

COLLEGE OF THE HOLY CROSS
Department of Sociology & Anthropology

ANTH 101: The Anthropological Perspective

Fall 2023 / Section 06

INSTRUCTOR: Doug Bafford

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OFFICE HOURS: Mondays 3:00-4:00 PM,
Wednesdays 10:00-11:00 AM, and by appointment
Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays

OFFICE LOCATION: Beaven Hall 230

CLASS MEETING TIMES AND LOCATION: Mondays,
Wednesdays, and Fridays, 2:00-2:50 PM,
Beaven Hall 113



Course Description:

A one-semester introduction to the main modes of cultural anthropological analysis of non-Western and Western cultures alike, such as those of Africa south of the Sahara, Southeast Asia, Melanesia, Polynesia, and the Americas. This course explores what it means to be human from a comparative and cross-cultural perspective, with topics including ethnographic methods, concepts of culture, symbolic communication, ecological processes, kinship, religion, gender, hierarchy, economics, medicine, political life, and transnational processes. The course equips students with the analytical skills to live alongside people from unfamiliar cultures with empathy and mutual understanding while developing a critical self-reflection on their own cultural backgrounds, thus “making the strange familiar and the familiar strange.”

Prerequisites:

You must be a first- or second-year student to enroll in this course. No prior knowledge of anthropology is required.

Common Requirements:

This course fulfills either the Cross-Cultural Studies or Social Science common area of the undergraduate curriculum. Students interested in potentially declaring a major or minor in anthropology can learn more from the Department of Sociology & Anthropology, located on the second floor of Beaven Hall.

Required Readings:

The following required books can be purchased through most major retailers in either physical or electronic format. The Knauff book must be the fifth edition, as this has important additional chapters

based on the authors' more recent visits to the Gebusi that we will study in class. Any edition of the Fadiman text is acceptable. All other required and supplementary readings will be available online via the course Canvas site, which can be accessed at <https://hc.instructure.com>.

Fadiman, Anne. 1997. *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.

Knauff, Bruce, with Anne-Sylvie Malbrancke. 2022. *The Gebusi: Lives Transformed in a Rainforest World. Fifth Edition*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc.



Course Objectives:

By the end of this course, you should be able to

- Trace in broad strokes the historical development of anthropology as a discipline spanning the social sciences and the humanities
- Understand the influence of cultural logics on behavior, attitudes, and emotions
- Evaluate the prospects and challenges of adopting cultural relativism, as well as differences in moral systems cross-culturally
- Describe the scope of human variability in economic institutions, kinship organization, and political structures
- Consider the cultural dimensions of scientific and religious systems as ways of knowing
- Provide nuanced written analysis of the underlying assumptions behind racial, ethnic, and gendered classification schemes
- Apply anthropological understanding to everyday social life, including medical institutions, higher education, and contemporary economic systems, through participant observation

Course Policies:

In order to create the most effective learning environment possible and for the consideration of your fellow students, I ask that we all follow these simple guidelines while in class:

1. Arrive on-time having read the assigned materials and completed any relevant tasks or preparation for that day. The content you are expected to learn will come both from reading and activities completed outside of class time and additional material brought out during lectures and discussions. You will get the most out of the course if you keep up with the workload as you go rather than leaving everything for when exams and papers are due. In order not to disturb others in the class, you should try to arrive before the completion of our opening ritual.
2. Avoid distractions from electronic devices. This course demands your full presence, undistracted by concerns outside the room, and your time in class won't be worthwhile unless you commit yourself to paying attention to what we are doing. If you are relying on a device during class time for notetaking, you should aim to access only those programs that are immediately relevant to course topics so as not to distract yourself. As a common courtesy, this simple step will also avoid disrupting those around you who will inevitably watch your screens from the periphery.

