

Mesa Community College
ASB 220: MWF 11:00-11:50 am
ANTHROPOLOGY GOES TO THE MOVIES
FALL 2008

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Shereen Lerner
 OFFICE HOURS: MWF 10:00-11:00/by appointment
 OFFICE: SC-058
 PHONE/EMAIL: 461-7306/ slerner@mail.mc.maricopa.edu
 HOME PAGE: www.mc.maricopa.edu/~slerner
 ANTHROPOLOGY WEB AREA: <http://www.mc.maricopa.edu/dept/d10/asb/>
 CULTURAL SCIENCE WEB AREA: <http://www.mc.maricopa.edu/dept/d10/>

Course Description: This is a course in anthropology and popular culture. Through the medium of box office movies and television we'll explore the appeal that indigenous cultures, human evolution, prehistory, and archaeology have for popular culture. This course is not a critique of the films we watch nor is it intended to systematically teach human evolution or the principles of anthropological research -- though along the way you will learn some basics about a variety of topics. In this course, the viewing of popular films and television episodes that feature anthropologists and archaeologists will be paired with topical readings from professional literature.

Course Syllabus

(Topics, activities, videos, and order may change as needed; not all videos listed below will be viewed; there will also be some out-of-class viewing of videos required)

I. What is Anthropology?

- A. Cultural, biological, and archaeology subfields
- B. Anthropological research methods and ethics
- C. What is Culture?
- D. Fieldwork, ethnography, emic and etic views, cultural relativism/cultural romanticism, ethnocentrism
- E. Star Trek-The Prime Directive: How does the prime directive relate to the ethics and field work of anthropologists?

“As the right of each sentient species to live in accordance with its normal cultural evolution is considered sacred, no Star Fleet personnel may interfere with the healthy development of alien life and culture. Such interference includes the introduction of superior knowledge, strength, or technology to a world whose society is incapable of handling such advantages wisely. Star Fleet personnel may not violate this Prime Directive, even to save their lives and/or their ship unless they are acting to right an earlier violation or an accidental contamination of said culture. This directive takes precedence over any and all other considerations, and carries with it the highest moral obligation.”

Readings: Introduction to Anthropology:

<http://anthro.palomar.edu/tutorials/cultural.htm> What is culture? Characteristics of Culture

<http://www.aaanet.org/anthbroc.htm> What is Anthropology?

<http://www.aaanet.org/committees/ethics/ethcode.htm> code of ethics-skim through this to get a sense of the key issues that confront anthropologists

<http://www.ucc.uconn.edu/~epsadm03/kung.html> !Kung-gain an understanding of the !Kung lifestyle and values

<http://www.ianth.org/fieldwork/tamakoshi/> The Anthropologist in the Field What are the steps involved in conducting fieldwork? After reading this, how does it compare to what you see in Krippendorf's Tribe-both the video clips of field work they show in the movie, and the fictional tribe he creates?

Films: How are indigenous people portrayed in the media? How do these perceptions create an ethnocentric view? What are the positives and negatives that are shown with regard to indigenous people and their lifestyles?

Third Rock from the Sun television show-ethnicity and culture

Krippendorf's Tribe- What is appropriate field work and interaction with the tribes?

Gods Must Be Crazy- How realistic is the portrayal of the !Kung at the beginning of the film, and the mission of lead character? What is the perception of a "primitive" culture?

How is the global world impacting the traditional culture? Or Emerald Forest- How do we perceive indigenous cultures?

!Kung ethnographic film

II. Films about the Human Past

- A. Early hominids: Human origins
- B. Neanderthals
- C. Modern human origins
- D. Humans almost everywhere
- E. Creation/Intelligent Design vs. Evolution

Readings: Review the timeline and critical characteristics of hominids and early homo sapiens.

What is Physical Anthropology: <http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/biology/forensics/>

Read: Human paleontology

What is human evolution?

What is a hominid? What is a primate?

What is the difference between a primate and a hominid?

Why do we study primates?

What is paleoanthropology

<http://www.answers.com/topic/physical-anthropology>

Who was Neandertal?

http://www.mc.maricopa.edu/dept/d10/asb/anthro2003/origins/hominid_journey/neandertal.html

Modern Homo Sapiens:

http://www.mc.maricopa.edu/dept/d10/asb/anthro2003/origins/hominid_journey/modernhomo.html

Read: What is a Theory? http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/evolution/library/08/1/1_081_55.html

Define a theory and how it relates to scientific inquiry.

Class Discussion and Activity: What is Science? What is Scientific Inquiry?

<http://www.becominghuman.org/> Scientific Method, Finding Fossils, Explore a Dig, Profiling Fossils, Dating, Interpretation.

