CULTURE AND SOCIAL LIFE
Department of Anthropology
Fall 2024 Tuesdays 12:10-1:30
Room: RAB-001

Instructor- Dr. Dana Conzo (She/Her)
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Office Hours- By Appointment (virtual meetings available)

Course Description:

In this course, we will focus on a survey of topics that will help us hone the discussion on cultural production, manifestations, and contestations. The course will provide an interdisciplinary perspective grounded in Anthropology, but also including materials from other fields in the social sciences, such as History, and Cultural Studies. The course will also introduce students to the four-field approach in Anthropology (Cultural Anthropology, Biological Anthropology, Archaeology, and Linguistics). The geographical regions that will be covered in this class will be Latin America and the Caribbean (including its diasporas) and the United States of America. This course will provide students with a context to discuss topics that include culture, race and ethnicity, connecting it to the main arguments around cultural difference, identity, political economy, health, food, environment, language, politics, gender, sports, and religion.

COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1- Department Goals

This course contributes to each of the five learning goals for majors in the Anthropology department (found here: https://anthro.rutgers.edu/academics/undergraduate/undergraduate-learning-goals). In particular, students will become more familiar with fundamental dilemmas in the history of the discipline (goal #1).

2- Core Learning Goals

II: Areas of Inquiry - B: Social Science and History
m. Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization.
n. Employ tools of social scientific reasoning to study particular questions or situations, using appropriate assumptions, methods, evidence, and arguments.

LECTURES AND RECITATIONS

General Weekly Lecture: Tuesdays 12:10-1:30
Sections:
Wednesday 3:50 PM - 5:10 PM RAB-109B
Thursday10:20 AM - 11:40 AM HCK-209
Thursday 12:10 PM - 1:30 PM BIO-302
Thursday 2:00 PM - 3:20 PM College Avenue ABE-2200
Thursday 5:40 PM - 7:00 PM RAB-209B

Your final grade will be divided among the following requirements:

1. Class participation and attendance (25%) – You will be required to show up AND participate in class discussion.

2. Reading Response Posts- (25%): Students are required to keep up with readings, to come to discussion prepared for discussion and in-class exercises, and weekly responses.

   For the weekly response papers, you are required to write 1-2 paragraphs discussing the readings. Please do not write summaries. Instead, answer the following questions.

   a. What is the main argument or thesis of the reading, and how is it supported by evidence or examples?
   b. What are the key concepts or ideas introduced in the reading, and how do they relate to the broader themes of the course?
   c. Can you identify any strengths or weaknesses in the author's argument or reasoning? Are there alternative perspectives to consider?
   d. How does this reading connect to other readings or concepts discussed in the course, and what new insights or questions does it raise?
   e. In your opinion, what are the practical implications or real-world applications of the ideas presented in the reading?
   f. What specific concepts, arguments, or passages in the reading did you find most challenging or unclear, and why? How do you think these points could be better explained or clarified?
   g. What aspects of the assigned reading do you find most contentious or with which you disagree? Can you provide specific reasons or evidence to support your perspective, and how might this disagreement contribute to a deeper understanding of the topic?

   These will be due MONDAY NIGHT BEFORE CLASS.

3. A midterm exam (20%) Exam may include identifications, fill-in, and short essay questions. This will be proctored during lecture
4. A research paper (30%) due at the end of the semester. Further instructions will be distributed in class early in the semester.

Required Texts:

The assigned readings will be available on Canvas. I understand that textbooks can be costly, I have created this course using digitized material, meaning that I posted all the course material online. If you have any trouble accessing the material, please don’t hesitate to email me.

Course Policies:

1. ***Arrive on time.*** When we're all in the classroom on time, we all stay on the same page and the flow of class discussion is vastly improved. Coming late disrupts other students, breaks the flow of discussion, and disturbs me. For that reason, I will lower your participation grade if you are habitually late.

2. ***Treat one another respectfully.*** In this class, we will often deal with controversial issues and have spirited debates and discussions. **It is okay—and even encouraged—for you to disagree with each other and with me, as long as it is done respectfully**.

3. ***Attendance:*** Attendance in this course is required and will be recorded daily. While attendance is crucial to this class, extenuating circumstances may require you to miss a class meeting.

4. Participation: Don't be afraid to talk, especially if your ideas seem incomplete (you might cause an avalanche of productive thought). This class will thrive on a call and response style of teaching. You are an essential part of it! Also, Participation is part of your grade =)

Communication:
Students are responsible for timely attention to email and Canvas postings for this course and therefore should check the Canvas site and their Rutgers email accounts regularly. Dates and assignments may change; all changes will be announced in class or posted on Canvas or both.

