



COURSE UNIT (MODULE) DESCRIPTION

| Course unit (module) title | Code |
|--|------|
| Anthropology: Social and Cultural Diversity | |

| Annotation |
|---|
| <p>The aim of the course is to engage with social and cultural diversity of the humankind. The course aims to achieve this through introducing students to anthropology, a study of human social and cultural diversity, as well as to ethnographic and interdisciplinary research based on in-depth, long-term engagement with societies and cultures. During the course, students will learn about various aspects of human life from politics to religion, from coming of age to death, and diverse corners of the earth from Europe to Melanesia, from South Africa to Siberia. The first part of the course will be devoted to establishing basic knowledge of anthropology and the study of diversity, while the second part will apply that knowledge in studying concrete aspects of human life (e.g., religion), as well as regional case studies (e.g., Mongolia). In doing so, it will enable greater transcultural understanding, as well as understanding and appreciation of diversity, necessary for engaging with contemporary society.</p> |

| Lecturer(s) | Department(s) where the course unit (module) is delivered |
|---|---|
| Coordinator: Dr. Kristina Jonutyte Other(s): Dr. Kristina Garalyte | Institute of Asian and Transcultural Studies |

| Study cycle | Type of the course unit (module) |
|-------------|----------------------------------|
| First | General university studies |

| Mode of delivery | Semester or period when the course unit (module) is delivered | Language(s) of instruction |
|------------------|---|----------------------------|
| Online | Spring semester | English |

| Requisites | |
|---|--|
| Co-requisites (if relevant): English language proficiency (level B2 required) | Additional requirements (if any): None |

| Number of ECTS credits allocated | Student's workload (total) | Contact hours | Individual work |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 5 | 130 | 48 | 82 |

| Purpose of the course unit (module) | | |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| <p>The aim of this course is to introduce students to social and cultural anthropology as well as to ethnographic research and develop their abilities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyse ethnographic literature and understand social and cultural diversity of humankind; - Understand and critically assess topics of social and cultural anthropology, including birth and death, religion, political life, digital life, and others; - Understand how and why ethnographic approaches are used in interdisciplinary research; - Apply theories, methods and approaches of social and cultural anthropology in human social and cultural diversity context; - Work in teams, analysing a given social or cultural issue, and communicate the results of teamwork effectively. | | |
| Learning outcomes of the course unit (module) | Teaching and learning methods | Assessment methods |
| Students will know and be able to discuss the particularities and the strengths and weaknesses of various anthropological approaches in the context of other related disciplines in social sciences and | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| humanities. | Lectures, reading texts, seminar presentations and discussions. | Exam, group presentations of the seminar material, group presentations of research ideas, participation in discussions. |
| Students will know the main methodological approaches in social and cultural anthropology and be able to critically evaluate and apply them when seeking to understand issues related to social and cultural diversity in contemporary societies. | | |
| Students will be able to plan and carry out individual or group research, engaging with social and cultural anthropology theories. | Team work, seminar presentations, discussions. | Group presentations of the seminar material, group presentations of research ideas, participation in discussions. |
| Students will be able to discuss social and cultural similarities and differences, as well as present their opinion in argumentative manner to colleagues and broader audiences. | | |

