



Department of Sociology and Anthropology  
The University of Texas at El Paso

ANTH 1302-013 (CRN 13369)

Fall 2023

INTRODUCTION TO CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

SYLLABUS

Meeting Times & Location: MW 10:30-11:50 am, Education Bld. Rm#203

Instructor: Prof. Bilge Firat ([bohearn@utep.edu](mailto:bohearn@utep.edu))

Office Hours & Location: T 1:30-2:30 pm or by appointment, Old Main Bld. Rm#312

TA: Raoul Tayou Tayou, MA ([rtayoutayo@miners.utep.edu](mailto:rtayoutayo@miners.utep.edu))

TA Office Hour & Location: TBD

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

*Preparation for anthropology is preparation for life,  
and it lies in the cultivation of a readiness to  
both listen to others and question ourselves.<sup>1</sup>*

The world around us is changing before our eyes. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century we are experiencing an interaction with people, ideas and systems that is intensifying at a breathtaking pace. Communication technologies link people instantaneously across the globe. Economic activities challenge national boundaries. People are on the move within countries and between them. As a result, today we increasingly encounter the diversity of humanity, not only on the other side of the world but also in our schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, religious communities, and families. How will we develop the skills and strategies for engaging and navigating the complex, multicultural, global, and rapidly changing reality of the world around us? Anthropology is the toolkit you are looking for.

Cultural anthropology is the study of humans, particularly the many ways people around the world today and throughout human history have organized themselves to live together: to get along, to survive, to thrive and to have meaningful lives. This course will introduce you to the fascinating work of anthropologists and the research strategies and analytical perspectives that anthropologists have developed—our tools of the trade—that can help you better understand and engage today's world as you move through it. In many ways, you are already an anthropologist. You are dealing with human diversity every day. How do you approach human diversity on campus, in your jobs, in your families, with the people you date? Whether your interest is in business, psychology, criminal justice, or political science, you will need a skill set for analyzing and engaging a multi-cultural and increasingly interconnected world and workplace. Introduction to Cultural Anthropology will equip you to better understand and engage the world as you move through it, and if you so choose, to apply those strategies to address complicated issues of race, gender, inequality, climate change, human

---

<sup>1</sup> MacDougall, Susan. 2016. "Enough about Ethnography: An Interview with Tim Ingold." Member Voices, Fieldsights, April 5. <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/enough-about-ethnography-an-interview-with-tim-ingold>.

Disclaimer: This syllabus is subject to change.

Any changes will be communicated to the students in due time.



Department of Sociology and Anthropology  
The University of Texas at El Paso

sexuality, ethnic conflict, religious difference, poverty, migration, and many more – the challenges confronting us and our neighbors in this global village.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course presents the anthropologists' toolkit to empower you to:

- See the world in new ways, to “make the strange familiar and the familiar strange,” and reimagine the diverse possibilities for living as humans
- Recognize, analyze, and engage structures of power
- Critique cultural folk myths about human nature
- Generate new anthropological knowledge about human culture by researching, thinking, and writing anthropologically – thereby becoming proto-scholars.

### COURSE MATERIALS

Lectures, readings, films, guest speakers, discussions and other in-class exercises will explore the role of anthropology in analyzing and addressing contemporary issues.

#### Required Textbook:

- Guest, Kenneth J. 2023. *Essentials of Cultural Anthropology: A Toolkit for A Global Age*. New York: W.W.Norton. Fourth Edition (CA).

The textbook is available at Campus Bookstore, but you are not obliged to buy Bookstore copies. Should you require physical copies or read the textbook by other means, make sure that you get/read the third (and latest) edition and that you have access to online InQuizitive. **Other readings** may include articles and book chapters that are NOT found in the textbook; instead, these readings will be made electronically available to you in due time on Blackboard. Electronic reserves are available to all students registered for this course as full text PDF files or weblinks that may be downloaded and printed from our course page on Blackboard.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

You will learn from your peers and from me by discussing course materials collectively or in smaller groups. But this course also aims at developing your skills in applying what you learn in class to outside cases of your own choosing. The course will prepare you to try ethnographic field research and data collection techniques. Each student will engage in a multi-stage faculty supervised original ethnographic fieldwork project physically conducted in the City of El Paso and its vicinities or among digital communities who meet virtually. We will spend ample time in class talking about the details of conducting hands-on field research, library and archival research, and the writing process. Overall, you will be assessed based on the following five (5) forms of assignments, each of which are weighted differently:

#### Attendance and Participation (10 points of the course grade in total; 5 points each)

Disclaimer: This syllabus is subject to change.  
Any changes will be communicated to the students in due time.



