Hung Shing Temple, Kau Sai Chau Island, Hong Kong Territory © B. Milicic
Instructor: Bojka Milicic, Ph.D., Associate Professor-Lecturer  
E-mail: milicic@anthro.utah.edu  
Office: Gardner Commons 4558 (Department of Anthropology)  
Office hours: Thursday 1-2.

This course is accessible to all majors.

Non-Contract Note. “The syllabus is not a binding legal contract. It may be modified by the instructor when student is given reasonable notice of the modification.”

Description: Anthropologists and other social and behavioral scientists often debate the interaction between nature and culture. This course argues that the foundation of human culture is based on our capacity to produce symbols. Culture cannot exist without symbols. We will explore the anthropological approach to various facets of symbolism and meaning by looking at both human biological make up and cultural variation. The course provides the basis for an understanding of the unity of the human mind and describes and explains cross-cultural differences. The basic theoretical assumption is that universal cognitive processes organize our perception of the world, while each culture chooses a particular interpretation through its worldview or cosmology. This hypothesis will be tested on ethnographic examples.

We will review classic theories, models, and ethnographies as well as the recent findings, on symbolic communication in anthropology, archaeology, linguistics, and cognitive studies with examples ranging from prehistory to the contemporary Western culture. We will study the symbolism of colors, food, animals, human body, gender, art, myth, ritual, and politics. We will study the symbolic meanings in the worldviews of the native Pueblos of the American Southwest, China, India, Mexico, central and South Africa, Iceland, Jewish culture, Polynesia, and mainstream American cultures.

General goals:
1) Global Cultural diversity:  
Students will be able to identify and understand, symbolic behavior in cultural areas vastly different from the United States.

2) Applying knowledge to Contemporary Global Context:  
Students will learn how to analyze and interpret culturally constructed systems of meaning. Students will be able to cross-reference and apply knowledge acquired in this class to the wide range of fields such as linguistics, psychology, human biology, history, philosophy, marketing, literature, and art.

3) Intercultural Knowledge – Cultural Self – Awareness:
Students will develop a sense of cultural self-awareness through selected ethnographic examples from a number of different cultures. Students will search for patterns that on the one hand reveal human universal, while on the other hand they will examine cultural variations in terms of environmental, historical, economic, and social contexts.

4) **Knowledge of Cultural Worldview Framework:**
The basic theoretical assumption for this course is that universal cognitive processes organize our perception of the world, while each culture chooses a particular interpretation through its worldview. For their research projects students will explore how people in other cultures shape their worldview.

5) **Global Perspective Taking:**
Students will acquire knowledge about basic cognitive tools and processes that humans use in communication. They will explore how these cognitive tools enabled the human species to inhabit the world.

**Specific Course objectives:**
**At the end of this course students**
- will acquire knowledge about basic cognitive tools and processes that humans use in communication.
- will acquire knowledge about models, theories, and ethnographies in cultural anthropology as well as important work in the area of physical anthropology and human cognition.
- will learn how to integrate knowledge about human universals as outcomes of natural selection with culturally constructed meanings.
- will be able to analyze and interpret systems of meaning across a wide range of cultures.
- will learn how to do independent research, construct an argument, analyze data and apply the knowledge acquired in this class in the term research paper.
- will be able to cross-reference and apply knowledge acquired in this class across the wide range of fields such as linguistics, psychology, human biology, history, philosophy, marketing and business, literature, and art.

**Texts:**


**Additional Readings on Canvas**
Teaching philosophy and methods:

Teaching is a process of exchanging and engaging thoughts. It is giving and receiving. This class consists of lectures, several films shown in class and strongly encourages student participation and discussions.

How to get a good grade in this class:

Read this syllabus carefully! Attend class! Read the assigned chapters ahead of class! Download presentations from Canvas before exams! Take additional notes in class! Plan your term paper well in advance! Use the class material in your paper! Ask questions and participate in discussions! Talk to me if you have any problems. You can earn extra credit points for regular attendance, interest, and class participation.

