

DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

COURSE OUTLINE – Winter 2023

AN2070 (A3): Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology – 3 (3-0-0) 45 Hours for 15 Weeks

Northwestern Polytechnic acknowledges that our campuses are located on Treaty 8 territory, the ancestral and present-day home to many diverse First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people. We are grateful to work, live, and learn on the traditional territory of Duncan's First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation, and Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, who are the original caretakers of this land.

We acknowledge the history of this land and we are thankful for the opportunity to walk together in friendship, where we will encourage and promote positive change for present and future generations.

INSTRUCTOR: Shawn Morton, PhD **PHONE:** (780) 539-2830
OFFICE: C-402 **E-MAIL:** smorton@nwpolytech.ca
OFFICE HOURS: M/W 11:00-12:00 or by appointment

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:

The comparative study of human society and culture, particularly non-western communities, with special attention to the family, social structures, economic and political institutions, religion, and processes of change.

PREREQUISITE(S)/COREQUISITE:

None.

REQUIRED TEXT/RESOURCE MATERIALS:

Kenny, Michael G. & Kirsten Smillie (2017) *Stories of Culture and Place: An Introduction to Anthropology*, 2nd Ed. University of Toronto Press.

Nathan, Rebekah (2005) *My Freshman Year: What a Professor Learned by Becoming a Student*. Penguin Books, Ltd.

DELIVERY MODE(S):

In Person.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- To establish an anthropological framework which can be used to facilitate an understanding of the diverse cultures of this world, including economic, social, political and ideological systems;
- To study a variety of topics in cross-cultural perspective; and

- To introduce a variety of research methods used by anthropologists.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate use the vocabulary and concepts of socio-cultural anthropology
- Critically analyse assigned readings and find answers to questions posed by the instructor
- Understand the value of ethnography, as the careful description of ways of life in particular settings
- Appreciate the anthropological reliance on ethnology, the generalizations made by comparing ethnographies
- Implement one of several qualitative research methods, i.e., interviews, participant observation, content analysis or archival research. Through their own work and hearing of others', students are then equipped with a variety of strategies for conducting research in other settings
- Present reports on qualitative research methods in a safe environment, enhancing their public speaking skills

TRANSFERABILITY:

Please consult the Alberta Transfer Guide for more information. You may check to ensure the transferability of this course at the Alberta Transfer Guide main page <http://www.transferalberta.ca>.

**** Grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability**

EVALUATIONS:

Assessment	Weight
9 reading quizzes, 5 points each, for 45 points total	22.5%
Assignment, Pt. 1, for 35 points	17.5%
Assignment, Pt. 2, for 35 points	17.5%
Assignment, Pt. 3 (Presentations), for 25 points	12.5%
Assignment, Pt. 4, for 60 points	30%
Total = 200 points	100%
Note: All points are weighted equally for 200 points total.	
Extra credit for up to 10 points	5%

Reading Quizzes (9 reading quizzes at 5 points each for 45 points total)

You will be given 9 reading quizzes covering your syllabus and chapters in our primary textbook throughout the semester. Each quiz will consist of a small number of questions (multiple choice, matching, etc.) and are intended to encourage you to keep up with your readings. They are not worth a whole lot of points in the grand scheme of things but could mean the difference between one letter grade and the next; don't let them slip past you! **Reading Quizzes are to be completed on our myClass page, will open Mondays at 8 am of the week assigned, and close Sundays at 11:59 pm (see due dates on schedule).**

A Semester-Long Project... In Four Parts (155 points total)

As we discuss in class, the bread-and-butter of fieldwork in social and cultural anthropology is centred on the concept of participant observation, and perhaps the most fundamental product of this is the ethnography. While traditionally this has involved anthropologists studying cultures/societies other than their own, anthropologists may also engage in self-ethnography, or the study of the researcher's own group. This project is intended to take you through the process of ethnographic research in four distinct (and blessedly bite-sized) parts.

Skills and learning objectives: In this assignment you will practice (de)familiarization, semi-structured field observation, taking and organizing field notes, presentation skills, applying anthropological concepts and perspectives to data gathering, and comparative analysis.

Note: Do not take any photos. The use of pseudonyms to protect the identity of those you discuss is encouraged. Please do not provide real addresses, phone numbers, etc.

Part One - Data Collection/Participant Observation (35 pts)

NO LESS THAN 3 TIMES, spend 30-60 minutes in a publicly accessible location (a space that is available to you as a member of the public, student, or worker, *not* one that is private, proprietary, or requires special permissions to be in and report about).

OR

ONE TIME, spend **AT LEAST** 90 minutes at a public event or special gathering (an event that is available to you as a member of the public, student, or worker, *not* one that is private, proprietary, or requires special permissions/payment to be in and report about).

In either case, this space should be at school, here, on the NWP campus.

