

Making Sense of a Changing World: Anthropology Today

ANTH1120 Y Section C/Fall Semester Syllabus

Course Information

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Course Overview

Course Description

In this course, you will learn to think like an anthropologist. You will use anthropological approaches to increase your understanding of global issues in diverse locales. This course challenges you to engage with other ways of knowing and being, and to rethink your taken-for-granted knowledge and beliefs through the comparative analysis of the human condition. This course will take a problem-based approach to a range of topics such as: the effects of race and racism, sources of religious conflict, alternate genders and sexualities, First Nations and health, international development, and issues of social inequality. Students are encouraged to bring their own knowledge and experience as the first step in thinking like an anthropologist (i.e., rethinking the taken-for-granted). The emphasis in this course is developing skills (analytical thinking, reading, writing). Course credit exclusions: AP/ANTH 1130 6.00 (prior to Fall 2016), AP/ANTH 1120 6.00 (prior to Fall 2014).

Course Learning Objectives

As you take this course, you will work toward these goals:

- Learn to think like an anthropologist
- Learn to recognize and define anthropological concepts and theories
- Connect anthropological concepts and themes across the course materials
- Develop a critical perspective on the powerful, transnational, and local repercussions of culture in your everyday life and in the wider world

Course Format and Organization

Lectures and Tutorials (All In-Person)

- During lectures, the Course Instructor (CI) will expand on the required texts and introduce additional historical context and cultural examples. Opportunities for discussion and questions will be available throughout lecture.
 - Lecture Outlines (a scaffold of the lecture material) will be provided to students to use as a note-taking tool. However, full lecture notes and lectures slides *will not be made available*. If you require accommodation, you may contact your CI directly to request slides.
- During Tutorials, Tutorial Assistants (TAs) will further assist your ability to understand and identify concepts and themes explored in lecture with other examples. Tutorials are discussion-based and involve collaborative and active learning activities.

Organization of Course Texts

The course will move systematically through several texts, focussing on essential reading in anthropology in the first module and then examining more recent case studies in anthropology, including an ethnography, *Food in Cuba* (Garth 2020), in the following two modules.

eClass

In addition to in-person lectures and tutorials, eClass will be used to share course materials (such as the Syllabus, Lecture Outlines, and Assignment breakdowns). All assignments (including mini assignments) must be submitted through eClass. In addition, there will be Discussion Boards for listing additional resources for your peers, organizing study groups, and initiating relevant discussions related to course themes and content.

Course Communication and Office Hours

Course Announcements

The CI and TAs will communicate course announcements at the beginning or end of in-person classes and tutorials and via eClass.

Student Communication

You can communicate with one another during lecture and tutorial discussions and on discussion boards on eClass. (Discussion boards will be moderated by the CI and TAs to ensure they conform to expectations for student conduct and relevance to the course.)

You can communicate with your CI and TA during office hours and over email. Please wait 48 hours to follow-up on an email if you have not received a response (excluding non-business days). Please do not expect emails marked “urgent” to be responded to more quickly.

Office Hours

Office hours will be made available by the CI and your TA (Times and Dates TBD). Attending office hours is not only a great way to ask follow-up questions about course materials or assignments, but also an opportunity to connect to your CI and TA and gain mentorship.

Course Expectations

- Engage respectfully and generously with one other and with your CI and TAs.
- Read course materials deeply and actively.
- Read and take notes on the materials *before class*.
- Prepare relevant questions and comments for class and tutorials.
- During discussion and learning activities in tutorials and lecture, participate actively by offering relevant comments and questions, assisting your peers, and attending lectures and tutorials.
- In general, good notetaking involves synthesizing and identifying the most important concepts and points of a material or lecture *in your own words*:
 - Note-taking for readings in anthropology generally involves identifying the main themes and thesis of a material; briefly summarizing the text; defining important terms; and identifying key elements of an anthropological case study (place, time frame, participants, methods, and relevance to the weekly theme).
 - Note-taking in lecture and tutorials involves using the lecture outline and writing the important points of the lecture or tutorial discussion.
- In addition to lecture and tutorial times, set aside approximately 4–8 hours each week to read, take notes, work on assignments, and study for tests.

