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Human Relations Area Files at Yale University

Note to Instructors

This introductory course covers a variety of anthropological themes and aspects of culture. Students are encouraged to debate whether or not cultural universals exist by comparing and contrasting ethnographic examples from around the world. Assignments include a group project and essay.

The materials for each week have been curated with quality, scope, diversity and ease of access in mind (see below). The weekly discussion topics (“key readings”) focus on engaging articles from the HRAF homepage. These articles offer cross-cultural insight on fundamental anthropological themes supported by ethnographic examples sourced from the eHRAF databases. In addition, each week is supported by one or more videos or mini-lecture for in-class or at-home viewing. Textbook chapters and optional advanced ethnographic or theoretical readings are also provided, allowing for some flexibility across different class levels at the discretion of the instructor.

Where possible, links to relevant documents within [eHRAF World Cultures](#) are indicated. Note that eHRAF database membership is required for full paragraph-level access to documents. The writing assignment similarly requires that students conduct research within eHRAF World Cultures. One week of this syllabus is therefore dedicated to an eHRAF Workshop for teaching students how to search the databases for ethnographic sources to support their essays. Instructors unfamiliar with eHRAF may be interested in learning more about teaching research skills with the eHRAF Databases in a [webinar](#) and/or [free trial](#).

Built for online learning

For faculty currently seeking online learning resources for transitioning from traditional classroom teaching to digital environments, this syllabus and its exercises have been formatted for easy adoption via remote platforms. It has been adapted in light of campus shutdowns in March 2020 to prioritize digital resources over physical books. The required videos and articles for each week are all freely available online. A small number of the optional “advanced readings” may have a paywall where noted.

An extended “companion” reading list with texts is offered below should instructors or students have access to the texts now or in the future. These traditional textbooks, monographs, and journal articles are listed as supplementary reading. Again, links to digital versions of texts available in eHRAF are provided where applicable. Instructors can choose to assign these should students have access to them.

For more about adapting coursework for online learning conditions, see:

[Remote futures: tips for online teaching and learning in anthropology](#)

Ethnographic Insights Across Cultures

Course Description

Through the comparative study of different cultures, anthropology explores the most fundamental questions about what it means to be human. Drawing upon eHRAF World Cultures and eHRAF Archaeology, this introductory course encourages students to explore cultural similarities and differences to better understand how culture shapes who we are: our societies, our shared meanings, and our everyday lives. Beginning with unpacking the concept of culture in anthropology, each week covers a different anthropological theme, including love, ritual performance, gender, language, food, and kinship. Evaluating cultural universals will allow students to contemplate the rich diversity of the human experience. With remote learning in mind, wholly online sources on timely topics are interwoven with classic ethnographic accounts to inspire lively class discussions. The cross-cultural and database research skills developed throughout the course provide a solid framework for understanding and analyzing anthropological concerns both within and beyond the social sciences.

Learning Objectives

- Develop an understanding of the concept of culture within anthropology
- Distinguish between ethnography and anthropology
- Read and interpret ethnographic data
- Compare and contrast diverse cultural insights and belief systems
- View one's personal habits and beliefs within global social and historical context
- Draw meaningful cross-cultural conclusions about human universals
- Conduct independent database research

Timetable & Class Level

This teaching exercise is aimed at Introductory-level courses in socio-cultural anthropology at community colleges or universities. It is structured for approximately 2-3 course hours per week divided between a "lecture" portion as well as weekly "seminar discussions". However, the syllabus is designed to be adaptable to suit other timetables, class sizes, and levels. It can be supplemented with more advanced ethnographic or theoretical material and additional reading to scale up for larger and/or more advanced level courses.

Suggested Grading Breakdown

Activity	Percentage
Attendance & Participation	20%
Research Paper	50%
Group Project	30%

Required Texts

This syllabus prioritizes digital resources. The vast majority of the weekly materials (with the exception of the eHRAF Databases) are entirely open access. The recommended free and open-access textbooks for the course are the following:

- Brown, N., Tubelle de Gonzalez, L. and T. McIlwraith (eds.) 2017. [Perspectives: An Open Invitation to Cultural Anthropology \(2nd Edition\)](#). SACC, American Anthropological Association.
- Dastrup, R. A. 2015. [Introduction to Human Geography](#). PressBooks.
- Stein, F., S. Lazar, M. Candea, H. Diemberger, J. Robbins, A. Sanchez & R. Stasch. 2018. [The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Anthropology \(CEA\)](#).
- Wesch, M. 2018. [The Art of Being Human: A Textbook for Cultural Anthropology](#). New Prairie Press.

