INTRODUCTION TO ANTHROPOLOGY • ANTHROPOLOGY 130-80

Wm Paterson University • Winter 2010-2011 • Professor Glenn Alcalay
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"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 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

(1) Anthropology: The Human Challenge by Haviland, Prins, Walrath, & McBride. 13th edition. Thomson-Wadsworth. 2011. ISBN: 978-0-495-81084-1;
(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

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