

ANTHROPOLOGY

ANT 130 Introduction to Cultural Anthropology (4 Credits)

What does it mean to be human? What is culture, and how does it shape the way humans see the world? Why are some forms of cultural difference tolerated, while others are not? As the holistic study of the human experience, cultural anthropology addresses these questions in a world shaped by human migration, climate change, capitalist extraction and global inequality. This course provides an overview of the discipline's history, its distinctive method of ethnography and the breadth of topics it addresses, including public health, race, the environment, gender, language, nationalism, software design, the body, music, cities, government and more. First-years and sophomores only. Enrollment limited to 25. {S}

Fall, Spring

ANT 135/ ARC 135 Introduction to Archaeology (4 Credits)

Offered as ANT 135 and ARC 135. This course studies past cultures and societies through their material remains and explores how archaeologists use different field methods, analytical techniques and theoretical approaches to investigate, reconstruct and learn from the past. Data from settlement surveys, site excavations and artifact analysis are used to address economic, social, political and ideological questions across time and space. This course is taught from an anthropological perspective, exploring key transitions in human prehistory, including the origins of food production, social inequality and state-level societies across the globe. Relevance of archaeological practice in modern political, economic and social contexts is explored. First-years and sophomores only. Enrollment limited to 30. {N}{S}

Fall, Spring, Annually

ANT 200 Colloquium: Research Methods in Anthropology (4 Credits)

This course introduces students to the variety of methods of inquiry used for research in anthropology. Throughout the semester, students are introduced to methods of locating and analyzing information and sources, developing research questions and writing. Normally taken in the spring of the sophomore or junior year. Anthropology majors only. Prerequisite: ANT 130. Enrollment limited to 20. Instructor permission required. {S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

ANT 212 On Botanophilia (4 Credits)

There are many ways to love plants. Home gardeners design with them, healers study their properties to treat patients with them, field botanists learn ornate vocabularies to identify them, poets sound their symbolic depths. What do these different forms of botanophilia say about the human condition and its interspecies intimacies? Living amidst our planet's sixth mass extinction event, more botanophilia is needed and needed yesterday. Putting love, joy and community forward as urgent political affairs, this course asks how students might go about cultivating plant love for earthly survival. Enrollment limited to 30. {S}

Fall, Spring, Alternate Years

ANT 215 Ethnographic Mapping: Place, Body and Landscape (4 Credits)

This course considers theories and practices of reinterpreting landscape through the lenses of indigeneity, transnational feminism and decoloniality. Through a broad range of theoretical and creative works, students explore alternative ways of knowing and relating to places—thinking across space and time, built structures and material absences, borders, embodiment and networks of relations. Discussions engage several ethnographic case studies across the Americas that closely examine the intersections of place, body and landscape. Students apply critical spatial practices by designing a digital project using textual, sonic and visual modes to remap a selected site based on ethnographic research. Enrollment limited to 30. (E) {S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

ANT 217 Sensory Anthropology (4 Credits)

This course examines sensory perception as a mode of carrying out ethnographic research and a focus of inquiry. Through course readings, students engage with how anthropologists have understood the senses—sight, taste, touch, smell and hearing—as an area of shared, cultural knowledge. Bridging anthropology with sensory related works, students tackle ongoing scholarly concerns and move beyond the legacy of a hierarchical model of the five senses to consider how the senses work together and intertwine with other domains of experience. By analyzing the role of the senses in cultural formations—that is, everyday practices, relations of power, meaning creation and social processes, students ask how are the senses mobilized in collective life? What can the interplay of the senses offer us as a way of understanding social experience? Enrollment limited to 30. (E) {S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

ANT 219 Space, Materiality and Power (4 Credits)

This course bridges theories of space and materiality in anthropology, considering how a range of ethnographic case studies engage intersections of place, race, gender, class, migration, diaspora, labor and governance, and what they afford for understanding social spaces. From built forms and infrastructures to housing and public zones, the class explores how discussions focused on the material objects and qualities of space contribute to the study of sociocultural experience. Discussions address questions of human spatiality across geographies and regional contexts, theoretical foundations, the making of physical spaces, the spatial tactics of social actors, the qualities of the built environment, and environmental debris and regeneration. Enrollment limited to 30. (E) {S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

