Welcome to Cultural Anthropology!

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Today’s Agenda

• Icebreaker & Introductions

• Go over syllabus/course outline

• Introductory lecture
Icebreaker Activity

Find someone who...

• Speaks at least 3 languages (trilingual)
• Has lived in another country for at least 8 months of their adult life
• knows the other 3 subfields of anthropology
• can identify the subject of this iconic image (w/o looking in the book! =-)
• Can identify the writer who coined the phrase “white man’s burden” (Hint:
  (author of the Jungle Book & Rikki Tikki Tavi)
Icebreaker Answers

• Trilingual students? Bilingual? Quadru-lingual?
• Living in another country for ~8 mos. or longer is akin to the experience of doing anthropological fieldwork
• Subfields?
  • Archaeology, biological/physical, linguistic
• Who is she?
• Rosie the Riveter: used to encourage that it was their patriotic duty to join the work force
• Rudyard Kipling...we’ll learn more about the phrase, the poem he wrote by the same name & the extent to which its damage was felt for several decades
Interview & present a classmate:

Now, please interview a fellow classmate regarding:

• Name (ask for last name too, I will be checking off roster as we go)
• Yr. of study & Course of Study
• Swap e-mail addresses (& phone #s if comfortable)
• Name story (Do they have a nickname, what does their name mean, or were they named after someone?)
What is anthropology?

• roots of the word, Greek origin:

  anthropos = man
  logos = word

• Thus, the synthesis would be:

  Knowledge about mankind, or modernized:
  the science of humankind

• What makes it unique from other disciplines that fit the same description?
Celebrating Human Diversity
Buzz words

• Diversity: there are many different ways of human, part of the beauty of being human
• Studying diversity: making sense of the complex & rich systems of meaning that make up culture
• Holistic: what does that mean?
  • whole of human condition: past, present & future
  • Celebrating diversity & understanding universals
• This, of course, is a tall order!
• Organized into subfields to manage such an all encompassing focus
Subfields

- Archaeology: human cultural diversity in the prehistoric past (midden)
- Biological/Physical: human genetic variation, primatology, human evolution
- Linguistic: not so much about the history & origins of languages & lang. families, rather focus on lang. as pwr., examining issues of class, gender, race, sexual orientation & lang.
- Cultural: human cultural diversity in the present day
Dimensions of Anthro

• Academic/Theoretical (Ivory Tower): focus is on research, accumulation of knowledge, formulation of theories, removed from the practical

• Applied/Action (Advocacy): what is advocacy?
  • focus is on putting that knowledge to work, utilizing it to act as advocates & help promote culturally sensitive programs & policies

• Of these two, one tends to predominate, which one?
Applied Anthro Example

• Medical anthro: has helped revolutionize our approach to medicine. Heard of acupuncture?
  Was illegal until a few decades ago, today not only is it legal, many insurance co’s will cover your visits.
  • Med. Anthro research & advocacy has established efficacy of tradit’nal practices,
  • Increasing awareness of dr’s bedside manner
  • Played a role in minimizing stigma against various illnesses
What is culture?

Brainstorm:
- Gender & sexuality
- Politics
- Styles of dress
- Values/beliefs
- Kinship
- Marriage
- Language & communication
- Art/music
- Food
Culture Is...

1. Learned: you’re not born w/ it, it’s not hardwired
   • Enculturat’n: process by which a child learns his/her culture

2. Shared: it’s not about one individ. person, culture is shared by a group of ppl., shared understandings
   Diff’t levels to culture of lrger & smller scale? Subcultures, (brainstorm)
3. Symbolic: we assign meaning to things & they become cultural, ex: our flag: stars & stripes stand for? Colors?
- White: Purity/Innocence, Red: Hardiness/Valor & Blue: Justice/Perserverance
- Wedding ring: is there an integral connect’n btwn the ring & the actual marriage?

4. Dynamic: Not fixed, always changing
- Original a symbol of a married, called?
- Bhindi mangal sutra
4. Culture is dynamic (cont’d)
   • Cultural constructions: the set of cultural meanings we attribute to a concept, the way we actively create the reality of that concept
   Ex.s: gender, race

5. Culture is adaptive & maladaptive (oft. Simultaneously)
   Ex.: China’s one child policy, how is it adaptive?
   Maladaptive?

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EirCpAByc2U&feature=related
Culture is...(cont’d)

- Adaptive & maladative (cont’d): @ home: automobiles
- How are they adaptive? Maladaptive?

6. Taken for granted: we don’t realize the degree to which it shapes & guides our percept’ns & worldview like a set of eyeglasses that put the world into focus

Ex.: Food
Culture is...

- W/in our context: veal as food & factory farming.

  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eOWQOXeJyUM&feature=related

  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CaHXA1LLB_l&feature=related
Culture is...

• Ethnocentrism: judging another culture/tradition by our own cultural standards/values
• Cultural relativism? attempting to suspend judgment when viewing another cult’l practice/tradition
• Another q to ask: is it poss. to take cultural relativism too far? Examples?
• Drawing the line w/ human rights violations
Why study culture?

• Multicultural world: in today’s mod. global economy, highly likely that the co. you work for will be multinat’l,
  • Multiculturalism: celebrat’n of cultural diversity, the belief that such diversity strengthens a nation rather than threaten’g it
  • ≠ melting pot: discuss
Why study anthro?

• Studying diversity helps us to better understand ourselves
• Emphasizes cross-cult’l teamwork
• Contributes to developm’t of cognitive complexity & helps w/ reconciling cult’l contradict’ns
• Provides well rounded foundation for active listening & facilitates social acuity
Nacirema article

- Miner: a pinnacle in the soc. Sciences
- As we read, think about the beliefs & practices of the Nacirema & what your thoughts are about them, bear in mind cult’l relativism
- Who are the Nacirema? Let’s spell it backwards…
- This article illustrates the prob’s of exoticization
- Exoticization is dehumanizing even when it’s not meant to be negative