Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology

Semester 2, 2008

Course Co-ordinator: Barry Morris
Room: W348
Ph: (02) 49215961
Fax: (02) 49216902
Email: Barry.Morris@newcastle.edu.au

SOCA1020 - Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology

Course Coordinator: Dr Barry Morris
Semester: Semester 2 - 2008
Unit Weighting: 10
Teaching Methods: Lecture/Tutorial

Brief Course Description

The course introduces students to Social and Cultural Anthropology. The content of the course covers aspects of the history of anthropology and some of the themes that run through anthropological thought and the nature of anthropological fieldwork. The course will examine some of the main areas of ethnographic specialisation within the School (e.g. the Pacific, Aboriginal Australia, South Asia, Islamic societies, Southeast Asia as well as Western societies); and consider how the study of other cultures and societies can help us deal with urgent problems confronting today's world.

Contact Hours

Lecture for 2 Hours per week for the Full Term
Tutorial for 1 Hour per week for the Full Term

Course Outline Issued and Correct as at: Week 1, Semester 2 - 2008

CTS Download Date: 2nd July
Learning Materials/Texts: Book of Readings

A book of readings will be made available.

Course Objectives

1. To provide an introduction to the discipline of social and cultural anthropology as a reflexive, critical mode of research into contemporary society.
2. To further develop students' understanding of the nature of social research.
3. To develop students' systematic, critical and sympathetic understanding of the nature of the contemporary world society, its pattern of inequality and its ongoing transformations.
4. To further enhance students' scholarly skills including capacity for effective research and critical appraisal of relevant literature, and skills in critique, logical debate, oral presentation and written communication.

Course Content

The course introduces the history of anthropology and of anthropological thought and, the nature of anthropological fieldwork. Specific topics vary from year to year, but may include:
1. The historical development of modern social and cultural anthropology.
2. Basic theoretical and analytic models applied in anthropology.
3. The relationship between society and environment.
4. The impact of global economic and cultural processes on societies around the world.
5. The variety and transformations of forms of social and political organisation, and cultural expression among non-western societies.
6. Anthropology of urban societies, the variety and form of ethnic and cultural expression in post-colonial and cosmopolitan settings in a rapidly changing world.
8. The relevance of the study of other cultures to urgent problems confronting today's world, such as the accelerating environmental crisis.

Assumed Knowledge

SOCA1010, SOCA101OC or equivalent

Callaghan Campus
SOCA1020 INTRO. TO SOCIAL & CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY
Semester 2 - 2008

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<thead>
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<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Room</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>Wednesday 11.00 AM - 1.00 PM</td>
<td>[CT202]</td>
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<tr>
<td>and Tutorial</td>
<td>Wednesday 1.00 PM - 2.00 PM</td>
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<td>or</td>
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<td>or</td>
<td>Wednesday 3.00 PM - 4.00 PM</td>
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Essential Criteria in Assessment

This course contains compulsory components or assessment items that must be satisfactorily completed in order for a student to receive a pass mark or better for the course. These essential elements are described in the CTS. Refer - http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000648.html

Assessment Items

To be completed:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Essays / Written Assignments</th>
<th>Essay of 1,500 words (40%) due week 9.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examination: Formal</td>
<td>Two-hour multiple-choice examination (50%).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group/tutorial participation and contribution</td>
<td>(10%). This mark will be based upon a systematic and ongoing evaluation of the student's contributions to tutorial discussion. It may also include the successful completion of tutorial exercises.</td>
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Students are required to attend all lectures and tutorials. Attendance in tutorials is a requirement of the course as a mark for participation is part of the assessment. Attendance and participation records will be kept for this purpose.

Online Tutorial Registration:

Students are required to enrol in the Lecture and a specific Tutorial time for this course via the Online Registration system. Refer - http://studinfo1.newcastle.edu.au/rego/stud_choose_login.cfm

NB: Registrations close at the end of week 2 of semester.

Studentmail and Blackboard: Refer - www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/

This course uses Blackboard and studentmail to contact students, so you are advised to keep your email accounts within the quota to ensure you receive essential messages. To receive an expedited response to queries, post questions on the Blackboard discussion forum if there is one, or if emailing staff directly use the course code in the subject line of your email. Students are advised to check their studentmail and the course Blackboard site on a weekly basis.

