

## **Anthropology as a Profession (ANT 470)**

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### ***Course Description & Objectives***

In the United States, trained anthropologists are employed in a variety of fields from corporate marketing to international development work to higher education. This course provides students with the opportunity to consider the scholarly and professional issues, which have shaped and continue to influence the discipline. Class discussions, and assignments are designed to cultivate students' skills at critical thinking, writing, and verbal communication as well as and to broaden their perspectives through hands-on experience. Students will be asked to examine a controversial issue in the field of Cultural Anthropology, to conceptualize how anthropology can solve practical problems, to participate in the local professional and academic community, and to reflect upon their personal career development.

This course will be run as a seminar, meaning that class content will be directed by individual students (and mediated by the professor). In this type of class, it is important for students to come to class prepared in advance to share their thoughts. Class time will be primarily spent debating contemporary issues and discussing each other's projects. Students will be encouraged to attend off-campus activities and to interact with non-Brockport personnel. It is recommended that all students familiarize themselves with ANGEL and forward their ANGEL mail to an email account that is consistently checked.

By the end of the semester, students will have fulfilled the following objectives:

- To comprehensively consider the ethical implications of anthropological research and issues
- To understand how anthropological research can be applied to practical problems
- To reflect upon and explore career options and the anthropology profession

### ***Course Requirements:***

**To earn a passing grade, students must complete *each* requirement.** *A student who fails to do so will earn an automatic E.* Student performance in this course will be evaluated in accordance to the Department of Anthropology's Guidelines for Student Evaluation. Letter grades are calculated as follows: A: 100-93; A-:92-90; B+:89-87; B:86-83; B-:82-80; C+:79-77; C:76-73; C-:72-70; D+:69-67; D: 66-63; D-: 62-60; E:59-0. I suggest reading "Your Right to know and Academic Policies" Handbook, which details various college-wide standards concerning attendance and academic dishonesty.

The score breakdown of Course Requirements is below with summaries to follow:

<b><i>Controversial Issues</i></b>	<b>(10 total)</b>
Essay	5
Debate Facilitation	5
<b><i>Class Participation</i></b>	<b>(20 total)</b>
<b><i>Applied Research Project</i></b>	<b>(45 total)</b>
Find-a-problem task	15
Background research task	10
Conceptual Plan	20
<b><i>Career Exploration</i></b>	<b>(25 total)</b>
Cover Letters or Statement	10
Informational Interview	15
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Total	100 pts

### ***Controversial Issues***

The nature of ethnographic fieldwork and the potential insights gained by such a process places anthropologists in oftentimes ethically ambiguous situations. Each week, the class will explore how anthropologists or anthropological knowledge relates to a contemporary event or issue through the format of a debate. Depending upon the issue and class size, each debate will be facilitated by one or two student leaders. Each student leader will complete a *short essay* on their given issue. On their assigned day, student leaders will take an active role in facilitating debating. (See Assignment Descriptions)

### ***Class Participation & Attendance***

Class participation is integral to this seminar-run class. A student who misses a class has lost an opportunity to participate in class activities and this cannot be made-up. Hence, attendance is MANDATORY. Additionally, be aware that merely arriving to class on time and occupying a seat does not qualify as class participation. Students are expected to come to class prepared to give progress reports and/or assigned task results. A high participation grade reflects a student's ability to provide relevant comments and insights to the topic at hand, and to listen attentively. Uncollegial behavior such as dominating the conversation, moving the discussion onto an obvious tangent, holding side conversations, and texting on one's cell phone will result in a low participation grade.

Excused absences include those documented emergencies that are beyond a student's control (as perceived by the professor) and pre-appointed college business (like a scheduled athletic event, which the professor has already been notified about in advance). Please schedule doctor's appointments and work shifts outside of class time. While I appreciate when students notify me in advance that they will be missing class, such absences are not excused. Also bear in mind that being absent does not preclude a student from being assigned a task for a future class session.

### ***Applied Research Project***

The application of anthropological insights and ethnographic research methods to a practical contemporary problem is exciting in its ability to provide immediate results and to affect a broad population. Students will be asked to consider how anthropological research can be used to better understand local problems or to improve people-oriented services. (See Assignment Descriptions.)

### ***Career Exploration***

How do I know what it means to be a professional anthropologist? What can I do with this degree in Anthropology? To be a professional is to be engaged with one's colleagues and the public in a way that utilizes one's particular training and/or education. As part of their career exploration, students will be asked to conduct an "informational interview." This provides students with the chance to contact a professional anthropologist and to learn about his/her particular career trajectory (see Assignment Descriptions).

### ***Late Policy:***

Assignments must be submitted in hard-copy form at the start of the class in which it is due. Late assignments will be accepted until the last day of class. 2.5 points will be deducted from the grade earned for each day the assignment is late. Do not expect late assignments to be graded on a timely basis.