Ethics/Academic Integrity: Read the Rutgers academic integrity policy at http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu. Violations include cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, denying others access to information or material, and facilitating violations of academic integrity.

You are responsible for knowing what plagiarism is. For tips about how to consult sources without plagiarizing, and how to take notes so that you don't plagiarize by accident, see http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/avoid_plagiarism.

In addition, the Rutgers Copyright Policy assigns ownership of pedagogical materials developed by instructors to those instructors (https://policies.rutgers.edu/view-policies/governance-legal-matters-–-section50#3).

Students do not have the legal right to post course materials on websites without the written authorization of the instructor. Doing so without authorization could violate the University Academic Integrity Policy and subject the student to disciplinary action.

Course Structure
The course structure includes weekly lectures and recitations, complemented by numerous interactive online exercises and activities. Students must attend Professor Conzo's Tuesday lectures, participate in the weekly recitations, and fulfill all class requirements outlined below.

Lectures: Each week delves into a primary module from the course as outlined on the Canvas website. The lecture offers an overview of the topic, acquainting students with the essential frameworks and concepts tied to the week's themes and readings. Students could engage directly with the course leader for questions and clarifications.

Recitations: Each recitation is guided by a designated facilitator, serving as an extension of your weekly readings to deepen your grasp of the module and engage with ethnographic writings in the field. The recitations address queries, provide a collaborative space for peer interaction, and foster dialogue with co-instructors.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION
Course Website
A Canvas website (https://tlt.rutgers.edu/canvas) accompanies this course; there you will find announcements, chapter review materials, quizzes, discussion boards, and other resources. If you have trouble accessing the site, please reach out to one of your instructors.
All students are responsible for timely attention to email and Canvas postings for this course and therefore should check the Canvas site and their Rutgers email accounts regularly. Dates and assignments may change; all changes will be announced in class or posted on Canvas or both.
[Please use the Rutgers absence report online system rather than emailing the instructors directly about absences.]

**If you miss more than two recitation sections, you are required to see a Dean of Students for assistance in verifying any special circumstances, and to submit documentation of those unusual circumstances to the professor and your TA. The only excused absences are for unusual circumstances—such as medical reasons or a death in the family—and these circumstances must be documented by a physician and/or academic Dean.

Religious holidays
Please notify the professor and your TA during the first two weeks of the semester if you observe a religious holiday that will prevent you from attending a lecture or recitation section meeting. You may arrange to make up the work missed only if you notify the professor and your TA during the first two weeks of the semester about any expected absence due to a religious holiday.

Lateness
Please come to lectures on time; it is very distracting to your professor and classmates when students join late.

E-mail communication with TA and professor

In the subject line of your email message, begin with "101"—e.g., a subject line might read: "101/reading question" or "101/exam question." (Specifying "101" in your email subject line will help to ensure timely responses.) Start your emails with formal greetings and be polite and concise throughout. Adress your professors as Dr. or Professor (Not Miss/Ms/Mrs/Mr). Address your Tas however they prefer.

Please email us with any questions you may have. Remember that emails are not text messages so do not expect immediate responses. If you do not receive a reply, you may send a polite follow-up email or speak to us in class, but please allow sufficient time for a response

Use of AI and ChatGPT in Class Assignments

In this course, students are permitted to use artificial intelligence tools, such as ChatGPT, for brainstorming, initial research, and clarification purposes. However, the final product of all assignments must reflect the student's original thought and understanding of the material. Reliance on AI-generated content without proper synthesis or attribution is discouraged and may be considered academic dishonesty. Students are encouraged to use AI responsibly, critically evaluate the information it provides, and integrate it appropriately into their academic work. More information on this will be provided on canvas.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

(Any changes or amendments will be announced in class and on Canvas in advance)

9/3 Week 1- Introduction to Cultural Anthropology

● Nelson, Katie & Lara Braff. 2020. "Introduction to Anthropology" in Perspectives: An Open Invitation to Cultural Anthropology, 2nd edition. Ed. Nina Brown, Laura Tubelle de González, and Thomas McIlwraith. Washington DC: American Anthropological Association. Pp. 3-28

9/10 Week 2- Methods in Cultural Anthropology

● Video: Doing Anthropology (2008) in lecture
● Geertz, Clifford. "Thick Description: Toward and Interpretive Theory of Culture." The Interpretation of Cultures. New York: Basic Books, 1973, pp. 3-32.
● Nelson, Katie. 2020. "Doing Fieldwork" in Perspectives: An Open Invitation to Cultural Anthropology, 2nd edition. Ed. Nina Brown, Laura Tubelle de González, and Thomas McIlwraith. Washington DC: American Anthropological Association. Pp. 45- 69

