



# ANTH270: Cultural Diversity & Ethics Semester 'Yr Section 9xx-9xx

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## Catalog Description:

Examination of the cultural construction of ethical values and how cultural diversity, including beliefs, values and ways of doing business, impacts human technological innovation. Focuses on developing a holistic, social-science mindset and application of critical thinking skills.

## About this Course

This course uses real-world examples, experiences and case studies to explore contemporary ethical issues born of the diverse nature of human culture globally and our intellectual creations and technological innovations. In this writing intensive ('W'), collaborative and reflective class, we will use an anthropological mindset to develop the communication and critical-thinking skills needed to effectively examine the human condition. This course may challenge your assumptions of 'normal'. This course would be especially beneficial to any person intending to work or live in any culturally diverse or international environment, because this course encourages reflection upon one's personal and professional responsibility, values, culture and ethics in relation to regional, national and global contexts.

## Student Learning Outcomes

On the successful completion of this course the student will:

- ☑ Develop and improve written and verbal communication, and critical thinking skills.

- ☑ Critically appraise how diversity of ideas, technology, innovations, values, beliefs and other aspects of culture shape the decisions we make and affect the human experience.
- ☑ Investigate, compare and debate how using a holistic mindset and incorporating different experiences, cultures or ethical perspectives may change a perceived problem, process or project.
- ☑ Identify, explain and discuss the concepts of professionalism, social responsibility, personal responsibility, ethnocentrism, critical cultural relativism, worldview, ethos (spirit of the culture), axiology (what is valued) and epistemology (how we know what we know).
- ☑ Hypothesize and explore how these concepts (listed above) apply to your chosen discipline or subject of interest.
- ☑ Be better prepared to effectively work in diverse, international or multicultural teams and environments.

" EDUCATION IS NOT THE LEARNING OF FACTS, BUT TRAINING THE MIND TO THINK."  
- ALBERT EINSTEIN

Photograph by: Tammy Vora | GAspire.com | Flickr.com/photos/tmvera

## About your Professor

Dr. Catharina Laporte  
Cultural Anthropologist

🏠: ANTH 227

Office Hours: Tues & Thurs, 12:30 - 2pm or by appointment.

☎: (979) 845 5242

✉: [claporte@tamu.edu](mailto:claporte@tamu.edu)

## Why Anthropology?

Anthropology, and its sub-discipline Archeology, is the holistic study of humanity both past and present. Anthropology is a very diverse subject and discipline—it is the perfect choice for anyone who loves to have their fingers in lots of pies!



That is because anthropology is a meta-discipline; it integrates knowledge generated from lots of different disciplines such as philosophy, history, economics, business, psychology, sociology, political science, gender and minority studies, as well as traditional hard sciences like geography, computer science, biology, chemistry, and physics.

At Texas A&M University, in addition to having an Anthropology Department, anthropologists are faculty in numerous other departments including Recreation, Parks and Tourism, Architecture, Health Sciences, and International Studies. For all majors, the meta-discipline of anthropology provides

an ideal window to the wonderfully diverse nature of humanity.

See [anthropology.tamu.edu](http://anthropology.tamu.edu) for more information.

## Class meeting information

### Large Class Meetings

In EABA121 Here's the MapLink:

<http://aggiemap.tamu.edu?bldg=04605>



Sections 901-904 Tues 2:20- 3:35pm

### Small Class Meetings

In ANTH237 Here's the MapLink"

<http://aggiemap.tamu.edu?bldg=0477>



Section 901 Wed 8:00-9:15am  
Section 902 Wed 9:35 – 10:50am  
Section 903 Wed 9:35 – 10:50am  
Section 904 Wed 9:35 – 10:50am

## Course Structure

This course meets two times a week. The first meeting of the week is a 'large' class of no more than 100 students. The second meeting of the week, led by a teaching assistant, is a smaller group of no more than 25 students.

The class is divided into Learning Modules that are available in eCampus. You are expected to have completed the Learning modules *prior to class noted on the schedule (last page of this syllabus).*

The course, and its modules, is structured in a way that acknowledges that students have different learning styles. Each module will have some time devoted different modes of learning: watching, listening and doing. Additionally, the course is structured to allow for more active learning and interaction with the instructor, the community and other students. For example, you will be actively researching materials that contribute to class discussions, and we will sometimes have guest speakers in class.