Recommended companion texts & supplementary advanced reading

This supplementary reading list contains additional recommended texts. Links to online versions are provided if available.

- Barnard, A. & J. Spencer (eds) 1996. *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology*. Routledge.
- Barnard, A. 2000. *History and theory in anthropology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Evans-Pritchard, E. E. (Edward Evan). 1937. *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among The Azande*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
<https://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=fo07-071>.
- Hendry, J. 2016. *An Introduction to Social Anthropology: Sharing Our Worlds*. Red Globe Press.
- Hobsbawm, E. and T. Ranger. 1938. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Ingold, T. 1996. *Key Debates in Anthropology*. London: Routledge.
- Mead, Margaret. 1928. *Coming of Age in Samoa: A Psychological Study of Primitive Youth for Western Civilisation*. New York: W. Morrow & Company.
<https://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=ou08-003>.
- Murdock, George P. 1949. [Social Structure](#). Toronto: Macmillan. (PDF, archive.org)
- Pountney, L. and Maric Tomislav. 2015. *Introducing Anthropology: What Makes Us Human?* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Group Project: Interview & Presentation

The purpose of this interview project is to learn about different cultural perspectives or experiences that your fellow classmates may have in comparison with yourself. Each student should share some aspect of their own “culture” and/or ethnic background or ancestry (e.g. ideas or practices learned from their parents or grandparents), or, alternatively, another country that they have lived in or traveled to. “American” cultural examples are acceptable, but groups should have at least 3 different regional examples *from personal experience* to compare and contrast.

Assignment: Teams of 3-4 students must interview each other on some aspect of the topic for the week that their group is assigned to. On the class day for that topic, the entire team must come prepared to present their findings in the form of a PowerPoint presentation with annotated slides. Total presentation time should be around **20-25 minutes**. The subject of the presentation should roughly be what commonalities and differences your group found between the beliefs and practices of its team members’ cultures or ethnic backgrounds. Conclude the presentation by assessing whether or not the team members believe that the chosen aspect(s) of the weekly topic covered constitute a “cultural universal”. Why or why not?

Guidelines:

- Students will be assigned into groups of 3-4 students.
- The interview and presentation should be based on the general theme of the assigned week, but groups can choose a narrower focus within this thematic area (e.g. if the theme is “love”, marriage, dating, divorce or romance are acceptable topics).
- Each team will meet – via Zoom, WebEx, Skype, or equivalent – at some point prior to the lecture for the week of their topic.
- Student teams should prepare 3-5 unique questions to ask each other in the style of an interview. Interviewers within the group can each pose different questions if desired.
- You do not have to include the exact answers to *every question* in your presentation.
- The **interviews should help you get to know your fellow classmates**, while **presentations should summarize the similarities and differences that you discovered**.
- Each team member should take an equal part in preparing and presenting to the class.
- An open class discussion led by the team will follow the presentation.

Essay: Do cultural universals exist?

Choose any aspect of human life or anthropological theme and evaluate whether or not you believe it to be a cultural universal based on ethnographic evidence. Refer to the eHRAF articles that we have read and discussed for each week as a model. However, endeavor to choose an original subject to focus on. If you choose to explore one of the subjects from the weekly syllabus or aspects of it, you must use predominantly new examples and a new angle, supplemented with original theoretical and ethnographic research. Any of the listed textbooks are valid sources for theoretical background, but you are welcome to go beyond these texts by visiting anthropological journals.

While you are free to write about something that you have experienced in your own culture, use the eHRAF World Cultures database to decide on your topic or trait, and to conduct research across several cultures, to ensure that you will be able to gather enough ethnographic data for comparison. You may refer to the [Outline of Cultural Materials \(OCM\)](#) to decide on a topic.