3. Always have in front of you something with which to write notes. You are free to use whatever medium you prefer, but try to jot down not just what I have to say in class but what your classmates share in discussion, all of which may be used on the exams or assignments (and the notes about which will be invaluable in your studying).
4. Allow for an atmosphere of respectful academic discourse. This course covers potentially controversial social topics on which many people (including me) have strong opinions. Try your best to debate respectfully and sympathetically, even when you disagree with your classmates or with me. We want to allow everyone to express his or her perspective in a supportive yet academically critical setting. You may find it helpful to think of our job as to debate *ideas*, not other people.
5. Ask questions about anything (terms, concepts, history, etc.) you do not know or are unsure of. Even if it seems like a silly question, chances are that other people have the same uncertainty, and you will help others by asking it. Asking provocative questions about the human world and our place in it is one of the key goals of the course.
6. If you have concerns with anything in the course, please see me as soon as possible. Troubles that build over the course of the semester become more difficult to address; it will be much easier to deal with them as early on as possible. I am always available to find a solution that works best for you, regardless of what issues come up.
7. Regularly scheduled office hours are available on a first-come, first-served basis. I will meet with everyone who shows up during my office hours (listed at the top of the syllabus, unless modified by prior email announcement) in order of arrival. If your schedule is limited and you can only meet at a specific time, email me in advance to reserve a spot. You can also send an email to arrange a time outside of my regularly scheduled hours if they don't work for you. I am on campus virtually the entire day on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.



Assignments:

In addition to smaller weekly activities and in-class exercises (discussed below), you will complete five major assignments over the course of the semester: a fieldwork exercise, a synthetic essay, a holistic ethnography, a midterm exam, and a final exam. First, the fieldwork exercise will require you to adopt the techniques of participant observation to try your hand at anthropological fieldwork, at least in miniature. The assignment will involve a period of observation and notetaking in Worcester, after which you will write a short social scientific analysis (no more than three double-spaced pages) of these observations in light of the concepts introduced in course material. For the second major assignment, the synthetic essay, you will synthesize information found in two of the assigned readings covered during the first part of the course into an original argument. You will need to summarize the core argument and perspective of each author, but more importantly, the goal of this writing is to consider how each text can shed light on the other and how, together, they constitute a synthetic whole with insights not apparent in each text individually. The essay you submit should be no longer than five double-spaced pages, so conciseness will be key.

The third assignment, the holistic ethnography, requires you to compose an essay of no more than eight double-spaced pages in which you will craft an ethnographic overview of a culture group of your choice. You will conduct secondary research using library resources (and possibly supplemented with

first-hand primary observation) to give a detailed account of several aspects of social life among your chosen group. A critical component of this essay is that you incorporate findings from your own research with the anthropological questions, concepts, and frameworks presented in the course. As your thesis, you will suggest how information about this culture intervenes into any of the scholarly debates we have explored throughout the course (i.e., how it supports an answer or partial answer to a central anthropological question). More details and submission guidelines for each of these written assignments are posted to Canvas and will be discussed in class well in advance of their due dates.

Finally, there will be an in-class midterm exam given approximately halfway through the semester and a final exam given during Holy Cross's designated exam period at the end of the term. For the midterm you will have a full class period to answer a series of short-answer and essay questions based on the readings and class discussions completed thus far. For the final, you will have the full allotted period to answer a similarly structured exam; although it draws on core concepts introduced throughout the course, its emphasis will be on the ethnographic cases covered since the midterm only. A study guide for both will be distributed beforehand to help guide your preparation.

All written assignments prepared outside of class should be fully documented with consistent use of a citation style. American anthropologists typically follow the Chicago Manual of Style (author-date version) as a disciplinary convention, and you are welcome to use the same in this course. However, if you are more familiar with another style (e.g., MLA, APA, etc.) and would prefer to use it, you are welcome, as long as you do so consistently. The most important point is that you give clear references to outside texts and ideas you have borrowed, even if the texts have been assigned in class. Resources to help you learn good citation practices are available online at the [library's citation guide](#) and in person at the Writer's Workshop on the second floor of Dinand Library.

For all formal papers (i.e., the fieldwork exercise analysis, synthetic essay, and holistic ethnography), please try to think of a creative title (not the name of the assignment, like "Fieldwork Exercise") and place it at the top of the page. Of particular importance, make sure you set the font to Times New Roman size 12, the line spacing to double, eliminate extra space between paragraphs, place the *current* date in your standard heading (not the date on which you began the assignment), and include a reference list if you are relying on other people's ideas and data. You are strongly recommended to visit the Writer's Workshop to improve the quality of your academic writing, especially given the writing-intensive nature of anthropological work. You can [visit their website](#) to schedule a free forty-five-minute appointment, to which you should bring a copy of the assignment and your current draft.