Important Additional Information

Details about the following topics are available on your course Blackboard site (where relevant). Refer - www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/

- Written Assignment Presentation and Submission Details
- Online copy submission to Turnitin
- Penalties for Late Assignments
- Special Circumstances
- No Assignment Re-submission
- Re-marks & Moderations
- Return of Assignments
- Preferred Referencing Style
- Student Representatives
- Student Communication
- Essential Online Information for Students
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<th>Grading guide</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>49% or less</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>An unacceptable effort, including non-completion. The student has not understood the basic principles of the subject matter and/or has been unable to express their understanding in a comprehensible way. Deficient in terms of answering the question, research, referencing and correct presentation (spelling, grammar etc). May include extensive plagiarism.</td>
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<tr>
<td>50% to 64%</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>The work demonstrates a reasonable attempt to answer the question, shows some grasp of the basic principles of the subject matter and a basic knowledge of the required readings, is comprehensible, accurate and adequately referenced.</td>
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<td>65% to 74%</td>
<td>Credit</td>
<td>The work demonstrates a clear understanding of the question, a capacity to integrate research into the discussion, and a critical appreciation of a range of different theoretical perspectives. A deficiency in any of the above may be compensated by evidence of independent thought. The work is coherent and accurate.</td>
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<td>75% to 84%</td>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td>Evidence of substantial additional reading and/or research, and evidence of the ability to generalise from the theoretical content to develop an argument in an informed and original manner. The work is well organised, clearly expressed and shows a capacity for critical analysis.</td>
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<td>85% upwards</td>
<td>High Distinction</td>
<td>All of the above, plus a thorough understanding of the subject matter based on substantial additional reading and/or research. The work shows a high level of independent thought, presents informed and insightful discussion of the topic, particularly the theoretical issues involved, and demonstrates a well-developed capacity for critical analysis.</td>
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Essay Questions

An essay of 1500 words is to be submitted by Friday 19th September

You must keep a copy of your essay.

If you use a word processor, always keep at least one backup copy of your work on floppy disk, and update it as you work on the essay. Photocopy hand-written essays

The School will take no responsibility for an essay that goes astray.

The essay is to be referenced in accordance with the Harvard system. (Consult your tutor if you are unfamiliar with this system and refer to the WRITING YOUR ESSAY guide that you were given in Semester I for SOCA1010. If you do not already have a copy of the WRITING YOUR ESSAY guide please obtain one from the School of Humanities and Social Science Office.) The essay is worth 40% of your assessment.

In this course, it is recommended that you use the Harvard system for documenting sources. This involves noting author, date and page number/s for in-text citations that refer readers to a list of references. An in-text citation names the author of the source, gives the date of publication and specifies the page number. Direct quotes are to be indented and also must include author, date and page number. At the end of the essay, a list of references provides publication information about the sources; the list is alphabetised by authors' last names (or by titles for works without authors).

Choose one of the following five topics: N.B. The list of references is merely an initial guide. You do not necessarily need to read all of the references listed, and you are encouraged to find your own references in addition.

**Topic 1**

What do the varying depictions of Captain Cook as the God (Lono) or natural scientist reveal about meaning, history and cultural interpretation.

Readings:


Sahlins, M. 1986 Ch.4 Captain James Cook, or the Dying God, in Islands of History, London: Tavistock

Whitebread, P. 1969 Captain Cook's Role in Natural History in Australian Natural History, vol. 16, No.8


**Topic 2**

**Explore the cultural politics of the various reworkings of western culture that Aborigines have produced.**

**Readings:**


**Topic 3**

**Discuss how Australian Aboriginal ideas of the body are used to connect individuals to the landscape and to the past. How do these ideas also create social relationships?**

**Readings:**


### Topic 4

Explore how contemporary western ideas of embodiment create gendered identities and gender relationships. Using anorexia, explain how the body can become the domain for working through cultural and social relationships.

**Readings:**


### Topic 5

Style, for Hebdige (1981, 1988), is never politically neutral, but a means by which otherwise marginalised or alienated groups could be seen. Do you agree? Using Punk, consider what he means by sub-cultural style.

