



School of Arts & Science
SOCIAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT

ANTH 110-001
Anthropology of Women
W2009

COURSE OUTLINE

This course will examine the social, economic, and political position of women in traditional, developing, and industrial societies, with an emphasis on cultural assumptions about women and theories of gender relations and stratification. This is not a feminist class, and will not explore the various topics with the exclusion of men. The roots of the feminist approach in anthropology can be found in equality, and the goal of this course is to examine a variety of issues related to women while striking a balance and considering all participants.

1. Instructor Information

- (a) Instructor: Nicole Kilburn, MA
- (b) Office Hours: TBA
- (c) Location: Young 207
- (d) Phone: 370-3368
- (e) Email: kilburn@camosun.bc.ca

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2. Intended Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Outline the main tenets of the feminist perspective in anthropology.
2. Explain the biosocial nature of pregnancy and childbirth.
3. Outline the cross-cultural patterns of marriage, gender division of labour, and activities originating in the domestic sphere.
4. Describe the impact of international development on women.
5. Critically evaluate relevant topics such as veiling, seclusion, and female genital modification using cultural relativism.
6. Apply the feminist anthropology perspective to issues pertaining to women's lives in Canada and around the world.
7. Apply the anthropological perspective in writing an anthropological paper.

3. Required Materials

(a) Texts:

Barnes, Virginia Lee and Janice Boddy
1995 *Aman: The Story of a Somali Girl*. Toronto: Vintage Canada.

Freidl, Erika
1989 *Women of Deh Koh: Lives in an Iranian Village*. Toronto: Penguin.

Jordan, Brigitte

1993 *Birth in Four Cultures: A Cross Cultural Investigation in Yucatan, Holland, Sweden, and the United States* (fourth edition). Prospect Heights, Illinois: Waveland Press.

(b) Required readings on reserve in Library

Abu-Lughod, Lila

2002 Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others. *American Anthropologist* 104(3): 783-790.

Freidel, Ernestine

2001 Society and Sex Roles. In *Applying Anthropology: An Introductory Reader*, 6th edition. Aaron Podolefsky and Peter J. Brown, eds. California: Mayfield Publishing Company.

Lamphere, Louise

2001 The Domestic Sphere of Women and the Public World of Men: the Strengths and Limitations of an Anthropological Dichotomy. IN: *Gender and Cross-cultural Perspective*, Caroline Brettell and Carolyn Sargent editors, pp.100-110. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

4. Basis of Student Assessment (Weighting)

a) Exams : 60%

There will be 2 exams written throughout the course of the semester. Both are worth 30%. The midterm exam will be written in class on **Thursday, February 12**. The final exam will be written during the college exam period. The final exam is NOT cumulative, although some core concepts like cultural relativity and the feminist perspective in anthropology will be considered throughout the course, even if they are presented in the first half.

Exams must be written at the scheduled times. The only exception is grave illness, BUT the instructor must be notified by email or phone message prior to the start of the exam, and a medical note must be presented. There are no exceptions without a medical certificate. If a make-up exam is scheduled because of illness, students must write the make-up exam at the mutually agreed upon time as soon as possible.

b) Assignments:

Experiential Knowledge assignment concerning your own birth: 10%

Due Thursday, January 29

Brigitte Jordan considers a number of criteria in her investigations of birthing practices cross-culturally, and how the information contributes to an understanding of particular ethno-obstetric systems. Using Jordan's work as a guideline, consider your own birth. Where were you delivered, and by whom? Who else was present? What forms of technology were used (for example, C-section, drugs, forceps). A discussion with either (or preferably both) parent(s) will be in order to flesh out the details and to collect pertinent experiential data. How does this inform us about the cultural perspectives of birth for the culture you were born into? Organize the data collected into a 3-5 page (typed, double-spaced) paper.

Article Review: 5%

Due Tuesday, March 10

Students will carefully consider the key points of Lila Abu-Lughod's article. The review will include a summary of key points and critical commentary of the article with respect to the course in general but also Erika Friedl's book *Women of Deh Koh*. The assignment should be approximately 3 pages in length (typed, 12 font, double-spaced). The goal of an article review is for students to get an in-depth understanding of the article in question and to be able to then discuss the article's central issues in class.

Class ‘debate’ of circumcision, particularly female genital modification: 20% (15% for group presentation, 5% for individual argument briefs)

Cultural relativity, a core component of anthropology is put to the test when considering female genital modification (FGM), a cultural practice common in many traditional African contexts. Should the practice be abolished? Do we, as anthropologists and outsiders, have the right to pass judgment on such cultural practices and lobby for government intervention? In his or her own cultural context, is an individual harmed by this practice? What are the consequences of NOT participating in what is often a rite of passage and an essential identifier of group affiliation and adulthood?

At the end of the second week of class, students will form small groups that will investigate one small part of either side of this debate. Each group will prepare a short presentation (no more than 10 minutes) on their topic, and each group will present their research in a round table-style debate/discussion in an extended class on **March 24**. Each group member will also prepare a brief of their argument that will be handed in on the day of the debate. Groups may work together on their briefs if they choose, but each student must submit their own, individually written brief. Marks will be awarded based on the quality of the research and strength of the argument, presentation, and individual briefs. The goal of this exercise is to investigate this issue in detail as a class to better understand the complexities of the debate.

