

ANTH 5015
Anthropology: A Postgraduate Introduction
Fall 2023

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Anthropology is a four-field discipline addressed to the question of what it means to be human; researchers may be trained in the biological sciences, archaeology, linguistics, and/or the ethnographic method. While the semester begins with the biocultural, we will primarily explore major subfields in socio-cultural anthropology by acquainting ourselves with different approaches to understanding the human condition, cultural variation, and social organization. Students will learn to think and see the world in a distinctly anthropological way.

Required Texts

All readings are either posted on Blackboard or available as an eBook through the University Library.

Clara Han's *Life in Debt* is available both as an eBook and limited copies are available in paperback at the University Bookstore.

Resources

The following suggestions are not required reading, but they may be helpful in getting oriented:

Pountney, Laura, and Tomislav Marić. 2021. *Introducing Anthropology: What Makes Us Human?* Cambridge and Medford: Polity Press, 2nd edition. (On 4-hour reserve at University Library)

The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Anthropology. This is a searchable on-line encyclopedia and can be found here: <https://www.anthroencyclopedia.com/>

Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this course, students will:

1. Have a general understanding of the various subfields in socio-cultural anthropology.
2. Have a general grasp of how anthropology has changed over time.
3. Be acquainted with different approaches to understanding the relationship between cultural diversity and human universals.
4. Learn how to think holistically.

GRADE DESCRIPTORS

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Criteria for 1) the course and 2) for coursework</i>
A	<p>1) Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.</p> <p>2) The work has creatively synthesized course materials and key ideas in an original way. Observations are nuanced, the argument is logical and cohesive, the discussion is well-organized, and the writing is clear. Concrete evidence corresponds to statements and claims. The work responds directly to the assignment prompt.</p>
A-	<p>1) Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.</p> <p>2) The work synthesizes course materials and key ideas in an original way, but there are areas for improvement.</p>
B-range	<p>1) Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.</p> <p>2) The work demonstrates a solid grasp of course materials and key ideas. There are areas for improvement with respect to handling complexity, building a cohesive argument, organizing the discussion, communicating clearly, and/or identifying relevant evidence. Response to the assignment prompt may not be sufficient.</p>
C-range	<p>1) Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.</p> <p>2) The work shows some effort, but course materials have not been sufficiently engaged. The argument and the writing is not clear, and/or there is no evidence for statements and claims made. Understanding of course materials and key ideas has not been demonstrated.</p>
D-range	<p>1) Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes.</p> <p>2) The work shows little effort to engage course materials. There are major problems with clarity of argument and writing.</p>
F	<p>1) Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.</p> <p>2) The work has failed respond to the assignment prompt.</p>

Evaluation

<i>Grade Item</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
Paper No. 1	25%	October 6
Paper No. 2	25%	November 10
Final Paper	35%	December 20
Participation	15%	--

All assignments must be submitted to VeriGuide. Assignments without a signed declaration from VeriGuide will not be graded. Please visit:

https://academic.veriguide.org/academic/login_CUHK.jspx

TIP FOR SURVIVAL: The diversity of topics and perspectives surveyed in this class can feel overwhelming. I encourage you to form small study groups, and talk to me if you are having difficulty.

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Week 1 (September 7): INTRODUCTION

📖 Bourgois, “Poverty at Work: Office Employment and the Crack Alternative,” in *Conformity and Conflict: Readings in Cultural Anthropology*

Week 2 (September 14): ECOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

📖 Moran, “Human Adaptability to Arctic Zones,” in *Human Adaptability: An Introduction to Ecological Anthropology*.

📖 West, “Preface,” in *Conservation is Our Government Now: The Politics of Ecology in Papua New Guinea*.

📖 West, “The Practices of Conservation-as-Development,” in *Conservation is Our Government Now: The Politics of Ecology in Papua New Guinea*.

🎧 *Games of the North* (2011)

Week 3 (September 21): BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

📖 Sapolsky, “The 2% Difference,” in *Annual Editions: Physical Anthropology*.

📖 Boesch and Boesch-Achermann, “Dim Forest, Bright Chimps,” in *Annual Editions: Physical Anthropology*.

📖 Stanford, “Got Culture?,” in *Annual Editions: Physical Anthropology*.

📖 Hrdy, “Mothers and Others,” in *Annual Editions: Physical Anthropology*.

📖 Anderson, “A Telling Difference.” *Natural History*.

📺 (OPTIONAL) Interview with Jane Goodall

Week 4 (September 28): LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

📖 McWhorter, “Most of the World’s Languages Went Extinct,” in *Making Sense of Language: Readings in Culture and Communication*.

📖 Tannen, “New York Jewish Conversational Style” in *Making Sense of Language: Readings in Culture and Communication*.

📖 Blum, “Naming Practices and the Power of Words in China,” in *Making Sense of Language: Readings in Culture and Communication*.

🎥 clip from *Annie Hall* (1977)

PAPER NO. 1 DUE: October 6 (Friday)

📖 Guiding questions will be posted September 29. Paper is due on October 6, by 11:59 p.m. Please follow instructions for submission in the prompt.

