

**CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY GST 208**  
**Canadian Bible College**  
**Winter Semester 1999**  
**Instructor: Shelley Ryan**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course serves as an introduction to cultural anthropology, examining its basic concepts, assumptions and methodology, with the purpose of showing how the discipline informs Christian ministry. Two major divisions are included, the first focusing on the definitions, theories and assumptions of culture as they relate to matters such as communication, worldview, contextualization and economic, legal, religious, social and political systems. The second part of the course will introduce the necessary skills to do anthropological research, with the goal of producing a mini-ethnography.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

This course will enable the student to develop in several areas, namely:

1. The cognitive domain. Each student will *know*:
  - a) the basic anthropological concepts and theories;
  - b) the dynamics and systems of culture.

This will be tested by a final exam.

2. The experiential domain. Each student will:
  - a) *experience* the steps of doing a mini-ethnography of a given social situation;
  - b) *improve* skills of observation of a social situation for the purpose of discovering the cultural meanings.

This will be evaluated by doing a mini-ethnography.

3. The affective domain. Each student will *have an increasing appreciation for*:
  - a) the commonalities and differences of other cultures and people as compared to his/her own culture;
  - b) the satisfactions and difficulties of doing participant observation research.

This will be evaluated through discussions and interactions during the class.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1. **Reading** -- a total of 700 pages

a) 450 pages from the required text:

Hiebert, Paul G.

1983 Cultural Anthropology

Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House

b) 250 pages from the following recommended texts (Identify one significant idea for each 50 pages read):

Grunlan, Stephen A. & Marvin K. Mayers

1988 Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective

Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan

Spradley, James P. & David W. McCurdy

1972 The Cultural Experience

Chicago, IL: Science Research Ass., Inc.

Winter, Ralph D. & Steven C. Hawthorne

1992 Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader

Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library

Each student will complete the reading report on page 3 of the syllabus and hand it in on the last day of class, April 15, 1999.

2. **Final Exam** -- An objective, short answer test will be given during exam week at the end of the semester. The Hiebert textbook plus classroom input will serve as basic resource material for the exam.

3. **Mini-Ethnography** -- Each student will complete a written mini-ethnography that will be developed and graded in five different steps. (Please see pages 4 to 8 of the syllabus for complete instructions.)

Step 1: Choose a social situation (5 points).

Step 2: Present some fieldnotes and fieldwork notebook with sections (5 pts).

Step 3: Present detailed observations of social situation (10 points).

Step 4: Present a domain analysis of social situation (10 points).

Step 5: Present a written mini-ethnography (20 points).

### **COURSE GRADING**

Reading	20%
Final Exam	30%
Ethnography	<u>50%</u>
Total	100%

All academic regulations will be observed, including the policy on late submission of assignments, as printed in the current Catalogue and Student Handbook. It is the responsibility of the student to be familiar with these regulations. All work must be typed in good manuscript style according to the format recommended by the College. Late assignments will be docked one point for each day that they are late. The professor reserves the right to modify any part of the course as it is deemed necessary or advantageous.

**STUDENT'S READING REPORT**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

1. Required reading

I have read the following:

Hiebert, Paul G. Cultural Anthropology

YES

NO

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Recommended Reading (total 250 pages)

I have read the following:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Title and author of book or article)

One significant idea from reading:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(# of pages)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Title and author of book or article)

One significant idea from reading:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(# of pages)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Title and author of book or article)

One significant idea from reading:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(# of pages)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Title and author of book or article)

One significant idea from reading:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(# of pages)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Title and author of book or article)

One significant idea from reading:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(# of pages)

**STEP #1: MINI-ETHNOGRAPHY**

1. Purpose: The purpose of this assignment is to understand the criteria for choosing a social situation in order to do an ethnography.
2. What is the social situation you have chosen for your ethnography?
3. Where does this social situation take place, who are the actors and what are the activities that you expect to describe?
4. Discuss the feasibility of doing an ethnography of the above social situation under the following criteria:
  - a. simplicity
  - b. accessibility
  - c. unobtrusiveness
  - d. permissibility
  - e. frequently recurring activities
5. Hand in at the beginning of the class along with this page.

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

**STEP #2: MINI-ETHNOGRAPHY**

1. Purpose: The purpose of this assignment is to set up a fieldwork notebook and to conduct the first period of participant observation and make a record of your experience.
2. Set up a fieldwork notebook or file with sections for:
  - a) condensed accounts
  - b) expanded accounts
  - c) journal
  - d) analysis and interpretation
3. Conduct a period of participant observation and record your experience.
4. Hand in the notebook or file at the beginning of class along with this page.

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

**STEP #3: MINI-ETHNOGRAPHY**

1. Purpose: The purpose of this step is to learn how to make and identify various kinds of descriptive observations.
2. A "Descriptive Question Matrix" is enclosed. Using this matrix as a guide, write out a series of questions that will lead to both grand tour observations and mini-tour observations. Review earlier fieldnotes to do so.
3. With these questions in mind, conduct a period of participant observation in which you make both grand tour observations and mini-tour observations.
4. Write up an expanded account of these descriptive observations.
5. Hand in at the beginning of class along with this page.

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

**STEP #4: MINI-ETHNOGRAPHY**

1. Purpose: To begin to understand the nature of ethnographic analysis and identify and carry out a systematic domain analysis on all fieldnote descriptions collected to date.
2. Conduct and write out a domain analysis following the steps provided in class. This analysis is based on the field-notes you have already collected.
3. Conduct other periods of participant observation in which you make additional descriptive observations in the areas in which you still have questions.
4. Hand in at the beginning of class along with this page.

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

**STEP #5: MINI-ETHNOGRAPHY**

1. Purpose: The purpose of this step is to identify the steps in writing an ethnography and to write and present the final draft of your mini-ethnography.
2. Gather together and organize all of your field notes, records of observations and interviews, the domain analysis, other quotations, etc.
3. Develop an outline. Here is a suggested one from Spradley and McCurdy:
  - I. Introduction
    - A. What is this paper about?
    - B. Define concepts of culture, ethnography and social situation.
    - C. What is the plan of the paper?
  - II. Field Work Methods
    - A. Why did you select this cultural scene?
    - B. How did you make contact with informants?
    - C. Describe the characteristics of your main informants.
    - D. What field work methods did you use?
    - E. What things influenced the selection of data?
    - F. Did you have any special problems?
  - III. The Setting
    - A. Describe the physical setting and social situation.
    - B. What are the major domains of this cultural scene?
  - IV. The Cultural Description
    - A. What domains are you going to describe and why?
    - B. What categories do informants use?
    - C. How are these categories organized?
    - D. How are they defined? What is their meaning?
    - E. How do informants use this information to construct their behaviour?
  - V. Conclusion
    - A. Can you make any tentative interpretations about this cultural scene?
    - B. Can you recommend areas for future research?
4. Write rough and then final draft of ethnography.
5. Hand in at the beginning of the class along with this page.

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_