9/17 Week 3- Language and Culture

● Light, Linda. 2020. "Language" in Perspectives: An Open Invitation to Cultural Anthropology. Ed. Nina Brown, Laura Tubelle de González, and Thomas McIlwraith. Pp. 70-95.
● Rosa, Jonathan. 2016. "Chapter 3- From Mock Spanish to Inverted English: Language Ideologies and the Racialization of Mexican and Puerto Rican Youth in the United States" in Raciolinguistics: How Language Shapes Our Ideas about Race, Edited by Samy Alim, H., John H. Rickford and Arnetha F. Ball. Pp. 65-80.
● Video: The Social Life of Language with Mike Mena (2020)

9/24 Week 4- Kinship

● Gilliland, Mary Kay "Family and Marriage" in Perspectives: An Open Invitation to Cultural Anthropology, 2nd edition. Ed. Nina Brown, Laura Tubelle de González, and Thomas McIlwraith. Washington DC: American Anthropological Association. Pp. 182
● Stacks, Carol "All Our Kin" in Ethnography and the City: Readings on Doing Urban Fieldwork. Ocejo, Richard E., Brian Bond, and Kyoichi Tachikawa, eds

10/1 Week 5- Environmental Sustainability

● Palmer, Christian T. "Culture and Sustainability: Environmental Anthropology in the Anthropocene" in Perspectives: An Open Invitation to Cultural Anthropology, 2nd edition. Ed. Nina Brown, Laura Tubelle de González, and Thomas

10/8 Week 6- Religion and Rituals

● Wolf, Eric R. 1958. "The Virgin of Guadalupe: a Mexican national symbol," The Journal of American Folklore, 71(279): 34-39.
● Mintz, Sidney. Mintz, S., & Trouillot, M. R. (1995). "The social history of Haitian Vodou." In Sacred arts of Haitian Vodou, University of California Fowler Museum, 123-147.

10/15 Week 7- Race, Identity, and Ethnicity
● García, Justin. 2020. “Race and Ethnicity” in Perspectives: An Open Invitation to Cultural Anthropology. Ed. Nina Brown, Laura Tubelle de González, Thomas McIlwraith. Pp. 204-230.
●Gravlee, C. C. (2009). How race becomes biology: embodiment of social inequality. American journal of physical anthropology, 139(1), 47-57.

10/22 Week 8 Midterm Exam in lecture no discussion sections

10/29 Week 9- Gender and Sexuality
● Mukhopadhyay, Carol 2020 “Gender and Sexuality” in Perspectives: An Open Invitation to Cultural Anthropology, 2nd edition. Ed. Nina Brown, Laura Tubelle de González, and Thomas McIlwraith. Washington DC: American Anthropological Association. Pp. 231-285
● Film– “José” in lecture

11/5 Week 10- The Economy and Food
● Food and Diaspora. Food, Culture & Society 11(4). Oxford International Publishers Ltd. Dba Berg Publishers
● McNeil, Cameron. 2009. “Introduction: The Biology, Antiquity, and Modern Uses of Chocolate Tree (Thobroma cacao L.)” in Chocolate in Mesoamerica: A Cultural History of Cacao Ed. Cameron L. McNeil, Florida: University of Florida Press; 1- 28.

11/12 Week 11-TBA

11/19 Week 12- Medical Anthropology and Health
● Henninger-Rener, Sashur. 2020. “Health and Medicine” in Perspectives: An Open Invitation to Cultural Anthropology, 2nd edition. Ed. Nina Brown, Laura Tubelle de González, and Thomas McIlwraith. Washington DC: American Anthropological Association. Pp. 425-443.
● Cavender, A.P., Albán, M. 2009. “The use of magical plants by curanderos in the Ecuador highlands.” Journal of Ethnobiology & Ethnomedicine, 5(3): 1-9

11/26 Week 13- Thanksgiving Break

12/3 Week 14 Public Anthropology
● Borofsky, Robert. “Public Anthropology” in Perspectives: An Open Invitation to Cultural Anthropology, 2nd edition. Ed. Nina Brown, Laura Tubelle de González, and Thomas McIlwraith. Washington DC: American Anthropological Association. Pp. 456-488

12/10 Week 15- Last day of class- Globalization, Diaspora, and Cultural Production
●Hall, Stuart. 2015. “Cultural Identity and Diaspora.” Williams, Patrick and Laura Chrisman (eds.). Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader, 392-403. New York: Columbia University Press.
● Sahlins, Marshall. "Cosmologies of Capitalism." Dirks, Nicholas (ed.). Culture/Power/History Reader. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
●Ong, Aihwa. “Cultural Citizenship as Subject-Making.” Current Anthropology 37(5):737-762.

12/17 Week 16- Final paper due