

San Jose State University

Department of Anthropology

Instructor

Dr. William Reckmeyer
Clark 465
408-924-5342 (V)
reckmeyer@sjsu.edu

ANTH 135

Behavioral Systems Science
Spring 2008
W 6:00 – 8:45 PM
WSQ 004

Office Hours

W 9:30-2:30 PM

Teaching Assistant

James Lauterbach
anth135@gmail.com

www.sjsu.edu/faculty_and_staff/faculty_detail.jsp?id=840

Course Resources

Albom, Mitch. *Five People You Meet in Heaven*. New York: Hyperion, 2006.
Briggs, Katharine C. and Myers, Isabel B. *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator: Self-Scorable*.
Palo Alto: Consulting Psychologists Press, 2006.
Brugardt, Curtis L. *Social Change Leadership Inventory*. Longmont: Rocky Mountain
Institute for Leadership Advancement, 1999.
Kauffman, Draper L. *Systems I*. St. Paul: Future Systems, 1980.

Course Description

This is an upper-division undergraduate course for people who are interested in learning more about a systems approach to understanding individual and collective dimensions of human behavior. Behavioral Science integrates insights and skills from three social sciences (anthropology, psychology, and sociology) to examine human behavior and appreciate the mix of biological, cognitive, cultural, and societal factors that generate it. Our focus will be on clarifying the systemic nature of human factors, the self-organizing processes that often cause counter-productive human behavior, and the cybernetics of how people regulate their individual and collective actions to act in purposeful ways. We will pay particular attention to examining the nature of leadership in human society and its role in fostering appropriate change in complex social systems in local as well as global settings.

Course Objectives

The main goals of this course are to help people think critically about different aspects of human behavior, appreciate multiple perspectives on complicated matters associated with such behavior, develop a solid grounding in the major features of a systems approach to behavioral science, and exercise collaborative leadership to make the world a better place for all to live. Specific objectives include:

- examining systemic similarities and differences in how human beings behave
- creating a metadisciplinary systems basis for more effective life-long learning
- exploring essential leadership skills required for meaningful systemic change

Our primary focus throughout the course will be on integrating fundamental intellectual and practical matters in order to become more reflective human beings and change agents.

Course Format and Requirements

This is an undergraduate seminar and will be participatively designed by the class as a whole. The first two weeks will be devoted to organizing our course work. The majority of the semester will be devoted to addressing selected topics through the reading, discussion, and writing of assigned materials; presentations by the instructor and outside experts; and a variety of class activities. The last two weeks will be devoted to pulling everything together into a coherent result. Everyone is expected to participate in helping us create a systemic teaching-learning experience. Specific responsibilities include the following assignments: a substantial systems paper (individual or social human system); elective paper or poster board presentation (critical review, case analysis, essay, etc); final examination; and appropriate participation in the course.

Each person's learning will be evaluated on the basis of his/her performance on the systems paper (??%-??%), elective paper/poster presentation (??%-??%), final exam (??%-??%), and class participation (??-??%) as specified in his/her individual learning contract.

Course Schedule and Topics

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Content Topics</u>	<u>Learning Topics</u>
23 January 08	1 st Class Session	Darci Arnold
30 January 08	Course Introduction	Systemic Learning
6 February 08	Systemic Course Design	Learning Contracts
13 February 08	Diversity & Human Behavior	Myers-Briggs
20 February 08	<i>Mindwalk</i>	<i>Mindwalk</i>
27 February 08	Evolving Global World	
5 March 08	Behavioral Systems Science	
12 March 08	Complex Behavioral Systems	
19 March 08	Cybernetic Systems	
26 March 08	☺ Spring Break ☺	☺ Spring Break ☺
2 April 08	<i>Friday Night at the ER</i>	<i>Friday Night at the ER</i>
9 April 08	Self-Organizing Systems	
16 April 08	Systemic Leadership	
23 April 08	Leadership & Social Responsibility	Social Change
30 April 08	Poster Presentations	Posters
7 May 08	Synthesis & Closure	
14 May 08	Final Exam Period	Final Exam Period

Course Grading Policies

In order to enhance student learning, detailed rubrics and templates have been developed for the course assignments that include expectations for completing those assignments and the criteria used to evaluate student learning. There is a linked set of rubrics and templates for each assignment that is available on the course website, along with all the other course materials. Good communication skills are vital for professionals who work and live in a globalizing world that depends on the exchange of sophisticated information, knowledge, and wisdom. SJSU graduates are expected to write well, which generally requires several iterations with focused editing of ideas as well as language before the ideas are sufficiently polished to be shared with others. Students are strongly advised to pay close attention to the guidelines laid out in the rubrics and templates for each assignment, as well as seeking out other sets of eyes (including members of your learning teams) to help finalize your work. SJSU also offers assistance – including workshops, tutoring, and individual consultations through the SJSU Writing Center (<http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/>).

