

Anthropology 4120 DSS, CI
Anthropology of Childhood
Engr 238 T & TH 12:00-1:15

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Office Hours: By appointment 2-4PM M-F, Old Main 245D.

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"...every anthropologist owes to the world, for the privilege of having been an anthropologist, at least one good ethnography" Goldschmidt, W. (1976:1) *Culture and Behavior of the Sebei*. Berkeley: University of California.

This course offers a novel perspective on the lives of children and their families. On dozens of issues in the study of children and their families, the anthropological perspective—informed by current thinking in culture and human evolution—undermines academic and popular wisdom regarding what is “natural” or normal. Indeed, both theoretical and practical ideas about children’s development in contemporary mainstream society are shown to be quite culture-bound. Systematically, we will draw on a vast literature in anthropology, history and primatology to construct a representative and rich portrait of children and their caretakers. This portrait is multi-hued, colored by vivid descriptions from the ethnographic literature and numerous photographs and films. Children are shown as infants, attached marsupial-like to their mothers; as toddlers under the care of older siblings; as 4-year olds acquiring their culture through make-believe; as 6 year olds eagerly learning to garden; as 8 year olds playing with peers; as 10 year olds foraging for their sustenance; as 14 year olds enduring painful ordeals to make them strong and; as 16 year old brides. Throughout, comparisons are drawn between the childhood described by anthropologists in pre-modern or traditional societies and contemporary Euroamerican and East Asian childhood. We won’t flinch, however, in revealing children’s lives in the now deeply impoverished communities found throughout the Third World. We conclude with discussing recommendations for policy initiatives that are informed by the anthropologists’ perspective rather than the, frequently ethnocentric, perspective that informs most current efforts to improve children’s well-being.

Students can take this course to fulfill the University Studies (DSS/CI) "Communications Intensive" and “Depth Social Science” requirements and the Anthropology major's "Methods" requirement. In the CritSum assignment, students will read and review anthropological studies of childhood from the U.S. and abroad. These will be taken apart in class to highlight the questions being posed/answered as well as the research techniques used. For their second writing assignment, students will pursue a specific research question in the ethnographic record and present their research in class for the benefit of other students. The two major writing/speaking assignments go through at least two drafts and students meet with a Rhetoric Associate to improve their writing/speaking. To learn more about the program and your RAs, go to: (<http://www.usu.edu/raprogram>)

Mastery of course material and the development of analytical skills will be assessed through several quizzes, class participation, the written assignments and a comprehensive, objective final exam.

I encourage you to use me as a sounding-board for your brainstorm and queries. Write to me on email. My response may be brief and telegraphic but it will be prompt and, usually, on the money: david.lancy@usu.edu

Blackboard (Bb)

The course website can be found on Blackboard (Bb). Students are encouraged to utilize the information and tools that are contained on the site, which includes instructions and resources for the writing assignments, quizzes, student grades and other resources.

To access the USU Blackboard system, go to <http://bb.usu.edu> and enter your UserID and your password. Your UserID is your Banner ID Number. Your password will default as your Banner PIN. If you wish to change your password, you must do so via <http://password.usu.edu/>. This website manages your password for Aggiemail, Blackboard and Banner. Do not try to change your password in Bb.

Once you log in, you will be taken to “My Blackboard,” a page listing all Bb courses you are enrolled in. Our course is listed as ANTH 4120: Anthropology of Childhood.

ASSIGNMENTS

Reading Assignments

Textbooks are available through the USU bookstore, and, alternatively, through Amazon.com as a fundraiser for the USU Museum of Anthropology (Old Main 252). Ordering through Amazon.com often nets students a better price on both new and used texts, and, if the link is made through the museum’s website, your books will be cheaper AND the Museum benefits as well, receiving a percentage of the price of everything purchased.

<http://www.usu.edu/anthro/museum/catalog/amafundmus.html>

To facilitate buying books through Amazon.com, museum personnel have created links for all SSWA courses. Simply go to the website listed above, look up your course, click on the textbook(s) featured for your class, place them in your Amazon.com shopping cart, make your purchase, and voila—your textbooks are shipped to you and the museum automatically receives a commission on the sale. Shipping is free for orders of \$25 or more.

Keep in mind, as well, that any time you plan to make a purchase from Amazon.com, if you go to their website via a Museum of Anthropology link (by clicking, for example, on *any* featured book, whether or not you plan to buy it), the museum will then receive a

small commission on everything you buy—not just books related to your courses. It's a nice way for the museum to fund outreach events here at USU, programs for Cache Valley families, and even undergraduate internships in the museum.