Student responsibility:

It is students’ responsibility to ask about notes, exams and other information about missed classes! Students are strongly encouraged to communicate with the professor and pick up their exams.

Attendance:

The instructor will take attendance several times through the semester. Each missed roll calls without a reasonable excuse will take 5 points off the total score.

Exams and grades

Three exams (two in-class midterms and the final in-class exam, 100 points each).

• Research paper (5-6 pages, 1.5 space, Times 12, 100 points, Word doc). Term paper is a project based on students’ individual interests. You may team up with a group of up to 4 students. All team members get the same grade; one paper/team, upload in Canvas.

• The paper is graded on: 1. Content: well-formulated argument, good examples, application of knowledge gained in this class (70 points.) 2. Style: organization, spelling, concise writing, proper use of references (30 points). The instructor will provide detailed guidelines for writing the paper on our Canvas page.

Papers obtained/copied on the Internet and references to non-scholarly sources from the Internet are not acceptable. Papers written for another class are not acceptable. Plagiarism will result in failing the
class.

• **Presentation:** Students will present in class their research projects as work in progress for the term paper, 20 points.

• **Outline:** One page term paper outline and bibliography (at least 2 scholarly sources) is worth additional 20 points.

• **Participation** in class brings additional points. **Late exams/paper/presentation:** If your exam, term paper or presentation is turned in late, **4 points will be subtracted for each day.** Exam deadlines can be changed and make-up exams allowed only under special circumstances or granted with a doctor’s note.

• **The semester grade is calculated as percentage of 440 possible points or the highest score in class.**

**Graduate students:**

• Three exams, 100 points each (see above!)
• In-class presentation of one class readings, 40 points.
• In-class presentation of the research paper, 20
• Research paper outline 20 points.
• Research paper (6-7 pages, Times 12, 1.5 space, word doc.) 100 points.

• Graduate students are expected and strongly encouraged to participate in class! The grade is calculated as a percentage of **460 points**

**Plagiarism Software Policy:**

Your professor may elect to use a plagiarism detection service in this course, in which case you will be required to submit your paper to such a service as part of your assignment.

**GRADE DISTRIBUTION**

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IMPORTANT DATES:

EXAM 1. February 11

EXAM 2. March 24

PAPER OUTLINE DUE: Friday, March 29th, upload on Canvas

PAPER DUE: Thursday, April 30th, upload on Canvas

FINAL EXAM: Friday, April 24, 2019; 1:00 – 3:00 pm (U of U final exam schedule)

Common courtesy:

Out of courtesy to students and the instructor please do not walk out and in of the class to make phone calls, etc., unless urgent. Please use your laptops during class only for this class needs. PLEASE TURN OFF YOUR CELL PHONES IN CLASS!

LECTURE TOPICS AND READINGS:


Reading:

Pagel, M. 2017. Q&A: What is human language, when did it evolve and why should we care? BMC Biology 15:64,

WEEK 2. 1/14, 16. Your brain on metaphors.

Readings:


Film: All in the mind

WEEK 3. 1/21, 23. The human mind and the first symbolic representations in prehistory. The rock art of the San of South Africa.

Readings:


**WEEK 4. 1/20, 30.** What is a set? Classification as a basic human cognitive tool. Practicing religion in Hong Kong. The colored world: biology and culture.

**Readings:**


Liu, Tik-Sang, 2003. Nameless religion in Hong Kong. (From: China Quarterly).

Student presentations

**WEEK 5. 2/4, 6.** White, black, and red: The world in color. Gender: two or more? How the human mind conceptualizes gender.

**Readings:**


Nanda, S. 1994.Hijras: An alternative sex and gender role in India. (From: Herdt, G. Third sex, third gender. Zone books.)

