ANTHROPOLOGY

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Anthropology is the scientific and humanistic study of cultural, physical, historical, and linguistic differences and similarities among humans. The discipline also seeks to understand and explain contexts of social inequalities by investigating power dynamics and identity constructions such as nationality, class, race, gender, and ethnicity. The program at Colby offers an introduction to cultural anthropology’s field methods, scope, and critical comparative analysis. Students receive training in anthropological theory and methodology and in the discipline’s engagement in solving social problems; firsthand experiences and participation in field programs investigating cultural diversity are encouraged. The department offers a major and a minor in anthropology.

Requirements for the Major in Anthropology

Ten courses, including: Anthropology 112, 313, 333, and one advanced seminar taken in the second semester of the senior year and chosen from courses at the 400 level; one culture area course normally selected from courses designated as such in the course description (consult your advisor for appropriate selections in any given semester); five elective courses, including at least two at the 300 level or equivalent. In addition to Anthropology 112, a maximum of one other anthropology course taught at the 100 level may be counted toward the major.

The point scale for retention of the major applies to all courses offered toward the major. No courses for the major may be taken satisfactory/unsatisfactory.

Honors in Anthropology

Seniors majoring in anthropology may apply for the honors program during the first two weeks of the fall semester. In addition to securing a faculty sponsor and department approval, the student must have a 3.25 overall grade point average and a 3.60 grade point average in the major. The program involves independent research conducted in Anthropology 483, 484. Honors normally will be taken for six to eight credits over two semesters, and the final product will be a thesis of 50 to 70 pages of superior quality.

Requirements for the Minor in Anthropology

Six courses, including Anthropology 112; one culture area course normally selected from courses designated as such in the course description (consult your advisor for appropriate selections in any given semester); and four additional courses in anthropology, two of which must be at the 300 or 400 level. In addition to Anthropology 112, a maximum of one other anthropology course taught at the 100 level may be counted toward the minor.

The point scale for retention of the minor applies to all courses offered toward the minor. No courses for the minor may be taken satisfactory/unsatisfactory.

Attention is called to the major in classical civilization-anthropology (requirements are listed in the “Classics” section of the catalogue).

Note: Anthropology 112 fulfills both the social sciences area (S) and the diversity (I) requirements. Subsequent courses, requiring 112 as prerequisite, do not carry those designations.

Course Offerings

AY112fs Cultural Anthropology  Introduction to the study of human societies and cultures through the concepts and methods of anthropology. Course material will (a) explore the great diversity of human social and cultural arrangements through the investigation of cultural communities around the world and the distinct ways their members experience and understand their lives and (b) investigate the larger historical, political, economic, and symbolic frameworks that shape contemporary human societies and cross-cultural interactions worldwide. Assignments emphasize clarity, concision, and coherence of written and oral arguments, as well as control over and understanding of course content.  

Four credit hours.  S, I.  FACULTY

AY119j The Anthropology of Utopias  Examines classic utopic and dystopic literature, philosophy, anthropology, art, and film from Plato to the present. Utopian literature involves anthropological reflection about the range of possibilities for human community and related anthropological themes of human social and cultural variability, conflict, and cooperation. Critically explores different utopian and dystopian discourses as vehicles for thinking about a world in crisis and its possible futures, as well as the effects these have on contemporary debates about politics and governance, citizenship, new technologies, media, family, and more.  

Three credit hours.  S.  HRISKOS
AY211s Human Rights and Social Justice in Global Perspective Listed as Global Studies 211. Four credit hours. RAZSA

[AY222] Maine's Musical Soundscapes: Ethnography of Maine Listed as Music 222. Four credit hours. A.