## Core Curriculum Learning Objectives

### Critical Thinking (creating thinking, innovation, inquiry, analysis, etc.)

- ☑ The formative learning modules in this class combined with a problem-solving flow-chart integrated throughout the course, purposefully introduce concepts that add to a student's ability to think critically about their own worldview, their own projects and areas of interest, as well as current global events.
- ☑ Assignments require students to independently research and holistically evaluate the ethical consistency and cultural foundations of different viewpoints and perspectives, analyze and interpret data, and justify interpretations.
- ☑ Students are encouraged to explore their assumptions and biases during in-class and online discussions, and large and small-group activities.

### Communication (effective development, interpretation, & expression through written, oral, and visual communication)

- ☑ Students will develop written communication skills through formative weekly quick tasks, reflection papers and responses, and a cumulative final written project.
- ☑ Visual communication skills will be developed via assignments that require students to visually

represent data, as well as through in-class discussions of data representations relevant to course topics.

- ☑ Anthropology is visually or non-verbally oriented discipline; students will practice interviewing and observing humans, interpreting their actions and non-verbal communications, and synthesizing these data within their worldview or projects.
- ☑ Students will develop oral communication skills via discussions with their peers, the course facilitators, guest speakers and industry representatives. These will include discussions of potentially charged topics in diverse settings.

### Social Responsibility (intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, etc.)

- ☑ Students will develop social responsibility through their exploration of numerous cultures. To achieve this, students will engage in role-playing, watch documentaries, read ethnographies and newsworthy articles, listen to podcasts and interact with guest speakers and industry representatives, and discuss and debate Western and non-Western ethical problems and solutions.
- ☑ Students will be required to explore different cultural viewpoints in their assignments and consider the balance between differing ethical approaches.

### Personal Responsibility (ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making)

- ☑ Students will develop personal responsibility through their exploration of the cultural construction of morality and the evaluation of normative ethical approaches.
- ☑ Students will engage in meta-reflexivity; why do they think the way that they do? How does this thinking impact their ability to make decisions and think critically about a problem or encounter? Students will come away from this class with a greater understanding of themselves, and their personal responsibility and position in society.
- ☑ Weekly assessment requires the student to engage and plan their workday
- ☑ Because of the collaborative and interactive nature of this class, especially the peer review and feedback on both RJs and FPs, students should have great personal responsibility to submit quality assignments and the associated feedback on time.





## Course Assessment

There will be no formal exams in this class. Grades will be based on the assessments listed below.

### Quick Tasks (QT)

To assess your comprehension and knowledge, and to give you the opportunity to explore the module concepts in more depth, ten quick tasks (QT) will be dispersed throughout the course. QTs will be assigned via the eCampus modules and be required to be submitted both online and in class on dates indicated on the class schedule. A grading rubric will be provided on eCampus. The two lowest QT scores will be dropped and the resulting sum will constitute 32% (8 x 4%) of your final grade.

### Critical Reflection Journals and Responses (RJ/RJR)

To promote the exchange of ideas and a critical appreciation for other people's thoughts and concepts in a written format, you will be required to submit RJs (of approximately 450-500 words) on eCampus. Think of this as a scholarly diary entry where you are reflecting upon the course content in relation to your life and/or current events, what we have viewed and discussed in class, together with the information presented in the modules.

For each RJ assignment, you are also required to respond (RJR) to at least two other people's RJ with your own unique thoughts or perspectives (no less than 250 words): remember to be respectful and scholarly in your submissions.

Due dates and times for RJs and RJRs are indicated on the class schedule. Everyone's RJ#1 will be graded. After that, half will be randomly chosen to be graded, such

that each student will have three RJ/RJR assignments graded by the end of the semester. A grading rubric will be provided on eCampus. These grades collectively constitute 18% (3 x 6%) of your overall grade.

### Final Project (FP)

In effort to analyze, apply and synthesize the material learned in this class, provide a legitimate networking opportunity, and improve your written, verbal, and critical thinking skills, you will produce a Final Project (FP). For this assignment, you will conduct an open ended interview of a person in an industry of your choice, and report on how cultural diversity and/or ethics impacts their daily lives. This will be an ongoing course long effort honed in the small class meetings. The final product will be approximately 6 pages (approx. 1500 words), although you can select the format and audience yourself (short file, governmental report, story for a popular press magazine, etc.). Your FP will be outlined, drafted, practiced, reviewed, reworked and informally presented in our small class meetings. Your FP will be assessed in stages with due dates detailed in the Class Schedule on final page of this syllabus: Written Proposal (4%); Status checkpoint (2%); evidence of interview (2%); First (best) draft (12%); and Final submission (20%). A grading rubric and more specific instructions will be provided in class. Your FP will constitute 40% of your overall grade.