ANT 221 Thinking From Things: Method, Theory and Practice in Archaeology (4 Credits)

This course focuses on the theoretical foundations of archaeological research, the variety of methods available to analyze material culture, the interpretation of results, and ethical considerations of practicing archaeology in the United States and abroad. The course provides students with a solid foundation for evaluating and contextualizing current methodological and theoretical trends within archaeology. Case studies illustrate the diversity of archaeological thought, interdisciplinary approaches to studying material culture and innovative directions in the field of anthropological archaeology. Discussions of practice address the roles and responsibilities of archaeologists in heritage management, museum development and community outreach.

Fall, Spring, Alternate Years

ANT 223 In Sickness and in Health: Biopolitics, Public Health, and Medicine in East Asia (4 Credits)

Same as EAS 223. What happens when states focus on their citizen's potential productivity and discipline to serve the interests of the nation? Biopolitics or the regulation and optimization of populations relies on biomedicine, science, statistics, laws, and policies to ensure the health and future of the nation. Using an anthropological lens the course examines how trajectories of East Asian history, politics, and science intersect with health in our globally connected futures. From SARS, AIDS, and Avian Flu, the dynamics of public health and medicine in East Asia offer an opportunity to develop insights into the relations between states, populations, and citizens. {S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

ANT 224/ ENV 224 Anthropos in the Anthropocene: Human-Environment Relations in a Time of Ecological Crisis (4 Credits)

Offered as ANT 224 and ENV 224. Anthropology seeks to understand human life in all its complexity, but what constitutes the human is far from straightforward. This course examines the changing ways that Anthropos is being understood in an era of rapid global climate change and our planet's sixth mass extinction event, both driven by human activities. We review perspectives on the relationship between humans and their environment from various cultural perspectives, considering how they engage notions of race, class, and gender, and what they imply for nature conservation. Topics include modernity, pets, cyborgs, kinship, symbiosis, extinction, species invasions, settler colonialism and the Anthropocene concept. Enrollment limited to 30. {S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

ANT 225 Language and Culture (4 Credits)

This course surveys the social and cultural contexts of languages throughout the world. It examines the ways in which a human language reflects the ways of life and beliefs of its speakers, contrasted with the extent of language's influence on culture. The course focuses on topics such as identity, social factors of language use, language vitality, language politics and issues of globalization. Each language is a repository of history and knowledge, as well as the culture, of a group of speakers. Languages and cultures from around the world are discussed, with special focus on endangered languages. Enrollment limited to 40. (E) {S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

ANT 226 Archaeology of Food (4 Credits)

This course explores (1) how and why humans across the globe began to domesticate plant and animal resources approximately 10,000 years ago, and (2) new directions in the archaeology of food across time and space. The first part of the semester focuses on the types of archaeological data and analytical methods used to understand the agricultural revolution. Case studies from both centers and noncenters of domestication are used to investigate the biological, economic and social implications of changing foodways. During the remainder of the semester, emphasis is placed on exploring a number of food-related topics within archaeology, such as the relationship between agriculture and sedentism, food and gender, the politics of feasting, and methods for integrating archaeological and ethnographic approaches to the study of food across the globe. Enrollment limited to 30. {S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

ANT 227 Othering: Race & Racisms (4 Credits)

If othering is intrinsic to human constitutions of self and identity, are othering discourses and practices universal across different human groups in different time periods? Does othering have the same political, economic and social consequences for all those othered by a particular group? These questions are examined through a focus on one set of othering discourses and practices: race. In what ways have constructions of racial hierarchies in different parts of the world intersected with other global political, economic and social processes: capitalism, slavery, nationalism, colonization, imperialism, neoliberalism? Readings draw on anthropological, historical and philosophical scholarship. (E) {S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

ANT 229 Africa and the Environment (4 Credits)