### ***Office hours & Contact Information:***

Immediate questions and assignment-specific concerns are best addressed during office hours or through appointments. Email should only be used for non-immediate topics and responses can be expected in 2-3 business days. I am happy to grant learning accommodations if given a couple of weeks notice.

### ***Academic Dishonesty***

"Academic dishonesty, 'cheating' and other forms of misrepresenting others' work as your own, such as plagiarism ... can result in a range of disciplinary actions including failure of a course or even conduct dismissal from the College."  
(This text is excerpted from Chapter 7 of the Handbook.)

### ***Electronic Devices:***

Cell phones, PDA, and other electronic devices should be **turned off** when in the classroom. Moreover, I do not allow note-taking on laptops in my classroom. If you would like note-taking assistance to better facilitate your learning process, please talk to me as well as the staff at the Student Learning Center.

**Course Materials:**

Assigned course readings will be accessible through ANGEL Reserves (designated by brackets) or the Library Reserves in Drake Memorial Library. For budget-minded students, consider sharing the cost and use of books.

Required Text:

Welsch, R. L. and Endicott, K. M. (2006, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Contemporary Issues in Cultural Anthropology*. Guilford, CT: McGraw-Hill/Dushkin.

**Course Schedule:**

An Assigned Reading should be read by the first day of the week in which it is listed (unless otherwise specified). Completion of a reading assignment includes not just the physical act of having read the text but includes comprehension of the material.

Note: Schedule is subject to change with notice.

**WEEK 1 – Introduction to Course**

Tuesday, Sept. 1<sup>st</sup> and Thursday, Sept. 3<sup>rd</sup>

Welcome and Course Information

**WEEK 2 - Should Cultural Anthropology Model Itself as a Natural Science?**

Sept. 8th and Thursday, Sept. 10<sup>th</sup>

Read: Welsch and Endicott, Part I – Issue 1.

**WEEK 3 – Was Mead’s Samoan Fieldwork Flawed?**

Tuesday, Sept. 15th and Thursday, Sept. 17th

Read: Welsch and Endicott, Part I – Issue 2

**WEEK 4 – Should We Abandon the “Culture” Concept?**

Tuesday, Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup> and Thursday, Sept. 24th

Read: Welsch and Endicott, Part I – Issue 3

**Due Thursday: Letters or Statement**

**WEEK 5 – Are San Hunter-Gatherers Basically Pastoralists?**

Tuesday, Sept. 29th and Thursday, Oct. 1st

Read: Welsch and Endicott, Part II – Issue 6

**WEEK 6 – Do Museums Misrepresent Cultures?**

Tuesday, Oct. 6<sup>th</sup> and Thursday, Oct. 8<sup>th</sup>

Read: Welsch and Endicott, Part II – Issue 15

**Due Thursday: Find-a-Problem Task**

**WEEK 7 –Do Native Peoples Invent Their Traditions?**

Tuesday, October 13<sup>th</sup> and Thursday, Oct. 15<sup>th</sup>

Read: Welsch and Endicott, Part I – Issue 4

**WEEK 8 – Do Some Illnesses Exist Only in Particular Cultures?**

Tuesday, Oct. 20<sup>th</sup>

**HOLIDAY**

Thursday, Oct. 22<sup>nd</sup>

Read: Welsch and Endicott, Part II – Issue 14

**WEEK 9 – Does the Natural-Supernatural Distinction Exist in All Cultures?**

Tuesday, Oct 27<sup>th</sup> and Thursday, Oct. 29<sup>th</sup>

Read: Welsch and Endicott, Part II – Issue 7

**Due Thursday: Background Research Task**

**WEEK 10 – Should We Be Concerned About Endangered Languages?**

Tuesday, Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup> and Thursday, Nov. 5<sup>th</sup>

Read: Welsch and Endicott, Part II – Issue 17

**WEEK 11 – Is Yanonami Violence an Effort to Maximize Reproductivity?**

Tuesday, Nov. 10<sup>th</sup> and Thursday, Nov. 12<sup>th</sup>

Read: Welsch and Endicott, Part II – Issue 11

**WEEK 12 – Has the Islamic Revolution in Iran Subjugated Women?**

Tuesday, Nov. 17<sup>th</sup>

Read: Welsch and Endicott, Part II – Issue 10

Thursday, Nov. 19<sup>th</sup>

**Due: Conceptual Plan and Outlines**

**WEEK 13 – Is Ethnic Conflict Inevitable?**

Tuesday, Nov. 24th

Read: Welsch and Endicott, Part II – Issue 12

Thursday, Nov. 26th

**HOLIDAY**

**WEEK 14 – Do We Have a Responsibility to Defend the “Least Advantaged”?**

Tuesday, Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> and Thursday, Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup>

**Due Thursday: Informational Interviews**

**WEEK 15 – Informational Interview Presentations**

Tuesday, Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> and Thursday, Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>