



**INTRODUCTION TO SOCIO-CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY (ANTH 112:10)**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY**  
**ST. FRANCIS XAVIER UNIVERSITY**  
**COURSE OUTLINE – FALL 2024**

*I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. This territory is covered by the "Treaties of Peace and Friendship" which Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) Peoples first signed with the British Crown in 1725. The treaties did not deal with surrender of lands and resources but in fact recognized Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations.*

**INSTRUCTOR**

Dr. Rashed Alam (he/him)

Office: JBB 335G

E-mail: [ralam@stfx.ca](mailto:ralam@stfx.ca)

Office Hours: Sept 04 – Dec 06 (except for Fall Study Break); Tuesdays 10-12 PM; Thursdays 4-6 PM; Fridays 12-2 PM.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

Tuesdays 8:30-9:45 AM

Fridays 10:00-11:15 AM

Classroom: MULH 2032

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Anthropology pioneered comparative approaches that explain how cultural texts, social norms, and historical reconfigurations shape human behavior and beliefs. **Introduction to Socio-Cultural Anthropology** informs students about the diverse ways people celebrate their culture, identify themselves, participate in a community, and develop social ties. This course is not an

exhibition of distant, 'primitive,' and exotic ways of being in the world; instead, it inspires students to explore why labelling other cultural practices as exotic or inferior is problematic. It searches for shared values that unite humans and make them resilient despite the diversity in cultures and societies. The course introduces students to anthropology's primary interests, including ethnographic fieldwork, culture and cultural relativism, family structure and kinship, neoliberalism, structural violence, settler-colonialism, gender, sexuality, and identity politics. The course assessments will enhance students' skills in critical thinking, academic writing, and the application of anthropological approaches.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Define the key concepts and terms of anthropology and its subfields.
2. Develop a comprehensive understanding of anthropological approaches, methods, and practices.
3. Explain the significance of ethnography in comprehending human and cultural diversity.
4. Discuss how human societies are interconnected and how they transform over time.
5. Analyze the underlying causes of structural inequality and social hierarchy.
6. Reflect on their cultural biases and apply anthropological sensibilities to understand and appreciate cultural differences.
7. Develop a broad understanding of the shared struggle of fellow humans for identity, equality, and dignity.
8. Improve their skills in developing research arguments, analyzing theoretical perspectives, and organizing research evidence in written assignments.

## **COURSE MATERIALS**

All course readings are available to registered students via Kwe' (Moodle), the StFX library's electronic database, and open-access internet resources. Students are not required to purchase any textbooks.

The course uses selected chapters of two textbooks:

1. Brown, N., McIlwraith, T., & González L. T. D. (Eds.). (2020). *Perspectives: An Open Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*. Arlington, VA: American Anthropological Association. This textbook is available at: <https://perspectives.americananthro.org/>
2. Monaghan, J., & Just, P. (2000). *Social and Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press. The e-book is available at the StFX Library. Follow this

link: <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/stfx/detail.action?docID=232868&pq-origsite=primo>

## COURSE EVALUATION

| <i><b>Assessment</b></i>        | <i><b>Grade (%)</b></i> | <i><b>Deadline</b></i>               |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Active Learning & Participation | 05                      | Throughout the term                  |
| Ethnographic Assignment         | 05                      | September 27                         |
| Mid-term Test                   | 25                      | October 11                           |
| Anthropology Podcast            | 10                      | November 5                           |
| Essay                           | 25                      | November 29                          |
| Final Exam                      | 30                      | As per the Registrar's exam schedule |

### ACTIVE LEARNING & PARTICIPATION (5%)

The course administers several active learning activities throughout the term. Active learning activities promote student engagement through informal and formal exercises. Participation in such learning events encourages students to critically reflect on course materials and engage in problem-solving activities. Furthermore, active learning transforms students from passive to active learners, sharing agency between the instructor and students. Students will be able to express creative and critical ideas through writing, teamwork, and technology tools.

Students will participate in different individual and group active learning exercises each week. They are primarily low-stakes, ungraded thinking and writing exercises. Some examples include discussing course materials with your peers, summarizing the author's arguments in one sentence, designing a poster highlighting a community event, and participating in collective brainstorming. These crucial exercises will prepare students to perform better in high-stakes writing assignments and exams. Students who attend class regularly (at least 80% of classes) and participate in these activities will get full marks (5% grade).

