

Fall 2018
HUMA1620 Human Culture and Society
Course Syllabus

Course Time:

Mondays and Wednesdays
Lecture 12:00 - 12:50 pm
Tutorial 13:00 - 13:20 pm

Course Instructor: Dr. Huwy-min Lucia Liu

Office Hours: 2-3pm on Mondays and Wednesdays

Office Location: RM3385, Academic Building

Course Teaching Assistant: Mr. Herbary Zhang

Office Hours: 11:00 am -12:00 pm

Office Location: RM3301 (PG Commons)

Course Description:

Anthropology is a discipline concerned with what it means to be human; we research “humanity” through exotically foreign human practices no less than through those human practices that are most familiar to us. It provides a way of seeing the world and the place(s) of humanity in it that emphasizes holism, experiential learning, and comparison. Anthropology is as concerned with understanding the differences between and within groups of people as it is with the similarities that make *all* of us equally human. Moreover, it offers a perspective on difference that allows us to see how some differences have been historically infused with power, resulting not just in difference, but deep-seated *inequalities*. This course introduces students to the core questions, conversations, and concepts that have driven anthropological research and whose discussions have provided valuable insight into the human experience.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs):

1. Understand basic terms, concepts, and theories in cultural anthropology about human culture and society.
2. Develop an appreciation of cultural diversity and understand the meanings of different cultural practices in their socio-cultural contexts.
3. Develop ethnographic research skills for collecting field data on human culture and society.

Assessment Tasks:

1. “Norm Violation” Essay: 36% (Deadline: **October 24, 2018**)
2. Final take-home exam:
40% (I will post the final exam on Canvas before 9am on December 8, 2018. You must submit your answers before **9am on December 11, 2018**).
3. Tutorial Assignments: 24% (3% for each assignment). I will choose the best 8 out of 10 assignments when calculating your overall grades.

Required Readings:

Many of the key concepts and some of the examples that I will refer to in the course lectures also appear in the following extremely useful two textbooks. While I am not assigning either in full for this course, they are excellent reference materials. They are:

Carol Lowery Delaney (2017) *Investigating Culture: An Experiential Introduction to Anthropology*.

Richard Robbins and Rachel Dowty (2017) *Cultural Anthropology: A Problem-Based Approach*.

Your assigned lecture and tutorial readings are listed in the course outline.

Notes on Grading

Essay and take-home exams are listed above the date they are due. Late work will be marked down one third of a letter grade per day late (an A paper will get an A- if turned in up to 24 hours late or a B+ if turned in within 48 hours of the deadline). No assignments will be accepted more than 3 days late except under emergency circumstances. You **MUST** speak with the professor as soon as possible if you think this applies to you.

Notes on Readings

Both the lecture readings and tutorial readings have to be completed **BEFORE** lecture. Lecture readings will help you understand the lectures better. This is particularly important if you are a first-year student or if you are not a native English speaker. Tutorial readings are the basis for group discussion during tutorial. Please be sure you do both!

Tutorial Assignments:

All tutorial assignments should be 1-2 pages long. All text documents are double spaced with 2.5cm margins on all four sides unless otherwise specified. As for maps and other illustrative kinds of assignment, you can just write these on a single piece of paper. Students will receive specific details about each assignment in separate documents.

Note on Electronic Devices

As this is a class designed for first and second year students, I require everyone to take notes with a pen or pencil on paper. If you *must* take notes using an electronic device in cases involving learning disabilities or other clear reason, then please come and talk to me. Generally, I have found that computers and mobile devices tend to be much more of a distraction than a help while in class. Remember that these are not only a distraction for your own learning, but also for your classmates. *Please turn all of your devices to silent mode and put them away so as not to disturb the class!*

Course Outlines

Week 1: Introduction (No tutorial this week)

September 3

Introduce the course

September 5

Introduce Anthropology and Anthropological Ways of Thinking

Week 2: The Concept of Culture

September 10

Lecture:

What is culture?

Lecture Reading:

*Joshua Rothman (2014) "The Meaning of 'Culture,'" *The New Yorker*.