Course Evaluation

Assessment	Due Date	Weight %	Course Learning Outcome
Mini Assessment A	Sept 27 before lecture on eClass	2.5%	Gain familiarity with library research; Learn to identify ethnographic methods
Mini Assessment B	Nov 22 before lecture on eClass	2.5%	Learn how to strategically read texts; Gain familiarity with a range of anthropological subjects and writing styles.
Assignment 1: Film Review	Nov 4, 11:59pm on eClass	10%	Identify anthropological concepts and themes in documentary films
Assignment 2: Ethnographic Review	Dec 2, 11:59pm on eClass	15%	Synthesize and connect an ethnography with anthropological concepts and themes from the course; Critically engage a text
Final Test	December Exam Period: TBD	15%	Synthesize and understand course concepts and materials; Connect course materials
Participation	See assessment description for more details	5%	Develop an understanding of learning as a social practice
		50%	

Assessment Descriptions

This course has several different assignment types to aid in identifying, synthesizing, and connecting anthropological concepts, methods, and themes across course materials, as well as learning valuable research, writing, and reading skills.

Mini Assignments (2 x 2.5%), 1 page max.

These are short, low-stakes assignments that will familiarize you with resources available to you. They will teach you valuable skills for your academic success. Feel free to be creative and use these assignments as an opportunity to ask questions of anthropological texts and of your TAs and CI.

Review Assignments (x2)

Assignment 1: Film Review (10%), 3–4 pages.

You will be provided with a list of short and feature-length documentaries. You will choose one to synthesize and review. You will briefly summarize the film and argue why your fellow peers in this class would benefit from watching it as burgeoning anthropologists. These benefits should include identifying anthropological concepts and themes discussed at any time during the course (from lectures, tutorials, and other course materials) and evaluating the film's ability to convey those concepts and themes.

Assignment 2: Ethnography Review (15%), 4–5 pages.

During this class, we will be collectively reading *Food in Cuba* (2020) by Hanna Garth. For this assignment, you will write a critical review of the ethnography, identifying 2-3 key themes discussed in other course materials. You will demonstrate these themes with specific examples from the ethnography. Your review should also focus on what could be valuable about reading this ethnography for a *non*-anthropologist.

Final Test (15%)

The final test will be composed of multiple choice, short answer, and long answer questions. It will be scheduled during the December Exam Period. A study guide will be made available prior to the test.

Participation (5%)

Participating in tutorials means both attending and actively participating in all tutorial discussions. You must come to all lectures and tutorials on time so as not to disturb ongoing lectures and discussions. If you arrive late, this may negatively affect your tutorial participation grade.

Submitting Assignments

All assignments should be submitted digitally to eClass through Turnitin. It is recommended that you bring to tutorials a hard-copy or digital copy of your mini assignment to aid in discussion. There will be designated assignment modules on eClass with information about the assignments and evaluation criteria available.

All assignments must use proper citation and a bibliography (including the mini assignments). Please see the section of this syllabus on style guides and citation.

The Review Assignments should be formatted using the following conventions:

- 12-point font in Times New Roman
- Double-spaced
- 1-inch margins

- Left-aligned (not centre, right, or full justified)
- Using tab-spaces to indicate new paragraphs (rather than an extra space).
- Include student name, student number, course code, CI name, and TA name on the first page
- Include an original title
- Include a Works Cited/Bibliography
- Be submitted to eClass as a Word Document or PDF

Should your review assignment be submitted in a different format or not following these conventions, you will be asked to *resubmit* the assignment. This will likely result in your grade being returned later than the rest of the class.

Late Work Policy

There are no penalties for late assignments. However, you must request extensions *prior to all assignment deadlines* (including mini assignments). In case of a medical or personal emergency immediately prior to or after the deadline passing, documentation *must be provided* to receive a grade. Bear in mind that should you require lengthy extensions, the CI and TAs may not be able to evaluate your assignments by important drop dates. In general, submitting assignments on time or within a timely period is essential to keeping up with the course material and to assess your own performance and learning in the course.

If you need to miss a tutorial session, please inform your TA by email prior to that session with a valid reason as to your absence.

Missed Tests and Exams

If you miss an exam, you must provide official documentation according to university policy and be prepared to write a make-up test scheduled at the CI's discretion. If you know in advance that you need to miss a test for a medical or an excusable reason, please let your CI know over email *as soon as possible*.

Grading

The grading scheme for this course conforms to the 9-point system used in undergraduate programs at York University. For a full description of the York grading system, visit the York University [Academic Calendar](#).

All tests and assignments will be graded according to the evaluative criteria supplied to you prior to assignment deadlines, and in conformance with general expectations of student academic performance and skills.

Requests for Regrades

It is within your right as a student to request a regrade on an assignment or test. All requests for regrades should be emailed to the TA that marked your assignment or test.