### ETHNOGRAPHIC ASSIGNMENT (5%)

What do you find interesting about StFX and Antigonish? Was there any cultural event or community gathering that attracted your attention anthropologically? This ethnographic assignment is designed to involve students in the critical thinking process, which is an essential part of ethnography. The readings of the first three weeks mainly discuss how anthropologists facilitate ethnographic studies and why cultural relativism is important for understanding human differences. Based on the first three weeks' materials, apply your understanding of

ethnographic fieldwork in observing and analyzing a cultural/community event, and then write an interpretive analysis of your field notes. As part of the assignment, you must spend at least one hour observing the event (either on campus or in the town) and taking field notes. After completing fieldwork, write a 2-page reflexive analysis of the event and your field notes. Please attach your field notes with the assignment. You must clearly demonstrate your observation skills, especially how you are being critical of your own preconceived biases and how/if anthropological concepts have shaped your perspectives. This assignment will allow you to experiment with ethnographic approaches and develop a researcher's perspective for later use in writing the essay. More details about the assignment and a rubric will be provided closer to the due date (Sept 27).

### **MID-TERM TEST (25%)**

The mid-term test will take place during the regular class time on October 11 in MULH 2032. It covers all course materials from Sept 10 to Oct 4 classes. The exam format is mixed, including true/false, multiple-choice questions, and short answers.

### **ANTHROPOLOGY PODCAST (10%)**

A podcast is a creative and engaging medium to express opinions and ideas. It enhances teamwork, critical analysis, public speaking, and digital literacy skills. Students will be divided into teams. Each team will be given a topic related to the course themes to create a podcast on that topic. The team members will review at least two peer-reviewed journal articles related to the topic and record a 5-10-minute audio conversation session discussing the materials as experts. This assessment intends to demonstrate students' knowledge of the subject, scholarly collaboration, and critical thinking competencies. Each team will be required to provide a summarized 2-page script of the podcast. All podcasts and scripts will be made available in Kwe' for the entire class. More details about the assessment and a grading rubric will be provided closer to the due date (Nov 5).

### **ESSAY (25%)**

One of the main goals of the course is to strengthen students' analytical skills in investigating cultural practices and social relations. In this writing assignment, you will demonstrate how the course materials made you rethink cultures and cultural differences. Students are required to facilitate a literature-based research project and write a 1500-word essay. The focus of the research should be relevant to course themes, such as cultural norms, kinship practices, family structure, marital traditions, economic behavior, political institutions, spirituality, gender or

sexual identities, structural violence, settler-colonialism, and so on. It is strongly advised that you visit during my office hours if you require assistance in deciding on your research topic. The paper should clearly outline and support a central thesis and ideally focus on a case study. The central thesis of the essay must be supported by a critical review of 5-7 peer-reviewed sources. More details about the essay, including a rubric, will be provided closer to the due date (Nov 29).

## **FINAL EXAM (30%)**

The 2-hour final exam covers all course materials from Oct 29 to Dec 3 classes. The exam features true/false, multiple-choice questions, short answers, and critical reflection. The Registrar's office schedules the final exam. Please do not purchase a travel ticket before the end of the official examination period.

***StFX ACademic Transition Program (X-ACT):*** Incoming students are encouraged to sign up for X-ACT –StFX Academic Transition program. Students who successfully complete the program will be able to apply bonus marks to one of their courses that is participating in X-ACT. (Upper-year students enrolled in this course who would like to participate in the program are invited to email [sscentre@stfx.cato](mailto:sscentre@stfx.cato) sign up). If you successfully complete the program, one bonus mark (1% of the total course grade) will be added to your essay grade.

## **WEEKLY COURSE SCHEDULE AND REQUIRED READINGS**

### **SEPT 6: INTRODUCTION**

Course Orientation

Syllabus discussion

*Doing Anthropology* (<https://shass.mit.edu/multimedia/video-2008-doing-anthropology>)

### **SEPT 10 & 13: ANTHROPOLOGY AND ITS PRIMARY DOMAINS**

Brown, N., McIlwraith, T., & González L. T. D. (Eds.). (2020). *Perspectives: An Open Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*. Arlington, VA: American Anthropological Association.