**Readings:**

Hebdige, D. 1988 *Hiding in the Light*, London: Routledge,

Hebdige, D. 1981 *Subculture: the meaning of style*, London: Methuen,


Chalmers, I. 1986 *Popular Culture*, London: Methuen


End of Semester Exam

50% of your assessment.

Time and place to be advised

The exam will consist of a set of multiple choice questions designed to test knowledge of the lecture materials and tutorial readings. The exam will cover material presented in all lectures and tutorial readings.

Non-Discriminatory Language

Students are required to use non-discriminatory language. This includes avoiding the use of "he" to refer to men and women. Two easy ways of doing this are to use the plural (ie. they) or "s/he" (the short form for "he or she"). The terms "Aboriginal" and "Aborigines" are spelt with a capital A, just like "English," "French" or "Spanish".

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Lecture Topic &amp; Assessment at a Glance</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>23rd July</td>
<td>Introductory Lecture /No tutorial</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>17th September</td>
<td>Essay due Friday before 5pm</td>
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<td>24th September</td>
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**Semester Recess:** Monday 29 September to Friday 10 October 2008

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>15th October</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>29th October</td>
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<td>5th November</td>
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**Examination period:** Monday 10 November to Friday 28 November 2008
Lecture and Tutorial Program

Part 1: Cultural Categories and Interpretation

LECTURER: Dr Barry Morris

Week 1: Introduction: What is anthropology?

Every society has culture and language. In this lecture we will explore the anthropological understanding of culture and society. The concept unifying anthropology is the notion of culture. As Spradley and McCurdy argue ‘the acquired knowledge that people use to interpret their world and generate social behaviour is called culture’ (1980). For anthropologists, human beings are not born with culture itself, but with the capacity to acquire it. Culture is learned through everyday interactions with others. It is this focus on the capacity to learn culture through everyday interactions that provides the emphasis in anthropology on ethnographic fieldwork. Ethnographic fieldwork involves the engagement in research by living and participating in culture or sub-culture for an extended period of time. This course will emphasise anthropology as a way of seeing the world rather than what anthropology has discovered.

No Tutorial: Tutorials begin in week 2.

Tutorial Readings

The following reading is meant to introduce students to key aspects of anthropology, namely, cultural analysis and fieldwork research. They are short readings for getting students to think about how we think about others and how we think about ourselves. No tutorials are arranged for these readings, however, students are encouraged to read them.


Tutorial Questions

What do we mean by the cultural dimension of everyday life?

What is ethnography?

Why does Spradley insist that the anthropologist must become a student?

Video: Doing Anthropology
Monday 5th July: Cannibalism and the Death of Captain Cook

When we look at other cultures we often see them as exotic. We wonder how people could believe what they do and how they could organise their practices and sociality around seemingly bizarre beliefs and practices. The practice of cannibalism is in certain cultures rejected as evil, while in others it has played a central role in the ritual order. From an anthropological perspective, the concept of culture is central to understanding why human beings are what they are and why they do what they do. In many societies, myths have provided the major means of creating and imposing structures of meaning. Such myths explain why the world is what it is and what practices must be sustained to maintain it. This lecture will explore the kinds of questions asked about the relationship between cannibalism, myth and history in Marshall Sahlins's classic ethnography on the Hawaiians. How did the Hawaiians react to the coming of Europeans? For Sahlins, there is no history without culture, because history is determined by interpretations provided by culture.

Lecture References

Sahlins, M. 1986 Ch.4 Captain James Cook, or the Dying God, in Islands of History, London: Tavistock

Video: Conquest of Hawaii

From the voyages of the ancient Polynesians to the current independence movement, this feature-length special examines America's tropical treasures. Meet some of the many larger-than-life figures who have called Hawaii home and examine the influence of people like Captain Cook and the legendary King Kamehameha, who used courage, luck, determination, deceit and strategic brilliance to bind the islands into one nation.
Week 3: Too many Captain Cooks

Lecture
This lecture will look at the different interpretations of Captain Cook and Ned Kelly amongst Aborigines in Australia.

Lecture References

Video: Too many Captain Cooks, Penny MacDonald (1988)

Tutorial Readings:
This week’s tutorial begins formal tutorial discussion of the readings.

Week 4: Food and Culture

Lecture
In every society, food always does more than simply serve biological needs. Diet and food can play a major role in the construction of social identities and social relationships. This lecture will focus on the role of food in the production of the social bodies through which people relate to each other. An important part of this process is the way food mediates and constructs social identities and social relationships.