Paper topics and proposed titles must be emailed to the professor for approval at least 3 weeks before the deadline.

Research guidelines: Aim for 3-5 ethnographic examples from various parts of the world. You may choose any cultures that interest you as long as they are not all in the same world region (refer to Browse Cultures and/or the Search Results in eHRAF for a regional breakdown). As long as you meet the minimum content requirements, you may include additional ethnographic materials from outside of eHRAF. Remember to conclude your essay with reflections on cross-cultural differences and similarities.

References: All sources must be correctly referenced with in-text citations and listed in a bibliography. Refer to university guidelines on citations, plagiarism, and academic content.

Multimedia: You may supplement your essay with multimedia content including creating your own videos, presentations, photos, or digital artwork.

Word limit: Essays have a word limit of 2000 words. If including an original video or photo narrative, word limit is flexible at around 1,500 words in addition to the media. High resolution files must be hosted somewhere accessible by the essay due date.

Course Outline

Week 1: Uniqueness and Universals: An introduction to anthropology and culture.

According to Horace Miner (1956:503), “The anthropologist has become so familiar with the diversity of ways in which different people behave in similar situations that he is not apt to be surprised by even the most exotic customs”. Anthropology and anthropologists have thus acquired the reputation for *making the strange familiar and the familiar strange*. Taking this as a starting point for the exploration of culture, this week we will ask, what (if anything) makes humans unique? What accounts for cultural variation and difference within and between societies? Why might anthropologists want to draw generalizing conclusions across many cultures?

Video:

- [Robert Sapolsky – The Uniqueness of Humans](#) (~32 mins)

Key reading:

- [Making the strange familiar and the familiar strange](#)
- [The Return of the Comparative Method in Anthropology](#)

Textbook reading:

- ["Understanding Culture"](#) , *Introduction to Human Geography*. Read section 3.2 up to and including the section on Norms.
- Medeiros and Cowall. ["The Culture Concept"](#), in *Perspectives*.

Advanced reading:

- Miner, H. 1956. “Body Ritual among the Nacirema”. *American Anthropologist*, 58: 503-507. doi:[10.1525/aa.1956.58.3.02a00080](#)
- Howell, 2018. ["Ethnography"](#), Cambridge Encyclopedia of Anthropology

Week 2. eHRAF database research workshop

This workshop will prepare students to conduct research within the eHRAF World Cultures and eHRAF Archaeology databases. It will begin with a brief overview of ethnography, anthropology and cross-cultural research, including the methods employed by cross-cultural researchers. The remainder of the workshop will be a practical guide to browsing, searching, and saving search results in eHRAF. Students will be shown how paragraphs in eHRAF are indexed by subject, as well as encouraged to conduct sample searches and recognize relevant results in preparation for their essay assignments.

Recommended reading from [Introducing Cross-Cultural Research](#):

- [Ch. 1 – Introducing Cross Cultural Research](#) (PDF)
- [Ch. 2 – What's your Question?](#) (PDF)

About HRAF:

- [History and Development of HRAF Collections](#)
- [HRAF Timeline](#)

Class activity:

- [HRAF Jeopardy Game](#)

Database Guides:

- [Database Contents: Subjects, Cultures, and Traditions](#) (PDF)
- [eHRAF Video Tutorials](#) (YouTube)
- [Search Examples](#)
- [eHRAF User Guide](#) (WebHelp)

Week 3. Emotions in motion: Feelings and their expression

How do different cultures around the world process and express their emotions? Are some peoples more warm and welcoming, while others are cold and stern, or are these merely stereotypes? This week looks at two specific emotions in cross-cultural perspective – fear and anger – to see how they are manifested and controlled in different societies. Do we all have the same fears? How can some cultures be better at controlling tempers than others? A class activity based on the Atlas of Emotions allows students to explore their emotions, possible triggers, and varied responses.

