"Anthropology is the most scientific of the humanities and the most humanistic of the sciences" – Anthropologist Eric Wolf [1923-1999]

I. Objectives and Scope of Course

Anthropology is a unique member of the social sciences. It is the only academic discipline that examines Western and non-Western, historic as well as contemporary societies from a holistic perspective.

This course will explore the history and the evolution of the genus Homo through modern Homo sapiens sapiens [“Humans the double wise”]. The course will focus on anthropological inquiry, including basic concepts, methodologies, key theoretical perspectives, major achievements within the discipline, and real world issues facing us all.

Topics will include: human evolution; biology and evolution; primates and the first bipeds; the Neolithic transition and the rise of cities; characteristics of culture and human adaptation; language and religion; economic systems; sex, family and marriage; gender, same sex marriage, transgenderism, the arts; politics, power and violence; and the processes of change. Special attention will be paid to the ongoing debate between Darwinian evolution and “Creationism” [aka “Intelligent Design” – I.D.] in relationship to the teaching of science in American public schools. Witness what just happened to the Texas School Board and their [scary] revisionism of history.

In the aftermath of 9/11 and the terrorist attacks on the United States, anti-Arab, anti-Muslim, and increased distrust of the anthropological “Other” have filtered throughout the American landscape. Anthropology can play a positive role in enhancing our understanding and appreciation of cultures and ethnicities within and beyond our borders.

II. Course Requirements

Because this is an extremely short three-week course, you will have DAILY writing assignments [in the Discussion Board] in addition to three short [3 pp. max] Response Papers and two Exams [Mid-Term and Final]. Therefore, if you feel that you will not be able to keep up with this intensive workload, please consider taking another class.

(1) Discussion Board – For each of the chapters in our textbook [Haviland], there will be a thread on the Discussion Board to post your daily critical summaries of each chapter. Read the chapters critically and post what you consider to be the MAIN points or themes of your reading. Also, feel to interact with each others’ postings, as well as my postings.
(2) **Response Papers** – On a once-a-week basis you will be assigned to write a short [2-3 pp.] critical reaction to an assigned article on BlackBoard. There is no “right” or “wrong” response, and I am looking for your creative, critical, original, and even punchy reaction to the assigned article in question.

(3) **Exams** – There will be two Exams – a Mid-Term and a Final – consisting of essay questions. The Exams will remain open for 72 hours each, but you must complete the Exam once you begin it: You may not stop and then start again later . . .

**Grading** is based on the following:

- Discussion Board 40% of final grade
- 3 Response Papers 15%
- Mid-Term Exam 20% of final grade
- Final Exam 25%

**III. Required Texts and Assigned Readings**


(2) Assigned readings will be posted for Response Papers [etc.] on BlackBoard.

**IV. Major Topics covered in this course:**

- The essence of Anthropology
- Biology and evolution
- Living primates
- Macroevolution and the early primates
- The first bipeds
- Early Homo and the origins of culture
- Pre-modern humans and the elaboration of culture
- Global expansion of Homo sapiens and their technology
- The Neolithic transition
- The emergence of cities and states
- Modern human diversity: Race and racism
- Human adaptation and a changing world
- The characteristics of culture
- Ethnographic research: Its history, methods, and theories
- Language, symbolism and communication
- Social identity, personality and gender
- Patterns of subsistence
- Economic systems
- Sex, marriage and the family
- Kinship and descent
- Grouping by gender, age, common interest and class
- Politics, power and violence
- Spirituality, religion, and the supernatural
- The arts
- Processes of change
- Global challenges, local responses, and the role of Anthropology
- The impact of Globalization in the 21st century
- The future of global capitalism

V. Selected Bibliography


Harris, Marvin. The rise of anthropological theory. New York: Crowell.