Lecture References

Video: A World of Food: m Tastes and Taboos in Different Cultures

Tutorial Readings:
During your reading, consider the following questions:
**Week 5: Aboriginal Culture and Embodiment**

**Lecture**

This lecture finishes the theme of the last lecture by exploring the relationship between procreative images in male initiation rituals and women’s power to give birth. It then moves on to explore traditional Aboriginal relationships to the land. It explores how identity and social relationships are formed out of relationships to landscape. The mythological and procreative beliefs of Aborigines establish a cosmological relationship to the land that blurs the boundaries of identity and embodiment.

**Lecture References**


**Video:** *Waiting for Harry.* *(Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies)*

**Tutorial Readings**


**Tutorial Questions**

Douglas is interested in natural symbols, during your reading, consider the following questions:

1. In what ways do food taboos transmit cultural values?

2. How does the body provide a model of boundaries used to organise concepts and social groups?

**Week 6: Cultural Construction of Food and Sexuality in the West**

**Lecture**

A number of feminists criticise the imaginary bodily schemes which western women are being forced to internalise in order to appear as worthwhile and culturally valued members of society. They blame the mass media and the consumer culture it serves, for producing bodily schemes which: (1) do not match mature women's bodies; and (2) are increasingly difficult to achieve. Is the Anorexic a victim of this consumer culture or is she resisting this consumer culture and other socially authorised ways of being feminine?

Wolf sees the beauty myth as a new way of problematising women's identity in a period where they have increasingly acquired formal legal equality with men. She believes that male power has moved from the formal public sphere into the private sphere of controlling and problematising the way women relate back to themselves.
Lecture References:


Video: Portraits of anorexia (A Fat Chance Films Production)

Tutorial Readings


During your reading, consider the following questions:

1. How do various aspects of the landscape to objectify identity, morality and social relationships”?
2. Explore how procreation re-enacts mythology, how mythology is lived in forms of identification that blur the boundaries of subject and object.
Week 7: Embodied Sub-cultural styles

Lecture: Revolting Style: the meaning of Punk

Dick Hebdige (1979, 1988) published two influential studies on the sub-cultural style. For Hebdige, sub-cultural style that was manifested through dress, performance, speech and sound gave social groups powerful means of validation and recognition. Style, for Hebdige, was never politically neutral, but a means by which otherwise marginalised or alienated groups could be seen. His early work considers the emergence of Punk as a social and cultural phenomenon, while his later work considers the commodification of Punk.

Lecture References

Hebdige, D. 1988 Hiding in the Light, London: Routledge, Ch 1 Hiding in the Light: Youth Surveillance and Display
Hebdige, D. 1981 Subculture: the meaning of style, London: Metheun, Ch.7 Style as Intentional Communication
Chalmers, I. 1986 Popular Culture, London: Methuen, Ch.9 Sounds of Youth
Marcus, Greil 1989 Lipstick Traces, Cambridge, Mas.: Harvard University Press

Video: The Filth and the Fury  (R rated) (DVD)
Tutorial Readings

Bordo, S., 1988, ‘Anorexia nervosa: Psychopathology as the crystallization of culture’, in Diamond, I. and Quinby, L.(eds) Feminism and Foucault, Northeastern University Press, Boston, pp.87-117


Week 8: Redemption and the Rastafari

Lecture: Cultural Identity and the Rastafari

Although the rastas origins are in a rural context, it is with the urban rastas in post-colonial Jamaica that we will be concerned. The lecture will look at the post-colonial and anti-statist aspect of the Rastafari and the way reggae music became a global symbol of opposition to the racial politics of colonialism.

Lecture References

Owens, J.1976 Dread: the Rastafarians of Jamaica, London: Sangster, Ch.2 Dread Rastaman

Video: Redemption Song-- Voodoo/Rasta

Tutorial Readings

Hebdige, D. 1988 Hiding in the Light, Ch 1 Hiding in the Light: Youth Surveillance and Display, London: Routledge

Hebdige, D. 1981 Subculture: the meaning of style, London: Metheun, Ch.7 Style as Intentional Communication
Tutorial Question:

Does the cultural politics of Punk reveal an attempt to seek identity in the ‘anonymous flux of consumerism’ or is it essentially anti-commercial.

