

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY
San Jose State University

ANTH 191
Frontiers of Anthropology
Spring 2008

INSTRUCTOR & COURSE: ANTH 191 meets 3-5:45 p.m. on Mondays in WSQ 004. The instructor is Karen Fjelstadⁱ, and you can reach me at 924-5714 or by dropping by Clark Hall 463 during office hours (Mondays and Wednesdays 10:30-11:30 and 1:30-2:30, and by arrangement. Office hours are for you—use them. You can also reach me by email at kfjelstad@cabrillo.edu.

READINGS

Robert Borofsky (2005). *Yanomami: The Fierce Controversy and What We Can Learn From It*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Roger Trigg (2001). *Understanding Social Science*, 2nd Edition. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is required of anthropology majors but it is also applicable to behavioral science and social science majors with an interest in anthropology. It is a weekly seminar designed to provide anthropology students, whose interests may be in cultural anthropology, archaeology, physical anthropology or related social sciences, an opportunity to engage in discussions on critical issues of the day. Such discussions will reveal both the diversity of anthropological perspectives and allow students to discover anew the core perspectives that give the discipline its coherence. In addition, students can reflect on the skills they have gained and develop strategies for utilizing their capabilities as anthropologists throughout their lives. Students will read materials concerning a variety of contemporary issues and participate in class discussions. Students will also reflect on a prepare materials related to the skills they have gained and will develop strategies for utilizing their capabilities as anthropologists throughout their lives.

COURSE GOALS

1. Students will develop an understanding of anthropology as a discipline with a unique perspective that can illuminate contemporary academic and social issues. They will be exposed to the different points of view in these controversies. Accordingly, a first course goal is to allow you to assess the discipline(s) of anthropology (and psychology and sociology).
2. Students will make an assessment of the proverbial “real world” in order to develop an appreciation for where and how anthropology is being used, as well as how it could be used in a variety of settings and applications. The goal here is to develop students’ ability to use anthropology and other social sciences in their careers and as informed citizens.
3. Students will develop well-grounded yet personal syntheses of anthropology and its uses, as well as the ability to present these syntheses to other people. Thus, the course will facilitate and support the students’ sense of professionalism and their preparation for careers and community life.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. The course will promote critical thinking, learning to analyze and evaluate various issue-related arguments, discovering and weighing underlying assumptions. The students should be able to apply the diverse theories to which they have been exposed to various contemporary issues.
2. The course aims to improve writing skills, particularly in logic and organization.

3. The course will encourage reflection, allowing students to be able to formulate carefully reasoned judgements.
4. The course will allow each student to synthesize diverse perspectives and pools of information.
5. The course will support students in developing a sense of themselves as professionals with important skills and knowledge.

DEPARTMENTAL OBJECTIVES

The Department of Anthropology seeks to enhance student knowledge and skills in the following areas, most of which are specifically addressed in this course:

Knowledge

1. Understanding culture as the distinguishing phenomenon of human life, and the relationship of human biology and evolution.
2. Awareness of human diversity and the ways humans have categorized diversity.
3. Knowledge of the significant findings of archaeology, cultural anthropology, and physical anthropology, and familiarity of the important issues in each sub-discipline.
4. Knowledge of the history of anthropological thought and its place in modern intellectual history
5. Comprehension of migration, colonialism, and economic integration as significant phenomenon shaping global society.

Skills

6. Ability to access various forms of anthropological data and literature.
7. Awareness of importance and value of anthropological knowledge in contemporary society, and the ability to apply it to social issues.
8. Knowledge of the research methods of the sub-disciplines of anthropology, and the ability to apply appropriate research methods in at least one sub-discipline.
9. Ability to present and communicate anthropological knowledge and the results of anthropological research to different audiences.

Professional Values

10. Knowledge of political and ethical implications of social research

COURSE FORMAT AND MUTUAL EXPECTATIONS

Each class will include several different activities, and each week might differ in many ways from the one before. This class is a seminar, and students should be aware of their own roles and that of the instructor. Regarding the former, students are expected to be present and prepared for class discussions. This means that you have completed the assigned readings, taken notes or underlined as appropriate, and thought about what you have read. In other words, mastery of the material is assumed. Being prepared means that you submit materials as per the class calendar, and that those materials reflect professional standards of writing and presentation. The professor's role is to develop the structure for the class, to ensure that we conform to it, and to modify it if necessary. The instructor will also raise questions and encourage the active participation of students as discussants.

GRADING (weighting in parentheses):

1. Trigg Chapter Critiques (2 @ 20% = 40%). You will write two papers in which you explore in depth a week's worth of Roger Trigg's book. A complete draft of your paper is due the week *after* we review the topic in class, so you will have the benefit of that discussion. That draft should reflect your best possible effort, but since Trigg's book is difficult, I will allow you to revise your draft repeatedly.

