

Course Description
SOCM17-101 Culture: Definitions and Dimensions

Leading Lecturer: Nguyen Luu Lan Anh

Aim of the course

The purpose of the course is to give an overview of cultural anthropology - especially its approach; to present current trends and the links between anthropology and other disciplines.

Learning outcome, competences

Knowledge:

- Learning the basic concepts and paradigms of cultural anthropology
- Learning about the notion of culture
- Learning methodology for understanding culture
- Students understand the connections between different aspects of culture

Attitude:

- Students become open to the different interpretive frameworks in an intercultural context
- Students strive to understand and be open to different cultural frames and functions
- Students could accept the legitimacy of cultural differences and the importance of cultural identities.

Ability:

- Students come to adhere to cultural relativism instead of ethnocentrism

Content of the course

Topics of the course

The course introduces the basic concepts of cultural anthropology, its history, main methods as well as the major theoretical trends from the beginnings to the present, focusing on the discussion of the concept of culture. The course discusses the development of the concept of culture and analyzes the importance of its incorporation into the methodology of various disciplines. It shows how the introduction of cultural points of view and the recognition of their importance have contributed to the development of these disciplines and broadened their perspectives. We will emphasize the importance of the unique anthropological method, fieldwork based on participant observation. Besides this, we will deal with the notion of identity, ethnicity and cultural adaptivity and get an insight on some subfields of cultural anthropology e.g. social anthropology, economic anthropology or the anthropology of religion.

Learning activities, teaching methods

Lecture, discussion, group work, pair work, essay

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Evaluation of outcomes

Learning requirements, mode of evaluation, criteria of evaluation:
requirements

- Oral exam at the end of the course
- Essay - either „thick description” or in-depth interview report

Mode of evaluation: oral exam

The grade is calculated the following way:

- classroom activity: 10%
- essay / case study : 40%
- exam results: 50%

Criteria of evaluation:

- Understanding the course materials and the connection between different concepts.
- Ability to apply knowledge in the essay.

Reading list

Compulsory reading list

Eriksen, T.H. (1995) *Small places, large issues: an introduction to social and cultural anthropology (Anthropology, culture, and society)*. London, Pluto Press. 9.-24., 24.-40., 93-108, 108-124, 124-142, 193-209., 261-265.

American Anthropological Association (2012) *Statement on Ethics: Principles of Professional Responsibilities*. Arlington, VA: American Anthropological Association.

<http://www.aaanet.org/profdev/ethics/upload/Statement-on-Ethics-Principles-of-Professional-responsibility.pdf>

Barley, Nigel (1992) *The Innocent Anthropologist: Notes from a Mud Hut*. New York, Henry Holt and Company. chapter 1.,12.,13.

Geertz, C. (1993) Thick Description. Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture. In *The Interpretation of Cultures*. London. Fontana. 3-30.

Geertz, C. (1993) Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight. In *The Interpretation of Cultures*. London. Fontana. 412-455.

Helman, Cecil (2007) *Culture, Health and Illness*. Chapter 1: Introduction: the scope of medical anthropology. Chapter 11: Cultural aspects of stress and suffering

Kluckhohn, Clyde (1942) Myths and Rituals: A general theory. *The Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. 35, No. 1. pp. 45-79

Barth, F. (1994). Introduction In *Ethnic groups and boundaries: the social organization of culture difference*. Oslo. Scandinavian University Press.