



Course Outline

2026-2027 Catalog

ANTH 18 - World Cultures

Catalog Description

Transfer Status: CSU/UC

Unit(s): 3.00

Lecture: 51.00 Contact hours/102.00 Out of class hours/153.00 Total hours/3.00 Unit(s)

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Course Description: This course is a survey of the world's culture areas as described and conceptualized by cultural anthropologists. While the course has a significant geographical component, emphasis is placed on an anthropological perspective on cultural dynamics in terms of general subsistence patterns, sociopolitical organization, and the increased globalization over time of the world's cultural systems. Societal types such as hunter gatherers, horticulturalists, pastoralists, intensive agriculturalists, and industrialists are described and compared from an anthropological perspective. Culture contact and change models are also included as a substantive part of the course content.

Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. identify all major world culture areas and the major cultural traditions associated with each of them (culture areas).
2. define and recount environmental, sociocultural, and biological factors that contribute to the formation of societal types across time and space.
3. identify and apply theories of culture change and contact, which inform emergent global cultural systems.
4. locate and distinguish major world culture areas (eg Africa, Mesoamerica, Oceania, etc.) on a global level.
5. identify and explain the importance of the culturally relativistic approach to learning about cultures other than one's own while applying the holistic approach and using ethnographic and/or historical examples.

Course Content

Topic Titles / Suggested Time Topic	
	<u>Lecture</u>
<u>Topics</u>	<u>Lec Hrs</u>
Introduction: Background	6.00
Descriptive Methods and Theoretical Approaches to World Cultures	6.00
Societal Types: Bands, Tribes, Chiefdoms, and States	3.00
The South Pacific: Polynesian, Micronesian, and Melanesian Traditions	3.00
Southern Asia: India, Australia, and Southeast Asia	3.00
Asia Proper: China, Japan, Korea, and the Siberian Steppes	6.00
The Middle East	6.00
Africa	6.00
Western and Eastern Europe	3.00
North America	3.00
Central and South America	6.00
Total Hours: 51.00	

Methods of Instruction

- A. Collaborative Group Work
- B. Discussion
- C. Homework: Students are required to complete two hours of outside-of-class homework for each hour of lecture
- D. Lecture
- E. Multimedia Presentations
- F. Strategies for developing critical thinking and inquiry skills will be employed. Directed projects including writing assignments (2,500 word minimum word requirement); students will be required to use formal research methods and write their papers using an established writing style (e.g. MLA, APA or Chicago).

Methods of Evaluation

- A. Exams/Tests
- B. Quizzes

- C. Written Assignments
- D. Essays and research papers

Examples of Assignments

Reading Assignments

- 1. Read the chapter that explains how modern dynamic models for cultural regions are more useful than the older, more static models. Be prepared to discuss problems associated with the “culture area” approach.
- 2. Read the chapter that focuses on the emergence of agriculture in the fertile crescent area (ca. 5,000 B.C.). Be prepared to discuss “monocausality” and the limitations of such theories with regard to understanding culture change.

Writing Assignments

- 1. Write a three-page essay summarizing the “cultural area” approach. How has the cultural ecological approach, developed by Julian Steward and others, forced us to be suspicious of strict culture area organization when analyzing regional differences?
- 2. Write a five-page essay summarizing the work of V. Gordon Childe and Robert Braidwood. How do their views differ from those of Kent Flannery?

Out-of-Class Assignments

- 1. Using Google Earth to create a map showing major urban areas through time in central China: compare urban scale from 1950 to the present and discuss your findings with the class.
- 2. Genocide is a tragic and unfortunate crime that has been committed around the world in many regions among and between cultural groups. Please access the Butte College Library to identify one example of genocide. Please research the factors that led up to and contributed to the strife between the two populations that you identify. How many people were killed as a result? What are the social factors that have unfolded in the time since this genocide occurred? Please bring your findings in to discuss with your classmates.

Recommended Materials of Instruction

Bodley, John H. (2019). Cultural Anthropology: Tribes, States, and the Global Systems. *Mayfield*, 7th. 978-1538127902.
Raymond Scupin. (2020). Cultural Anthropology: A Global Perspective. *SAGE Publications*, 10th. 9781544363141.

Zero Cost Textbook

Perspectives: An Open Invitation to Cultural Anthropology (2023).
<https://perspectives.americananthro.org/>

Other Learning Materials

Goode's Atlas

Minimum Qualifications

Anthropology (Masters Required)

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