

SOAN 103
READING OTHER CULTURES
Fall 2015/2016

Tuesday, Thursday - 9:30 to 10:45am

Instructor: Ms. Muzna AL-MASRI
Nicely 201E – Email address TBC
Office hours: Tuesday & Thursday – time TBC

Catalogue Description

An introduction to the study of other cultures drawing on film, ethnographic case studies, and topical debates. This course presents basic concepts in the comparative study of culture, methods of observing and interpreting other cultures, a sense of how knowledge about other cultures is constructed, and tools to develop a critical awareness of one's own cultural traditions. Note that this course is classified as a humanities, not a social science, course. Students may take it to fulfill the humanities requirement of their freshman year but not in fulfillment of the freshman social sciences requirement.

Course Description

This course is designed to provide you with a better and deeper understanding of how culture operates in other people's lives and your own. In order to do this, we will engage the works and methods of anthropologists, that is, social scientists who explore the plurality, changeability and fragility of the human form of life in its various dimensions. The course will be divided into two parts. In the first block of sessions (weeks 1-9), we will learn to recognize how culture manifests itself in the manifold ways in which we inhabit space, time, and our bodies as speaking and relational beings. We will rely in this endeavor on a textbook designed to introduce you experientially to the study of culture and on brief, actual scientific articles that illustrate anthropologists' methodologies. In the second, final block of sessions (weeks 10-13), we will read an ethnography in order to see what anthropologists can accomplish in the space of a book. While engaging these readings, you will learn to develop simple but important analytical skills to read social science texts in a productive and critical manner. We will dedicate the last week to summarizing key concepts we have encountered throughout the course.

We will also make use of films and engage with current public debates and concerns. The teaching approach is elicitive, and where possible experience based. The course is seminar style and its success is dependent on every student's commitment to contribute to a safe, engaging, and pleasurable learning environment. Students are expected to be active participants responsible for their learning process and supportive of the learning needs of fellow students.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this class, students will:

- Demonstrate proficiency in basic anthropological concepts and terminology, and understand key aspects in the study of culture.
- Have a basic understanding of what anthropological research methods are.
- Be able to engage social science readings in a productive and critical fashion.

- Be able to write a concise, articulate argument applying anthropology to their own lives.
- Appreciate the multiple approaches to the study of complex societies.
- Recognize the layering of dispositions, heritages and social forces that help to compose their orientations to the world and their own way of being human.

Course Requirements

Requirement	Percentage of final grade
1. Attendance, participation, & reflection on readings	10%
2. Two reflection essays	40% (20% each)
3. Mini research assignment & presentation (group work)	30% (15% for research report - 15% for presentation)
4. Summary of a key concept	5%
5. Final exam	15%

1. Attendance, participation, & reflection on readings:

You will be expected to read 40-70 pages a week, and completing your weekly reading assignments is essential for the success of the course. You are expected to complete the reading by Tuesday every week and be able to share in class, for every reading, the following:

- Key ideas that the text presented.
- Excerpts/quotations from the text that you consider particularly interesting.
- Your reaction to / opinion of the arguments presented in the text.

2. Two reflection essays

You will write two reflection papers (1200/1500 words) over the course of the semester. For these essays, I will provide you with a choice of one of two questions designed to prompt a reflection on your part on how our course readings and class discussions can be used to examine your way of being in the world in a new light. Each time the question will be submitted to you ten days in advance, at which time I will also elaborate on the details of what you are required to cover in the essay and how it will be graded. I will also provide feedback on essays (and not just a grade) and will be happy to provide advice on how best to improve your writing.

Take advantage of the writing resources available to you, first among them the AUB [Writing Center](#) where you can schedule an appointment for advice and feedback at any stage of the writing process. The Writing Center's website includes a page collecting most useful [writing links](#). Specific guidelines on how to write an anthropology paper can be found [here](#). Also take a close look at this [checklist](#) for editing and reviewing your paper before submitting it.

All written assignments must be uploaded as Microsoft Word documents on Moodle on specified dates. The file name should include the course code, assignment, and your name (for example: SOAN103_RevEssay1_FullName.doc). They must be double-spaced with one inch margins all around. Your name and the page number must appear in the upper-right corner of every page (in the "header"). Part of your grade for written assignments will have to do with your documents' presentation. Proofread and edit them for obvious typos, misspellings, and basic errors in grammar, usage and punctuation before submission.

