Anthropology 342: Nature/Culture Now!
Debates Across Biological and Cultural Anthropology

Winter 2016, M/W 1:00-2:30
269 Weiser

Contestations over the primacy of nature or culture in the shaping of human bodies and behaviors drove some of the most heated debates of twentieth century American life. Divisive battles over racial difference, women’s rights, homosexuality and the origins of illness continue to be fought through claims about biological determinism and cultural construction.

This course, co-taught by a biological and a cultural anthropologist, investigates the ongoing power of this opposition through an examination of anthropology’s central role in formulating the nature/culture dichotomy itself. We begin with a unit on the very recent historical underpinnings of the nature/culture debate, both within anthropology and in American life more generally, and proceed with three case studies, exploring current biological and cultural approaches to race, sex and disease.

Throughout the course, students will be challenged to become conversant with both biological and cultural approaches to human bodies and behavior. Each unit will end with a class wide conversation. Debate will be a central part of the class experience. Our goal is to teach students how to think, not what to think.

Instructors

Dr. Elizabeth Roberts
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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 12:00-1:00

Dr. Abigail Bigham
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Office Hours: Wed., 3:00-4:00
Requirements and Course Structure

Advisory suggestion: Anthropology 101

Attendance: Attendance in lectures and sections is mandatory. Students will be responsible for all material covered in the lectures, and active participation in section will be an important component of the overall grade for the course. Absences will result in a significant lowering of your course grade. We do recognize, however, that serious problems may arise that absolutely prevent you from attending class. You may therefore have up to 2 absences from lecture and 2 absences from section. Any more will affect your final grade or evaluation. You cannot pass this course if you have more than 6 total absences in lecture and section combined.

Readings: The single most important component of the course is the weekly readings. The materials have been chosen for their readability and value in illuminating various aspects of the nature/culture debate. Readings will usually average 80-150 pages per week, and will need to be done carefully to derive anything substantive from the course, as well as to prepare for the exams and papers. It is critical students keep up with the weekly reading, as it will form the basis for discussions in lectures and section and the foundation for all of our other activities. We reserve the right to change or modify (within reason) this syllabus and reading assignments when necessary.

Papers: Students will write two 5 page papers (bibliography not included) over the course of the semester. Papers will be graded based on critical thinking and analysis, organization and writing quality. The first paper is 15% of your grade, the second paper is 25% of your grade (40% total).

Exams: Two exams will be administered during the semester. The exams will be based on lecture topics and readings assignments. Each exam is worth 20% of your grade (40% total).

Discussion section: During the discussion section of the course, you will complete activities that reinforce the topics covered in lecture and will discuss assigned readings. GSI’s will facilitate class discussion. Please come up with 1 question per week that synthesizes ideas from all assigned articles. These questions should be used to facilitate in-class discussion. They should not be too simplistic or superficial. All questions should be submitted to Forums on ctools by 5PM the day before your discussion section. All students are expected to actively participate in section discussions (20%).
Email Policy

Email correspondence should be sent to your instructors, Abigail Bigham or Liz Roberts, ONLY in the case of an emergency or if you need to schedule an in-person meeting outside of our regularly scheduled office hours. In our experience, most emailed questions are answered by simply reading this syllabus. If you have a simple question that is not covered by the syllabus, please ask us in person before or after lecture. This is much more efficient for everyone than sending an email. If you have a complex question, please come see us during our regularly scheduled office hours. If you have a schedule conflict with this time slot, you may email to set up a time. In your email subject, please include the following information: AnthrBIO 342 or AnthrCul342 student meeting request.

Books and Articles
Readings: Individual articles are available on CTools under “Resources”.

At the Bookstore:

GRADING AND POINTS BREAKDOWN

**Papers.** 40% (200 points)
- Paper 1  15%
- Paper 2  25%

**Exams.** 40% (200 points)
- Exam 1  15%
- Exam 2  25%

**Discussion section.** 20% (100 points)
In-section participation and discussion questions - 20%

**Total points=500**

Any questions about grades or attendance must first be directed to your GSI. If the issue cannot be resolved, the instructor can be consulted. The instructor’s decision, whether to lower, raise, or keep the grade the same, will be final.
Other Stuff