AY224s Border Crossers and New Neighbors: Immigrants in Maine This ethnographic humanities lab introduces students to immigrant experiences through readings and engagement with immigrant communities in Maine. We begin with intensive readings to gain expertise about different aspects of immigrant experiences, including the reasons for mobility, employment, family, religion, and identity. Background preparation enables students to work with preselected immigrant and immigrant support organizations to learn about their experiences and to collaborate in documentary production. Requires significant travel and student initiative. Part of the two-course cluster, Integrated Studies 224, "Global Maine." Four credit hours. S, U. BESTEMAN

[AY231] Caribbean Cultures Considers Caribbean people, places, products, and the webs of domination and resistance that formed and transformed the region and its diasporas. Ethnographies, films, food, music, memoir, and other texts tackle topics like empire building and dismantling; colonialism and postcolonialism; decolonization and displacement; development and underdevelopment; commodification and consumption; labor, revolution, and liberation. Cross-cultural and cross-temporal navigations develop an anthro-historical sensibility about the Caribbean's pivotal place in the world. Also listed as African-American Studies 231. Fulfills anthropology's culture area requirement. Prerequisite: Anthropology 112 or American Studies 276. Four credit hours. I.

[AY236] Illegal Drugs, Law, and the State Drawing on legal and political anthropology, we will examine the legal regimes and cultures of control that target the commerce and consumption of illegal drugs. We will consider the evolution of these policies, their role in the construction of the state, and their impact in a variety of historical moments and social worlds. Case studies will include prohibition, cocaine, medical and recreational use of marijuana, and alternative forms of political power facilitated by the drug trade, with a special focus on Latin America. Students will gain critical reading and presentation skills and will refine their writing and research skills through the production of an original case-study research project. Fulfills anthropology's culture area requirement. Prerequisite: Anthropology 112 or American Studies 276. Four credit hours. I.

AY242f Anthropology of Latin America: City Life An introduction to anthropological research on Latin America, with a particular focus on contemporary urban life. Cities attract migrants seeking new forms of communal life, educational, and economic opportunities and escaping war. We will examine the transformation of gender roles, political participation, and cultural production. Goals include learning to apply an anthropological lens to discussions of and gaining a basic knowledge of issues facing contemporary Latin America. Students will gain critical reading and discussion-facilitation skills and will refine their writing and research skills through the production of an original case-study research project. Fulfills anthropology's culture area requirement. Prerequisite: Anthropology 112. Four credit hours.

AY243j Globalization, Democracy, and Political Transformation in Bolivia Students will learn a range of perspectives on recent Bolivian history; gain the ability to analyze Bolivian politics, economy, and social relations; and identify and trace critical forms of interconnection between Bolivia and contemporary global systems. Based in Cochabamba, students will live with host families, hear from analysts and activists, gain an understanding of anthropological vocabulary and concepts, conduct original research, and reflect critically on international fieldwork. Scholarships are available through the Latin American Studies Program. Prerequisites: One year of college Spanish or equivalent, demonstrated interest in Latin America, and instructor permission. Three credit hours. S, I. TATE

AY244f Anthropology of Religion Introduces students to the anthropological study of religion, focusing on the lived experience of religion in a variety of historical, social, and cultural contexts. Examines religious symbols, ritual, possession, magic, and the relationship between religion and modernity. Cross-cultural investigation of diverse religious phenomena through ethnographic case studies, such as witchcraft in Sudan, voodoo in Brooklyn, and women's participation in the mosque movement in Egypt. Students will use concepts learned in class to design and carry out an independent research project on a relevant topic of their choosing. Prerequisite: Anthropology 112. Four credit hours. I.

AY246f Engaging Muslim Worlds Introduces students to the anthropology of Muslim societies. We will examine the ways that anthropologists and Muslims have made sense of Islam as a global religion and its local manifestations in different cultural contexts. Through reading works by anthropologists, journalists, and activists, students will consider key theoretical approaches to the study of pluralism, the relationship between religious knowledge and practice, the Islamic revival, syncretism, and modernity. We will investigate these issues in places as varied as Lebanon, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Mayotte. Fulfills anthropology's culture area requirement. Prerequisite: Anthropology 112. Four credit hours. I.