Videos:

- [Are there universal expressions of emotion? - Sophie Zadeh](#) (~5 mins)
- [How Culture Drives Behaviours - Julien S. Bourrelle](#) (~12 mins)

Key reading:

- [Towards an Anthropology of Fear: Are some things universally terrifying?](#)
- [How do parents around the world teach children to control their anger?](#)

Class activity:

- Explore the [Atlas of Emotions](#)

Advanced reading:

- Russel, James A. 1991. "[Culture and the Categorization of Emotions](#)", *Psychological Bulletin*. 110(3): 426-450 (PDF)

Week 4. Does romantic love look (and feel) the same everywhere?

You can't eat. You can't sleep. You can hardly concentrate on this sentence. Your heart skips a beat when the object of your affection walks into the room. In lieu of food and rest, you survive on daydreams of kisses and warm embraces. Do all cultures recognize this bizarre affliction as a tell-tale sign of being in love? This week we will discuss whether romantic love and kissing are cultural universals. The video for this topic explores the impact that technology may have on love and relationships. Has technology changed what it means to love? How many different types of love are there?

Video:

- [Technology hasn't changed love. Here's Why. - Helen Fisher](#) (~19 mins)

Key reading:

- [Romantic or disgusting? Passionate kissing is not a human universal](#)
- Goleman, D. 1992. "[After Kinship and Marriage, Anthropology Discovers Love](#)". NY Times.

Textbook reading:

- Wesch, M. [Love in Four Cultures](#), in *The Art of Being Human*. (PDF)

Advanced reading:

- Jankowiak, W. & Fischer, E. 1992. [A Cross-Cultural Perspective on Romantic Love](#). *Ethnology*. 31. 149. 10.2307/3773618. (PDF)
- Lindholm, C. 2006. [Romantic Love and Anthropology](#). *Etnofoor* 10: 1-12. (online/PDF)

Week 5. Gestures of kindness and reciprocity, or when no good deed goes unpunished.

Gift-giving as a means of displaying kindness and gratitude is one way that we show people that we care about them. In practice, finding the right gift can be stressful and full of potential landmines. What if the recipient hates the gift, or worse, feels *insulted* by it? This scenario gives us a hint that saying "thanks" can sometimes be a thankless experience in our own lives and relationships, let alone throughout cultures all across the globe. This week, we explore the anthropological perspective on gifts and other types of exchange, including reciprocity (generalized, balanced, and negative) and redistribution of wealth. We will also look at the language of exchange and the various forms a thank-you can take.

Videos:

- [What is a gift economy? - Alex Gendler](#) (~4 mins)
- [Gift-Giving – Anthropology Matters](#) (~7 mins), if assigning advanced reading below

Key reading:

- [Thanks, but no thanks: Expressions of gratitude in eHRAF World Cultures](#)

Textbook reading:

- Wesch, M. [The Power of Language](#), and [Creating the Good Life](#) (pp. 307-312 only), in *The Art of Being Human*. (PDF)
- Lyon, S. "[Economics: Modes of Exchange](#)", in *Perspectives*. Read section "Modes of Exchange" only, pp. 127-135. (PDF)

Advanced reading:

- Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1920. "Kula: The Circulating Exchange of Valuables in The Archipelagoes of Eastern New Guinea." *Man* 20 (51): 97–105.
<https://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=ol06-007>.
- Murdock, George Peter. 1970. "Rank and Potlach Among the Haida." *Yale University Publications in Anthropology*. New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press.
<https://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=ne09-002>.
- Mauss, M. 2002 [1954]. [The Gift: The form and reason for exchange in archaic societies](#). London: Routledge.

Week 6. Place, space and the dynamics house and home

Winston Churchill notably proclaimed, "We shape our dwellings, and afterwards our dwellings shape us." How do the spaces we inhabit become places we embody? The concept of "home" goes well beyond the bricks and mortar (or wood or clay) of the dwellings in which we reside. How many memories of your home are of the structure itself, and how many of are the relationships that were nurtured inside of it? This week explores the concepts of house and home as both material and cultural constructions, and introduces the idea of place-making in urban anthropology.

Videos:

- [Where is home? – Pico Iyer](#) (~14 mins)

Key reading:

- [Home Truths: An Anthropology of House and Home](#)
- [On Placemaking: An Anthropologist's Perspective](#)

Textbook reading:

- Samanani, F. and J. Lenhard. 2019. "[House and Home](#)", Cambridge Encyclopedia of Anthropology.
- Ember, C. 2014. "[Dwellings](#)" in C. R. Ember, ed. *Explaining Human Culture* (HRAF).