In accordance with the conventions followed by the American Anthropological Association, you should use the Chicago citation style in your written assignments. Refer to the [How to cite your sources](#) page on the AUB library website for the necessary information on the Chicago citation style and useful citation management tools. Schedule an appointment at the library or the writing center if you are unsure of how to use these resources. Those tools will be of great use to you throughout your college years and beyond.

3. Mini research assignment & presentation

You will be required to implement a mini anthropological research about a topic that will be discussed in class. You will work in groups of 3-4 students to design the research, collect data for it, and provide a written report as well as class presentation on both methodology and findings. Details of the theme, ways of approaching it, and reporting on findings will be further discussed in class.

4. Summary of a key concept

For the last session of class, you will be required to summarize one of a list of key concepts that have been discussed throughout the course. The summary needs to be no longer than 500 words and resemble in format an encyclopaedia entry.

5. Final Exam

Format of final exam will be shared at a later stage in the course.

Course Policies

Attendance: I will take attendance at the beginning of each class session. By coming late to class, you will be marked as absent, unless you come to see me at the end of the session with a valid excuse for being late. Absences for which a medical excuse is provided (on professional letterhead) will be recorded but not figured in the attendance grade. Any significant tardy arrival in, or early departure from, class will be figured as a half absence. Three absences without excuse will be penalized by 5% of the final grade, four absences by 10% of the final grade, five absences by 15%, and **anyone who has six or more class long, unexcused absences will receive an "F" grade for the course.**

Late assignments: Late assignments will not be accepted without penalty unless there is an emergency situation and you contact me immediately and *in advance* to discuss an extension. Otherwise, submitting your essay late will **lower your grade 3 % points per day late:** i.e. from 80/100 to 77/100 for the first 24-hours late, 74/100 for the second 24 hours late, and so on.

Moodle: Make sure you are familiar with the [Moodle](#) Learning Management System. I will use Moodle to post the questions for the reflection papers, and you will use it to submit your papers. Important course information (syllabus, presentation schedule) will be constantly updated on the site, as well as links to relevant material not on this course syllabus. If you have any question or problems regarding your Moodle account, use the following links: [Moodle for Students](#) and [Moodle FAQ](#).

Academic integrity: At AUB plagiarism is a serious offence and essays you present will be automatically checked for plagiarized text. Please consult information designed for students on the issue available [here](#).

Classroom behaviour: On the first session of the course we will agree together what is required from students to ensure a respectful and conducive learning environment for all. The details of this agreement will be available on moodle, and your continued registration in this course assumes you are committed to abide by this agreement.

Course Schedule

Key required text for the class are:

Delaney, Carol. 2011. *Investigating Culture : An Experiential Introduction to Anthropology*. Second edition. Malden, MA: Blackwell. **(Red cover)**

Bourgois, Philippe. 2003. *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio*. Second edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Both books are available at the AUB bookstore and are also on reserve in the AUB library.

Week	Theme	Required reading / assignment
1 3 September	Introductions	
2 8/9 & 10/9	What is culture? Orientation & Disorientation	Investigating Culture, Chapter 1, pp. 1-33.
3 15/9 & 17/9	Space	Investigating Culture, Chapter 2, pp. 35-78.
4 22/9	Time	Investigating Culture, Chapter 3, pp. 79-112. Assignment: Reflection Essay I
5 29/9 & 1/10	Language	Investigating Culture, Chapter 4, pp. 113-152.
6 6/10 & 8/10	Relatives and relations	Investigating Culture, Chapter 5, pp. 153-197.
7 13/10	Our bodies, our selves	Investigating Culture, Chapter 6, pp. 205-244. Assignment: Reflection Essay II
8 20/10 & 22/10	Food	Investigating Culture, Chapter 7, pp. 245-292.
9 27/10 & 29/10	Clothing	Investigating Culture, Chapter 8, pp. 293-340.
10 3/11 & 5/11	Reading Ethnography	Research reports due In Search of Respect – specific pages for every week to be confirmed.
11 10/11 & 12/11		In Search of Respect (continued)
12 17/11 & 19/11		In Search of Respect (continued)
13 24/11 & 26/11		In Search of Respect (continued) Summary of key concept due
14 1/12 & 3/12	Key concepts	Revision of key course learning