AY248f Anthropological Perspective on Science and Religion Cross-cultural research ranging from ethnographies of in vitro fertilization in Ecuador to religious healing in Madagascar to fetal personhood in the United States introduces students to new cultural perspectives on the relationship of science and religion. Ongoing written and oral discussion of case studies will enable students to gain facility with key theoretical models used to study the cultural politics of science and technology as well as the moral dilemmas of scientific
applications. Students will apply these analytical concepts in a final research project on a topic of their own selection. Previously listed as AY298B (Spring 2013). Prerequisite: Anthropology 112. Four credit hours. HALVORSON

AY255s Global Health: Critical Perspectives on Health, Care, and Policy Listed as Global Studies 255. Four credit hours. S. EL-SHAARAWI

AY256f Land, Food, Culture, and Power An examination of cultural and political aspects of land and other resource use in contexts of culture contact and/or social change, drawing from a variety of ethnographic examples in different parts of the world. A focus on varied subsistence and resource management systems explores how local forms of livelihood have been incorporated into and challenged by national and global economic relations and structures through processes of colonization and the growth of transnational capitalism. Human/Nature theme course. Prerequisite: Anthropology 112. Four credit hours. MILLS

AY258s Anthropology, History, Memory Anthropologists have depicted cultural systems as timeless, paying limited attention to how historical experiences produce, and how they are shaped by, everyday beliefs and actions. Examines the significance of history for anthropological understanding and vice versa. Investigates how different cultures construct the past and how the past shapes everyday lives, our own and others. Explores sites such as myths, monuments, bodies, and archives. Questions what is the past? How is it present? How do societies remember? How do they forget? Topics include technology, time, travel, commemoration, war. Formerly offered as Anthropology 298B. Prerequisite: Anthropology 112 or American Studies 276 or a 100-level history course. Four credit hours. BHIMULL

AY261f Japanese Language and Culture Listed as East Asian Studies 261. Fulfills anthropology's culture area requirement. Four credit hours. S. ABE

AY262s Music in Life, Music as Culture: Introduction to Ethnomusicology Listed as Music 262. Four credit hours. A, I. GUBNER

[AY268] Politics of Satire and Humor in Modern China Listed as East Asian Studies 268. Fulfills anthropology's culture area requirement. Four credit hours. S, I.

[AY274] Africans in America: The New Diaspora African immigration to the United States, while still small, has grown dramatically during the past few decades. The new African diaspora is characterized by family networks that span the Atlantic, by struggles within these networks about cultural heritage, authenticity, language politics, and intergenerational relations, by questions about responsibility and obligation across borders, and by complicated identity issues of race and belonging. We will examine these questions through reading novels, essays, and ethnography and by engaging the ways in which these issues are represented in film, music, and art produced by Africans in the new diaspora, and with guest speakers. Three credit hours. S, U.

AY276s African-American Culture in the United States Listed as American Studies 276. Fulfills anthropology's culture area requirement. Four credit hours. S, U. GILKES

[AY277] Culture of Cuteness: Japanese Women (in English) Listed as East Asian Studies 277. Fulfills anthropology's culture area requirement. Four credit hours. S, D, I.

AY278s Language and Gender Listed as East Asian Studies 277. Four credit hours. S, I. ABE

AY297f Global Displacement: Understanding Refugees and Refugee Policy Listed as Global Studies 297. Four credit hours. EL-SHAARAWI

AY297J Of Beasts, Pets, and Wildlife: What Animals Mean to Humans Explores human-animal relations in cross-cultural and historical perspective to view the centrality of animals to human existence. Considers the social, symbolic, and economic uses of animals in a variety of contexts, from cockfighting in Bali to the corporate culture of Sea World to central Maine farms. Examines the history and philosophies of the animal rights movement from the anti-vivisection campaigns of 19th-century England to contemporary animal rights protests in the United States. Concludes with an analysis of human animality and animal subjectivity to arrive at a deeper understanding of both human and non-human animals. Prerequisite: Anthropology 112 or Philosophy 113 or 114. Three credit hours. MENAIR

AY298As Goods, Gifts, and Globalizing Consumers Explores the global cultural diversity and social embeddedness of economic practice. Students gain analytical tools to critically examine global capitalism, consumption/consumerism, markets and their myriad social dimensions through a focus on transactions, exchange, social obligation, class distinction, and labor activities. In-depth case studies apply.
these insights to debates on topics such as debt, economic inequality, class, and the limits of commodification. Readings, films, and other materials highlight the rich diversity of anthropological perspectives on economic practice, from ethnographies of Wall Street to Malaysian factory work to middle-class formation in Nepal. Prerequisite: Anthropology 112. Four credit hours. S. HALVORSON