Advanced reading:

- Lawrence-Zuniga, D. 2017. [Space and Place](#). Oxford Bibliographies.
- Bourdieu, P. 1970. "[The Berber house or the world reversed.](#)" *Social Science Information*. 9(2): 151-170. (Paywall)

Week 7. Cultures and calendars: making and keeping time

Do all peoples conceive of time in the same ways? What does the past, present, or future mean for different cultures? How do we mark major milestones throughout the year, or events within our lifetimes? The videos for this week consider different ways of thinking and speaking about time and space, including deciphering the ancient Aztec calendar stone. The key readings focus on how two annual events – the spring and winter solstices – are celebrated around the world, and how these festivities mark time, space, and our place within the world.

Videos:

- [How Do Different Cultures Think About Time?](#) (~5 mins)
- [The Aztec Sun Stone \(The Calendar Stone\)](#) (~6.5 mins)

Key reading:

- [Celebrating the Vernal Equinox](#)
- [Winter Solstice Celebrations Around the World](#)

Textbook reading:

- Antrosio, J. 2020. "[Time](#)", *Living Anthropologically* (Cultural Ecology 2020).

Advanced reading:

- "Chapter III: Time and Space", (pp. 94-138) in Evans-Pritchard, E. E. 1940. *Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People*. Oxford: Clarendon. <https://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=fj22-001>. (eHRAF access required)
- Zeitlyn, D. 2015. "Looking Forward, Looking Back", *History and Anthropology* 26(4): 381-407, DOI: [10.1080/02757206.2015.1076813](https://doi.org/10.1080/02757206.2015.1076813)

Week 8. Defining selfhood: gender, sexuality, identity and power

Is gender a product of culture, or of biology? How does society shape our understanding of gender, including gender roles and identities? This week will explore the connections between gender and power by focusing on the manifestation of female agency across societies. Even from within restricted or oppressed conditions, ethnographic data shows that women can assert authority and control over themselves and others in creative ways; for instance, by leveraging access to areas of society where men have little to no interest or jurisdiction. We will follow this up with ideas about fatherhood and masculinity around the world. Lastly, this week will examine

the question of fixity or fluidity of gender categories by exploring pronouns. What insights can gender nonconforming children give us about the origins and/or mutability of gender as a cultural construct?

Videos:

- [The power of women's anger - Soraya Chemaly](#) (~12 mins)
- [How to talk \(and listen\) to transgender people - Jackson Bird](#) (~6 mins)

Key reading:

- [Women, Gender and Power in eHRAF](#)
- [An Anthropology of Dads: Exploring fatherhood in eHRAF](#)
- Bennet, J. 2016. "[She? Ze? They? What's in a Gender Pronoun](#)", NY Times.
- Yong, E. 2019. "[Young Trans Children Know Who They Are](#)", The Atlantic.

Textbook reading:

- Ember, C., et al. 2019. "[Gender](#)", In C. R. Ember, ed. Explaining Human Culture (HRAF)
- Wesch, M. [Becoming Our Selves](#), in *The Art of Being Human* (PDF)
- Mukhopadhyay, C. [Gender and Sexuality](#), in *Perspectives* (PDF)
- Wilson, A. 2019. [Queer Anthropology](#), Cambridge Encyclopedia of Anthropology.

Advanced reading:

- Schäfers, M. 2017. "[Voice](#)", Cambridge Encyclopedia of Anthropology
- Lozios, P, and E. Papataxiarchis. 1991. "Gender and Kinship in Marriage and Alternative Contexts", *Contested Identities: Gender and Kinship in Modern Greece*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. <https://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=eh01-079>.
- Dubisch, J. 1993. "'Foreign Chickens' and Other Outsiders: Gender and Community in Greece", *American Ethnologist* 20(2): 272–87. <https://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=eh01-027>.