SJSU Academic Integrity Policy

San Jose State University expects all students enrolled in the University, whether on a matriculated or extended education basis, to act in accordance with accepted academic and professional standards for integrity at all times. Official SJSU policy states that:

“Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University, and the University’s Academic Integrity Policy requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the Office of Judicial Affairs.”

This policy and detailed guidelines for complying with it can be found electronically online (<http://www2.sjsu.edu/senate/S04-12.pdf>). The most common issues of academic integrity are usually associated with some form of plagiarism, which is using other people’s ideas and words without clearly acknowledging the source of that information. Sometimes it is tempting to copy other people's ideas (from the Internet, textbooks, magazines, lectures, or even from other student papers) and incorporate them into our own work. As a result, it is very important to give proper credit to those sources. If proper credit is not given, then you are passing these ideas and words off as our own – which is both unethical and illegal. Students who engage in any form of academic dishonesty that contravenes SJSU policy will result in a failing grade (F) on that assignment for all parties involved and may lead to dismissal from the course and possibly the University.

SJSU Disability Policy

San Jose State University also recognizes that some students may require special accommodations to participate in a course. If any student in this course needs such assistance and/or would like to share emergency medical information, especially as it might affect safety issues like evacuation procedures, please contact me privately as soon as possible so we can decide how to proceed. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities register at the Disability Resource Center (924-6000) to establish a record of their disability so they can utilize the University’s resources.

Department Learning Objectives

Knowledge

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

Skills

- Ability to access various forms of anthropological data and literature.
- Awareness of importance and value of anthropological knowledge in contemporary society, and the ability to apply it to social issues.
- 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.
- Ability to present and communicate anthropological knowledge and the results of anthropological research to different audiences.

Professional Values

- Knowledge of political and ethical implications of social research.

Thought control in contemporary society
Anth 136

Instructor: Professor R. González
Semester: Spring 2008
Classroom: CL204
Meeting time: 3:00-4:15 pm

Introduction

In this course we will analyze the means by which different institutions and individuals control the actions, behaviors, and thoughts of people in contemporary modern societies—including our own. We will also analyze the dynamics of control—how control mechanisms change over time, as well as the means by which people are able to resist or escape such controls. The course should help you think critically about controllers, their targets, the mechanisms they employ, and the goals they seek to accomplish. It should also help you understand controlling processes affecting your everyday life.

For more than a century, social scientists and others have taken an interest in mechanisms of cultural and social control including "brainwashing" or coercive persuasion, indoctrination, groupthink, and propaganda, among others. Some argue that increasing political and economic centralization on a global scale—together with the wide reach of today's global communication technologies—have led to more efficient and total social and cultural controls. Controllers may use these techniques in an undemocratic (and sometimes dangerous) fashion to convince others to modify their behaviors, to reform their thoughts and values, or to compel them to act in predictable ways.

This course will be particularly focused on analyzing control from an anthropological perspective. We will examine the use of culture as a tool—in other words, the instrumental uses of culture. To help us think critically about processes of social and cultural control, we will begin by reading the classic novels *1984* and *Brave new world* as ethnographic accounts. Then we will focus upon mechanisms of social and cultural controls in various realms including schools, families, government, science, media, and business. Although much of the course material is set in the US, we will also examine other regions including Germany, China, Israel and Palestine, Venezuela, southeast Africa, Papua New Guinea, North Korea, Argentina, and post-war Iraq. Finally, we will discuss how processes of control influence everyday life and how we might effectively deal with them.

We will use the following texts, all of which are available at the campus bookstore:

Brave new world by Aldous Huxley (any edition)

1984 by George Orwell (any edition)

Imperial life in the emerald city by Rajiv Chandrasekaran

The street is my home: Youth and violence in Caracas by Patricia Márquez

Obstacles to peace: A re-framing of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict by Jeff Halper

In addition, we will use a supplemental course reader available for purchase at Maple Press (at 481 E. San Carlos Street). All materials will be on reserve at King Library. Much of the course material will be covered during the lectures, so it is critical that you attend class and take detailed lecture notes. There are no prerequisites for this course, and it is open to students from all majors. The more disciplinary perspectives that are represented in this course, the more likely it is that we will have fruitful discussions since the course material includes work by anthropologists, psychologists, journalists, novelists, historians, sociologists, and others.