You should strive to submit all assignments by the due dates listed in their prompts and on Canvas. Keeping abreast of submissions will make it easier for you to manage the workload over the course of the semester rather than postponing it for later, when you're likely to be even busier. For each day (or portion thereof) that your paper is late, your grade will be reduced by one-third of a letter (e.g., from B+ to a B). Please remember to read through your entire draft at least once before submitting it. Extensions are granted *automatically* for circumstances outside your control equal to the number of study days lost, **provided you let me know ahead of the due date**. Do not hesitate to reach out by email if you are having trouble meeting deadlines or other targets. If you would like to rewrite an assignment to try for a higher grade, which will be an average of the old and new scores, please see me during office hours to discuss your plans for revision. Along with your revision, you should submit a short memo in which you describe how you have addressed comments and suggestions from your initial draft. The last day to submit these revisions for any of the three major papers is the last scheduled day of classes. There are no other opportunities to earn extra credit.

Community-Based Learning:

You have the option of taking part in a semester-long project with the Office of Community-Based Learning, housed in the J.D. Power Center for Liberal Arts in the World. As anthropologists seek to learn more about unfamiliar cultural worlds through direct experience and close work with the communities they study, you can use the connections you make with a local Worcester organization to complete some of the assignments for this course. During the first few weeks of the semester, you will receive information from the CBL office on how to get in touch with a participating service opportunity, including registration, transportation, and weekly expectations. Those who have been placed with community partners may choose to use what you observe throughout the semester as source material for parts of your fieldwork exercise and holistic ethnography assignments. While participating in a CBL project is not a requirement for this course, you may find it a fulfilling and first-hand way to explore the material we are introducing in class. Furthermore, if you complete certain weekly requirements of roughly two hours per week, you may also elect to have a special designation placed on your transcript to indicate you participated in a CBL project for this course. More information is available on Canvas or by reaching out to Isabelle Jenkins at ijenkins@holycross.edu. You must contact the CBL office *within the first two weeks of the semester* if you are interested in this option.

Readings:

As in other reading-intensive courses in the humanities and social sciences, you are expected to come to class having carefully read the assigned materials. Due to our relatively small class size, I expect everyone to contribute something (even if it is small) to discussion at each meeting. If you have not closely read the materials for the day, it will be noticeable, and your engagement grade will be affected. Since many of our readings will be available electronically on Canvas, some students find it helpful to print them out to annotate while they read and to refer to during class. While you are not *required* to print out all the readings, if you do not have them in front of you during class, I expect you to have taken notes on some of the important passages, and I may call on you to answer questions about them. Nevertheless, I want you to see the readings for this course not as a burden but as a chance to connect with ideas and ways of knowing that may be unfamiliar to you, even if approaching these themes may be difficult at first.

Engagement and Collegiality:

A critically important component of your success in this course can be framed as “engagement and collegiality,” a unique metric for this course that includes elements that sometimes go under the heading of attendance, participation, and/or in-class assignments. Here it encapsulates how seriously you have engaged with the course material and with your classmates during class sessions, not only in formal written submissions. It is much broader than what can be measured in a single assignment with a specific due date. Still, to help you track throughout the semester how well you are engaging with the course, its calculation is made up of four specific items, each of which will be weighted equally.

First, as an incentive to ensure everyone has invested an equal amount of preparation outside of class, some meetings will begin with a short quiz based on the assigned readings for the day. These quizzes do not require significant reflection or fine-grained memorization, nor are you expected to understand everything you have read ahead of time; if you have read and taken notes on the main arguments in each text, you will likely earn 100% on each. They are merely a tool to ensure you are familiar enough with the material to jump into the discussion. Quizzes will be held immediately at the

start of class following our opening ritual (another incentive to arrive on time) and will take between five and ten minutes.