In Western discourses, African environments are defined by violence, famine and degradation, symptoms of African cultures that resist Western values such as private property, democracy and environmentalism. This course encourages students to think critically about such portrayals by learning about specific environments in Africa and how humans have interacted with them across time. The syllabus is anchored in cultural anthropology, but includes units on human evolution, the origins and spread of pastoralism, the history of colonial conservation science, and more. Discussions include gender, race, land grabbing, indigenous knowledge, the commons, the cattle complex, desertification, oil, dams and nationalism. {H}{N}{S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

ANT 233 History of Anthropological Theory (4 Credits)

This course reviews the major theoretical approaches and directions in cultural anthropology from the late 19th century to the present. These approaches include social organization and individual agency; adaptation and evolution of human culture; culture and personality, economic behavior, human ecology; the anthropology of development and change; and postmodern interpretation. The works of major anthropologists are explored, including Franz Boas, Bronislaw Malinowski, Margaret Mead, Evans-Pritchard, Claude Levi-Strauss, Marvin Harris, Eric Wolf, Clifford Geertz, Sherry Ortner and others. Prerequisite: ANT 130 or equivalent. Not open to first years. {S}

Spring

ANT 234 Culture, Power and Politics (4 Credits)

This course is a general introduction to anthropological analysis of politics and the political. Through a broad survey of anthropological texts and theories, we explore what an ethnographic perspective can offer to our understandings of power and government. Special emphasis is placed on the role of culture, symbols and social networks in the political life of local communities. Examples are drawn from a number of case studies in Africa, East Asia, Latin America and the United States, and range in scale from studies of local politics in small-scale societies to analyses of nationalism and political performance in modern nation-states. Enrollment limited to 30. {S}

Fall, Spring, Alternate Years

ANT 237 Monuments, Materials and Models: The Archaeology of South America (4 Credits)

This course offers an overview of the archaeology of South America, from the earliest traces of human occupation over 10,000 years ago to the material culture of the present. The course focuses on how archaeologists use data collected during settlement surveys, site excavations and artifact analysis to reconstruct households and foodways, social and political organization, and ritual and identity over the millennia. Discussions also include the relevance of the past in contemporary indigenous rights movements, heritage management strategies and nationalist projects. {N}{S}

Fall, Spring, Alternate Years

ANT 238 Anthropology of the Body (4 Credits)

Anthropology vitally understands bodies as socially meaningful, and as sites for the inculcation of ethical and political identities through processes of embodiment, which break down divides between body as natural and body as socially constituted. This course engages these anthropological understandings to read how bodies are invoked, disciplined and reshaped in prisons and classrooms, market economies and multicultural democracies, religious and ethical movements, and the performance of gender and sexuality, disease and disability. Through these accounts of the body as an object of social analysis and as a vehicle for politics, students learn fundamental social theoretical and anthropological tenets about the embodiment of power, contemporary politics as forms of "biopolitics" and the deconstruction of the normative body. {S}

Fall, Spring, Alternate Years

ANT 242 Cook, Drink and Eat: The Anthropology of Food (4 Credits)

Drawing on a holistic, multidisciplinary perspective, this course considers food as a lens through which to examine issues of identity such as gender, family, community, nationality, religion and class. Food and drink are further considered in terms of how they sustain human life. The class explores the journey of food production, preparation, distribution and consumption as well as food scarcity, security and sovereignty. Local, national and global networks are examined in an attempt to better understand the cultural and nutritional importance of food and the role it plays in socioeconomic and political relationships. Ethnographic research will be conducted in the local community. {S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

ANT 248 Medical Anthropology (4 Credits)

This course looks at the cultural construction of illness through an examination of systems of diagnosis, classification and therapy in both non-Western and Western societies. Special attention is given to the role of the traditional healer, the anthropological contribution to international health care and the training of physicians in the United States. Not open to first years. Enrollment limited to 30. {N}{S}

Fall, Spring, Alternate Years

ANT 249 Visual Anthropology (4 Credits)