AY313fs Researching Cultural Diversity Focus on ethnography as both the central research strategy of anthropologists and the written text produced by such research. Examines anthropological methods of data collection and ethnographic writing as these encompass not only the discipline's historical focus on localized communities but also contemporary understandings of connections to global processes, the analysis of complex inequalities, and a reflexive and engaged relationship with the human world. Explores practical strategies for conducting ethnographic research, including interviewing, observation, and other modes of qualitative data collection, the ethical issues presented by such research, and the application of analytical and theoretical models. Prerequisite: Anthropology 112, a 200-level anthropology course, a W1 course, and sophomore standing. Four credit hours. HALVORSON, TATE

AY333fs Contemporary Theory An analysis of the contemporary state of cultural anthropology through the investigation of contemporary theoretical approaches of central importance to the discipline. Examination of key theoretical concepts and their relevance for designing research questions, generating ethnographic perspectives, and building anthropological knowledge. Special attention to political economy, symbolic anthropology, poststructuralism, reflexive anthropology, postmodernism, and feminist and postcolonial anthropology. Assignments include both written and oral modes of analysis; strong emphasis on discussion and collaborative debate. Prerequisite: Anthropology 112, a 200-level anthropology course, a W1 course, and junior or senior standing. Four credit hours. BESTEMAN, BHIMULL

AY339f Asian Pacific Modernities Dramatic changes, particularly in the latter half of the 20th century, have transformed social and cultural expectations throughout the Asia Pacific region. Across Asia, everyday life is profoundly shaped by processes of globalization and powerful discourses of modernity. What does it require to make oneself a modern citizen in Thailand, Japan, China, or the Philippines? How do people live, shop, and entertain themselves on a daily basis? Through case studies and independent research, students explore the region's dynamic social and cultural transformations, with particular emphasis on East and Southeast Asia. Fulfills anthropology's culture area requirement. Prerequisite: Anthropology 112. Four credit hours. MILLS

AY341f Culture, Mobility, Identity: Encounters in the African Diaspora Use of text, film, food, and music to examine how African and African-descended people made and remade the modern world. Surveys how past and present cultural practices dialogically shaped the formation, transformation, and flows of the diaspora. Attention to the dynamics of circulation, contact, exchange, and estrangement facilitates travels through the Afro-Atlantic world. Inquiry into archives and other sites of memory enables consideration of the scale, scope, and impact of black action and imagination. Fulfills anthropology's culture area requirement. Prerequisite: Anthropology 112 or American Studies 276. Four credit hours. S, I. BHIMULL

[AY352] Global Activism: From Socialist Internationalism to Occupy Listed as Global Studies 352. Four credit hours. S.

[AY353] Globalization and Human Rights in China Listed as East Asian Studies 353. Fulfills anthropology's culture area requirement. Four credit hours. S.

AY355f Aging and Public Policy in East Asia Listed as East Asian Studies 355. Four credit hours. S, I. ZHANG

AY361s Militaries, Militarization, and War Examines the ways in which military conflict and institutions shape and are shaped by cultural, economic, and political forces in contemporary societies, especially in the Americas. Topics include the role of military service in creating and reinforcing gender norms, citizenship, and national identities; the ways in which war and militarized violence are experienced and commemorated; and ongoing controversy over counterinsurgency, internal defense, and modern forms of warfare. Students will develop their ethnographic skills through research and presentations. Formerly offered as Anthropology 398B. Prerequisite: Anthropology 112. Four credit hours. S. TATE

[AY363] Secrecy and Power This seminar examines the use of secrecy in political, religious, and social contexts. Students will engage with theoretical, ethnographic, and historical texts to trace the development of key analytical, methodological, and ethical issues concerning the anthropological study of concealment. Topics will vary according to student interest but may include transparency, surveillance, publicity, privacy, passing, argots, codes and ciphers, dissimulation, esotericism, and epistemology. Students will complete an independent research project on the use of secrecy in a historical or social context of their choosing. Prerequisite: Anthropology 112. Four credit hours. I.