Week 9. "You're, like, really pretty": on bodies and beauty standards

Do you feel beautiful today? Is physical beauty perceived in the same ways everywhere in the world? This week we will explore how culture shapes the body and our perceptions of it. Western beauty standards promoted by the fashion industry, popular media – and perpetuated by each of us when we scroll through social media and *like* all the "pretty" people and things – have become ubiquitous, arguably encroaching upon every corner of the globe. But what about the majority of bodies in the world that are not tall, skinny, or white? What other perspectives on beauty exist?

Videos:

- [Documentary on Societal Beauty Standards](#) (~7 mins)
- [How People Define Beauty Around the World](#) (~4 mins)

Key reading:

- [“I have worth”: female body confidence and perceptions of beauty around the world](#)

Textbook reading:

- Anderson-Fye E.P. [Anthropological Perspectives on Physical Appearance and Body Image](#). In: Thomas F. Cash, editor. *Encyclopedia of Body Image and Human Appearance*, Vol 1. San Diego: Academic Press, pp. 15–22.
- Wesch, M. [The \(Un\)Making of the Modern Body](#) and [The Dynamics of Culture](#) in *The Art of Being Human* (PDF)

Advanced reading:

- Gomólka, A. 2017. “Ugliness: A Cultural History” [book review] [10.3202/caa.reviews.2017.76](#).
- Nagar, I. & Virk, R. 2017. “The Struggle Between the Real and Ideal: Impact of Acute Media Exposure on Body Image of Young Indian Women”, SAGE Open. [10.1177/2158244017691327](#).

Week 10. Let the good times roll: rituals, rites of passage and liminality

Anthropologist Victor Turner defined ritual as "prescribed formal behavior for occasions not given over to technological routine, having reference to beliefs in mystical beings and powers". The subject of much anthropological analysis, rituals can in fact be secular or religious. They may mark major milestones for a society or community, constitute a rite of passage for individuals, or be enacted through more subtle behaviors in everyday life. Do all cultures have the same types of rituals? This week's videos introduce Van Gennep's three stages of rites of passage and Turner's concepts of *liminality* and *communitas* in order to explore rituals as acts of social performance as well as personal transition. A case study of Cajun Mardi Gras ritual traditions from eHRAF World Cultures highlights the inversion of cultural norms symbolized by its carnival-like indulgences.

Videos:

- [History of Ideas – Rituals](#) (~13 mins)
- [Van Gennep's Stages of Rites of Passage](#) (~2 mins)

Key reading:

- [Laissez les bon temps rouler! Mardi Gras and Cajun Traditions in eHRAF](#)

Textbook reading:

- Henninger-Rener, S. "[Religion](#)" in *Perspectives*
- Griffith, L. "[Performance](#)", in *Perspectives*. Read section "Ritual as Performance".

Advanced reading:

- Brown, G. 2003. "Theorizing ritual as performance: explorations of ritual indeterminacy". *Journal of Ritual Studies*, 17(1): 3–18. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44368641>.
- Sjorslev, I. 1987. "Untimely Gods and French Perfume: Ritual, Rules and Deviance in The Brazilian Candomble", *Folk* 29: 5–22. <https://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=so11-009>. (Membership required)

Week 11. Witchcraft and sorcery: dealing with misfortune, magic, and a zero-sum universe

Why do some guys have all the luck? Why do bad things happen to good people? These are questions we often find ourselves asking when life seems distinctly unfair. In a zero-sum universe, one person's good fortune is believed to come at the expense of another's misfortune. Anthropologist Evans-Pritchard's fieldwork and research on witchcraft and sorcery in Africa – detailed in his classic account, *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic Among the Azande* – is a rich starting point for exploring how other cultures view misfortune and malice in the absence of a belief in "chance" or "coincidence". Rural Irish folktales about fairies and their magic in eHRAF provide a fun case study for cultural comparison.

Video:

- [Strange Beliefs: Sir Edward Evans-Pritchard](#) (begin at 07:30; ~45 mins)

Key readings:

- [Luck of the Irish: Folklore and fairies in Rural Ireland](#)
- Evans-Pritchard, E. E. 1937. "Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande." Oxford: Clarendon Press. <https://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=fo07-071>. Read pages 69-70.