### Participation

This course is designed to foster learning through individual investigation and interaction with others. Your participation is a critical element to the success of everyone

in the class. This portion of your final grade will be determined by the quality of your active participation in class, eCampus Modules and/or use of QTs and technologies in class. Participation accounts for 10% of your overall grade.



Extremely important: if you fail the writing portion of the class, you will receive a failing grade for the whole course. Written work accounts for 58% of your final grade. Therefore, it is extremely important that you turn in your best work on all written assignments.

### Grade Calculation

Final Project (FP):	40%
Reflection Journals and Responses (RJ) (3):	18%
Quick Tasks (QT) (8):	32%
Participation:	10%
	100%

**A=90-100; B=80-89.9; C=70-79.9; D=60-69.9; F=Below 60**

## Modules and Class Technology

**eCampus:** This class will extensively use TAMU eCampus (ecampus.tamu.edu), for assignments, readings, discussions etc. There is no textbook.

**Modules:** This class is divided into modules. The entire module's information, including readings, videos, downloads and assignments will be available via eCampus. You are expected to complete the module online before the first class meeting of the week. Information delivered in the module will be discussed in class, and will be the subject matter for class discussions, workshops and exercises.

**Paper and Pencil/Pen:** it is essential that you always bring paper and a pencil or pen to all class meetings. At times you will be required to write, share and submit work in class.



**WiFi Technology:** In this class we will be using your handheld devices (such as smart phones, tablets, iPhones etc.) and/or your tablets or laptops as means of actively participating in class activities. You will be required to install small free apps on your device to communicate in the classroom. If you do not have a WiFi device, laptops are available to checkout, free, from the TAMU library.

**Please respect our learning environment, and only use electronic devices for class related activities!**

## Course Policies

**Attendance:** Attending the class is the responsibility of the student and no formal attendance will be taken. That being said, this is a collaborative and interactive class; a large portion of your assessment will be based on work conducted in class—if you miss those activities, undoubtedly your grades will suffer.

**Makeup Policy:** You are responsible for knowing the course schedule and assignment due dates outlined in this syllabus. For assignments that are missed due to absences, please refer to Student Rule 7 (<http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07>) for details concerning which absences are excused. Students with excused absences must provide written notification prior to the date of the absence, or in cases where advanced notification is not possible, within two working days following the absence. If you do have a university-excused absence please contact the instructor as soon as possible to arrange a makeup schedule.

QTs missed due to unexcused absences will receive a zero (remember that the two lowest will be dropped).

RJs and RJRs can be submitted up to 48 hours past their respective deadlines for a 25% penalty. Assignments submitted after that will receive a zero.

Due to the collaborative nature of assignments in this course and the logistics of peer review, late projects will receive a grade of zero unless supported by an approved university absence.

## Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Services, currently located in the Disability Services building at the Student Services at White Creek complex on west campus or call 979-845-1637. For additional information, visit <http://disability.tamu.edu>.

## Plagiarism and Cheating

Students are bound by the Aggie honor code not to lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those who do.

If you violate the code (e.g., by plagiarizing something or cheating) there will be no second chances—you will receive a zero for the assignment and may receive an F for the class.

Plagiarism is my 'pet peeve'!

All cases of plagiarism and cheating will be handled according to university policies. For further information on cheating and plagiarism, go to <http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu>.

## Ground Rules (aka Classroom Etiquette)

Throughout the course, you are likely to encounter new ideas through the course materials, and you will learn to look at old ideas in new ways.

We will be reading and discussing material that may challenge the way you think about things, both academically and personally. We need to remain open-minded and listen to one another; above all, it is crucial to maintain respect in all classroom interactions.