Lancy, David F. (1996) *Playing on the Mother Ground: Cultural Routines for Children's Development*. New York: Guilford. (Book)

Lancy, David F. (2008) *The Anthropology of Childhood: Cherubs, Chattel, Changelings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Book)

Note that additional material to support the book, including *Cliff Notes*-type Study Guide can be found on the book's website: <http://www.anthropologyofchildhood.usu.edu/>

In addition to these two texts, there are a number of articles assigned which you will find under the "Additional Readings" link on our Blackboard course page (see above).

Writing Assignments

5 Main Points (5MPs)

The readings assigned in this class have been selected to reflect a variety of perspectives in ethnography and the study of children. **Please read the assigned material in advance.** This is a seminar and you will be called on to lead discussion. To facilitate discussion and inquiry, 100% attendance and completion of reading assignments is expected. Any absence must be accounted for in writing. Further, each member is expected to bring insights to the discussion—there will be no on-lookers.

As a way of structuring this activity, *each student must complete ten 5MPs*. These are brief written (typed) assignments that list the five main points in the particular reading assigned for a particular class. These will also serve as "sound bites" for you to refer to when called upon to contribute to discussion. Hence, although the 5MPs are designed to be brief, you must be prepared to defend your choices and elaborate on the points in discussion.

For a research study, also note topic, setting and methods employed. Also ponder the question being asked or the purpose of the study. What conclusions can be drawn? What generalizations can be made about child development or culture and children? Type up your 5MP and use these notes as "cue cards" for yourself as we discuss each of the articles/ chapters in turn.

You will be randomly assigned to 12 articles/chapters for your 5MPs, spread out over the course of the semester. You only need complete 10, so you may skip or drop two. If you're absent on the day your reading is discussed, you may not hand in a 5MP. On the

other hand, if you are present and have a 5MP due, you will be called on to present your ideas. The 5MP lists can be found on Bb under the “Writing Assignments” link.

This is a pass/fail assignment. They are worth 5 points each for a maximum of 50 points.

You may use your collection of 5MPs to review for the Final Exam.

Critical Summary Paper (CritSum)

For this assignment you will write a 1-page typed review of an article-length anthropological study. The articles for the Critical Summaries represent a cross-section of the anthropological literature on childhood.

Your CritSum will include:

- Bibliographic info
- A summary of the article
- Critical commentary regarding methodology and conclusions

A sample CritSum is provided on the Writing Assignments page to help you with basic format and layout. You will find a listing of the eligible articles on that section of the webpage as well. As soon as you are able, visit the Anthropology Reception Desk (Old Main 245) and sign out an article from the receptionist.

Run a draft of your CritSum by one of your classmates, revise and then submit your draft to Blackboard. As a back-up, you will also bring a printed draft to class to be collected and passed on to your RA. Your Rhetoric Associate (RA) will have access to your submission. She will read it and then meet, individually, with you to provide guidance as to how your paper can be improved. After your RA meeting, your RA will post comments on the Bb Assignments tool. You will then revise the (ungraded draft) paper and submit the final draft, again on Bb. See class Schedule for specific dates.

I will grade them on technical proficiency, including spelling and grammar, thoroughness (evidence that you read the article and can summarize it) and analytical insight (evidence that you understood the article and can relate it to issues raised in the course)

Failure to meet deadlines, including your RA meeting, will have a severe, negative effect on your grade.

Later in the semester you will present your **CritSum** to the entire class. These presentations should take about 5 minutes. Presentation dates are based on the article you select. The presentations will begin the class period after your drafts are due. Check the Semester Schedule to determine when your article will be “up.”

The CritSum is worth 20 points.

Ethnology Project

You are to carry out a small-scale study during the semester. I will work with you, individually, to plan your study and will consult with you during the course of the study. An ethnology is a comparative study where you draw on several ethnographies of distinct cultures in order to look for underlying patterns of cultural variation or similarity. Broad similarity might be evidence of a biologically based, cultural universal. Variation might be due to differences in ecology or subsistence. Sample ethnologies have been made available in the Writing Assignments section of the class Homepage.