Student presentations

**FIRST EXAM: TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11**

**WEEK 6. 2/11. 13.** The mind and myth making.

Readings: Barber E. and P. Barber, 2004.myth. Chps. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

**WEEK 7. 2/18, 20.** Analogy: our brain’s best talent. Myth making principles as cognitive tools. Metaphoric reality

**Readings:**

Barber and Barber, Chpts. 6, 7, 8, 9.10

Student presentations

**WEEK 8. 2/25. 27.** Mnemonics. What is in the stars?
Readings: Barber and Barber Chps. 11, 12, 14, 15, 16

Student presentations


Readings:
Ortiz, F. The Tewa World (textbook) Chpts. 1, 2, 3 4

Student presentations

WEEK 10. 3/8-15 SPRING BREAK


Readings:
The Tewa. Chpts. 5, 6.

Student presentations

SECOND EXAM: Tuesday, MARCH 24

Symbolizing animals: the jaguar and Tezcatlipoca. The idea of fish in Iceland.


Student presentations

WEEK 13. 3. 30/ 4.2.
Symbolizing animals: the pangolin. Dirt is disorder. Food is not only good to eat, but also good to think: food prohibitions in ancient Israel. Classification of clean and unclean.


Student presentations

WEEK 14. 4/7. 9.

Food is good to think in India too: food, the caste system, and social distance. The art of tattooing: introduction.

Readings:


WEEK 15. 4/14.16.

The art of tattooing: Symbolism, myth, social structure, and tattooing as a means of cultural reproduction. Western and Eastern Polynesia


WEEK 16. 4/21.

The art of Tattooing: Eastern Polynesia continues. Conclusions.


FINAL EXAM: To be announced

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Department and University Regulations
ADA Statement: The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for Center for Teaching & Learning Excellence people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.
Safety Statement: The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit safe.utah.edu.

Addressing Sexual Misconduct: Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veterans status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776.

Wellness Statement: Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, cross-cultural differences, etc., can interfere with a student's ability to succeed and thrive at the University of Utah. For helpful resources contact the Center for Student Wellness (www.wellness.utah.edu; 801-581-7776).

Student Code: (Policy 6-400) All students are expected to maintain professional behavior in the classroom setting, according to the Student Code (http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php). Students have specific rights in the classroom as detailed in Section II of the Code. The Code also specifies standards of behavior (Section III) and academic conduct (Section V). Students must adhere to generally accepted standards of academic honesty, including but not limited to refraining from cheating, plagiarizing, research misconduct, misrepresenting one's work, and/or inappropriately collaborating" (Section VB). According to Faculty Rules and Regulations, it is the faculty responsibility to enforce responsible classroom behaviors. Students have the right to appeal such action to the Student Behavior Committee.

Incomplete Policy: An "I" will only be given for work not completed because of circumstances beyond the student's control, providing the student is passing the course and needs to complete 20% or less of the work. Valid reasons for an "I" grade include: (a) An illness (documented by a medical statement) that precludes the ability of the student to perform; (b) an accident or situation that prevents the student from physically being present (documentation may be required); (c) Extreme emotional or other mental circumstances that are severe enough to interfere with a student's normal academic performance. If you do receive an "I",
do not register for the course again. You must complete the required work in the
time agreed by you and the instructor. If the work is not completed within one
year, the grade will change to an "E". Faculty will not accept additional work to
change the grade after that one-year period. If student's have a problem with a
course, please deal with it immediately. It is the student's responsibility to contact
instructors and submit necessary forms. If you delay, your instructor may have
left the University or be out of the country. In such a case, you may find that there
is nothing the Department can do.

Repeating a Course: Any course taken at the University may be repeated. If you
wish to attend a class again, you must register for it and pay tuition for that
semester. Note that some courses may be taught infrequently or discontinued.
Note: The syllabus is not a binding legal contract. It may be modified by the
instructor when the student is given reasonable notice of the modification.