

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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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:

- *The Mirage of a Space Between Nature and Nurture*, Evelyn Fox Keller, 2010, Duke University Press.
- *Sex/Gender Biology in a Social World*, Anne Fausto Sterling, 2012, Routledge.

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:

- Evelyn Fox Keller “Introduction” in *The Mirage of Space Between Nature and Culture*, 2010.
- John Stuart Mill, “Innate Differences and the Regulation of Reproduction”. *Studies in History, Philosophy, Biology and Biomedical Sciences*. 2008
- Raymond Williams, Selections from *Key Words (Anthropology, Culture, Evolution, Individual, Nature)*. 1983.

January 13. History of Evolutionary Thought

Readings:

- Charles Darwin, Chapter XIV “Recapitulation and Conclusion” of *The Origin of Species*, v- 87. 2010 (1859). Cricket House Books.
- Ulrich Kutschera & Karl Niklas (2004) “The modern theory of biological evolution: an expanded synthesis”. *Naturwissenschaften*. 91:255-276.

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*.
- Alfred L. Kroeber, “The Superorganic” *American Anthropologist* 19(2): 163-213, 1917. Abridged Version - With Intro by Alex Golub.

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:

- Nicholas W. Gillham (2001) “Sir Francis Galton and the Birth of Eugenics” *Annual Review of Genetics*, 35:83-101.

February 1. Nature/Culture an Anthropological Conversation

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

Readings:

- Evelyn Fox Keller, *The Mirage of a Space Between Nature and Nurture*, Chapter 1-4, 2010, Duke University Press.

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

- John Hartigan, “Mexican Genomics and the Roots of Racial Thinking”. *Cultural Anthropology* 28 #3, 372-395

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

Readings:

- Jonathan Marks, “Race: Past, Present and Future” (2008) in *Revisiting Race in a Genomic Age* edited by B. Koenig, S. Lee, and S. Richardson. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, pp. 21-38.
- Nina Jablonski and George Chaplin (2010) “Human skin pigmentation as an adaptation to UV radiation”, *PNAS* 107:8962-8968.

Listen to:

- Esteban González Burchard, Pilar Ossorio, Alan Goodman, “Is there a Biological Basis for Race?” <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=122620064> National Public Radio (NPR), Science Friday Podcast, January 21, 2010.

February 15. Is Race Biologically Meaningful?

Readings:

- Michael Bamshad et al., (2004) “Deconstructing the Relationship Between Genetics and Race”, *Nature Reviews Genetics* 5:598-609.
- Clarence Gravlee, (2009). “How Race Becomes Biology: Embodiment of Social Inequality” *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 139:47–57.

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:

- Sarah Blaffer Hardy, (1990) “Sex bias in nature and in history: A late 1980s reexamination of the “biological origins” argument.” *Yearbook of Physical Anthropology* 33:25–37.
- 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:

- Pamela L. Geller, "Conceiving Sex: Fomenting a feminist bioarchaeology", *Journal of Social Archaeology*, 8:113-138, 2008.
- Eric Plemmons, "Envisioning the body in relation: Finding Sex, Changing Sex". In *The Body Reader: Essential Social and Cultural Readings.* 2010.
- 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:

- Arthur Kleinman, "Concepts and a model for the comparison of medical systems as cultural systems" *Social Science and Medicine*, 1978.
- Lesley Doyal, "Health Illness and Underdevelopment."

March 28. Disease in Place and Time

Readings:

- Margaret Lock and Vinh- Kim Nguyen, "Local Biologies and Human Difference", In *An Anthropology of BioMedicine*, Wiley Blackwell, 2010.
- 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:

- Andrea Wiley, (2004) "Drink Milk for Fitness': The cultural politics of human biological

variation and milk consumption in the United States” *American Anthropologist*, 106:506-517.

- John S. Allen and Susan M. Cheer, (1996) “The non-thrifty genotype” *Current Anthropology*, 37:831-842.

April 4. Developmental Origins of Health and Disease (DOHaD)

Readings:

- Gluckman et. al (2007) “Early life events and their consequences for later disease: A life history and evolutionary perspective” *American Journal of Human Biology*, 19:1-19.
- TBA

April 6. Health and Disease – An Anthropological Conversation

- ***Students will submit a question for the class conversation by April 4.***

Readings:

- Margaret Lock, “The Epigenome and Nature/Nurture Reunification: A Challenge for Anthropology” *Medical Anthropology*, 32, 291-308, 2013.

April 11. Nature/Culture Now? – A Class Wide Conversation

- ***Second paper due***
- ***Students will submit a question for the class conversation by April 9.***

Readings:

- Eva Jablonka and Marion J. Lamb, “Putting Humpty Dumpty Together Again” in *Evolution in Four Dimensions*, 239-393. MIT Press, 2005.
- Augustin Fuentes, “A New Synthesis: Resituating Approaches to the Evolution of Human Behavior” *Anthropology Today* 25(3), 2009.

April 13. Second Exam Review

April 18. Second Exam