciplinary Study* (1971, 45 minutes) [view online at home via Hamilton Library Hawai`i Voyager Catalog]


Recommended:


Survival International, 2013 (February 26), “Statement [signed by at least 18 anthropologists who have worked with the Yanomami]


Wong, Kate, 2001 (March), "Fighting the Darkness in El Dorado," Scientific
Film:

*Half-Life: A Parable for the Nuclear Age* (86 minutes, available through regional campuses and Wong AV at Sinclair Library)

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**April 9  continued**


Recommended:


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**April 16  continued**

Required reading:

Fluehr-Lobban 2013 – Chs. 4-5

Recommended:

Chagnon, Napoleon A., Faculty Homepage http://anthropology.missouri.edu/?q=node/94.


_____, 2013 (March 2), “The Times, it is Outragin” http://anthropomics.blogspot.com/2013/03/the-times-it-is-outragin.html.


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**April 23  Ethical issues in the Human Terrain System**

Recommended:

Practice and Professional Identity, Walnut Creek, CA; LeftCoast Press.


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April 30 continued

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May 7 continued

Required reading:

Fluehr-Lobban 2003 – Chs. 9-10.
May 12  FINAL JOURNAL AND ESSAY EXAMINATION DUE

APPENDIX I. GUIDELINES FOR JOURNAL

Each week write up to one page typed single-spaced as a personal course diary or journal entry.

While each entry should summarize the main points in the material covered in the course that week, the most important goal by far is to record your own thoughts on that material. Include your reactions, opinion, comments, criticisms, questions, and the like. Some of this you can already record in your notes during each class meeting.

Keep in mind the question for the final essay examination.

The first journal should be sent to the instructor around the middle of the semester on March 12, and the final entire journal on May 12, both as an email attachment to sponsel@hawaii.edu.

The journal should serve as the foundation for developing your answer for the final essay examination.

This is your personal private journal and will be deleted by the instructor from his email after grading and he will not share it with anyone else.

APPENDIX II. GUIDELINES FOR FINAL ESSAY EXAMINATION

One or more letter grades will be subtracted from the examination
grade for failure to adhere to the following guidelines.

This should be the focus of your final essay:

“Yet the ethics of anthropology is clearly not just about obeying a set of guidelines; it actually goes to the heart of the discipline; the premises on which its practitioners operate, its epistemology, theory and praxis. In other words, what is anthropology for? Who is it for?” (Pat Caplan, 2003, *The Ethics of Anthropology: Debates and Dilemmas*, p. 3).

Your final essay examination should reflect on the entire course based on your experience in class including lectures, class discussions, student reports, panel discussions, films, class notes, readings, and other material.

Your essay should be clear and concise, but substantial and penetrating. Go beyond generalizations to specifics including particular examples. Your essay should be at least four pages typed single-spaced. Include introductory and concluding paragraphs. Instead of quotes use paraphrases, don’t waste space. Use the spelling and grammar check on your computer to try to catch any errors in your essay, although the grade will be based solely on the quality and relevance of the content.

Ultimately your essay must be the product of your own individual scholarship and creativity. Any plagiarism will be rewarded with an automatic F for the final course grade and reported to the office of the Dean. However, you are most welcome to consult with any individual as well as any print and internet resources, although covering the required readings for the course is by far the most important. Just be careful to properly acknowledge any source for specific information, ideas, and the like. Also, be sure to include your own insights, comments, reactions, criticisms, and questions.

Be careful to cite readings, lectures, films, case studies, websites, class discussions, and handouts. In each reading citation include the author and page (e.g., Author’s Last Name, p. 60, or pp. 65-70). Other kinds of sources can be documented as follows: (lecture Jan. 22), (class discussion Jan. 22), (film title), or (personal communication with full name and date). It is not necessary to append a bibliography with the full citation of sources, if they are already in the course syllabus or on the Laulima website.
The purpose of the final essay (and final journal) is to: (1) convincingly demonstrate your familiarity with the course material; (2) present a critical analysis of it; and (3) discuss your own reactions to it. Your grade will be based on this purpose plus satisfying the above guidelines, grading criteria, course objectives, and learning outcomes listed earlier in the syllabus.

The final examination and journal are due May 12 by midnight. Please send it as an email attachment to the instructor with the subject identified as 410 Final Exam to sponsel@hawaii.edu. One letter grade will be subtracted for each day late.

APPENDIX III. GUIDELINES FOR POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

1. CONTENTS

Any report should incorporate substantial contents. However, the report also needs to be clear and concise. Drafting an outline first will help. Identify three to five main points near the beginning of your report and repeat them again near the end in order to reinforce your message. Keep the presentation focused on these main points. Package your information and ideas in a way that will attract and maintain the attention of your audience. Your opening statement is especially most important in this regard. A personal story or anecdote can be useful to set the stage.