2. Stakeholder Position Paper (10%). Each “Fierce Controversy” stakeholder *group* will prepare a position paper.
3. “Fierce Controversy” Synthesis (5%). Each *individual* student will write a brief paper reacting to and synthesizing the positions presented at the “Fierce Controversy” Conference you will attend.
4. Participation (10%). You participate by (1) doing the readings, (2) trying to answer the study questions, (3) contributing to the small group discussion and seminar, and (4) being an active participant in the “Fierce Controversy” Conference. Note that the success of the class is dependent on everyone doing the readings each week and coming to class prepared to discuss them. Individual students may be more or less prepared for those discussions on a given week; I understand that. However, if there is a pattern of not doing the readings then I reserve the right to require you to submit reading notes for grade, something I loathe doing.
5. Exercises (4 @ = 15% total). There are four exercises that will ultimately help you develop the content of your portfolio.
6. Final Portfolio (20%). The final “exam” in the class consists of a beautifully prepared portfolio that you create over the course of the semester. It will include (1) a cover letter, (2) letter of intent, (3) resume, (4) skills and knowledge overview (collectively 10%) and an appraisal/synthesis of your major (15%), as well as samples of your best work from SJSU. You will submit drafts of various elements of the portfolio throughout the semester. I will give you feedback and you can revise and resubmit as often as you wish, but you will not receive a grade until the final portfolio.

All papers must be typed with 1” margins and numbered pages, and carefully proof read. Accuracy, depth of understanding, and elegance of presentation will be assessed. I suggest reading the draft aloud to catch errors and unwieldy writing. Having a classmate edit your paper is also excellent practice. Late assignments will be penalized at the discretion of the instructor.

GRADING: A = 100-90%; B = 89-80%; C = 79-70%; D = 69-60%; and F = below 60%. I do assign plus and minus grades, but do not allow extra credit.

MISCELLANEOUS

Disability Accommodations. If you need course accommodations because of a disability, or if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please see me during office hours as soon as possible.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism. If you pass off someone else’s work as yours then you are plagiarizing. Visit <http://www.sjsu.edu/depts/SocialSciences/integrity.htm> if you have any doubt that you understand this concept. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade on the assignment and it will be reported to the appropriate university authorities. The work you submit this semester must reflect your original research and thought. It must conform to the instructions provided with each assignment.

CLASS CALENDAR

Week 1 (January 28)

Topic: Introduction to course requirements and format; instructor and student introductions.
EXERCISE #1 DISTRIBUTED

Week 2 (February 4)

Topic: Science
Readings: Trigg Chapter 1
Professionalism: Discuss portfolio process

Week 3 (February 11)

Topic: Sociology of Knowledge
Readings: Chapter 2
Professionalism: Letter of intent discussed
EXERCISE #1 DUE
EXERCISE #2 DISTRIBUTED

Week 4 (February 18)

Topic: Individuals and Society
Readings: Trigg Chapter 3
Professionalism: Major Appraisal and Synthesis Discussion
LETTER OF INTENT DUE FOR FEEDBACK

Week 5 (February 25)

Topic: The Problem of Knowing Other Societies
Readings: Trigg Chapter 4
Professionalism: Major Appraisal and Synthesis
MAJOR APPRAISAL AND SYNTHESIS ASSIGNMENT DISTRIBUTED

Week 6 (March 3)

Topic: Rationality and Values
Readings: Trigg Chapters 5 & 6
Professionalism: Major Appraisal and Synthesis Workshop

Week 7 (March 10)

Topic: Economics, Rationality and Individualism
Readings: Trigg Chapter 7
Professionalism: Resume writing discussed
EXERCISE #2 DUE

Week 8 (March 17)

Topic: Culture and Sociobiology
Readings: Trigg Chapter 8 & 9
Professionalism: Discussion careers and employment
EXERCISE #3 DISTRIBUTED

(March 24) SPRING BREAK

(March 31) Cesar Chavez Day

Week 9 (April 7)

Topic: Markets
Readings: Trigg Chapter 10
Professionalism: Grants and Contracts
DRAFT MAJOR APPRAISAL AND SYNTHESIS DUE FOR FEEDBACK

Week 10 (April 14)

Topic: Institutions
Readings: Trigg Chapter 11
Professionalism: Skills and Knowledge Assignment Distributed
EXERCISE #3 DUE

Topic: Where To and So What?
Readings: Trigg Chapter 12
Professionalism: Skills and Knowledge Workshop
EXERCISE #4 DISTRIBUTED
FINAL REVISED DRAFTS OF ANY TRIGG PAPER FROM CHAPTERS 1-9 DUE

Week 11 (April 21)

Topic: Introduction to “Fierce Controversy” and Yanomami Films
Readings: Borofsky front pages and Chapters 1-7
Professionalism: cover letter discussed

Week 12 (April 28)

Topic: Stakeholder Discussions of “Fierce Controversy” Facts
Readings: Borofsky Chapters 8 & 9
Professionalism: Professional Ethics
EXERCISE #4 DUE

Week 13 (May 5)

Topic: Stakeholder Discussions of Larger “Fierce Controversy” Issues
Readings: Borofsky Chapters 10 & 11
Professionalism: Workshop on assembling the portfolio

Week 14 (May 12)

Topic: “Fierce Controversy” Stakeholder Conference
Professionalism: Workshop on assembling the portfolio
STAKEHOLDER POSITION PAPERS DUE
FINAL REVISED DRAFTS OF ANY TRIGG PAPER FROM CHAPTERS 10-12 DUE

FINAL EXAMINATION: During the final examination period you will turn in your portfolio for grade and make a brief presentation based on it.

PORTFOLIO DUE
“FIERCE CONTROVERSY” SYNTHESIS PAPER DUE

ⁱ This greensheet was developed, designed and written by Chuck Darrah.