This course considers the unique perspectives, techniques and theories that anthropology offers for understanding the visual world. We focus on the production of visual materials (photographs and films, in particular) by anthropologists, as well as on the anthropological analysis of visual artifacts produced by other people. We consider the historical (particularly colonial) legacies of visual anthropology as well as its current manifestations and contemporary debates. Particular attention is paid to issues of representation, authority, authenticity, and circulation of visual materials. Enrollment limited to 30. {S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

ANT 250 The Anthropology of Reproduction (4 Credits)

This course uses anthropological approaches and theories to understand reproduction as a social, cultural and biological process. Drawing on cross-cultural studies of pregnancy and childbirth, new reproductive technologies, infertility and family planning, the course examines how society and culture shape biological experiences of reproduction. We also explore how anthropological studies and theories of reproduction intersect with larger questions about nature and culture, kinship and citizenship among others. {S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

ANT 255 Dying and Death (4 Credits)

Death, "the supreme and final crisis of life" (Malinowski), calls for collective understandings and communal responses. What care is due to the dying? What indicates that death has occurred? How is the corpse to be handled? The course uses ethnographic and historical sources to indicate how human communities have answered these questions, and to determine just how unusual are the circumstances surrounding dying in the contemporary Western world. Enrollment limited to 30. {H}{S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

ANT 257 Urban Anthropology (4 Credits)

This course considers the city as both a setting for anthropological research and as an ethnographic object of study in itself. We aim to think critically about the theoretical and methodological possibilities, challenges and limitations that are posed by urban anthropology. We consider concepts and themes such as urbanization and migration; urban space and mobility; gender, race and ethnicity; technology and virtual space; markets and economies; citizenship and belonging; and production and consumption. {S}

Fall, Spring, Alternate Years

ANT 258/ MUS 258 Performing Culture (4 Credits)

Offered as MUS 258 and ANT 258. This course analyzes cultural performances as sites for the expression and formation of social identity. Students study various performance genres such as rituals, festivals, parades, cultural shows, music, dance and theater. Topics include expressive culture as resistance; debates around authenticity and heritage; the performance of race, class and ethnic identities; the construction of national identity; and the effects of globalization on indigenous performances. Enrollment limited to 30. {A}{S}

Fall, Spring, Alternate Years

ANT 267 Contemporary South Asia (4 Credits)

This course introduces students to the culture, politics and everyday life of South Asia. Topics covered include religion, community, nation, caste, gender and development, as well as some of the key conceptual problems in the study of South Asia, such as the colonial construction of social scientific knowledge, and debates over tradition and modernity. In this way, we address both the varieties in lived experience in the subcontinent and the key scholarly, popular and political debates that have constituted the terms through which we understand South Asian culture. Along with ethnographies, we study and discuss novels, historical analysis, primary historical texts and popular (Bollywood) and documentary film. {S}

Fall, Spring, Annually

ANT 269 Indigenous Cultures and the State in Mesoamerica (4 Credits)

This course is a general introduction to the relationship between indigenous societies and the state in Mesoamerica. Taking a broad historical perspective, we explore the rise of native state-level societies, the transformations that marked the process of European colonization, and the relationship of local indigenous communities to post-colonial states and transnational social movements. Texts used in the course place special emphasis on continuities and changes in language, social organization, cosmology and identity that have marked the historical experience of native groups in the region. {S}

Fall, Spring, Alternate Years

ANT 272 Colloquium on Anthropology of Popular Cultures and Social Movements (4 Credits)

This course explores conjunctures of popular culture and social protest at a time when digital technologies have come to saturate everyday life. From the Arab Spring to youth-led revolutions in Hong Kong and Taiwan and populist outbursts across Iran, Lebanon, Cuba, Russia, and the US, social media has been hailed as turnkey in catalyzing confrontations between people and states. But play could turn political, the political could turn playful, or messages could go awry. Building from theories of mass media and youth subcultures, this course interrogates media, mediation, and meaning at the nexus of pop cultures and popular dissent. {S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

ANT 274 The Anthropology of Religion (4 Credits)