| Content: breakdown of the topics | Contact hours | | | | | | Individual work: time and assignments | | |
|---|---------------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| | Lectures | Tutorials | Seminars | Workshops | Laboratory work | Internship/work | Contact hours, total | Individual work | Assignments |
| 1. Introduction. What is anthropology? What is social and cultural anthropology? What is ethnography? | 2 | | | | | | 2 | | |
| 2. Ethnographic fieldwork. What does ethnographic fieldwork look like? What methods does it involve? Ethnographic methods in anthropological and interdisciplinary research. | 2 | | 2 | | | | 4 | 6 | To read thoroughly, take notes and prepare for seminar discussion: Engelke 1-24. Text for the seminar presentation (optional reading for others): Bestor 146-161. |
| 3. Society. Can a society be seen as a kind of an organism? What are some of the main early anthropological theories (up to the middle of the 20th century)? Functionalism, structuralism. | 2 | | | | | | 2 | 4 | Optional readings (to read thoroughly, take notes): Eriksen (<i>A History of Anthropology</i>) 46-67, Malinowski 1-16. |
| 4. Cultural relativism. How do anthropologists engage with difference? Are some cultures „better“ than others? Can a culture be „primitive“ or „advanced“? What is ethnocentrism? | 2 | | 2 | | | | 4 | 4 | To read thoroughly, take notes and prepare for seminar discussion: Eriksen (<i>Small Places Large Issues</i>) 1-9 Text for the seminar presentation (optional reading for others): Sahlins 1-39. |
| 5. Diversity. What are some of the main anthropological theories of the second half of the 20th century? In what ways were established ideas about culture and society destabilised in this period? Feminist approaches, interpretive approaches. | 2 | | | | | | 2 | 6 | Optional readings (to read thoroughly, take notes): Eriksen (<i>A History of Anthropology</i>) 138-165, Geertz 511-531. |
| 6. Culture. What is “culture”? Why has | 2 | | 2 | | | | 4 | 6 | To read thoroughly, take notes |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|----------|-----------|--|--|--|-----------|---|---|
| this term been critiqued by anthropologists? What are some of the more recent theories in anthropology? Theory of practice, actor network theory, etc. | | | | | | | | and prepare for seminar discussion: Engelke 25-55 Text for the seminar presentation (optional reading for others): Abu-Lughod 41-55. | |
| 7. Identity and globalisation. How has globalisation shaped cultures around the world? Does globalisation lead to cultural homogeneity? What is hybridity and how do hybrid cultural forms emerge? | 2 | | | | | | 2 | 6 | Optional readings (to read thoroughly, take notes: Engelke 161-188, Matthews 169-183 |
| 8. Personhood. Does a “person” mean the same thing around the world? Do people in different cultures understand and experience birth and death in the same way? How do people come of age around the world? | 2 | | 2 | | | | 4 | 6 | To read thoroughly, take notes and prepare for seminar discussion: Eriksen (<i>Small Places Large Issues</i>) 44-61 Text for the seminar presentation (optional reading for others): Tsintjilonis 173-194. |
| 9. A regional case study: Anthropology of the Mongolian cultural region. How do anthropologists approach the study of a particular region? What are some of the main themes in the anthropological study of the Mongolian cultural region? | 2 | | | | | | 2 | 4 | Optional readings (to read thoroughly, take notes: Upton 243-249, Buyandelgeriyn 127-147 |
| 10. Religion. What role does religion play in human societies? Is religion universal? Does religion have a function in society? How do anthropologists study religion? | 2 | | 2 | | | | 4 | 4 | To read thoroughly, take notes and prepare for seminar discussion: Eriksen (<i>Small Places Large Issues</i>) 220-238 Text for the seminar presentation (optional reading for others): Quijada 138-154. |
| 11. Politics. How do people organise their communities and societies in different cultures? What are some of the main ways of political organisation and action? What and how does political anthropology study? | 2 | | | | | | 2 | 4 | Optional readings (to read thoroughly, take notes: Eriksen (<i>Small Places Large Issues</i>) 165-183, Von Schnitzler 670-693. |
| 12. Digital anthropology. How do people live in the digital realm? In what ways is it related to offline life? Can one do an ethnographic study online? What might it look like? | 2 | | 2 | | | | 4 | 6 | To read thoroughly, take notes and prepare for seminar discussion: Miller & Horst 3-38 Text for the seminar presentation (optional reading for others): Boelstroff 60-86. |
| 13. Public anthropology and Applied anthropology. How can anthropological knowledge be applied in various practical situations? What broader relevance does anthropological research have? Examples of applied ethnographic and anthropological research. | 2 | | | | | | 2 | | To participate in the discussion. |
| 14. Group presentation of the seminar material. | | | | | | | | 4 | Team work on the group presentation in one of the above listed seminars. |
| 15. Group presentations of research ideas. | | | 8 | | | | 8 | 14 | Individual research and team work on the presentation. |
| 16. Preparation for the exam. | | 2 | | | | | 2 | 8 | Individual revision of the course material. |
| Total | 26 | 2 | 20 | | | | 48 | 85 | |

| Assessment strategy | Weight, % | Deadline | Assessment criteria |
|---|------------------|------------------------|--|
| Group presentation of the seminar material | 20 | During semester | <p>During the semester, students will prepare and deliver a group presentation on one of the seminars' topics. The presentation will have to demonstrate students' in-depth critical engagement with the seminar material (an academic article or chapter). It is also required that students attempt to go beyond the seminar material and look for additional contextual material and cross-cultural comparison, as well as come up with discussion questions. A PowerPoint presentation is mandatory.</p> <p>Assessment criteria:</p> <p>2 points: the seminar material clearly presented and critically evaluated; students do cross-cultural comparison; students are able to facilitate a discussion and answer related questions.</p> <p>1 point: the seminar material is presented superficially, there is no cross-cultural comparison, students are not able to lead a group discussion and / or answer related questions.</p> <p>0 points: seminar material was not presented or was presented in an extremely superficial way.</p> |
| Group presentation: research project idea on a selected topic in anthropology | 30 | At the end of semester | <p>At the end of the semester, students will have to prepare and deliver a group presentation in small groups. The group will have an overarching ethnographic research topic (e.g., religion) and each member will have to present an ethnographic research idea on its subtopic (e.g., Catholicism in rural Lithuania).</p> <p>The group presentation will consist of a general introduction into the topic (description, context, important anthropological research on the topic – at least 3 anthropological academic sources), followed by individual presentations (research idea and context, potential fieldwork details, research questions, at least one academic source in anthropology related to the research idea and explanation what the relation is, potential challenges and ethical issues). Each individual presentation has to be substantially different from others. It is required that presenters make a cross-cultural comparison and use anthropological theories. A PowerPoint presentation is mandatory.</p> <p>Assessment: 3: The presentation is clear and well-structured; the topic is understood and explained in a detailed and meaningful way; students do cross-cultural comparison and use anthropological theories; presenters are able to answer related questions.</p> <p>2.5: The presentation nearly fulfils the criteria for 3 but has minor shortcomings.</p> <p>2: The presentation is not completely clear, there are shortcomings in its clarity and lack of detail and / or contextualization; there are errors in understanding the academic texts used; presenters are not able to fully answer related questions.</p> <p>1.5: The presentation nearly fulfils the criteria for 2 but has more substantial shortcomings.</p> |