● Arrive on time to class with your cell phone turned off.
● Do not plagiarize. You will fail the assignment and possibly the class. If you are not entirely clear about what constitutes plagiarism, please talk to your GSI.
● Disability Services: Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) provides services to students with visual impairments, learning disabilities, mobility impairments, hearing impairments, chronic health problems and psychological disabilities, so they may enjoy a complete range of academic and nonacademic opportunities. Information on their services can be found here http://ssd.umich.edu/contact/index.html
● University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at (734) 764-8312 and https://caps.umich.edu/ during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or through its counselors physically located in schools on both North and Central Campus. You may also consult University Health Service (UHS) at (734) 764-8320 and https://www.uhs.umich.edu/mentalhealthsvcs, or for alcohol or drug concerns, see www.uhs.umich.edu/aodresources. For a listing of other mental health resources available on and off campus, visit: http://umich.edu/~mhealth/.
● Religious Accommodations: Students who expect to miss class or an assignment because of a religious holiday or event will be given a reasonable alternative opportunity to make up those points. You must notify us by the end of the second week of class if you have a schedule conflict related to a religious event.

Course Schedule – Lectures and Readings

UNIT I. A HISTORY OF THE NATURE/CULTURE DEBATE IN ANTHROPOLOGY

January 6. Course Introduction – An Experiment Across Sub-disciplines
  • “Letting Go Of Normal” - Anne Fausto-Sterling

January 11. The Origins of Nature/Culture
Readings:

January 13. History of Evolutionary Thought
Readings:


**January 18. No class, MLK day**

**January 20. Developing Nature/Culture in American Anthropology**

Readings:
- Carl N. Degler, “In the Wake of Boas” In *In Search of Human Nature: The Decline and Revival of Darwinism in American Social Thought*.

**January 25. The Promotion of Culture**

Readings:
- Margaret Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa: A Psychological Study of Primitive Youth for Western Civilization*, (1928) Foreword, Introduction,
- Derek Freeman, “Reflections of a Heretic” *The Evolutionist*, 1996

**January 27. Social Darwinism and Eugenics**

Readings:

**February 1. Nature/Culture an Anthropological Conversation**

- Students will submit a question for the class conversation by February Jan 29.

Readings:

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**UNIT II. RACE**

**February 3. Cultural Anthropology and Unmaking Race**

Readings:
- Franz Boas, “Race and Progress” *Science* 74, #4, 1931,
- “1950 Unesco Statement on Race”
- Amade M’Charek “Beyond Fact or Fiction: On the Materiality of Race in Practice.

**February 8. Cultural Anthropology and the Reality of Race**

Readings:
- Peter Wade, “Race Nature and Culture”, *Man* Vol 28 #1, 17-34

**February 10. The Biological Basis of Race (or Lack Thereof)**

Readings:

Listen to:
National Public Radio (NPR), Science Friday Podcast, January 21, 2010.

**February 15. Is Race Biologically Meaningful?**

Readings:

**February 17. Race in Anthropology—A Conversation**

- **First paper due**
- **Students will submit a question for the class conversation by February 15.**

**February 22. First Exam Review**

**February 24. First Exam**

**Feb 29/March 2. Spring Break**

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**UNIT III. SEX**

**March 7. Biological Determination of Sex**

Readings:
- Anne Fausto-Sterling - *Sex/Gender Biology in a Social World*, Preface through Chapter 3.

**March 9. Sex Differences in Behavior**
Readings:
- TBA
- Anne Fausto-Sterling - *Sex/Gender Biology in a Social World*, Chapters 4 and 5.

**March 14. Culture and Sex**
Readings:
- Bronislaw Malinowski, “The Relations Between the Sexes in Tribal Life” In *The Sexual Life of Savages*, 1929
- Mary Weistmantel - “Moche Sex Pots: Reproduction and Temporality in Ancient South America”
- Anne Fausto-Sterling - *Sex/Gender Biology in a Social World*, Chapters 6 and 7.

**March 16. Sex/Gender and the Material Body**
Readings:
- Anne Fausto-Sterling - *Sex/Gender Biology in a Social World*, Chapters 8, 9, 10.

**March 21. Sex – An Anthropological Conversation**
- *Students will submit a question for the class conversation by March 19.*

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**UNIT IV. HEALTH AND DISEASE**

**March 23. Illness as a Cultural System**
Readings:
- Lesley Doyal, “Health Illness and Underdevelopment.”

**March 28. Disease in Place and Time**
Readings:
- Duana Fullwiley, “Revaluating Genetic Causation: Biology, Economy and Kinship in Dakar Senegal” American Ethnologist 37 #4 638-661.

**March 30. Western Formations of Disease**
Readings:

April 4. Developmental Origins of Health and Disease (DOHaD)
Readings:
• TBA

April 6. Health and Disease – An Anthropological Conversation
• Students will submit a question for the class conversation by April 4.
Readings:

• Second paper due
• Students will submit a question for the class conversation by April 9.
Readings:

April 13. Second Exam Review

April 18. Second Exam