When requesting a regrade, please include in your email an explanation about your request. This explanation should focus on relevant information that your grader may have overlooked *according to the evaluation criteria*. In other words, it is your responsibility to demonstrate that your assignment or exam met the evaluative criteria and thus achieved a specific grade. Bear in mind that your TA may choose to keep the grade the same, raise the grade, or lower it, after reassessing an assignment. If you are unsatisfied with an explanation from a TA, you may then direct your request to the CI and the same procedures for re-evaluation will apply.

How to Use Citations

For this course, students will be expected to cite all material (including course materials and any outside research and materials) using **Chicago Style Author-Date**, which is the official style of the American Anthropological Association (AAA).

Citation practices don't only demonstrate academic integrity by linking information back to an identifiable source; they also show your CIs, TAs, and peers how you developed your ideas and demonstrate understanding and synthesis.

You can refer to these resources on citation styles and research support.

- [Chicago Style Overview](#), YorkU Libraries
- [Drop-in Research Support](#), YorkU Libraries
- [Writing Centre](#)

Course Schedule: Weekly Readings and Activities

Required Course Materials

Textbook: *Sociocultural Anthropology: A Problem-Based Approach*. Fourth Edition. By Richard H. Robbins, Rachel Dowty, Maggie Cummings, and Karen McGarry.

Ethnography: Garth, Hanna. 2020. *Food in Cuba: The Pursuit of a Decent Meal*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Both texts are available at the York University Bookstore (new and used), through other retailers, and as purchasable e-copies. There are limited copies available of the

textbook at the York University library. There is a free eBook of the ethnography available at the library.

All other course materials (including single book chapters and journal articles) will be linked on eClass or can be found online in the York University Library database.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (Sept 13): Course overview and learning strategies (NO TUTORIALS)

Read:

- The entirety of the eClass Modules and Syllabus

Learning Outcomes:

- Gain familiarity with the course format and syllabus
 - Learn expectations of students, Course Instructor, and TAs in class
 - Learn how to use class and tutorials and take effective notes
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MODULE 1: DEFINITIONS, CONCEPTS, HISTORY

Week 2 (Sept 20): What is anthropology? (TUTORIALS START)

Read:

- Textbook Chapter 1: Introduction, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, and Conclusions
- Abu-Lughod, Lila. 2002. "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and its Others." *American Anthropologist* 104 (3): 783–790.

Learning Outcomes:

- Gain familiarity with major terms in anthropology (e.g. cultural relativism; the culture concept)

Assignment:

- Mini Assignment A (due next week prior to start of class); See "Mini Assignment Breakdown" page in eClass
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Week 3 (Sept 27): What is ethnographic fieldwork?

Read:

- Textbook Chapter 2: Entire chapter

- Introduction/Methods of your chosen ethnography (from *Mini Assignment A*)

Listen to:

- *Zora's Daughters*. 2022. "Notes on the Field." Season 2, Episode 11, March 2. <https://zorasdaughters.com/episodes/notes-on-the-field/>

Learning Outcomes:

- Identify and define common methods of ethnographic fieldwork
 - Identify key transformations in the development of ethnographic fieldwork
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Week 4 (Oct 4): Why learn the history of anthropology?

Read:

- Wolf, Eric R. 1982. "Introduction." In *Europe and the People Without History*. Pp. 3–23. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. **READ ONLY PAGES 3–19.**
- Menand, Louis. 2019. "How Cultural Anthropology Redefined Humanity." *The New Yorker*, August 19. https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/08/26/how-cultural-anthropologists-redefined-humanity?source=search_google_dsa_paid&gclid=EAIaIQobChMI1OP_1Km86QIVHAIICR359Q7rEAAAYASAAEgI8mPD_BwE

Learning Outcomes:

- Understand synchronic and diachronic approaches to anthropology
 - Locate the importance of anthropology as a "handmaiden of colonialism"
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READING WEEK: OCT 8–14, NO LECTURE OR TUTORIALS

MODULE 2: FAMILY, IDENTITY, COMMUNITY

Week 5 (Oct 18): How are society and culture reproduced? How do they change?

Read:

- Textbook Chapter 5: Introduction, 5.1, 5.2, 5.5, and Conclusions; Chapter 4: 4.2, 4.3, and 4.5
- Garth, "Preface: Why Cuba?" and "Introduction: In Pursuit of Adequacy"

Learning Outcomes:

- Identify forms of social organization

- Assess the continuity and change of culture through various forms
-

Week 6 (Oct 25): Why are identities (i.e., gender, race, ethnicity) meaningful?