The theme of the ethnology should relate to children, families and/or schools. Annette and I have compiled a sample topic list and you will find it in the Writing Assignments section of the class Homepage. You may select one of these topics or design your own study. Your ethnology should have a brief **Lit Review** stating the problem or general area in which you've chosen to explore (e.g. "How do fathers interact with infants?"). Then you will review the **Evidence** you've found, listing and providing brief descriptions of the particular phenomenon as described in several ethnographies. And, lastly, you will prepare a **Discussion** section in which you try and tease apart what the purpose or function of this particular phenomenon might be (e. g. baby-parading enhances mating opportunities).

You have three possible sources. **First**, you can search on key terms in your topic in *The Anthropology of Childhood: Annotated Bibliography* prepared for the Anthropology of Childhood book. This will be made available to you on Blackboard. This Bibliography runs to 1500 pages. If you find promising sources, you may want to obtain the originals (good opportunity to learn how to use electronic library resources). You will find similar, additional material on the Anthropology of Childhood Website <http://www.anthropologyofchildhood.usu.edu/> under "Supplemental Notes."

Second, you can search various archives on your own such as Anthrosource or JSTOR. These and other excellent e-journals can be found by going to: <http://library.usu.edu> Under "Welcome" is a list of links. Follow the links for "Find Resources," then "Electronic Journals List." You can then click on the e-journal you wish to search. Off-campus access requires authentication, see library site for details: http://library.usu.edu/electres/off_campus.php

Third, the one source you are required to use is the Human Relations Area Files, a huge archive of ethnographic material. A class period will be set aside to discuss this assignment and to show you how to use HRAF (see Schedule).

You will submit to Blackboard a polished draft (approximately 8-10 pages, including references) of your Ethnology. As a back-up, you will also bring a printed draft to class to be collected and passed on to your RA. Your Rhetoric Associate (RA) will have access to your submission. She will read it and then meet, individually, with you to provide guidance as to how your ethnology can be improved.

After your RA meeting, your RA will post comments on the Bb Assignments tool. You will then revise the (ungraded draft) paper. Your final draft must be submitted to Bb by the final draft deadline (see Schedule for date). Specific submission instructions can be found under the Writing Assignments link on Bb.

I will grade them on technical proficiency, including spelling and grammar, completeness of the literature search and review, research design, adequacy of effort, clarity of writing, and originality of thought. The highest accolade will be to publish the best papers on the Anthropology of Childhood website.
www.anthropologyofchildhood.usu.edu/

During the last week of the semester, you will share your results with your classmates. Each student will have approximately 10 minutes to present. Preferred style is to talk us through the study using prepared notes and overhead transparencies. There will be time for questions and discussion. Further instructions can be found on the Writing Assignment link on Bb.

You can earn up to 60 points for your ethnology. Of these, up to 10 points will be awarded for sincere effort and timeliness. Up to 10 points will be awarded for the oral presentation with 40 points remaining for the written report.

Quizzes

There are six quizzes covering readings, films and lecture. The Quizzes consist of objective multiple choice and matching questions. You have 15 minutes to complete each Quiz but, if you go slightly over the time limit, there is no penalty. They are worth 12 points each and the lowest score is dropped. Please find the Assessments link under Course Tools on the left of the class Homepage. Dates for quizzes are given on the Calendar—also found under Course Tools.

Final Exam

The exam consists of 30 objective questions drawn from the pool of questions used in constructing the Quizzes. To prepare, review your 5MPs and those of your study partners.

The final is optional/extra credit. If you are happy with your grade, you do not need to take it. You can earn up to 30 points on the exam. It will be available on Blackboard during the first two days of Finals Week until 11 pm, Tuesday.

Attendance

Attendance is recorded and, in view of the seminar-nature of the class, skipping more than a couple classes would signify that you have missed significant content and your grade might be affected. Attendance at all the “Oral Presentation” sessions—out of

respect for your classmates and colleagues—is mandatory. Also note that, without an explanatory letter from Disabled Student Services, no open laptops are permitted in class. Individuals violating this rule will be asked to leave.

Grades

Ethnology = up to 60 points
5MPs = up to 50 points
CritSum = up to 20 points
Quizzes - up to 60 points
Final Exam = up to 30 points

Total possible=190 points.

If your total score:

178 or above=A;
171-177=A-;
165-170=B+;
159-164=B;
152-157=B-;
etc.

Accommodating Disabilities

If a student has a disability that will likely require some accommodation, the student must inform the instructor and provide documentation through the **Disability Resource Center**. Any requests for special consideration must be discussed with and approved by the instructor during the first week of class. In cooperation with the DRC, course materials can be provided in alternative formats.