Textbook readings:

- Benussi, M. 2019. "[Magic](#)", Cambridge Encyclopedia of Anthropology
- Espírito Santo, D. 2019. "[Divination](#)", Cambridge Encyclopedia of Anthropology

Advanced readings:

- Malinowski, B. 1935. *Coral Gardens and Their Magic: A Study of the Methods of Tilling The Soil and of Agricultural Rites in the Trobriand Islands. Vol. One, The Description of Gardening*. New York: American Book Company. <https://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=ol06-002>.
- LeVine, R. 1963. "Witchcraft and Sorcery in a Gusii Community", *Witchcraft And Sorcery In East Africa [By] John Beattie* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. <https://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=fl08-015>.
- Beattie, J. 1963. "Sorcery in Bunyoro", *Witchcraft and Sorcery In East Africa By John Beattie And Others*. London: Routledge and Paul. <https://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=fk11-008>.

Week 12. Puppy love: animals and their humans

You may have noticed by now that the internet is full of cat photos and cute puppy memes. It is clear that the human love of pets is a powerful and global phenomenon. For many pet owners, their furry (or scaly) domestic companions transcend any simple categorization of non-human animal. Indeed, research shows that it is a growing global trend for pet owners to consider their animals to be full members of their families, to dote upon them as they would children or romantic partners, and to thereby develop strong mutual bonds of dependency, love, and support. What can anthropology tell us about the relationship between humans and their fur babies?

Videos:

- [A Brief History of Dogs - David Ian Howe](#) (~4 mins)
- [Why We Love Dogs More Than Humans](#) (~4 mins)
- [Defining Domestication with Timothy Ingold](#) (~3 mins)

Key reading:

- [Unconditional Love: Is devotion to pets a cultural universal?](#)

Textbook reading:

- White, T. and M. Candea. 2018. "[Animals](#)", Cambridge Encyclopedia of Anthropology

Advanced Reading:

- "Chapter 10: The Sacrificial Role of Cattle", pp. 248-271, in Evans-Pritchard, E. E. 1956. "Nuer Religion." Oxford: Clarendon Press.
<https://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/document?id=fj22-016>. (Membership required)
- Leach, E. 1989. "Anthropological Aspects of Language: Animal Categories and Verbal Abuse", *Anthrozoös*, 2:3, 151-165, DOI: [10.2752/089279389787058055](https://doi.org/10.2752/089279389787058055) (Paywall)

Week 13. Good Eats: The Anthropology of Food

Food is powerful and omnipresent within human society. We need to eat to survive, yet the enjoyment of food is about much more than nutrition alone. The symbolic ability of food to connect people to time, place, and relationships makes it a diverse field of study for anthropologists. We all have strong feelings about foods that we love or hate. Is pineapple an acceptable topping for pizza? How do you feel about black licorice? And let us not get the British or Australians started on Marmite. Some aspects of food and eating are universal, such as commensality – the act of eating together with others. This practice, found the world over, reinforces strong bonds of family and friendship within a community. Food can also be a marker of social distance, as you will rarely share a meal with people you dislike (Thanksgiving dinner notwithstanding!). This week will take an ethnographic look at culinary adventures, including the social life of cheese, as well as the delights of chocolate and its origins in Mesoamerica.

Videos:

- [The History of Chocolate – Deanna Pucciarelli](#) (~4 mins)
- [American Kids try Dutch Food](#) (~5 mins)

Key readings:

- [The Social Life of Cheese](#)
- [The Mesoamerican origins of chocolate featuring eHRAF Archaeology](#)
- [Craving Comfort: bonding with food across cultures](#)

Textbook reading:

- Nahum-Claudel, C. 2016. "[Feasting](#)", Cambridge Encyclopedia of Anthropology
- Fox, R. 2014. [Food and Eating: An Anthropological Perspective](#). SIRC. ([PDF](#))

Advanced Reading:

- Mintz, S., and C. M. Du Bois. 2002. "The Anthropology of Food and Eating", *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 31: 99-119. Read online: www.jstor.org/stable/4132873
- Douglas, M. 1972. "Deciphering a Meal", *Daedalus*, 101(1): 61-81. Read online: www.jstor.org/stable/20024058