Read:

- Textbook Chapter 6: Introduction, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, and Conclusions
- Garth, “*La Lucha*” and “*Antes*”

Learning Outcomes:

- Assess how identities and hierarchies interact and intersect
 - Situate the development of identity as a historical and cultural phenomenon
-

Week 7 (Nov 1): What are the relationships between gender, sex, and sexuality?

Read:

- Textbook Chapter 5: 5.3; Chapter 6: 6.5, 6.6; Chapter 7: 7.3
- Garth, “Virtuous Womanhood”
- Kulick, Don. 1997. “The Gender of Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes.” *American Anthropologist* 99 (3): 574–585.

Learning Outcomes:

- Challenge normalized understandings of gender, sex, and sexuality as “natural” or “normal vs deviant”
- Explore how gender, sex, and sexuality are embedded in a cultural or social reality

Assignment:

- Assignment 1: Film Review due Friday, November 4 by 11:59pm on eClass
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Week 8 (Nov 8): How do people form and sustain hierarchies and communities?

Read:

- Textbook Chapter 7: Introduction, 7.1, 7.2, Conclusions
- Garth “Communities”

Learning Outcomes

- Challenge the convention that forms of social hierarchy are culturally universal (i.e., existing in the same way for everyone)
 - Compare different forms of social hierarchy and their interactions
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MODULE 3: POWER, DEVELOPMENT, ENCOUNTER

Week 9 (Nov 15): How are race and racism produced and perpetuated?

Read:

- Textbook Chapter 7: 7.4, 7.5
- Garth, “Breakdown” and “Conclusion: The Politics of Adequacy”

Learning Outcomes:

- Develop familiarity with the historical development of “race” and “racism”
- Examine anthropology’s complicity with the production of race and racism
- Assess anthropologists’ current examinations of race and racism

Assignment:

- Mini Assignment B due before Week 10 class
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Week 10 (Nov 22): Why do narratives of progress and development have power over people?

Read:

- Textbook Chapter 3: Entire Chapter
- Li, Tania Murray. 2008. “Social reproduction, situated politics, and *The Will to Improve*.” In *Focaal—European Journal of Anthropology* 52: 111–118.

Further Reading:

- Ralph, Laurence. 2014. “Development, or Why Grandmothers Ally with the Gang.” In *Renegade Dreams: Living Through Injury in Gangland Chicago*. Pp. 19–52. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Learning Outcomes:

- Connect progress and development to the history of anthropology
 - Synthesize and evaluate the social and global hierarchies that narratives of progress and development produce and enable
-

Week 11 (Nov 29): How do anthropologists study encounters between the local and the global?

Read:

- Textbook Chapter 8: Entire Chapter
- Satsuka, Shiho. 2015. “The Interpretation of Nature.” In *Nature in Translation: Japanese Tourism Encounters the Canadian Rockies*. Pp. 147–182. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Learning Outcomes:

- Critically evaluate claims that globalization is making everything “universal” or “Western”
- Query the category of the “universal” or the “global” as cultural terms

Assignments:

- Assignment 2: Ethnography Review Due Friday, December 2 by 11:59pm on eClass
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Week 12 (Dec 6): Is anthropology changing?

Read:

- Fernando, Mayanthi L. 2014. “Ethnography and the Politics of Silence.” *Cultural Dynamics* 26 (2): 235–244.
- Bonilla, Yarimar and Jonathan Rosa. 2015. “#Ferguson: Digital Protest, Hashtag Ethnography, and the Racial Politics of Social Media in the United States.” *American Ethnologist* 42 (1): 4–17.

Further Reading:

- Yates-Doerr, Emily. 2020. “Antihero Care: On Fieldwork and Anthropology.” *Anthropology and Humanism* 45 (2): 233–244.
- Günel, Gökçe, Saiba Varma, and Chika Watanabe. 2020. “A Manifesto for Patchwork Ethnography.” Member Voices, *Fieldsights*, June 9.
<https://culanth.org/fieldsights/a-manifesto-for-patchwork-ethnography>
- Tsing, Anna L., Jennifer Deger, Alder Keleman Saxena, and Feifei Zhou, curators and editors. 2021. *Feral Atlas: The More-Than-Human Anthropocene*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. Access: <https://feralatlans.org/>

Learning Outcomes:

- Assess how anthropologists work to address contemporary issues and problems in the discipline
 - Develop an initial understanding of the difference between the “object” and the “subject” of anthropological study
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EXAM PERIOD: DECEMBER 8–23

Final Test Date: TBD

Course Policies

All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information:

- [Student Rights & Responsibilities](#)
- [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#)

Please also review the following course policies:

Academic Integrity

In this course, we strive to maintain academic honesty to the highest extent possible. Please familiarize yourself with the meaning of academic integrity by completing [SPARK's Academic Integrity module](#) at the beginning of the course. Breaches of academic honesty range from cheating to plagiarism (i.e., the improper crediting of another's work, the representation of another's ideas as your own, etc.). All instances of academic dishonesty in this course will be reported to the appropriate University authorities and can be punishable according to the [Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#).

