

## 070.132 – Invitation to Anthropology

Johns Hopkins University, Fall 2020

Lecture	Wednesdays 12pm – 1:15 pm, online
Discussion	Fridays 12pm – 1:15 pm, online
Professor	Anand Pandian, office hours Tue 2-4 PM EST, online
Teaching Assistants	Section 1, Nat Adams, office hours Mon 3-4 PM EST, online Section 2, Miki Chase, office hours Fri 2-4 PM EST, online Section 3, Sojung Kim, office hours Fri 10-12 AM EST, online Section 4, Perry Maddox, office hours Mon 1-3 PM EST, online Section 5, Emma McGlennen, office hours Fri 2-4 PM EST, online

These are difficult times for people here and around the world, highly unsettling, with occasional glimmers of a life beyond these trials. This course introduces anthropology as a way to reflect on the challenges of contemporary existence. We will examine key anthropological methods like fieldwork and storytelling, juxtaposing texts and concepts with short ethnographic films and other media. Our texts explore topics like the politics of food access in Washington DC and the place of animals in the everyday life of rural India. With an eye to social and racial justice, we focus on stories written and told by people of color, and both the struggles and critical vision of marginalized communities.

**Materials** – There are seven books required for the course, see below for details. All are short and engagingly written. Please make sure to absorb the assigned readings fully, carefully, slowly. The class will take place via a Teams interface, through online meetings and chat channels. Lectures and discussions will be live and synchronous, but also recorded for asynchronous engagement.

**Requirements** (and % of overall grade) – Lecture attendance is expected, as is active participation in class discussion, as synchronously as possible (10%). Assigned readings must be completed *before* lecture each Wednesday; you will be asked to post one question on the week's reading on your section chat board each Wednesday by noon (10%), and to complete a brief quiz after lecture each week (10%). You will write three short essays (4-5 pages, double-spaced) over the semester (20% each), engaging in comparative analysis of the books we will be reading, on assigned topics. You will also complete one short (1 page, single-spaced) exercise in ethnographic description (10%).

**Policies** – (1) *Circumstance*. We understand that these are fraught and uncertain times. Please keep in touch as your circumstances evolve and needs arise. We will do our best to accommodate them.

(2) *Engagement*. As we engage each other virtually, at a distance, all of us (teachers included) will struggle with distraction. Your learning in this course will depend on focus and attention. We will do our best to keep the class engaging. We expect you to tune in and remain engaged.

(3) *Respect*. As anthropologists, we make a community of human beings, seeking to grasp the lives of others unlike ourselves with dignity and respect. This spirit is all the more essential online.

(4) *Disability*. If you have a disability that may need accommodation in this class, especially given the virtual platforms we are using, please let us know as soon as possible.

(5) *Grading*. Work will be assigned and submitted via Teams. By university policy, you have the option of either S/U or a letter grade. Either way, we expect careful and attentive work.

(6) *Academic integrity*. In this course, you must be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition.

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Materials</i>	<i>Topics</i>
Sep 2 / 4	Willi Lempert, <i>SCA</i> Zoe Todd, <i>Anthrodendum</i> Karen Attiah, <i>WaPo</i>	<i>Babakiueria</i> (dir. Don Featherstone, 1986)	<b>Introduction</b>
Sep 9 / 11	W pages TBA	<i>Waterlily</i> , Ella Deloria, 2009 [1947]	<b>Storytelling.</b> What are books in anthropology meant to do? How can stories convey knowledge?
Sep 16 / 18	W pages TBA		<b>The Body.</b> What is cultural about our bodies? How are they marked by race, class, gender?
Sep 23 / 25	B ix-57	<i>Barracoon: The Story of the Last 'Black Cargo,'</i> Zora Neale Hurston, 2018 [1931]	<b>Experience.</b> What does it mean to think with life? How does this practice change those who do it?
Sep/Oct 30 / 2	B 59-137 <b>Essay 1 due 10/5</b>		<b>History.</b> How do people live with past and future? What has modernity put into motion?
Oct 7 / 9	BFJ pages TBA	<i>Black Food Geographies</i> , Ashanté Reese, 2019	<b>Fieldwork.</b> Why do we travel in anthropology to other places? What is distinctive about our field methods?
Oct 14 / 16	BFJ pages TBA		<b>Power.</b> How does power shape the wellbeing of populations? How is inequality experienced?
Oct 21	APA 1-14, 44-76 <b>Exercise due 10/26</b>	<i>A Possible Anthropology</i> , Anand Pandian, 2019	<b>Description.</b> How to describe the world with empirical richness and conceptual depth? What practices of observation does this take?
Oct 28 / 30	SDG pages 1-60	<i>Self-Devouring Growth</i> , Julie Livingston, 2019	<b>Explanation.</b> What makes for good explanation in anthropology? How to generalize from local circumstance?
Nov 4 / 6	SDG pages 61-127 <b>Essay 2 due 11/9</b>		<b>Markets.</b> How do economies look to anthropologists? What is gained in markets and trade?
Nov 11 / 13	AI pages TBA	<i>Animal Intimacies</i> , Radhika Govindrajan, 2018	<b>Relationships.</b> What does kinship mean for anthropology? How do we relate to others, make connections?
Nov 18 / 20	AI pages TBA		<b>Life and Death.</b> How do human beings relate to animals? How do people live with loss?
Dec 2 / 4	APA 15-43, 77-109	<i>A Possible Anthropology</i> , Anand Pandian, 2019	<b>Estrangement.</b> Why do our stories seem surreal and otherworldly? What effects can such fictions produce?
Dec 9	Read LDT fully <b>Essay 3 due 12/16</b>	<i>Light in Dark Times</i> , Alisse Waterston and C. Corden, 2020	<b>Images.</b> What understanding do images make possible? What is their role in our knowing?