Week 9: Space and Place: politics of the body

Lecture: Civilising Bodies

My main concerns in these lectures will be the politics of social space and the politics of the body. What I intend to do today is look at the relationship between daily patterns of interaction and the use of social space. Norbert Elias in his book, The Civilising Process, seeks to analyse the changing standards of emotional and physical control in western culture. What Elias has as his agenda is analysing this domain of the self from an historical perspective. In this context, it is interesting to consider the hierarchical social ordering the civilising process represented in terms of the working class and as part of the colonising project.

Lecture references:

Thompson, E.P.1967 Time, work and industrial capitalism, Past and Present, 38, 56-97.


Video: Lousy Little Sixpence

Tutorial Reading

Owens, J.1976 Dread: the Rastafarians of Jamaica, London: Sangster, Ch.2 Dread Rastaman

Lewis, W. 1994 The Social Drama of the Rastafari, Dialectical Anthropology, 19, 283-294

Tutorial Question:

To what extent is Rastafarianism an expression of the racial politics of colonialism?
**Week 10: The Dirty Protest**

**Lecture: Protesting Bodies**

The *dirty protest* was part of a dispute Irish republican paramilitary prisoners and the prison authorities at the Maze prison ("Long Kesh") and Armagh Women's Prison which ran from September 1976 until October 1981. The prisoners refused to wash, and they refused to leave their cells. At first, they urinated under the doors and threw their excrement out of the windows. In 1976 the British government changed its position on the "special category status" given to paramilitary IRA prisoners. Newly convicted prisoners were to be sent to the new Maze prison (known as the H-Blocks) which was replacing the former internment units at Long Kesh.

**Lecture Reference:**

Aretxaga, Begona, 2005 Dirty Protest: Symbolic Overdetermination and Gender in Northern Ireland Ethnic Violence, in States of Terror, Reno: Centre for Basque Studies, University of Nevada

**Tutorial Readings:**


**Tutorial Question:**

The civilising process is an expression of social order, but also a statement of social hierarchy. Discuss.

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**Week 11: Art and Landscape**

**Lecture: Land and Life**

The Dreaming and Indigenous Art are interconnected. Art is seen as both an means of access to the Dreaming and a product of the Dreaming. In order to understand indigenous art, it is necessary to understand the concept of the Dreaming.

**Lecture References:**


Stanner, W. The Dreaming, in Bill Edwards (ed.) Traditional Aboriginal Society, South Melbourne: MacMillan

**Video: Dreamings, Peter Sutton**

**Tutorial Reading**

Aretxaga, Begona, 2005 Dirty Protest: Symbolic Overdetermination and Gender in Northern Ireland Ethnic Violence, in States of Terror, Reno: Centre for Basque Studies, University of Nevada

**Tutorial Question**

What constituted the political field at the particular moment of the Dirty Protest?
**Week 12: Life, Death and Land**

**Lecture: Land and Death**

This Yolngu mortuary ritual creates a symbolic world to facilitate the journey of a soul of a diseased person from the place of death to its incorporation at the conception site in its clan lands. The performance itself involves the selection of elements associated with different Ancestral beings and places and organising them into sequences. The ritual is concerned with the fate of the soul of the dead and to support the living in their expression of grief.

**Lecture References:**


**Video:** *Mardarrpa Funeral at Gurka’wuy, Ian Dunlop*

**Tutorial Reading:**


**Tutorial Question**

Is art a way of making a spiritual connection with the Dreaming?

**Week 13: Life, Death and Nation**

**Lecture: Nation and sacrifice**

ANZAC Day commemorates an historical event, but also what is seen as the mythical origins of the modern Australian state. In the ANZAC Day commemorative ritual we see the transformation an historical event and its narratives into origins of the nation based around themes of sacrifice, death and rebirth.

**Lecture reference:**


**Video:** *Anzac Day 1996: a day of remembrance*

**Tutorial Readings:**


**Tutorial Question**

Discuss the statement that knowing the landscape is a means of maintaining social relations in the spatial ordering and organisation set down for indigenous peoples by the ancestors. The Dreaming is not a transcendent or utopian realm in logical opposition to social reality, but immanent to practice.