What can anthropologists teach us about religion as a social phenomenon? This course traces significant anthropological approaches to the study of religion, asking what these approaches contribute to our understanding of religion in the contemporary world. Topics include religious experience and rationality; myth, ritual and magic; rites of passage; function and meaning; power and alienation; religion and politics. Readings are drawn from important texts in the history of anthropology and from contemporary ethnographies of religion. {S}

Fall, Spring, Annually

ANT 300 Ethnographic Design (4 Credits)

This course harnesses students' current and previous coursework to address a real life ethnographic design problem. Working in conjunction with students enrolled in ANT 200, students will help to design and carry out a qualitative research project led by an anthropology faculty member and will gain insight into anthropology's practical applications. Students are expected to take leadership roles, think creatively and concretely, work well collaboratively and see projects through to completion. Enrollment limited to 10. Instructor permission required.

Fall

ANT 317 Seminar: The Anthropology of Landscape – Space, Place, Nature (4 Credits)

Landscapes have long figured as a backdrop for anthropological studies, but recently the landscape has emerged as an object of deeper interest. From abandoned city blocks in Detroit, the shores of Walden Pond, the savannas of Eastern Africa, or the Chernobyl exclusion zone, landscapes are potent social and material phenomena. In this course, we explore theories of landscape from different disciplinary perspectives, and then use them to think through the ways that landscapes present themselves to anthropologists and their subjects. Topics include post-industry, colonial gardens, the US West, invasive species, environmental racism, time, capitalism, cartography and counter-mapping, and environmental conservation. Enrollment limited to 12. {N}{S}

Fall, Spring, Alternate Years

ANT 333 Calderwood Seminar: Nature/Culture and Public Anthropology (4 Credits)

Is it nature or culture that makes humans themselves? This question continues to provoke heated debates in American life, and anthropology has played a crucial role in them since Margaret Mead's groundbreaking account of her 1925 fieldwork on Samoan adolescents. The stakes for understanding the nature/culture dichotomy are high, as this course assesses human impacts on the environment, how new reproductive technologies reconfigure family relations or how race is a cultural not a biological construct. In a workshop setting, anthropology majors develop a portfolio of public writing as they contribute to contemporary conversations about the nature/culture divide. Cannot be taken S/U. Prerequisites: course work in Anthropology. Enrollment limited to 12. Juniors and senior Anthropology majors only. Instructor permission required. (E) {S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

ANT 340af Seminar: Topics in Anthropology- Anthropology of the Future (4 Credits)

In a landscape transformed by the pandemic, climate change, tightening borders, and surveillance and artificial intelligence technologies, what form will anthropology assume and what role will it play in the near future? In this seminar, we focus on three major forces – health, climate change, and technology – to show how the discipline is being transformed by them. We also examine how anthropology is, in turn, responding by treading a delicate balance between domestic and international issues, and specialist knowledge and non-specialist audiences in these domains to rearticulate its relevance for future societies. Enrollment limited to 12. Juniors and seniors only. Instructor permission required. {S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

ANT 340et Seminar: Topics in Anthropology-Ethnographic Writing (4 Credits)

Anthropological writing must convey the life-worlds of people and the textures of ethnographic encounters and fieldwork, and refine anthropological theories. How can writing do all of this at once? And as we craft a narrative, what do we leave out? Do we really describe ethnographic "reality" or do we create anthropological fictions? Why then do we look to ethnographic accounts to understand societies and cultures? Anthropological writing has dealt with these questions and more since its inception but most profoundly since the 1980s. In this class, we read pieces that reflect on and innovate with writing as anthropological praxis, and related issues of fact versus fiction, the politics of representation, narrative style, writing as a form of political action and the role of theory in the creation of knowledge. Enrollment limited to 12. Juniors and seniors only. Instructor permission required. {S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

ANT 342bb Seminar: Topics in Anthropology-Biopower, Biopolitics and Governance (4 Credits)

The obesity epidemic, personalized cancer treatments, and the commercialization of surrogate pregnancy represent manifestations of Foucault's conception of biopower or the regulation of the lives of individuals and populations. While institutions like law, medicine, and public health can make visible state interests in bodies and population, more indirect social processes operate to the same ends. For example, advertising and consumer products indirectly shape norms and ideals convergent with government interests. This seminar explores the workings and limitations of biopower, biopolitics, and governance through case studies drawn from anthropology. Enrollment limited to 12. Juniors and seniors only. Instructor permission only.