Direct your attention to observing the space and the people, beings, and things around you. As you observe, take down notes of all you see and notice. While recording *everything* you observe, try to identify what things you might usually take for granted. If you're in a familiar space, challenge yourself to make the familiar strange, in other words, to write about things you take for granted as something culturally produced and not necessarily "right" or "natural" or "common sense." If you're in an unfamiliar setting, try to make sense of what is going on in terms of those who belong to it—that is, try to make the strange familiar. Write down descriptions that don't assume you know what something is or why something is done a particular way. Don't be afraid to include speculations in your notes.

Take into the field a notebook and writing instrument, computer, or phone (for recording personal voice memos; **DO NOT RECORD OTHERS**). Take also a mental "checklist" of socio-cultural features that can be observed in human social spaces. Such a list might include but is not limited to *language/gesture, sights and sound, ideologies, ways relations are structured or enacted, relational activities (human and non-human), how material cultural objects are part of or excluded from the space, rituals and performances, gendered signs and processes, racialized spatializations, social inclusions or exclusions, sexism, racism*. Take detailed notes while you are doing this or wait until you are finished and write down your

experience right away, so you don't forget. Write down everything you see, hear, feel, smell, taste, and or perceive in any other way.

On the date indicated in your schedule, I want you to turn in your typed-up notes. The final product for this part of the assignment should be 4-6 pages of typed field notes.

Part Two - Synthesis/Thick Description (35 pts)

For this part of the assignment, take your notes from Part One and look for themes. Perhaps you observed people making or consuming food. Perhaps your ethnography has a soundtrack. Maybe family life provides structure. Maybe practices shaping behaviour at work or school are apparent. Pick a theme and use it to turn your notes into a narrative; "a day (or three) in the life." Make sure to add context and explain where necessary. How are the things you describe typical or atypical? Imagine that somebody from OUTSIDE your culture is reading your work (put yourself in that etic or "outsiders" frame of mind as much as is possible). What things might you take for granted as normal? What makes you question?

I want you to turn in your narrative, organized as a series of fully realized paragraphs. Feel free to use headings and sub-headings to help give your ethnography structure. You should also include an introductory paragraph (introducing the context) and a concluding paragraph (summing up any observations that stand out as particularly significant/surprising to you). At this point, do not incorporate any outside sources/research. The final product for this part of the assignment should be a 6-8 **double-spaced** page (12 pt. font, 1500-2000 words) ethnography

Part Three - Presentation (25 pts)

For this part of the assignment, take your write up from Part Two and turn it into a short presentation. There are several ways that you can go about this depending on your technical aptitude, comfort, and aesthetic choices. Perhaps you want to record a PowerPoint (or similar) presentation? You could also simply record yourself on your cell phone. Maybe you want to produce a more sophisticated video? You could also create a static academic poster (ask me for advice on this). Or, heck, if you are up for it, you can choose to present live in class. Whatever you choose, you will be graded on the quality and clarity of your presentation. Recorded or live presentations should aim for 5-10 minutes of length. For a poster, you need to capture and present equivalent amounts of information (meaning you'll have to get creative).

But wait! There's more! You are also responsible for viewing and commenting on *at least* two other peoples' presentations. I'll set up a Discussion area for you on our final week

All assignment parts are to be completed on our MyClass page and will close on their due date (as indicated on our schedule) at 11:59 pm.

Part Four – The Ethnographer Turns Ethnologist (60 pts)

Ethnography is the in-depth study of a single culture or society. Ethnology, on the other hand, is the comparative study of cultures or societies. Now that you are an expert in the former, you are going to try your hand at the latter. Your text by Rebekah Nathan (which you've been reading all semester, right?) will provide this comparison.

You're going to need to use Microsoft Word for this one. For this part of the assignment, take your write up from Part Two; read over your synthesis and edit according to the feedback received. Then, use the coloured highlighter function to highlight phrases or sentences that relate to concepts or processes we've studied in class. Next, **annotate** your highlighted parts, here's how: Use the footnote function to put a footnote after those highlighted phrases or sentences. In those footnotes, (1) relate what you observed and highlighted to a concept or process we have discussed in class. (2) Explain what that anthropological concept or process is. (3) Identify where similar themes were addressed in *My Freshman Year*. FINALLY, (4) explain the similarities/differences observed (feel free to speculate based on your understanding of course content). Some of your footnotes will point to things that require that you reference multiple concepts and processes, this is just fine and indicates how social life is anthropologically complex.

The final product for this part of the assignment is this corrected and annotated synthesis. You must provide a minimum of 20 annotations but see how many anthropological concepts and processes you can discover and point out!

Note that while the registrar's office will issue a scheduled exam time you DO NOT have a final exam in this class. Part 4 of this assignment is due and will close by 11:59 pm on the date scheduled by the registrar. Your instructor will let you know when this information is available.

Extra Credit (up to 10 points)

Extra credit is as stated, extra points above and beyond your regular class assignments. These points are somewhat easy to acquire, but to receive any point you must do exactly as asked. Opportunities for extra credit (worth 5 points each) will be announced throughout the semester.

GRADING CRITERIA:

Please note that most universities will not accept your course for transfer credit **IF** your grade is **less than C-**.

Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines		Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines
A+	4.0	90-100		C+	2.3	67-69
A	4.0	85-89		C	2.0	63-66
A-	3.7	80-84		C-	1.7	60-62
B+	3.3	77-79		D+	1.3	55-59
B	3.0	73-76		D	1.0	50-54
B-	2.7	70-72		F	0.0	00-49

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

Week	Date	Topic(s)	Reading(s)
1	Jan. 5	Introduction to course	Syllabus
Homework: Reading Quiz 1 - Due Sunday, Jan. 8, 11:59 PM			
Module 1: What is Anthropology?			
2.1	Jan. 10	What is anthropology? What is a social science?	Chapter 1
2.2	Jan. 12	History in context, Pt. 1	Chapter 2
Homework: Reading Quiz 2 - Due Sunday, Jan. 15, 11:59 PM			
Module 2: Topics in Social and Cultural Anthropology			
3.1	Jan. 17	Culture shock	Chapter 3
3.2	Jan. 19		
Homework: Reading Quiz 3 - Due Sunday, Jan. 22, 11:59 PM			
4.1	Jan. 24	Making a living	Chapter 4
4.2	Jan. 26		
Homework: Reading Quiz 4 - Due Sunday, Jan. 29, 11:59 PM			
5.1	Jan. 31	The ties that bind: kinship and the social order	Chapter 5
5.2	Feb. 2		
Homework: Reading Quiz 5 - Due Sunday, Feb. 5, 11:59 PM			
6.1	Feb. 7	Symbol, myth, and meaning	Chapter 6
6.2	Feb. 9		
Homework: Assignment, Pt. 1 - Due Sunday, Feb. 12, 11:59 PM			
7.1	Feb. 14	Health, medicine, and society	Chapter 7
7.2	Feb. 16		
Homework: Reading Quiz 6 - Due Sunday, Feb. 19, 11:59 PM			
8.1	Feb. 21		
8.2	Feb. 23		
9.1	Feb. 28	Gender and social expectations	Chapter 8
9.2	Mar. 2		
Homework: Reading Quiz 7 - Due Sunday, Mar. 5, 11:59 PM			
10.1	Mar. 7	Race, science, and human diversity	Chapter 9
10.2	Mar. 9		
Homework: Reading Quiz 8 - Due Sunday, Mar. 12, 11:59 PM			
11.1	Mar. 14	The politics of culture	Chapter 10
11.2	Mar. 16		
Homework: Assignment, Pt. 2 - Due Sunday, Mar. 19, 11:59 PM			
12.1	Mar. 21	Anthropology, cultural change, and globalization	Chapter 11
12.2	Mar. 23		
Homework: Reading Quiz 9 - Due Sunday, Mar. 26, 11:59 PM			
Module 3: Wrap-Up and Student Presentations. Woo!			
13.1	Mar. 28	Wrap-up, Pt. 1	Conclusion
13.2	Mar. 30	Back to the future - History in context, Pt. 2	
14.1	Apr. 4	Student presentations, Pt. 1	
14.2	Apr. 6	Student presentations, Pt. 2	
Homework: Reading Quiz 8 - Due Sunday, Apr. 9, 11:59 PM			
15.1	Apr. 11	Wrap-up, Pt. 2	
Final Exam (Assignment, Pt. 4) - Date TBD			

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Late Assignment/Make-up Policy: You are expected to follow the schedule as posted and **late assignments will not be accepted**, except with my permission. Contrary to a popular idiom, it is always better to ask for permission than forgiveness; if you know that you are going to miss a deadline, please let me know in advance.

Attendance and Participation: Attendance will not be taken, and no part of your grade is directly tied to attendance/participation. You are paying good money for this class and committing a significant amount of time to it. To get the most for your money and effort, **attendance is strongly encouraged**.

Classroom Climate Expectations: To create and maintain a safe and productive learning environment in the classroom, standards of behaviours are expected as follows:

1. **Listen** attentively and TAKE NOTES.
2. **Communicate** clearly and actively when asking questions or during discussions.
3. **Be respectful** when asking questions/discussing topics with EVERYONE. This does not mean that you need to agree with all the views/opinions expressed but note that there is a difference between being critical or engaging in a productive conversation and being confrontational or abusive.
4. **Refrain** from excessive talking or use of technology for NONACADEMIC PURPOSES. You are supposed to be in class, so BE IN CLASS.

If you choose to violate the above expectations, either once or repeatedly the following consequences will be enforced:

1. Verbal warning;
2. Meeting after class/in office hours, or;
3. Pursuing a report of non-academic misconduct under the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy.

STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated and there will be penalties. For a more precise definition of plagiarism and its consequences, refer to the Student Conduct section of the Northwestern Polytechnic Calendar at <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/programs/calendar/> or the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy which can be found at <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/about/administration/policies/index.html>.

**Note: all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.

Additional Information:

Note that you should not take your performance in this course as an indication of how much I like or respect you. No, that will depend on whether you laugh at my jokes (that was a joke). It goes without saying that post-secondary education is a process. You'll figure out what works for you. I'm here to help.