**Department of Sociology and Anthropology**  
**The University of Texas at El Paso**

**Regular class attendance** The University requires attendance to all 1xxx-level courses mandatory (see <http://catalog.utep.edu/policies-regulations/attendance-grading/#text> ). I view class attendance your responsibility. In this course, we will use university rules related to excused and unexcused absences, which can otherwise be found in the above link. Please stay home if you (a) have been diagnosed with any illness, or (b) are experiencing symptoms. I value your attendance and input in this course immensely. Outside of excused absences, regular attendance is essential to your democratic participation in class discussions and organizational matters. If you are absent, you will have no say, which pressing issues we should be discussing in class on Wednesdays or which piece we should be reading to educate ourselves on the subject matter. If you are absent, you won't have a say, in other words. Regular attendance will also sustain your participation portion of your grade.

**Criteria for assessing attendance:** Outside of excused absences, students can miss only one (1) class session. After that, 2 points per each unexcused absence from class will be taken off of your overall grade.

**Class Participation** Criteria for assessing participation in class discussions and exercises are as follows:

- 5 (A): The student is always attentive and well prepared, answers readily when called upon, initiates interactions, volunteers, participates actively in discussions and group activities;
- 4 (B): The student is prepared and pays attention, but is reluctant to take initiative, answers questions only when asked, participates actively in-group activities but passively in discussions;
- 3 (C): The student is not fully prepared, does not take initiative and often is not able to answer questions when called upon, participates scarcely in-group activities and in discussions;
- 2 (D): The student is inadequately prepared and has difficulty answering questions when called upon, his/her contribution to group activities and to discussions is minimal.
- 0-1 (F): The student is frequently absent from class and/or asleep during class activities and discussion and s/he fails to meet all the participation requirements.

**Reflection Pieces** (30 points of the course grade total; 3 points for each successful submission) This syllabus, and this course, in general, are designed to allow you to maximize your participation in it. One of the ways in which you are expected to do so (and will be rewarded for) is the submission of ten (10) short (ca. 300-400 words) reflection pieces to Blackboard as indicated on the reading schedule. You will have twelve (12) options to do so, but only 10 of the highest graded will count towards your final grade.

This exercise aims to increase your contribution to your and your peers' education. You will research current issues and events as disseminated in newspaper articles which, in your understanding, speaks to the current topic of the week. You will post your critical overview on the Discussion Board as indicated in the reading schedule below. The deadlines are set to give ample time to all class participants to read your submission. You will come to class prepared to defend your thesis as to how and which specific aspects of the current topic we are discussing your piece speaks to. Be mindful of that this will further improve your attendance and participation portions of this segment of your course grade.



Department of Sociology and Anthropology  
The University of Texas at El Paso

**Mid-Term Exams (60 points in total; 20 points for each mid-term exam)**

There will be three (3) mid-term exams each containing multiple choice questions. Exams may/may not also include a short essay question, which you will know beforehand.

**No Final Exam**

**GRADING SCALE**

The following grading scale will be used for all graded work in this course: A = 100-95% B = 94-85% C = 84-75% D = 74-65% F = 64% and below

**POLICIES**

**Professionalism** This course involves participation in discussions and activities. We each have different experiences that influence our perspectives of the world. The classroom should be a lively, interactive, and comfortable place where information is shared ideas tested and issues debated. You are expected to treat your instructor and all other participants in the course with courtesy and respect. Your comments to others should be factual, constructive, and free from harassing statements. You are encouraged to disagree with other students, but such disagreements need to be based upon facts and documentation (rather than prejudices and personalities). *Unprofessional or disrespectful conduct will result in a lower grade since part of the learning process in this course is respectful engagement of ideas with others.* You are expected to come to class prepared, complete assignments on time and adhere to the university's academic standards, including those governing academic dishonesty and misconduct (for more, see below). You should equally expect me as your professor in this course to be prepared for each class and to treat each student with respect and compassion.