AY373f The Anthropology of Gender and Sexuality Gender and sexuality represent fundamental categories of human social and
cultural experience; in every human society, understandings about gender and sexuality constitute powerful aspects of individual identity that shape and are shaped by key aspects of social relations and cultural belief. Yet specific beliefs and social structures vary tremendously across cultures. An investigation of the varied ethnography of gender and sexuality as well as important theoretical concerns: how meanings are attached to the human body, production and reproduction of gender hierarchies, and processes by which gender and sexual meanings (and associated social forms) may be transformed or contested in societies. Prerequisite: Anthropology 112 and a 200-level or higher anthropology course.  Four credit hours.  U.  MILLS

AY374f  Public Anthropology  An exploration of innovative ways in which anthropology is used for proactive, public engagement in policy implementation and transformative social action. We review the history of disciplinary efforts at public engagement and experiment with our own approaches to engagement using ethnography, cultural critique, and collaborative methodologies. Students will develop oral and written communication skills through individual and collaborative projects, experiment with different ethnographic genres, and assess the effectiveness of different approaches to public engagement. Previously offered as Anthropology 397A (Fall 2013). Prerequisite: Anthropology 112.  Four credit hours.  BESTEMAN

AY421s  Anthropology of Creativity  Creativity is a vital part of cultural life and social transformation. Anthropologists have long traced its meanings and manifestations across different historical and cultural contexts, from ethnographies of the extraordinary and collective to the study of the ordinary and individual. We will explore a range of topics relevant to the critical investigation of human capacities for and responses to possibility, destruction, spontaneity, empathy, radical imagination, structural oppression, and social emancipation. Creative expressions considered include poetry, dance, music, social media, experimental ethnography, Afrofuturism, and other aesthetic realms. Prerequisite: Anthropology 112, and 313 or 333 (either may be taken concurrently).  Four credit hours.  BHIMULL

[AY437]  Media, Culture, and the Political Imagination  Listed as Global Studies 437.  Four credit hours.

AY451f  Justice and Injustice in Global Europe  Listed as Global Studies 451.  Four credit hours.  RAZSA

AY455s  Intervention: The Ethics and Politics of Humanitarianism  Listed as Global Studies 455.  Four credit hours.  S.  EL-SHAARAWI

[AY462]  Global Mobilities: Movements, Modernities, Citizenships  In today's world, dramatic flows of people, goods, and ideas enable claims to new (and newly imaginable) identities while at the same time challenging familiar norms and social structures. Ethnographic case studies from Asia, the United States, and elsewhere explore the diverse ways in which contemporary modernities, citizenships, and mobilities constitute dynamic fields of social meaning as well as critical arenas of cultural, political, and social struggle. Students will design and carry out a significant independent research project exploring course themes resulting in a substantive analytical paper and an oral presentation. Prerequisite: Anthropology 112, one 300-level or two 200-level anthropology courses, a W1 course, and senior standing.  Four credit hours.

AY464s  Anthropology of Food  Food is essential to human life. Yet the significance of food for human being extends far beyond calories and nutrition. What counts as food is deeply shaped by cultural meanings and associations. Food can signify distinctive cultural identities; it can mark proud or shameful histories and global connections; it can point to (or obscure) deeply embedded structures of power and relations of inequality and privilege, both within and across diverse societies. Food offers rich fields for anthropological theorizing and fruitful avenues for extending critical research skills. Course work culminates in an independent, original research project and oral presentation. Human/Nature theme course. Prerequisite: Anthropology 112, and 313 or 333 (either may be taken concurrently), and junior or higher standing.  Four credit hours.  MILLS

AY483fj  Honors in Anthropology  Prerequisite: Senior standing, admission to the honors program, and permission of the supervising faculty member.  Three or four credit hours.  FACULTY


AY491f, 492s  Independent Study  Individual topics in areas where the student has demonstrated the interest and competence necessary for independent work. Prerequisite: Permission of the instructor.  Two to four credit hours.  FACULTY