Second, for class sessions that do not begin with a quiz, you will be asked to partake in a question-generation exercise. Based on your reading of any assigned texts or the material introduced in discussion or lecture, you will formulate a question of criticism, clarification, or curiosity that you will write on a paper to be distributed around the room. Alternatively, you may choose to respond to someone else's question or ask a follow-up. These questions will then be addressed at the end of our class session or later as part of our collective studying/recap. As mentioned in the course policies section above, a key skill to develop in this course is the ability to ask critical questions about the world around us, and this routine will help us develop that skill. If you are unable to be in class and therefore miss a quiz or question activity, **you can stop by during office hours or another time by appointment to discuss the material introduced and make up any lost points.**

Finally, your mental presence at and participation in each session is a crucial component of this course and your engagement grade. I will assess how thoroughly you have taken advantage of opportunities to speak up, come to office hours, ask thoughtful questions, and respond to your colleagues with meaningful contributions. You cannot earn an A for this component simply by showing up; you must earn it through consistent, careful, thoughtful, and eager engagement in class discussions. At the same time, productive discussion does not exclude taking risks; feel free to try new ideas without fear of being wrong. One of the most important skills we will cultivate this semester is making a habit of bold moves in your thinking. Practically speaking, boldness entails suggesting alternative ideas that you may not be entirely sure about, exposing them to scrutiny along with your own cherished positions and assumptions. In all assignments, you are encouraged to think imaginatively and not always worry about having the "correct" position or interpretation. While you should always strive to support your arguments with good evidence, there is value in testing out explanations that may at first seem counterintuitive or speculative.

To offer a sense of how I evaluate this important component of your engagement and to offer an opportunity for improvement, you will receive my assessment for how well you have met these criteria approximately halfway through the semester, as well as at the end of the course. I understand that outgoing conversation or debate is not a style suited to all learners. Therefore, if you feel you are not able to participate rigorously during class, please let me know so that we can figure out an alternative mode of participation, whether through office hour visits or other activities. Together, these four items—quiz average, question exercises, discussion contributions in the first half of the course, and discussion contributions in the second half of the course—will be weighted together to calculate your engagement and collegiality grade.



Students with Disabilities:

Any student who feels he or she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should reach out as early in the semester as possible to discuss specific needs. Please contact the Office of Accessibility Services in Hogan Campus Center Room 505 or by phone at 508-793-3693 to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

Academic Integrity:

All education is a cooperative enterprise between faculty and students. This cooperation requires trust and mutual respect, which are only possible in an environment governed by the principles of academic integrity. As an institution devoted to teaching, learning, and intellectual inquiry, Holy Cross expects all members of the College community to abide by the highest standards of academic integrity. Any violation of academic integrity undermines the student-faculty relationship, thereby wounding the whole community. The principal violations of academic integrity are plagiarism, cheating, and collusion. See the [full academic integrity policy](#) for more details.

Audio Recording:

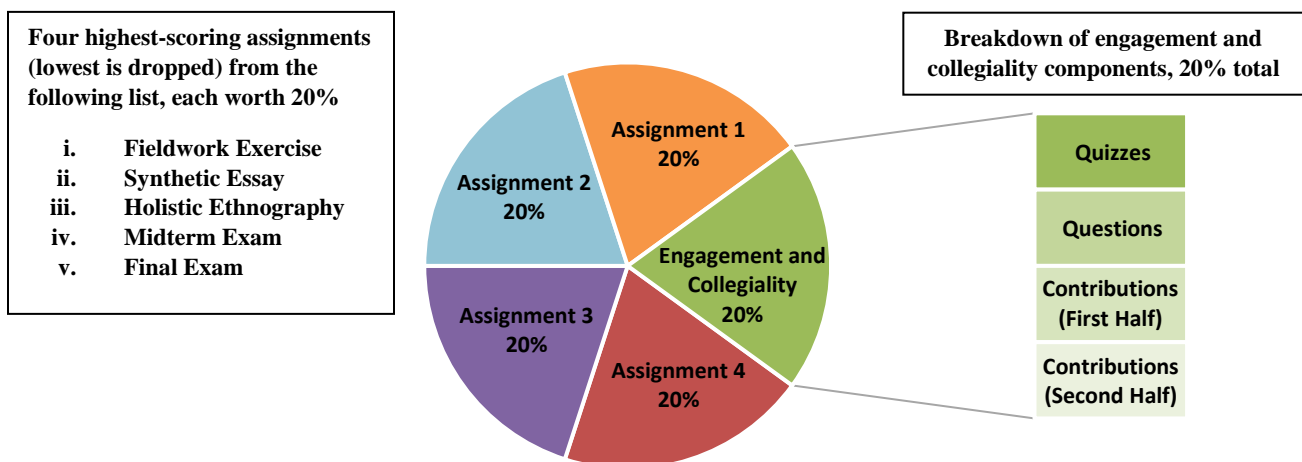
If you feel it is in your best interest to record our conversations as a means to understand/process the ideas introduced in class and share them with wider audiences, you may do so for any use.