Reading Assignment for Clan of the Cave Bear

Research the anthropological and archeological evidence about the origins and the extinction of the Neanderthals and be prepared to compare the scientific evidence with the way the movie portrays the Clan's physical and cultural appearance.

http://archaeology.about.com/od/hominidancestors/a/neander_4.htm

Becoming Human: <http://www.becominghuman.org/>

Hominid Journey:

http://www.mc.maricopa.edu/dept/d10/asb/anthro2003/origins/hominid_journey/timeline.html

Research the anthropological and archeological evidence about the origins and the extinction of the Early Modern Human/Anatomically Modern Human/Homo Sapien Sapien (Cro-Magnon) and be prepared to compare the scientific evidence with the way Auel portrays the Other's physical and cultural appearance.

http://archaeology.about.com/od/earlymansites/a/cro_magnon.htm

Films (compare the way hominids and homo sapiens are portrayed to what you have read and discussed in class; identify which hominids you are watching and think about their capacities; evaluate competing theories such as those trying to explain the invention of stone tools long after bipedalism but before brain expansion. Look for racist and sexist imagery, stereotypes; who are the "smart" ones?

Quest for Fire (film clip)

Clan of the Cave Bear or The Ice Man

Evolution, Creationism, and Intelligent Design

Evolution vs. Creation http://www.religioustolerance.org/ev_hist.htm

Scopes Trial: <http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/scopes/scopes.htm>

Kitzmiller vs. Dover Area School District

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kitzmiller_v._Dover_Area_School_District

<http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/biology/evolution/index.shtml>

Read about the history of evolution. Read about Natural Selection. What did you learn about evolution? What is natural selection?

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/id/>

Explore this web site. What is intelligent design? How does the essence of science differ from religion? Read the section on the Board vs Teachers. What were the key points made by the Board and the teachers? Listen to portions of the ruling by the judge. What is your opinion-did he address the key issues? Explain.

Finally, provide your own opinion on the underlying question to the Dover court case: Was the Board policy a covert way to introduce religion into a public school, and therefore in violation of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution?

Read about the Scopes "Monkey Trial."

<http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/scopes/evolut.htm>

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4723956>

Answer the following questions:

What is the fundamental conflict?

What was the content of the Butler bill? What role did the Butler bill play in the trial?

Read the articles about the history of the conflict between evolution and creation and the article on the Dover case. How well do you think the Simpson's segment captures the issues that have surrounded this controversial issue? Does the segment side with Dover or Scopes and what is the basis for the conclusion they draw within the segment as it concludes?

MOVIES: Inherit the Wind, The Simpsons: The Monkey Suit, Idiocracy (film clip).

Forensic Anthropology

<http://www.anthro4n6.net/forensics/>

You will use the information gathered below as part of your review of the episode, "Woman at the Airport" (Bones TV show). While watching the show, you will identify the accuracy of their study of the bodies. You will also assess how well they interpret the remains, particularly the Iron Age body. How is forensic archaeology portrayed in the movie?

What is forensic anthropology?

Define the following terms:

Inventory and profile

Sex and Race-what are some of the observations?

How do you record stature and weight?

How is Time of Death estimated?

How is the manner of death determined?

III. The Practice of Archaeology

A. The early years of archaeology

B. Egypt and Biblical Archaeology

Readings:

History of Egyptology:

<http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/prehistory/egypt/archaeology/egyptology.html>

Archaeologists:

<http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/prehistory/egypt/archaeology/egyptology.html> focus on Flinders Petrie, Mark Lehner, Zahi Hawass

History of and Science of Archaeology by Kris Hurst:

http://archaeology.about.com/od/historyofarchaeology/a/history_series.htm

Archaeological Sites: (select Giza, Luxor, Memphis, Thebes, and one of your choosing)

<http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/prehistory/egypt/archaeology/sites/index.html>

Egyptian Religion: <http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/prehistory/egypt/religion/religion.html>

Read: The Soul, Mummification, and skim through the list of gods and goddesses)

Nazi archaeology: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazi_archaeology

Films:

The Mummy-How well are the tombs represented? The mummies?

IV. Archaeologists and Anthropologists in the Movies? Television?

A. Who is an archaeologist/anthropologist?

B. Politics, race, and gender: archaeology and nationalism

C. Ethics and archaeology-who owns the past?

Readings:

Archaeological Ethics: <http://www.saa.org/public/resources/ethics.html>

Looting and the Antiquities Trade:

<http://www.bu.edu/phpbin/news-cms/news/?dept=4&id=44579&template=4>

<http://lootingmatters.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.savingantiquities.org/heritagetrade.php>

<http://www.museum-security.org/artifacts-saz.htm>

Who Owns the Past? <http://www.gla.ac.uk/archaeology/resources/archcont/owns.html>

http://www.mc.maricopa.edu/dept/d10/asb/world_archaeology/science.pdf scientific method and archaeology

Films:

Indiana Jones (Raiders of the Lost Ark)-note the manner in which archaeology is conducted in Egypt; What happens in the beginning of the movie when Indiana Jones is in the jungle (the depiction of the natives and what he does with the artifacts). Also note, for the next section, political undertones of how the Nazis are portrayed. Finally, be sure to note how women are portrayed.