**Accommodations** The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. Students requesting an accommodation based on a disability must register with the [UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services](#) (CASS). Contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 915-747-5148, or email them at [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu), or apply for accommodations online via the [CASS portal](#).

Disclaimer: This syllabus is subject to change.

Any changes will be communicated to the students in due time.



Department of Sociology and Anthropology  
The University of Texas at El Paso

**Scholastic Integrity** Academic dishonesty and misconduct in research or scholarship are prohibited and are considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. They include, but are not limited to, cheating, fabrication, falsification, multiple submission, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, reviewing, or reporting research, as well as collusion (i.e., collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act) and complicity in any or all of the above. Most serious breach of the said code is *plagiarism* [*pley-juh-riz-uhm, -jee-uh-riz-]*, which is defined as “the appropriation of another person’s ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit.” Plagiarism includes:

- Intentionally, knowingly, or carelessly presenting the work of another as one’s own (i.e., without crediting the author or creator).
- Failing to credit sources used in a work product to pass off the work as one’s own.
- Attempting to receive credit for work performed by another, including papers obtained in whole or in part from individuals or other sources. Students are permitted to use the services of a tutor (paid or unpaid), a professional editor, or the University Writing Center to assist them in completing assigned work, unless the instructor explicitly prohibits such assistance. If the student uses such services, the resulting product must be the original work of the student. Purchasing research reports, essays, lab reports, practice sets, or answers to assignments from any person or business are strictly prohibited. Sale of such materials is a violation of both these rules and State law.
- Failing to cite the World Wide Web, databases, and other electronic resources if they are utilized in any way as resource material in an academic exercise.
- Other similar acts such as collusion.

Your written work submitted via Blackboard will go through SafeAssign, a plagiarism detecting software. SafeAssign reviews assignment submissions for originality and will help you learn how to properly attribute sources rather than paraphrase.

Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All suspected violations of academic integrity at The University of Texas at El Paso must be reported to the [Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution \(OSCCR\)](#) for possible disciplinary action. To learn more, please visit [HOOP: Student Conduct and Discipline](#).

**Attendance, Medical Protocols and Course Drop** Regular attendance; timely completion of reading and written assignments; thoughtful contribution to class discussions, including participation in several in-class exercises are required. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, and alternative instruction will be provided.

According to UTEP Curriculum and Classroom Policies, “When, in the judgment of the instructor, a student has been absent to such a degree as to impair his or her status relative to credit for the course, the instructor may drop the student from the class with a grade of “W” before the course drop deadline and with a grade of “F” after the course drop deadline.” (See academic regulations in the UTEP Undergraduate Catalog for a list of excuse absences.) If I find that, due to non-performance in the course, you are at risk of failing, I will not drop you from the course but will strongly advise you to do so yourself. If you feel that you are unable to





**Department of Sociology and Anthropology**  
**The University of Texas at El Paso**

complete the course successfully, please let me know and then contact the [Registrar's Office](#) to initiate the drop process. If you do not, you are at risk of receiving an "F" for the course.

**Use of Technology** Technology is part of our lives and learning experience. You are thus permitted to use your laptop, phone, tablet etc. in class. However, please pay utmost attention in order not to distract and disrupt our collective learning environment, which would surely affect your learning experience as well as that of others. If there is any complaint from your classmates or from myself regarding your abuse of technology, you will be asked to stop this behavior immediately.

**Unstated Rule of Communication** You can reach me through e-mails, dropping by my office during (or outside of) regular office hours. (If outside of office hours, please e-mail in advance to let me know that you'll be dropping by). I will respond to your e-mails within a reasonable timeframe (I'm a quick responder) and expect of you doing the same! PLEASE CHECK YOUR UNIVERSITY E-MAILS REGULARLY for communication from me or your TA.

**READING SCHEDULE**

Unless otherwise noted, you are required to come to class having done the assigned reading(s) on the day they are scheduled.