| | | | |
|------|----|------------------------|---|
| | | | 1: The presentation is unclear, the topic is not well understood and there are major faults in interpretation. 0: There is no presentation. |
| Exam | 50 | At the end of semester | One part of the exam will consist of short open-ended questions and one will consist of multiple-answer questions. Questions will be based on material covered throughout the course. Assessment: 5 (excellent). Excellent knowledge and academic abilities. 95-100% of the questions answered correctly. 4.5 (very good). Very good knowledge and academic abilities. 85-94% of the questions answered correctly. 4 (good). Above average knowledge and academic abilities. 75-84% of the questions answered correctly. 3.5 (average). Average knowledge and academic abilities. Some mistakes (not essential ones). 65-74% of the questions answered correctly. 3 (satisfactory). Knowledge and academic abilities are below average. There are substantial mistakes. 55-64% of the questions answered correctly. 2.5 (weak). Knowledge and academic abilities only meet the minimum requirements. 51-54 % of the questions answered correctly. 0-2. Minimum requirements are not met. |

| Author | Publishing year | Title | Issue of a periodical or volume of a publication; pages | Publishing house or internet site |
|---|-----------------|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| Required reading (uploaded to the course's Virtual learning environment) | | | | |
| Engelke, M. | 2018 | <i>How to Think Like an Anthropologist</i> | | Princeton: Princeton University Press |
| Bestor, T. | 2002 | Networks, Neighborhoods, and Markets: Fieldwork in Tokyo. | In: G. Gmelch & W. Zenner (eds), <i>Urban Life: Readings in the Anthropology of the City</i> , pp. 146-161 | Long Grove: Waveland Press. |
| Eriksen, T. H. | 2013 (2001) | <i>A History of Anthropology</i> | | London: Pluto Press |
| Malinowski, B. | 1921 | The Primitive Economics of the Trobrianders | <i>The Economic Journal</i> 31(121) | |
| Eriksen, E. H. | 2010 | <i>Small Places, Large Issues</i> | 3rd ed. | London: Pluto Press |
| Sahlins, M. | 1972 | <i>Stone Age Economics</i> . | pp. 1-39. | Chicago: Aldine, Atherton, Inc |
| Geertz, C. | 2008 (1973) | Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cock Fight. | In: R. J. McGree & R. L. Warms (eds), | London: Rowman & Littlefield |

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|------|---|---|--|
| | | | <i>Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History</i> , pp. 511-531. | |
| Abu-Lughod, L. | 1990 | The Romance of Resistance: Tracing Transformations of Power through Bedouin Women. | <i>American Ethnologist</i> 17(1): 41-55. | |
| Matthews, G. | 2007 | Chungking Mansions: A Center of “Low-End Globalization” | <i>Ethnology</i> 46(2): 169-183 | |
| Tsintjilonis, D. | 2007 | The Death-Bearing Senses in Tana Toraja. | <i>Ethnos</i> 72(2), 173-194. | |
| Upton, C. | 2010 | Introduction: Focus on Mongolia | <i>Central Asian Survey</i> 29(3): 243-249 | |
| Buyandelgeriyn, M. | 2007 | Dealing with Uncertainty: Shamans, Marginal Capitalism, and the Remaking of History in Postsocialist Mongolia | <i>American Ethnologist</i> 34(1): 127-147 | |
| Von Schnitzler, A. | 2013 | Traveling Technologies: Infrastructure, Ethical Regimes, and the Materiality of Politics in South Africa. | <i>Cultural Anthropology</i> 28(4): 670-693. | |
| Quijada, J. B. | 2012 | Soviet Science and Post-Soviet Faith: Etigelov’s Imperishable Body. | <i>American Ethnologist</i> 39(1): 138-154. | |
| Miller, D. & Horst, H. A. | 2012 | The Digital and the Human: A Prospectus for Digital Anthropology | In: H. A. Horst & D. Miller (eds) <i>Digital Anthropology</i> , 3-38 | Oxford: Berg |
| Boelstroff, T. | 2008 | <i>Coming of Age in Second Life: An Anthropologist Explores the Virtually Human.</i> | pp. 60-86 | Princeton: Princeton University Press |
| Recommended reading | | | | |
| Barnard, A. | 2021 | <i>History and Theory in Anthropology</i> | 2nd ed. | Cambridge: Cambridge University Press |
| MacClancy, J. | 2019 | <i>Exotic No More: Anthropology for the Contemporary World</i> | 2nd ed. | Chicago: The University of Chicago Press |
| Čiubrinskas, V. | 2007 | <i>Socialinės ir kultūrinės antropologijos teorijos: mokomoji knyga</i> | | Kaunas: Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto leidykla |