2. ORAL COMMUNICATION

The most interesting and important ideas will not be effectively communicated to your audience unless they are delivered skillfully. The main skills in oral communication are to attract and hold the attention of your audience from the outset; vary your voice to avoid a monotone; maintain eye contact with the entire audience during your talk; stand up and
judiciously use appropriate body language such as facial expressions and hand gestures; and identify and emphasize your main message(s) near the start and again at the close of your presentation. You need to repeatedly rehearse your presentation to be sure that you can confidently and comfortably deliver it within the time period available. Repeatedly rehearsing in front of a few of your acquaintances and getting their constructive feedback can help a lot.

3. POWERPOINT

Limit the number of frames in your PowerPoint to about one frame for every one to two minutes according to the time available. For example, use about a dozen frames if you have only 15 minutes for your presentation, or about two dozen frames if you have a half of an hour. When you start developing your PowerPoint presentation, select a frame design and color combination that best reflect your subject matter. Be sure to use a strong contrast in the colors of the text and background. For instance, it is easiest for your audience to read something like a yellow text on a dark blue background, or vice versa. Avoid using light colors for both text and background. Use a bold font in the largest size that will fit on the frame.

The goal is to design the PowerPoint so that it can be easily read by the audience without straining. It should also be aesthetically pleasing. Use a font size as large as will fit on the frame and use a bold font. Limit the text on each frame of the PowerPoint to a few key words or phrases. Avoid too much detail. The text is simply a guide to help your memory as speaker and an outline for the audience to help them follow the main points of your talk. Do not read the text on each frame to your audience; they are literate and will be more actively engaged in your presentation if they read the text on each frame for themselves. Instead, explain the key words and phrases on each frame to elaborate on the main points outlined. If you use a quote, then ask the audience to read it for themselves in order to involve them more actively in the presentation.

Use a few striking but relevant illustrations or images for most frames, but not necessarily on every one of them. The careful selection of images that are the most relevant and of the highest quality will greatly enhance your PowerPoint. Sometimes special effects or gimmicks with the PowerPoint such as animation can enhance a presentation, but if they are not handled carefully then they may be distracting for the audience, especially in
a short presentation. Your primary goal is to inform your audience, rather than dazzle them with your technological skills and in the process sacrifice your message. Images can be found on Google.com, Yahoo.com, and Bing.com among other sources.

Video segments, such as taken from YouTube, may be useful if you have time and if they can be accessed easily, quickly, and reliably. However, usually it is most convenient to simply use a VHS tape or better a DVD set beforehand at the appropriate place to begin the segment you wish to show, instead of inserting the video clip in your PowerPoint beforehand and then during your talk waiting for the download when you wish to show it. Of course, this assumes that a video or DVD machine is available in the meeting room.

4. USB

You should bring your PowerPoint file on a USB or Flash Drive that can be installed easily and quickly in the computer provided in the meeting room, rather than wasting time installing your laptop, trying to download the PowerPoint from your email, or some other venue. Be sure to test and practice with any equipment well in advance of your presentation in order to avoid any frustration for you and for your audience with technical problems.

APPENDIX IV. GUIDELINES FOR PANEL DISCUSSION OF CASE STUDIES

1. PANEL SIZE AND COORDINATION

The optimum size for a student panel is around three or four individuals, a smaller or larger number can be awkward. One member of the panel should volunteer or be elected to serve as coordinator. The coordinator should make a list of the names and email addresses of all members of the panel to set up a group email to facilitate effective communication and coordination of the panel as a whole. Every panel member needs to do their fair share of the work and presentation. If
someone doesn’t do this then that should be reported to the instructor.

2. TWO MEETINGS

Each panel should meet outside of class at least twice, the second time for rehearsal. It is important for the panel to rehearse the presentation before it is given in class in order to work out any problems, gauge time (one hour), and make it run as smoothly as possible. In effect, panel meetings outside of class should be like a small seminar on the subject under consideration as part of the active and collaborative learning style emphasized in this course.

3. INSTRUCTOR FEEDBACK

Ideally a meeting of the panel or a representative should be held with the instructor in order to report on the panel’s plans for the contents and delivery of its presentation. Ideally this meeting should be scheduled during the instructor’s office hours and involve as many of the members of the panel as possible.

4. WHOLE BOOK

The members of each panel should dialog among themselves in person and by email to prepare and organize the presentation including the collective PowerPoint. Each panelist is required to do a different book. In this presentation panel members should engage together in a conversation about their collective and individual conclusions on the subject. Avoid each panelist simply summarizing successive chapters of a book. The book as a whole should be discussed by the panelist and toward the end briefly among the panelists. (The author of an academic book usually identifies the argument and main points in a preface, introduction, and/or conclusion).

5. IDEAS AND DELIVERY

The panel should keep its presentation simple, just focus on discussing the argument and three to five main points identified for each book as a whole. Try to accomplish this in a manner that attracts and holds the attention of the class. In other words, both the ideas and their delivery are important for an effective presentation.

6. ASSESSMENT
The instructor will grade the panel as a whole and each individual member.

For more guidelines please explore the nine steps for effective oral communication at:


APPENDIX V. RELATED PUBLICATIONS BY INSTRUCTOR


2013, “Is There Any Light in the Darkness in El Dorado Controversy After a Decade?” (submitted for publication).