Overall class participation 5%

Attendance is not recorded, but regular attendance is expected as passive participation in the course. Participation will be graded based on being prepared for class and asking pertinent questions, and engaging in group discussions.

BE FOREWARNED: Try to avoid handing in papers late, as you will lose marks!!! An assignment will be considered late if it cannot be handed in at the beginning of class. Assignments handed in after class on the due date will have 1 mark deducted (printing problems don't make good excuses!). Assignments handed in the day following the due date will have an additional 10% deducted. Assignments will not be accepted later than three school days after they are due.

Please note: extra assignments **are not** available to students to up-grade poor marks from exams.

5. Grading System
Standard Grading System (GPA)

| Percentage | Grade | Description | Grade Point Equivalency |
|------------|-------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 90-100 | A+ | | 9 |
| 85-89 | A | | 8 |
| 80-84 | A- | | 7 |
| 77-79 | B+ | | 6 |
| 73-76 | B | | 5 |
| 70-72 | B- | | 4 |
| 65-69 | C+ | | 3 |
| 60-64 | C | | 2 |
| 50-59 | D | | 1 |
| 0-49 | F | Minimum level has not been achieved. | 0 |

Temporary Grades

Temporary grades are assigned for specific circumstances and will convert to a final grade according to the grading scheme being used in the course. See Grading Policy E-1.5 at camosun.ca for information on conversion to final grades, and for additional information on student record and transcript notations.

| Temporary Grade | Description |
|-----------------|---|
| I | <i>Incomplete:</i> A temporary grade assigned when the requirements of a course have not yet been completed due to hardship or extenuating circumstances, such as illness or death in the family. |
| IP | <i>In progress:</i> A temporary grade assigned for courses that are designed to have an anticipated enrollment that extends beyond one term. No more than two IP grades will be assigned for the same course. |
| CW | <i>Compulsory Withdrawal:</i> A temporary grade assigned by a Dean when an instructor, after documenting the prescriptive strategies applied and consulting with peers, deems that a student is unsafe to self or others and must be removed from the lab, practicum, worksite, or field placement. |

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7. Recommended Materials or Services to Assist Students to Succeed Throughout the Course

LEARNING SUPPORT AND SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

There are a variety of services available for students to assist them throughout their learning. This information is available in the College calendar, at Student Services or the College web site at camosun.ca.

STUDENT CONDUCT POLICY

There is a Student Conduct Policy **which includes plagiarism**. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the content of this policy. The policy is available in each School Administration Office, at Student Services and on the College web site in the Policy Section.

**Anthropology 110: Women in Cross Cultural Perspective
Winter 2009 Course Schedule**

| WEEK | LECTURE TOPIC | READINGS |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Week 1 Jan. 5-9 | T: Introduction to the course TH: What is feminism and how has it influenced anthropology? | Lamphere article |
| Week 2 Jan. 12-16 | T: History of the feminist approach, continued TH: Biological and cultural aspects of the female reproduction | Friedl article; start Jordan |
| Week 3 Jan. 19-23 | T: Medical anthropology, and cross-cultural perceptions of birth TH: ethnographic approach | Jordan p. ix - 90 |
| Week 4 Jan. 26-30 | T: authoritative knowledge and ethno-obstetrics TH: When Reproduction and Technology Intersect EXPERIENTAL KNOWLEDGE ASSIGNMNET DUE | Jordan p. 147-197 |
| Week 5 Feb. 2-6 | T: When Reproduction gets Political: China's One-Child Policy TH: Walk a Mile In <u>These</u> Shoes; Footbinding in "Classical" China | Jordan p.199-215 |
| Week 6 Feb. 9-13 | T: The Culture of Food TH: MIDTERM EXAM | web resources accessed via course website |
| Week 7 Feb. 16-20 | T: Cultural History and Context of the Middle East TH: READING BREAK | Friedl prologue |
| Week 8 Feb. 23-27 | T: Women in Islam TH: Veiling, Seclusion, and Oppression | Friedl chapters 1, 2, 3 |
| Week 9 March 2-6 | T: Marriage and Kinship in the Middle East TH: Review and Discussion of Friedl's book | Friedl chapters 4, 6, 7, 10 |
| Week 10 March 9-13 | T: Representation of Muslim Women across cultures ARTICLE REVIEW DUE IN CLASS TH: Gender, Politics, and Nomadic Pastoralism in Somalia (intro. to <i>Aman</i>) | Abu-Lughod article Barnes p. 1-78 |
| Week 11 March 16-20 | T: Gender Stratification in North Africa TH: no class because of lengthened class March 24 | Barnes p. 79-189 |
| Week 12 March 23-27 | T: Circumcision and Cultural Relativism: A Heated Anthropological Debate T: Spirit possession as resistance | Barnes p. 190-288 |
| Week 13 March 30- April 3 | T:Lecture to be announced TH: Textiles as Cultural Tradition | Friedl chapter 9 |
| Week 14 April 6-10 | T: Women and Development TH: Current issues, continued... and wrap up | No readings: time to catch up and prepare for final exam |