Week	Dates	Theme & Reading	Reflection Piece	Key Questions
1	Aug 28 Aug 30	Introduction to the course Chapter 1: Anthropology in a Global Age		What is "anthropology" and how does it relate to our lives? What is "cultural anthropology" and how does it relate to our lives?
2	Sept 4 Sept 6	LABOR DAY/ No class Chapter 2: Culture -Miners		What is "culture" and what is it good for? How does cultural anthropology relate to other social sciences and other subdisciplines of anthropology?
3	Sept 11 Sept 13	Chapter 13: Religion Chapter 13: Religion (cont.) - Discussion of Reflection Pieces on Ch 13	<b>X</b>	Structures of Power III: Relating and Affect/What is religion (good) for?  <i>Reflection Pieces on Chapter 13 are due by Sept 12, 5 pm on Blackboard!</i>
4	Sept 18 Sept 20	Chapter 3: Anthropology, fieldwork as participant observation, & ethnography  <i>On campus fieldwork exercise</i>		Where, when, how, and why does one do "anthropology"? What is the difference between anthropology, fieldwork, and ethnography?



**Department of Sociology and Anthropology**  
**The University of Texas at El Paso**

5	Sept 25	Chapter 4: Language	<b>X</b>	Where, when, how and why do we communicate what we communicate? Are we alone in doing this?
	Sept 27	Chapter 4: Language (cont.) - Discussion of Reflection Pieces on Chapter 4 - Class discussion & exam review		<i>Reflection Pieces on Chapter 4 are due by Sept 26, 5pm on Blackboard!</i>
6	<b>Oct 2</b>	<b>Mid-term Exam I</b>		
	Oct 4	Chapter 7: Gender		Biopolitics and Body Politic I
7	Oct 9	Chapter 8: Sexuality	<b>X, X</b>	Biopolitics and Body Politic II
	Oct 11	Chapters 7, 8 (cont.) - Discussion of Reflection Pieces on Chapters 7 and 8		<i>Reflection Pieces on Chapters 7 and 8 are due by Oct 10, 5pm on Blackboard!</i>
8	Oct 16	Chapter 5: Race & Racism	<b>X, X</b>	Biopolitics and Body Politic III-IV
	Oct 18	Chapter 6: Ethnicity & Nationalism		<i>Reflection Pieces on Chapters 5 and 6 are due by Oct 20, 5pm on Blackboard!</i>
9	Oct 23	Chapter 9: Kinship, Family, & Marriage	<b>X</b>	Biopolitics and Body Politic V
	Oct 25	Chapters 5, 6 & 9 (cont.)		<i>Reflection Pieces on Chapter 9 are due by Oct 27, 5pm on Blackboard!</i>
10	Oct 30	- Discussion of Reflection Pieces on Chapters 5, 6 & 9 - Class discussion & exam review (online)		
	<b>Nov 1</b>	<b>Mid-term Exam II</b>		
11	Nov 6	Chapter 10: The Global Economy	<b>X</b>	Structures of Power I: Global circuits of commodities, labor, and capital
	Nov 8	Chapter 10: The Global Economy (cont.)		<i>Reflection Pieces on Chapter 10 are due by Nov 10, 5pm on Blackboard!</i>
12	Nov 13	Chapter 12: Politics & Power	<b>X</b>	Structures of Power II: Domination, Hegemony, and Dissent
	Nov 15	<i>NO CLASS // American Anthropological Association Annual Conference (15-19)</i>		<i>Reflection Pieces on Chapter 12 are due by Nov 17, 5pm on Blackboard!</i>

Disclaimer: This syllabus is subject to change.  
 Any changes will be communicated to the students in due time.



**Department of Sociology and Anthropology**  
**The University of Texas at El Paso**

13	Nov 20	Chapter 11: Environment & Sustainability	<b>X, X</b>	What does it mean and how does it feel to be living in the age of the Anthropocene? <i>Reflection Pieces on Chapters 11 and 14 are due by Nov 24, 5pm on Blackboard!</i>
	Nov 22	Chapter 14: Health, Illness, & the Body		
14	Nov 27	- Discussion of Reflection Pieces on Chapters 10, 12, 11, & 14 - Class discussion & exam review		
	<b>Nov 29</b>	<b>Mid-term Exam III</b>		
15	Dec 4	Chapter 15: Arts & Media	<b>X</b>	How else do human beings express themselves? What is cultural anthropology good for again? <i>Reflection Pieces on Chapter 15 are due Dec 5, 5 pm on Blackboard!</i>
	Dec 6	- Discussion of Reflection Pieces on Chapter 15 - Course wrap-up		