- Katie Nelson & Lara Braff. Chapter 1: Introduction to Anthropology

## **SEPT 17: FIELDWORK AND ETHNOGRAPHY**

Monaghan, J., & Just, P. (2000). *Social and Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- *Chapter 1: A Dispute in Donggo: Fieldwork and Ethnography*

Sapiens, *Why Don't More Humans Eat Bugs?* (<https://www.sapiens.org/culture/eat-bugs/>)

## **SEPT 20: CULTURE & CULTURAL RELATIVISM**

Monaghan, J., & Just, P. (2000). *Social and Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- *Chapter 2: Bee Larvae and Onion Soup: Culture*

Sapiens, *What Netflix Got Wrong About Indigenous Storytelling* (<https://www.sapiens.org/culture/busaw-trese/>)

## **SEPT 24: FILM: TALKING CANADIAN**

## **SEPT 27 & OCT 1: SUBSISTENCE & ECONOMICS**

Brown, N., McIlwraith, T., & González L. T. D. (Eds.). (2020). *Perspectives: An Open Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*. Arlington, VA: American Anthropological Association.

- *Isaac Shearn. Chapter 5: Subsistence*
- *Sarah Lyon. Chapter 6: Economics*

## **OCT 4: FILM: ONE NIGHT IN BHOPAL**

## **OCT 8: MID-TERM EXAM REVIEW**

## **OCT 11: MID-TERM EXAM**

## **OCT 15 & 18: FALL STUDY BREAK**

## **OCT 22: ANTHROPOLOGY PODCAST**

Students will be divided into teams to prepare and plan for the Anthropology Podcast assignment.

## **OCT 25: RESEARCH & ANALYSIS**

Grace Bourret's guest lecture on library research, literature review, and citation strategies.

## **OCT 29 & NOV 1: SOCIAL & POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Monaghan, J., & Just, P. (2000). *Social and Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- *Chapter 4: Fernando Seeks a Wife: Sex and Blood*
- *Chapter 5: La Bose Becomes Bakar: Caste, Class, Tribe, Nation*

## **NOV 5 & 8: THE SOCIAL & CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY**

Brown, N., McIlwraith, T., & González L. T. D. (Eds.). (2020). *Perspectives: An Open Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*. Arlington, VA: American Anthropological Association.

- *Sashur Henninger. Chapter 11: Religion*

Evans-Pritchard, E. E. (1976). *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

- *Chapter 2: The Notion of Witchcraft Explains Unfortunate Events*

Sapiens, *COVID-19 and the Turn to Magical Thinking* (<https://www.sapiens.org/culture/covid-19-magic/>)

## **NOV 12 & 15: THE POLITICS OF IDENTITY**

Brown, N., McIlwraith, T., & González L. T. D. (Eds.). (2020). *Perspectives: An Open Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*. Arlington, VA: American Anthropological Association.

- *Justin D. García. Chapter 9: Race & Ethnicity*
- *Carol C. Mukhopadhyay, et al. Chapter 10: Gender & Sexuality (PP. 282-295 & 312-323)*

## **NOV 19: STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE**

Farmer, P. (2004). An Anthropology of Structural Violence. *Current Anthropology*, 45(3), 305–325.

## **NOV 22: FILM: STEALING A NATION**

## **NOV 26 & 29: SETTLER-COLONIALISM**

Razack, S. H. (2020). Settler Colonialism, Policing and Racial Terror: The Police Shooting of Loreal Tsingine. *Feminist Legal Studies*, 28(1), 1–20.

Denov, M., & Campbell, K. (2002). Casualties of Aboriginal Displacement in Canada: Children at Risk among the Innu of Labrador. *Refuge*, 20(2), 21–33.

## **DEC 3: FILM: *ROCKS AT WHISKEY TRENCH***

## **DEC 6: COURSE REVIEW**

A brief review of the Final Exam contents

Q&A sessions on the course/Final Exam

## **COURSE POLICIES**

### **CLASS ATTENDANCE**

Anthropology encourages collaboration and peer discussions. Therefore, class attendance is mandatory to engage students with course materials and class discussions. Students must register class attendance in Kwe'. The in-class active learning activities will also document class attendance. Students present in at least 80% of classes will get the full Active Learning and Participation marks (5% grade). If you miss three or more classes, whether for illness or any other reason, your ability to pass will be severely compromised. Inform me or the Dean's office if you must miss classes.

### **SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS**

All assignments must be submitted to Moodle. Assignments submitted by email will not be accepted. It is also important that you always retain a copy of your assignments.

### **LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

5% off per day late unless an extension has been granted. Late assignments will not be accepted after five days (including weekends) beyond the original deadline without appropriate



documentation from the Dean's office. All deferred or makeup assessments will be essay-based.