Religious Observances:

Any student who faces a conflict between the requirements of the course and the observance of his or her religious faith should contact me as early in the semester as possible. In such event, I will provide reasonable and fair accommodations that do not unduly disadvantage you and allow you to keep abreast of any missed course material.

Grading:

You will be evaluated based on the quality of your assignments, the degree of improvement throughout the semester, and the value of your participation to our community of inquiry. Aside from “engagement and collegiality” (which is worth 20% of the grade), there are five major assignments (three written assignments and two in-class exams). The four highest of these scores will be weighted at 20% each, while the lowest score will be dropped. To visualize the calculation of your final course grade, the various components will be weighted as follows:






Your work will be evaluated according to the following scale, as set by the College:



- A..... Excellent (for exceptional and innovative work)
- A-
- B+
- B..... Good (for thoughtful work that meets expectations)
- B-
- C+
- C.....Satisfactory (for acceptable work)
- C-
- D+
- D..... Low Pass (for poor work)
- F.....Failing Grade





Course Schedule:

<i>Class Unit</i>	<i>Day</i>	<i>Reading and Assignments Due</i>
Week 1: Prologue What Is Anthropology All About?	August 30	None
	September 1	Syllabus Horace Miner, “Body Ritual among the Nacirema”
PART I: Principles of Social Organization		
Week 2: Foundations of Anthropological Inquiry	September 4	Matthew Engelke, <i>How to Think Like an Anthropologist</i>
	September 6	Bruce Knaft, <i>The Gebusi</i> , Entry and Introduction (pp. 1-9) Bronisław Malinowski, <i>Argonauts of the Western Pacific</i>  Submit Fieldwork Exercise Part 1: Site Selection
	September 8	Clifford Geertz, “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture”
Week 3: Cultural Logic and Social Life	September 11	Bruce Knaft and Anne-Sylvie Malbrancke, <i>The Gebusi</i> , Chapters 3 and 4
	September 13	Renato Rosaldo, “Of Headhunters and Soldiers: Separating Cultural and Ethical Relativism”  Submit Fieldwork Exercise Part 2: Description
	September 15	E.E. Evans-Pritchard, <i>Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande</i>

Week 4: Political and Economic Organization I – Questioning Typologies	September 18	E.E. Evans-Pritchard, “The Nuer of the Southern Sudan” Bruce Knauft, <i>The Gebusi</i> , Chapters 1 and 2
	September 20	Marshall Sahlins, “The Original Affluent Society” Richard Lee, “Eating Christmas in the Kalahari” (<i>optional</i>)
	September 22	David Kaplan, “The Darker Side of the ‘Original Affluent Society’”
Week 5: Political and Economic Organization II – Large-Scale Systems and Bureaucracies	September 25	Karen Ho, <i>Liquidated: An Ethnography of Wall Street</i>
	September 27	Amy Penfield, “Maneuvering for Paper: Physical and Social Experiences of Bureaucracy in Venezuelan Amazonia”  Submit Fieldwork Exercise Part 3: Analysis
	September 29	David Graeber, <i>Bullshit Jobs</i>
PART II: Biology, Culture, and Classification Schemes		
Week 6: Kinship	October 2	Bruce Knauft, “Getting Along with Kin and Killers” (available on Canvas) Bruce Knauft, <i>The Gebusi</i> , Chapter 9
	October 4	Marshall Sahlins, <i>What Kinship Is—And Isn’t</i>
	October 6	Cai Hua, <i>A Society without Fathers or Husbands</i>
Week 7: Gender, Sex, and Sexuality	October 16	Margaret Mead, <i>Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies</i> Bruce Knauft, <i>The Gebusi</i> , Chapter 5
	October 18	Anne Fausto-Sterling, “The Five Sexes: Why Male and Female Are Not Enough” Colin Wright, “Sex Is Not a Spectrum” Donald Donham, “Freeing South Africa: The ‘Modernization’ of Male-Male Sexuality in Soweto” (skim)
	October 20	David M. Halperin, <i>How to Be Gay</i>

