

ANTHROPOLOGY 3350F-001

Society and Culture I: Historical Perspectives

COURSE OUTLINE

Fall 2020

Instructor: Dr. Greg Beckett (he/him)

Email: gbeckett@uwo.ca

Office Hours: Via email or Zoom, by appointment

TA: Franziska Albrecht (she/her)

TA Email: falbrech@uwo.ca

TA Office Hours: Via email or Zoom by appointment

Credit value: 0.5 credit

Mode of delivery: For 2020/2021 this course will be conducted online, asynchronously and synchronously using Zoom videoconferencing technology, with discussions to take place weekly during the scheduled synchronous class time.

Synchronous class time: Thursdays 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. EST.

Calendar Course Description: This course explores where anthropology came from, what influenced its early questions, and how those questions have shifted over time, through an examination of some classic anthropological work on society and culture.

Antirequisites: the former Anthropology 3301E.

Prerequisites: Registration in third or fourth year in any Anthropology module.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Syllabus:

We are standing on the shoulders of giants – some of anthropology's most brilliant minds have grappled with how to understand social organization. In this course we will explore the history of some important anthropological theories about social organization, analyzing how anthropological concepts and categories have been constructed and reconstructed over time. We will do so by examining the work and lives of some foundational figures in anthropology from the late-19th to mid-20th centuries. We will read examples of their original (primary) work, in order to understand how particular kinds of anthropological questions or perspectives emerged out of the intersection of specific life circumstances and interests, intellectual networks and formation of schools of thought, and particular ethnographic circumstances in specific political and historical contexts. The intention

is not to try to cover all major figures – many are left out! – but rather to turn an anthropological eye on anthropology itself, exploring both a series of anthropological concepts and the social processes through which anthropological perspectives are actively produced.

Some of the questions that guide this course are: How do the scholars studied understand what constitutes “society,” and how it relates to “culture”? How do they conceptualize the causes of social or cultural patterning? What are the implicit or explicit boundaries of their units of study? And ultimately, what do they consider to be the proper scope of anthropology?

At the end of this course, you will have a deeper knowledge of where anthropology came from and how some of its central questions evolved over time. While much of the subject matter is drawn from sociocultural anthropology, many of the concepts we will examine also orient research and thinking in the other subfields of anthropology.

A full course schedule including a week-by-week breakdown of topics and assigned readings will be available on the course’s OWL site before the first day of class.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Interpret how anthropological knowledge is produced through the intersection of: particular historical moments and political contexts; personal histories and intellectual networks; and an engagement with the situations and people anthropologists encounter during their research.
- Appreciate the limits of anthropological knowledge by exploring how scholars came to know what they thought they knew, constrained (as we all are) by the conditions in which they were working.
- Analyze the underlying assumptions of anthropological writings and effectively communicate that analysis both orally (through participation in regular class discussions) and in written assignments.
- Work collaboratively with a group of peers to develop shared understandings of class readings and to prepare regular brief oral presentations on those themes.

Course Materials:

Registered students will be able to access all course readings through the course site in OWL before the first day of class.

Evaluation:

Grades will be based on weekly quizzes, weekly online discussion and assignments, a group presentation, two analytical essays, and a final exam, as follows:

Weekly Quizzes – 10%

There will be an online quiz each week throughout the course. Quizzes are to be completed in OWL before the week’s assigned online lecture. Quizzes will focus on the main ideas in the required readings. They are intended to motivate you to complete all of the reading before viewing the lecture and to help you identify key points from the readings. There will be no make-up quizzes but I will drop the lowest two quiz grades.

Weekly Online Discussion and Assignments – 15%

Students will participate in synchronous online discussion and complete weekly assignments as assigned in OWL. Weekly assignments may involve posting discussion questions or reading responses or completing short readings/videos assignments that supplement the week's lecture. Assignments will typically be multiple choice, true/false, and short answer questions. There will be no make-up assignments but I will drop the lowest two grades.

Two Essays – 50% (25% each)

Students will write two essays each 1500–2000 words and each worth 25% (for a total of 50% of the final grade). Essay prompts will be posted to OWL when each essay is assigned. These essays are not meant to be research papers and will not require students to do additional library research; rather, they will entail a close reading of the course material and a careful analysis of the relevant texts. The first essay is due Thursday October 22; the second essay is due Thursday November 19.

Final Take-Home Exam – 25%

The final exam will be composed of two essay questions that will ask students to make connections across the readings to reflect on the broader issues explored in the course..

More information on writing assignments, including due dates, will be made available to students on the course OWL site.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com.

Course Specific Conditions Required to Pass this Course

In order to pass an essay course, the student must exhibit some minimal level of competence in essay writing and the appropriate level of knowledge of the content of the course.

As an essay-designated course, both writing assignments and the final take-home exam in this course must be submitted and two of the three must receive passing grades in order to pass this course.

Statement on Seeking Special Accommodations:

No accommodations will be granted retroactively more than 10 days after an assignment's due date or a missed quiz or test. Please see your academic counsellor immediately if you will be seeking accommodations based on medical or compassionate grounds.

Accommodation, Illness Reporting and Academic Considerations

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

Students will have up to two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the term, provided the following conditions are met: the

absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student's final grade. Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence, unless noted on the syllabus. All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty.

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see:

[Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences - Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#)

[Student Medical Certificate \(SMC\)](#)

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

Statement on Plagiarism:

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing. It is also a scholastic offence to submit the same work for credit in more than one course. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence.

Institutional Statements and Policies

All students should familiarize themselves with Western's current academic policies regarding accessibility, plagiarism and scholastic offences, and medical accommodation. These policies are outlined in Western's academic policies by clicking on this link: [Western's academic policies](#).

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