Accessibility

While all individuals are expected to satisfy the requirements of their program of study and to aspire to achieve excellence, the University recognizes that persons with disabilities may require reasonable accommodation to enable them to perform at their best. The University encourages students with disabilities to register with [Student Accessibility Services](#) to discuss their accommodation needs as early as possible in the term to establish the recommended academic accommodations that will be communicated to Course Directors through their Letter of Accommodation (LOA).

Please let your instructor know as early as possible in the term if you anticipate requiring academic accommodation so that we can discuss how to consider your accommodation needs within the context of this course. Sufficient notice is needed so that reasonable steps for accommodation can be discussed. Accommodations for tests/exams normally require three (3) weeks (or 21 days) before the scheduled test/exam to arrange.

Religious Observance Accommodation

York University is committed to respecting the religious beliefs and practices of all members of the community, and making reasonable and appropriate [accommodations to adherents for observances of special significance](#). Should any of the dates specified

in this syllabus for course examinations, tests, or deadlines conflict with a date of religious significance, please contact the instructor within the first three (3) weeks of class. If the date falls within the formal examination periods, you must complete and submit a [Religious Accommodation for Examination Form](#) at least three (3) weeks before the start of the exam period.

Intellectual Property

Course materials are designed for use as part of this particular course at York University and are the intellectual property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third-party copyrighted materials (such as book chapters, journal articles, music, videos, etc.) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian copyright law. Students may not publish, post on an Internet site, sell, or otherwise distribute any course materials or work without the instructor's express permission. Course materials should only be used by students enrolled in this course.

Copying this material for distribution (e.g., uploading material to a commercial third-party website) may lead to a charge of misconduct according to York's [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#), the [Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#), and/or legal consequences for copyright violations.

Student Conduct in the Learning Environment

York University is committed to fostering teaching and learning environments that are free of disruptive and/or harassing behaviour, are physically safe, and conducive to effective teaching and learning. Students and instructors are expected to maintain a professional relationship characterized by courtesy, civility, and mutual respect and to refrain from actions disruptive to such a relationship. Individuals who fail to adhere to such standards and who violate University or public law may be subject to disciplinary action by the University.

For more information, see the policies on [Disruptive and/or Harassing Behaviour in Academic Situations](#), the [Student Conduct and Responsibilities](#), and the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#).

Health and Safety

All York students and instructors share responsibility for the safety and well-being of the community while on York's campuses. Please continue to check [YUBetter Together](#) for the latest information on health and safety.

Student Support and Resources

To help you succeed academically, York University offers a wide range of resources and services. Everything from writing workshops and peer mentorship to wellness support and career guidance is available to fulfill our LA&PS students' needs. Explore the links below to access these on-campus resources:

- [Academic Advising](#) is available to provide students support and guidance in making academic decisions and goals.
- [Student Accessibility Services](#) are available for support and accessibility accommodation when required.
- [Student Counselling, Health & Wellbeing](#) offers workshops, resources, and counselling to support your academic success.
- [Peer-Assisted Study Sessions \(PASS\) Program](#) provides student study sessions for students to collaborate and enhance their understanding of course content in certain courses.
- [Student Numeracy Assistance Centre at Keele \(SNACK\)](#) supports students in courses involving math, stats, and Excel.
- [The Writing Centre](#) provides multiple avenues of writing-based support including drop-in sessions, one-to-one appointments, a Multilingual Studio, and an Accessibility Specialist.
- [ESL Open Learning Centre \(OLC\)](#) supports students with building proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking English.
- [Learning Skills Services](#) provides tips for time management, effective study and learning habits, keeping up with coursework, and other learning-related supports.
- [Learning Commons](#) provides links to supports for time management, writing, study skills, preparing for exams, and other learning-related resources.
- [Roadmap to Student Success](#) provides students with timely and targeted resources to help them achieve academic, personal, and professional success.
- [Office of Student Community Relations \(OSCR\)](#) is responsible for administering the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) and provides critical incident support.
- [goSAFE](#) is staffed by York students and can accompany York community members to and from any on-campus location, such as the Village Shuttle pick-up hub, parking lots, bus stops, or residences.

For a full list of academic, wellness, and campus resources visit [Student Support & Resources](#).