Week 5 (October 5): KINSHIP

📖 Fox, “Introduction” in *Kinship and Marriage: An Anthropological Perspective*.

📖 Fox, “Unilineal Descent Groups,” in *Kinship and Marriage: An Anthropological Perspective*.

📖 Carsten, “‘Knowing Where You’ve Come From’: Ruptures and Continuities of Time and Kinship in Narratives of Adoption Reunions.” *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*

Week 6 (October 12): ECONOMIC ANTHROPOLOGY

📖 Bohannan, “The economic integration of society” in *Social Anthropology*.

📖 Bohannan, “Multicentric economies, conversion, and the conflict of economies,” in *Social Anthropology*.

📖 Chin, “Anthropologist Takes Inner-City Children on Shopping Sprees,” in *Purchasing Power: Black Kids and American Consumer Culture*.

🎥 clip from *The Godfather* (1972)

Week 7 (October 19): POLITICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

📖 Sahlins, “Poor Man, Rich Man, Big Man, Chief: Political Types in Melanesia and Polynesia.” *Comparatives Studies in Society and History*.

🎧 *Ongka’s Big Moka* (1976)

Week 8 (October 26): “POLITICS” IN CONTEMPORARY ANTHROPOLOGY

📖 Nugent, “Governing States,” in *A Companion to the Anthropology of Politics*.

📖 Gordon, “Governmental rationality: an introduction,” in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. (Please read pp. 1-13 only)

Week 9 (November 2): GENDER

📖 Ortner, “Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?” in *Making Gender: The Politics and Erotics of Culture*.

📖 Ortner, “So, *Is* Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?” in *Making Gender: The Politics and Erotics of Culture*.

📖 Mahmood, “Feminist Theory, Embodiment, and the Docile Agent: Some Reflections on the Egyptian Islamic Revival.” *Cultural Anthropology*.

🎧 clips from *Paris is Burning* (1990)

PAPER NO. 2 DUE: November 10 (Friday)

📖 Guiding questions will be posted November 3. Paper is due on November 10, by 11:59 p.m.

Week 10 (November 9): Congregation for Conferment of Degrees

👉 No class.

📖 Han, Introduction and Chapters 1 – 2, in *Life in Debt*.

Week 11 (November 16)

👉 No class. I will be at the American Anthropological Association conference.

📖 Han, Chapters 3 – 4 and Conclusion, in *Life in Debt*.

Week 12 (November 23): RELIGION AND RITUAL

📖 Lienhardt, “The Control of Experience,” in *A Reader in the Anthropology of Religion*.

📖 Boddy, “Spirits and Selves in Northern Sudan,” in *A Reader in the Anthropology of Religion*.

👤 *Les Maitres fous* (1954)

Week 13 (November 30): MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

📖 Good and Good, “Learning Medicine”: The Constructing of Medical Knowledge at Harvard Medical School,” in *Knowledge, Power & Practice: The Anthropology of Medicine and Everyday Life*.

📖 Mattingly, “Narrative Matters,” from *The Paradox of Hope: Journeys through a Clinical Borderland*. (Please read pp. 53-76 only)

📖 Kaysen, *Girl, Interrupted*. (Please read pp. 1-43, and pp. 73-48)

Make-up class (December 5): ETHNOGRAPHY

👂 Review your notes on the book *Life in Debt*. We will do small group work in class.

FINAL PAPER DUE: December 20 (Friday)

📝 Guiding questions will be posted December 6. Paper is due on December 20, by 11:59 p.m.

TIPS & POLICIES

Opinions vs. Arguments

There is a difference between opinion and argument. Your personal viewpoints are welcome during class discussion, but your papers will be evaluated based upon your ability to formulate an argument rather than your ability to express an opinion. An argument is analytical. Arguments propose relationships between variables, and they support assertions with empirical evidence.

There is also a difference between opinion and perspective. An opinion usually contains some kind of judgment about how the world should or should not operate. A perspective, on the other hand, is a way of looking at the world. In other words, having perspective involves the ability to see patterns and themes, or differences and divergences, which may not be obvious at first glance. Having an opinion is easy. Having the insight that comes with perspective is much harder.

Meta-level observation

A common difficulty new students have with this course relates to learning how to do meta-level observations, i.e. observing the observers, noting how a topic or phenomenon could be approached in different ways, and noting how trends change over time. This may sound intimidating, but this skill is crucial to critical thinking.

Late Submissions

Papers submitted after the due date will suffer a fraction of a grade deduction for every day it is late. For example, an A- will become a B+, a B will become a B-, et cetera.

Academic Honesty

The Chinese University of Hong Kong places very high importance on academic honesty, and adopts a policy of *zero tolerance* on academic dishonesty. Any such offence will lead to disciplinary action including possibly termination of studies at the University. Students should know how to properly use source material and how to avoid plagiarism. Detailed guidelines and examples for the acknowledgement of sources can be found on the University's website at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>. All papers must be submitted through VeriGuide.

Use of AI Tools

Use of AI tools for course papers is strictly prohibited. You are expected to work independently, and to cite sources for any and all information you did not collect yourself.