Fall, Spring, Variable

ANT 347iw Seminar: Topics in Anthropology-How We Inhabit the World (4 Credits)

Making a place of one's own entails occupying and consuming what the place consists of. Human inhabitation of the planet can be seen as simultaneously productive and destructive, of both the inhabited space and its inhabitants. Drawing on concepts commonly considered "economic"; i.e. production, consumption, exchange, and property the following questions will be explored in this course: i) Does anthropological research confirm the universality of these concepts in human communities across history and geography as assumed by political and economic philosophers? ii) In what ways are the experiences, and hence understandings of, production, consumption, exchange, and property being transformed by the processes termed "neoliberalism"? How are these changes shaping the ways in which older and newer dispossessed groups may or may not inhabit the world? Readings for the course will include philosophical and anthropological texts. Enrollment limited to 12. Juniors and seniors only. Instructor permission required. {S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

ANT 347pp Seminar: Topics in Anthropology-Pondering Pottery (4 Credits)

Pottery— both fragments and whole vessels— is ubiquitous in the archaeological record and provides insights into technological choices, shifting styles, food-related practices, economic relationships, and many other aspects of past lifeways. In this course we will focus on how archaeologists collect, analyze, interpret, and present information about pottery from diverse contexts across the globe. Students will have the opportunity to conduct independent research on fragmentary and complete pottery vessels and we will also utilize ethnographic and historical studies of potters to expand our understanding of these practices today. Enrollment limited to 12. Juniors and seniors only. Instructor permission required. {S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

ANT 352eu Seminar: Topics in Anthropology-Eugenics at Smith College (4 Credits)

This course is a research seminar based on the history of the eugenics movement and other forms of racial pseudo-science in the United States.

After completing some general readings on the history of American eugenics, students will develop individual research projects based on the rise, decline and lingering impacts of the movement. The focus in developing these projects will be on materials stored in the Smith College Archives, which range from the papers of Harris Hawthorne Wilder, Morris Steggerda and other faculty who were involved in eugenics research to ephemeral materials that document the participation of Smith students in this research from the 1910s to the late 1930s. Enrollment limited to 12. Juniors and seniors only. Instructor permission required. {S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

ANT 353cc Seminar: Topics in Anthropology-Cannabis as Catalyst (4 Credits)

Once maligned as a dangerous "gateway drug" and as a troubling sign of social decay, cannabis is increasingly regarded as a potent and future-focused remedy for a range of medical and social ills. This course considers this rapid and dramatic cultural, legal and political transformation and what it has to teach us about much broader social shifts and tensions. The study of cannabis is a starting point for thinking about a variety of crucial anthropological topics, including human-plant relations, legality and illegality, race and (in)justice, pharmaceuticals and botanical treatments, kinship and care, science and expertise, and disability activism. {S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

ANT 353dd Seminar: Topics in Anthropology-Disability and Difference (4 Credits)

Disability is both a universal human reality and a profoundly embodied, contested, and situated experience. This course explores this tension from a range of methodological and theoretical perspectives, with an emphasis on innovative ethnographic work. Our approach will be insistently transnational and intersectional, taking into account how disabled selves and communities are shaped by geographical and historical context, racial and ethnic identity, class background, gender, and sexuality. We will consider concepts and themes such as embodiment, citizenship and belonging, access and visibility, creativity, medicalization and diagnosis, politics and advocacy, and virtuality and technology. Enrollment limited to 12. Juniors and seniors only. Instructor permission required. {S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

ANT 400 Special Studies (2-4 Credits)

By permission of the department, for junior and senior majors.

Fall, Spring

ANT 404 SPECIAL STUDIES (4 Credits)

Fall, Spring

ANT 430D Honors Project (4-8 Credits)

Fall, Spring, Annually

ANT 432D Honors Project (6 Credits)

Fall, Spring, Annually