Tutorial:

Reading Discussion in Small Groups

Tutorial Reading:

*Richelle Gamlan "8 Questions About the U.S. You'll Be Asked While Teaching in Asia," see <https://www.gooverseas.com/blog/questions-youll-be-asked-while-teaching-in-asia>

September 12

Lecture:

How do we investigate culture?

Explaining the norm violation paper

Lecture Reading:

*Robbins and Dowty (2017) Chapter 1, Question 1.1: Why do human beings differ in their beliefs and behaviors? (p.5-8).

Tutorial:

*Watch a TED Talk: Ethnography: Ellen Isaacs at TEDxBroadway

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nV0jY5VgymI>

Week 3: Space

September 17

Lecture:

The cultural construction of space

Lecture Reading

*Sue Bridwell Beckham (1988) "The American Front Porch: Women's Liminal Space," *Making the American Home: Middle-Class Women and Domestic Material Culture, 1840-1940*, p. 69-79 (read the first half).

Tutorial:

Assignment No. 1 Due: Your Space in Hong Kong

Complete your assignment **before** class. Present your assignment to your peers in small groups during tutorial. Turn in your assignment before you leave class.

September 19

Lecture:

Restricted and Invisible Spaces

Lecture Reading:

*Sue Bridwell Beckham (1988) "The American Front Porch: Women's Liminal Space," *Making the American Home: Middle-Class Women and Domestic Material Culture, 1840-1940*, p. 69-79 (read the second half).

Tutorial:

Discuss Beckham's article in small groups

Week 4: Times

September 24

Lecture:

Cosmological Times

Lecture Reading:

*Janet Siskind 1992. "The Invention of Thanksgiving: A Ritual of American Nationality," *Critique of Anthropology*, p. 167-176 (read the first half)

Tutorial:

Assignment No. 2 Due: Choose your own holiday

Complete your assignment **before** class. Present your assignment to your peers in small groups during tutorial. Turn in your assignment before you leave class.

September 26

Lecture:

Lived Times

Lecture Reading:

*Janet Siskind 1992. "The Invention of Thanksgiving: A Ritual of American Nationality," *Critique of Anthropology*, p.177-187 (read the second half).

Tutorial:

Discuss Siskind's article in small groups

Week 5: Language

October 3

Lecture:

Theories of Language

Language in Use

Lecture Reading:

*Cameron, Claire. 2015. "5 Languages That Could Change the Way You See the World." *Nautilus*, March 3, Published online at <http://nautil.us/blog/5-languages-that-could-change-the-way-you-see-the-world>.

Tutorial:

Assignment No. 3 Due: How is time conceptualized or described in Chinese or in English (choose one).

Complete your assignment **before** class. Present your assignment to your peers in small groups during tutorial. Turn in your assignment before you leave class.

Week 6: Relations and Relatedness

October 8

Lecture:

Family and Kinship

Lecture Reading:

*Robbins and Dowty (2017) Chapter 5: Introduction (p.185-187), Question 5.2: How are families formed and ideal family types maintained? (p. 196-204).

Tutorial:

Assignment No. 4: Writing a Family Ethnography Part I

Complete this assignment during class time

October 10

Lecture:

Love and Sex

Lecture Reading:

*Robbins and Dowty (2017) Chapter 5: Question 5.3: What are the roles of sexuality, love, and wealth? (p. 204-207).

*Natalie Angier (2013) "The changing American family", *New York Times*.

Tutorial:

Assignment No. 4 Due: Writing Family Ethnography Part II

Complete your assignment **before** class. Present your assignment to your peers in small groups during tutorial. Turn in your assignment before you leave class.

Week 7: Body

October 15

Lecture:

Our Bodies

Lecture Reading:

*Susan Brownell 1995 "'Obscene' Bodies, the State, and Popular Movements: Body Building," *Training the Body for China*, p.265-277.

Tutorial:

Reading Discussion in Small Groups

Tutorial Reading

*Robbins and Dowty (2017) "Fat Talk" (p.252-259)

Week 8: Body

October 22

Lecture:

The Social Body

Lecture Reading:

*Susan Brownell 1995 "'Obscene' Bodies, the State, and Popular Movements: Old People's Disco," *Training the Body for China*, p.277-288.

