

070.132 – Invitation to Anthropology

Johns Hopkins University, Fall 2014

Anand Pandian, Department of Anthropology*

Teaching Assistants – Ghazal Asif and Mac Skelton

Lecture – Tuesdays 10:30 AM - 11:45 AM, Krieger 308

Discussion – Thursdays 10:30 AM - 11:45 AM, Mattin 160 / Jenkins 102 / Jenkins 107

The screen that brings you last night's Instagrams and celebrity gossip also flashes glimpses of melting icecaps and burning rubble. These are complex times for human beings, both exhilarating and deeply unsettling. This course introduces anthropology as a science of human experience, as a mode of reflecting on contemporary life around the globe. Our readings will explore subjects as diverse as plastic surgery in Colombia, the global trade in African blood diamonds, and romantic breakups on Facebook. We will examine essential anthropological methods such as fieldwork and storytelling, juxtaposing texts and concepts with short ethnographic films and other media.

Materials – There are six books required for the course, available through Red Emma's Bookstore in Mt. Vernon and the campus Barnes & Noble Bookstore. You will also need a notebook for notes.

Requirements (and % of overall grade) – Attendance at all course meetings is required, as is active participation in class discussion (20%). Assigned readings must be completed *before* lecture each Tuesday; you will be asked to post one question on the week's reading, for clarification or discussion, on the Blackboard website each Tuesday morning by 8am (10%). You will write three short essays (4-5 pages, double-spaced) over the semester (20% each), engaging in comparative analysis of the books we will be reading on topics that we will assign. You will also complete one short (1 page, single-spaced) exercise in field observation midway through the semester (10%).

Policies – (1) *Attendance*. Attendance at all lectures and discussion sections is required, and reasons are expected for absence; multiple unexcused absences from class will compromise your grade, so please ensure that your name is recorded during each session on the class attendance sheet. As we will be working closely with our books, please make sure to bring them to class.

(2) *Electronic devices*. Numerous studies have shown that use of laptops, smartphone and other electronic devices significantly compromises classroom focus and individual learning. We are all susceptible to distraction. Use of such devices is not allowed during class sessions, and students who violate this policy will be asked to absent themselves for the remainder of class. If this expectation may pose any significant problems for you, please talk to us about this individually.

(3) *Assignments*. All assignments are due in your section leader's mailbox in Macaulay 404 by 4pm on the concerned due date; late assignments will be marked down 10% per day.

(4) *Disability*. Any student with a disability who may need accommodations in this class should obtain an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services.

(5) *Academic integrity*. The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course, you must be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition.

* Office hours Tuesdays 1:30-3:30 PM, Macaulay 111 / pandian@jhu.edu

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Assignments</i>	<i>Books</i>	<i>Topics</i>
Aug 28	Appear	Get them!	Introduction
Sept 2 / 4	Read EZ ix-88	<i>Exit Zero: Family and Class in Postindustrial Chicago</i> , Christine Walley, 2013	Storytelling. What are books in anthropology meant to do? How can stories convey knowledge?
Sept 9 / 11	Read EZ 89-168		Money. How do anthropologists study the economy? How is class inequality experienced?
Sept 16 / 18	Read AA xi-88	<i>Ayya's Accounts: A Ledger of Hope in Modern India</i> , Anand Pandian & M. P. Mariappan, 2014	Experience. What does it mean to think <i>with</i> life? How does this practice change those who do it?
Sept 23 / 25	Read AA 89-205 Essay 1 due 9/26		History. How do people live with past and future? What is different about modern life?
Sept 29 / Oct 2	Read GO xv-101	<i>Global Outlaws: Crime, Money, and Power in the Contemporary World</i> , Carolyn Nordstrom, 2007	Fieldwork. Why do we travel in anthropology to other places? What is distinctive about a field science?
Oct 7 / 9	Read GO 105-208		Power. How does law govern the movement of bodies, things? What slips through and why?
Oct 14	Exercise due 10/12		Description. How to describe the world at hand with empirical richness and conceptual depth? What kind of observation does this take?
Oct 21 / 23	Read FW 1-85	<i>Flight Ways: Life and Loss at the Edge of Extinction</i> , Thom van Dooren, 2014	Relationships. What does kinship mean in anthropology? How do we relate to others, make connections?
Oct 28 / 30	Read FW 87-147 Essay 2 due 10/31		Life and Death. How do human beings relate to animals? How do people live with loss?
Nov 4 / 6	Read BB ix-77	<i>Beauty and the Beast</i> , Michael Taussig, 2012	Estrangement. Why do our stories seem surreal and otherworldly? What effects can such unreality produce?
Nov 11 / 13	Read BB 78-153		The Body. What is cultural about our bodies? How are they marked by gender, sexuality?
Nov 18 / 20	Read BU 1-90	<i>The Breakup 2.0: Disconnecting over New Media</i> , Ilana Gershon, 2010	Explanation. What makes for good explanation in anthropology? How to generalize from local circumstance?
Dec 2 / 4	Read BU 91-201 Essay 3 due 12/11		Technology. How have media, technology changed social life? What remains of our humanity?