Second, it is important that you show respect to others by arriving to class on time, not packing up your stuff before class finishes, and by only using smart or cell phones, computers and other communication devices for class related activities

## ..Some final advice....

- ☑ **Be Prepared.** To be successful, you need to work through assigned materials carefully before each class meeting, pay attention during class, and actively contribute to class discussions.
- ☑ **Take notes during class.** You should take notes during each class meeting. Learning to be a critical thinker includes learning how to take effective notes. Don't just write down what is said in class or what is presented on a Powerpoint slide. Consider writing down your thoughts on the subject as well as any questions that you have about the material.
- ☑ **Learn to Think Critically.** In this class, you are encouraged to think critically about the course materials. In other words, think about what you are reading and learning in class and learn to ask the following questions:
  - What is being said? What is the argument being put forward?
  - Who is conveying the message? What is their cultural position and background?
  - When was it written? Is the argument shaped by a particular historical moment? How would the argument differ if written during a different time?
  - Why is the message being conveyed? Does the author have an agenda? If so, what is it?
  - What is the evidence? What kinds of evidence and data are used to make an argument? Does the evidence support the argument? Is the evidence sufficient?
  - Is the argument sound?

- ☑ **If you have questions.... ASK!** Remember, if you are thinking it, it more than likely that someone else is also thinking it.
- ☑ **Utilize office hours.** Office hours provide a regular time when you can expect me to be available for discussion of individual concerns. If you are having problems understanding the material or you would like to talk about the course assignments, please come and visit me.



## Class Schedule

	Module	Date	In Large Class (Tuesdays or Thursdays) (100 Students)	Date	In Small Class (Wednesdays or Fridays) (25 Students)
	1		Instructor Introduction Syllabus and technology review		Student introductions Introducing Your Final Project (FP) Group exercises incl. examining the syllabus
Fundamentals	2		Science, engineering and humans... Why Anthropology? Bring practice QT to class		Role Play: Water boiling in a small village –or- OD in India
	3		What is Holism? What is Culture? What is Ethnocentrism? Submit in eCampus and bring paper copy to class: QT#1 Due before 8am: RJ#1		Exercise: Anthropology in practice - Observing and Interviewing the other. Crafting your email to your interviewee. Due before 8am: RJRs#1
	4		Diversity, inclusion and learned ignorance Submit in eCampus and bring paper copy to class: QT#2		What is, and why support, diversity?
	5		Paradigms & Epistemology Submit in eCampus and bring paper copy to class: QT#3		Engaging in Meta-reflexivity and creating interview questions
Ethics	6		What is Ethics? Submit in eCampus and bring paper copy to class: QT#4 Due before 8am: RJ#2		Exercise: Creating a Code of Ethics Submit in eCampus and bring paper copy to class: FP Proposal Due before 8am: RJRs#2
	7		The Code of Ethics in your discipline. What is valued and why? What results? Worldview Submit in eCampus and bring paper copy to class: QT#5		TAMU Writing Center: FP workshop
	8		Critical Cultural Relativism: Guest speaker (Volcanic Virunga) – or- Hot Houses in Guatemala Submit in eCampus and bring paper copy to class: QT#6 Due before 8am: RJ#3		Exploring Definitions & Perspectives Role Play: Unintended 'Sticky' Consequences Submit in eCampus and bring paper copy to class: Interim Checkpoint of FP Due before 8am: RJRs#3
Problem Solving	9		Fractious Problem Solving & Responsible Innovation: Self Driving Cars Submit in eCampus and bring paper copy to class: QT#7		Exercise: Analyzing Fractious Problems: cosmic questions, cloning John Lennon, weapons manufacture.
Different Ways of Thinking	10		Myths, naturalistic fallacies and assumptions Submit in eCampus and bring paper copy to class: QT#8 Due before 8am: RJ#4		TAMU Writing Center Workshop: Mechanics of writing Due upload before 8am: Evidence of FP Interview Due before 8am: RJRs#4
	11		Technological Determinism & Cultural Construction of Technology. Due before 8am: RJ#5		Workshop: Peer Review of FP Due before 8am: RJRs#5
	12		Bribery, corruption, nepotism, gifts, and grease payments Submit in eCampus and bring paper copy to class: QT#9		Exercise: Whistle blowing Submit in eCampus and bring paper copy to class: Best Draft of FP
	13		Risk, harm, (in) equality and the environment Guest Speaker or Emic perspectives on Nuclear Energy Submit in eCampus and bring paper copy to class: QT#10		Popsicle drop-in with one-on-one FP help
	14		Final Wrap up with guided discussion: Ship breaking in Bangladesh		Submit in eCampus and bring paper copy to class: Final Version of FP Do in class: Final Presentations