Timeline-How are the archaeologists portrayed?

Star Trek: The Next Generation: Gambit I and II

Star Trek Voyager: Emanations

V. Fact Versus Fiction: The Impact of Popular Culture on Understanding Prehistory and Other Cultures

A. Aliens and Spaceships

B. Ethnocentrism

Weird Theories:

<http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/prehistory/egypt/archaeology/weirdtheories/weirdtheories.html>

<http://skepdic.com/vondanik.html> Chariots of Gods von Daniken

<http://www.larryzimmerman.com/fantasti/culttopics.html> Cult Archaeology,

Pseudoscience, and Creationism Topics- select two of the topics and read some of the articles within each of those topics

Films: *Von Daniken: The Mysteries Continue* (NBC), *Mystical Monuments of Ancient Greece* (History Channel)

Nazca Lines

Stargate

Indiana Jones and the Crystal Skull

COURSE REQUIREMENTS, GRADING, AND FORMAT

Class Activities and Videos: We will be watching many videos throughout the semester. You will be responsible to take notes on the video that can be used in class discussions and assignments.

Readings: There are reading assignments throughout the course; these are internet-based. You are required to complete these prior to the completion of each unit. Some of

these will be discussed in class with your group. The purpose of each set of readings is to assist you in your critical analysis of the videos. Each reading has a set of questions for you to answer. Due dates for all reading assignments will be provided in class.

Movie Reviews: For each video you will be provided a set of questions to answer. You are expected to answer these on your own-but we will also discuss the movies in class to assist you in capturing the relevant information.

Presentation- You will be asked to select a video of your choice (with my approval) and provide an analysis as to how it relates to anthropology. You will prepare a SHORT presentation about the video and your analysis (clips of the video would be great as part of your presentation-if possible!). The video can be from a television show or movie. Dates for presentations will be provided in class. You can do this assignment with a partner.

Attendance Policy: This course and its graded activities are heavily based upon videos, class discussions, and activities. To do well in the class you MUST attend class, listen, participate in class discussions and activities, and take useful notes. A sign-up sheet will be available at the beginning of each class period. Failure to sign your name on the list represents an absence. If you cannot avoid missing a class, give me a call prior to class. If I do not hear from you, your absence will be recorded as "unaccounted". If you miss more than 3 classes of unaccounted classroom instruction, you may be withdrawn from the course. If you have a pattern of missing classes, even though your absences are "accounted for", you may also be withdrawn from the class. I prefer not to withdraw anyone so please let me know if there are problems so we can try to resolve them.

Grading and Evaluation: I offer a number of different ways for you to earn points. Some of these are take-home, others are done in class. All of these are required to complete the class. Late assignments will be accepted for partial credit if turned in within one week of the due date. Your grade will be based on the cumulative total of all projects and any extra-credit points you earn. You can estimate your grade by using the traditional standard of 90-100%=A; 80-89%=B, etc. *The actual number of assignments may vary. Your grade will be adjusted accordingly.*

Experiential Learning Activity: You will be given the opportunity to substitute an experiential learning project for one paper or as extra-credit. The idea of experiential learning is to provide you with the opportunity to apply your classroom based knowledge to a "real world" experience. Examples of experiential learning projects will be discussed in class; you must have my prior approval of any project you propose.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

Disabilities: I will make any reasonable accommodations for limitations due to disabilities, including learning disabilities. Please see me personally before or after class or during my office hours to discuss any special needs you might have. If you have a documented disability and require specific accommodations, you will need to contact the Disability Resources and Services Office at 461-7447, in Building 37, Student Services Complex, to obtain an "Instructor Notification Form."

Honesty: Cheating is unethical and not acceptable. Plagiarism is using information or

original wording in a paper without giving credit to the source of that information or wording; it is also not acceptable. If you are found to be cheating, your essay or assignment will be taken away from you and you will receive no points. You may be subject to disciplinary action, per the MCC student handbook.

Sharing: I am willing to listen to all comments, complaints, and suggestions regarding the class. The best way to have a good class is to work together. I believe in sharing experiences that relate to the class, and if you participate, the class will be more rewarding. I am also willing to assist you in advising if you have questions about registration, courses, and in particular, anthropology as a major.

You may audiotape class lectures if you wish. Please **TURN OFF ALL CELL PHONES** during the class period. I reserve the right to answer the phone if it rings.

Course content may vary to meet the needs of this class.

Continued enrollment in this course implies that you have read and accepted the conditions listed in this syllabus.