Tutorial:

Assignment No. 5 Due: Advertising Images

Complete your assignment **before** class. Present your assignment to your peers in small groups during tutorial. Turn in your assignment before you leave class.

October 24

Norm Violation Project Dues

Norm Violation Project Presentation in Class

Week 9: Food Consumption

October 29

Lecture:

We are what we eat

Lecture Reading

*Huwy-min Lucia Liu (2011). "Substance, masculinity, and class: betel nut consumption and embarrassing modernity in Taiwan," *Popular Culture in Taiwan: Charismatic Modernity*, p. 131-148.

Tutorial:

Reading Discussion in Small Groups

Tutorial Reading:

*Robbins and Dowty (2017) "An Anthropologist Looks at a Happy Meal," p.28-31.

October 31

Lecture:

What makes a meal?

Lecture Reading:

*Richard Robbins (2005). "The Case of Sugar," *Global Problems and the Culture of Capitalism*, p211-217.

Tutorial:

Assignment No. 6 Due: An Anthropologist Looks at Cha chaan teng ("tea restaurant")
Complete your assignment **before** class. Present your assignment to your peers in small groups during tutorial. Turn in your assignment before you leave class.

Week 10: Food Production and Clothes

November 5

Lecture:

Modes of Subsistence and their transformation

Lecture reading:

*Robbins and Dowty (2017) "Chapter 2 Introduction Q. 2-1, Q. 2-2," p.40-57.

Tutorial:

Assignment No. 7 Due: Imagine you are a World Bank Consultant...
Complete your assignment **before** class. Present your assignment to your peers in small groups during tutorial. Turn in your assignment before you leave class.

November 7

Lecture:

Fashion

Lecture Reading:

*Ann Marie Leshkovich and Carla Jones (2003). "What Happens When Asian Chic Becomes Chic in Asia," *Fashion Theory*, Vol.7, Issue3/4, p.281-300.

Tutorial:

Assignment No. 8 Due: Clothes Manufacturing
Complete your assignment **before** class. Present your assignment to your peers in small groups during tutorial. Turn in your assignment before you leave class.

Week 11: Emotions

November 12

Lecture:

Cultural Construction of Emotions

Grief in Bali

Lecture Reading:

*Emily Schultz and Robert Lavenda (2012). "Emotions," *Cultural Anthropology: A Perspective of the Human Condition*, p.128-130.

Tutorial:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzkfRicF8wE>

Assignment No. 9 Due: Emotional Labor in Hong Kong

Participate in small group discussions on emotional labor and then turn in the group discussion summary sheet.

November 14 (No Class)

Week 12: Ritual

November 19 (No Class)

November 21

Lecture:

Secular Ritual

Lecture Reading:

*Emily Schultz and Robert Lavenda (2012). "What is ritual," *Cultural Anthropology: A Perspective of the Human Condition*, p.165-169.

Tutorial:

Assignment No. 10 Due: Your Ritual Life

Complete your assignment **before** class. Present your assignment to your peers in small groups during tutorial. Turn in your assignment before you leave class.

Week 13 Ritual

November 26

Lecture:

Myths and urban legends

Lecture Reading:

*Grant Evans (2013). "Ghost and The New Governor: The Anthropology of a Hong Kong Rumour," *Hong Kong: Anthropological Essays on a Chinese Metropolis*

Tutorial:

Reading Discussion in Small Groups

Watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xcb8kkIvXc> in class

November 28

Lecture:

*Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. 2009. "The Danger of a Single Story." Ted Global Talk, Globalization as Wrap Up and Explaining Take Home Final Exam

Lecture Reading:

*Emily Schultz and Robert Lavenda (2012). "Cultural Imperialism or Cultural Hybridization," *Cultural Anthropology: A Perspective of the Human Condition*, p.380-385.

Tutorial:

Reading Discussion in Small Groups

What can you do if you study anthropology?

Tutorial Reading:

*Robbins and Dowty (2017) "Shopping and Selling," (p.30-36).