Week 8: Race I – Biological Fluidity and Social Construction	October 23	Jared Diamond, “Race without Color” AAA Statement on Race Karen Brodtkin Sacks, “How Jews Became White”
	October 25	 MIDTERM EXAMINATION
	October 27	Michael Baran, “‘Girl, You Are Not Morena. We Are Negras!’: Questioning the Concept of ‘Race’ in Southern Bahia, Brazil”
Week 9: Violence and Discrimination	October 30	Richard Wrangham and Dale Peterson, <i>Demonic Males</i>
	November 1	Robert W. Sussman, “Exploring Our Basic Human Nature: Are Humans Inherently Violent?”  Submit Synthetic Essay
	November 3	Pierre Bourdieu, <i>Distinction</i> Bruce Knauff, <i>The Gebusi</i> , Chapter 8
Week 10: Race II – Adjacent Forms of Classification	November 6	H. Samy Alim and Geneva Smitherman, <i>Articulate While Black</i>
	November 8	Sarah Lamb, “The Politics of Dirt and Gender: Body Techniques in Bengali India” Louis Dumont, <i>Homo Hierarchicus (optional)</i>
	November 10	Bruce Knauff, <i>The Gebusi</i> , Chapter 10
<u>PART III: Cultural Meaning and Knowledge Production</u>		
Week 11: Language and Semiotic Systems	November 13	Franz Boas, “On Alternating Sounds” William O’Grady, “Language: A Preview” (<i>consult for terminology if you’re not already familiar with linguistics</i>) Steven Pinker, <i>The Language Instinct (optional)</i>
	November 15	George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, <i>Metaphors We Live By</i> Complete the New York Times American Dialect Quiz
	November 17	Kira Hall, Donna M. Goldstein, and Matthew Bruce Ingram, “The Hands of Donald Trump: Entertainment, Gesture, Spectacle”

Week 12: Religion and Ritual	November 20	Susan F. Harding, “Convicted by the Holy Spirit: The Rhetoric of Fundamental Baptist Conversion” Bruce Knauft, <i>The Gebusi</i> , Chapters 6 and 7 Donald A. Slater, “Linking Cave, Mountain, and Sky: A Subterranean Observation Point for the Sunrise on the Day of Solar Zenith Transit in Yucatan, Mexico” Douglas Bafford, “Religion and Science”
Week 13: Medicine and Culture	November 27	Anne Fadiman, <i>The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down</i> , Chapters 1-10 Peter Conrad, <i>The Medicalization of Society</i>
	November 29	Adeline Masquelier, “Public Health or Public Threat? Polio Eradication Campaigns, Islamic Revival, and the Materialization of State Power in Niger”
	December 1	Anne Fadiman, <i>The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down</i> , Chapters 11-19
Week 14: Globalization and Applied Anthropology	December 4	Bruce Knauft, <i>The Gebusi</i> , Chapters 11 and 12
	December 6	John Bodley, <i>Victims of Progress</i>  Submit Holistic Ethnography
	December 8	None
Exam Week: Epilogue What Can We Do with Anthropology?	TBD	 FINAL EXAMINATION

*** NB: This schedule and syllabus are subject to change as we move through the semester. ***

Source for Image on First Page: Bruce Knauft, [online supplement to The Gebusi](#).
(Caption: “Sayu, holding my book, *Exchanging the Past*, open to the photos of he himself as a 5-year old in 1981 (L) and as a young bachelor in 1998 (R).”)