### **REAPPRAISALS OF ASSIGNMENTS**

If you are concerned or confused about the grading of your assignment after you get it back, please see me during my office hours. All grade-related issues must be discussed during the office hours. If you would like me to reappraise your work, please submit the original paper with a maximum 300-word explanation of why you think you deserve a higher score. This must be done within seven calendar days of the release of your grade. Although I will review your grade, it may stay the same or even decrease.

### **USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)**

Please note that the use of artificial intelligence aids (e.g., chatGPT) is not permitted in any course assessment.

### **COURSE DROP INFORMATION**

Students may drop a course, online in Banner, on or before the relevant deadline. See the calendar of events in the StFX Academic Calendar for the drop-date. Please keep in mind that the permission to drop or change a course after the course change deadline can only be granted by the Dean's office and that informing the professor, or merely ceasing to attend class is not sufficient.

### **USE OF TECHNOLOGY**

You can use a laptop in class, but turn off/silence your cell phone. The use of electronic devices in class for purposes not related to the course is not allowed. Please do not tape/video record the class.

### **COPYRIGHT & INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

Course materials designed for use in this course at StFX University are the property of the instructor, unless otherwise stated by the instructor. Copying this material for distribution, online posting, or selling of this material to third parties without permission is subject to Canadian Copyright Law and is strictly prohibited.

## **EMAIL AND COMMUNICATION**

Office hours are strongly recommended for course-related discussions. However, feel free to email me on weekdays. I will respond within 48 hours. Please put the course number in the subject line of your email and include your name and student number at the end of all correspondence. Please note that I will be offline during weekends. You are requested to use StFX credentials for all academic correspondence.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. Suspected cases of plagiarism will be reported to the appropriate authorities and proven cases will result in a mark of zero for the assignment. See the University's policy on plagiarism and cheating at <https://www.mystfx.ca/registrars-office/academic-integrity>. Not intending to plagiarise is not a legitimate excuse. Know what is included in the definition and ensure that the paper you submit meets acceptable academic standards according to the policy. When in doubt, consult with me.

## **RESPECT: ACADEMIC DISCOURSE, CLASS CLIMATE, AND INCLUSIVITY**

A core social value in anthropology is respect. In this classroom, you are likely to encounter ideas that you find surprising or even unsettling. You should feel free to voice your opinions; at the same time, you should feel free to respectfully challenge ideas with which you disagree. When engaging in discussion, I encourage you to listen — to be attentive to the experiences and views of others before formulating your own arguments, reactions, and critiques. One of the most important things I hope you will learn in this class is that a diversity of backgrounds and opinions is not a threat but an opportunity for thinking about and addressing social issues that concern us all.

## **EQUITABLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

Everyone learns more effectively in a respectful, safe and equitable learning environment, free from discrimination and harassment. I invite you to work with me to create a classroom space — both real and virtual — that fosters and promotes values of human dignity, equity, nondiscrimination and respect for diversity. Please feel free to contact the Human Rights and Equity Advisor, Megan Fogarty if you have questions or concerns about equity in the classroom or in the StFX Community in general. Megan can be contacted by email at [mfogarty@stfx.ca](mailto:mfogarty@stfx.ca) or by telephone at 902-867-5306.

## **INFORMATION ABOUT REQUESTING AN ACCOMMODATION AT STFX**

If you have a disability and would like to request accommodations, please contact me during the first week of the semester so that your accommodations may be provided in a timely manner. The Tramble Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) provides assistance in determining and facilitating appropriate accommodations for students with verified disabilities. The Tramble Centre for Accessible Learning welcomes students with documented permanent disabilities and offers them a student-centred program of support. Located in Room 108 of the Angus L MacDonald Library, new and returning students meet with program staff to discuss options for support. The deadline for registering with the Centre is two weeks prior to the end of classes each semester and three business days' notice is required for booking all accommodated tests and exams. To book an appointment, go to the Tramble Room website: <https://www.mystfx.ca/accessible-learning/>

## **ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITIES**

Students are responsible for understanding and adhering to the requirements of this course as well as the academic regulations outlined in Chapter 3 of the Academic Calendar. I am responsible for maintaining the academic standards of St Francis Xavier University as well as of my discipline as I transmit knowledge about the course subject to the students and foster the development of critical academic reading, researching, analytical and writing skills.

**Best of luck with the semester!**