

ANTH 2311.1
Ethnology: Melanesia
Fall 2018
Mon Wed 2:30 -3:45
Loyola Academic 177

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Office Hours: MW 10am-noon

DESCRIPTION

This course is a regional study of the ethnology of Melanesia. Drawing examples from across the region but with a particular focus on Papua New Guinea, we will look at topics such as kinship and social organization, gender roles, exchange, colonialism, resource extraction, religion, and tourism. Through lectures, films, and role-playing activities, you will be encouraged to translate your learning into active participation in “The Village”, which will be explained during the first class meeting and which will be continued throughout the semester. A key aspect of this course will be to examine critically social change in various forms.

EXPECTATIONS

This course will be run as a combination of lectures and in-class activities based on experiential learning. This means that your active participation is required and linked closely to your grade. All students are expected to keep up with the readings, to come to class having interrogated the readings, and to engage in in-class activities regularly. Failure to do so will negatively impact your final grade.

PLEASE NOTE that I will not tolerate students using electronic devices such as phones and tablets in class (unless as part of a designated in class activity). If you prefer to use a laptop to take your notes, please let me know in writing after the first class. Otherwise, I expect all electronic devices to be turned off and placed out of sight during class. If I see you using such a device, you have distracted me (and probably your fellow students) and may be asked to turn it off and/or leave the classroom, if it happens repeatedly.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the completion of the course, students are expected to:

- understand various types of social organization in Melanesia, including gender relations;
- recognize and understand different kinds of exchange;
- understand the various ways in which people make a living in Melanesia;
- understand the ways in which Melanesian social relations are both different to, and similar to, our own;
- recognize Melanesia not as an “exotic” place, but one firmly embedded in the modern world (and yet, with many ways of looking at the world that differ from our own taken-for-granted “truths”)
- understand the significance of various interactions between indigenous Melanesians and outside influences in the past and present such as colonial officials, missionaries, loggers, mining companies, environmentalists, and tourists.

READING

Required Texts

Course Reader, available at the university book store

Weiner, Annette (1988) *The Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea*. Orlando, FL: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Knauff, Bruce (2016) *The Gebusi: Lives Transformed in a Rainforest World*, 4th Ed. New York: McGraw Hill.

ASSESSMENT

This class rewards students who attend class, keep up with readings, and engage in discussions and class activities. The relative weightings of these components are as follows:

Active Participation	10%	
Journal	10%	Due last day of each month
In-class quizzes	20%	
Essay Proposal (250-500 words)	10%	Due Oct 15
Essay (1750-2000 words)	25%	Due Nov 5
Take-home Final Exam	25%	Due Dec 10

You must hand in your assignments by the dates and times given above. If you are going to be late, contact me. **Extensions must be requested before the due date.** Late essays will only be accepted without penalty if an extension has been granted in advance and the essay is accompanied by an adequate and documented explanation. Essays not accompanied by such explanations or for which an extension has not been granted will be penalized at the rate of one point (i.e. 1% of your final grade) per day.

**Any work received more than two (2) weeks AFTER the due date will automatically receive a grade of zero, except in exceptional circumstances.

****The essay proposal, essay and the Take-Home Final Exam MUST be submitted BOTH to the Dropbox on Brightspace, AND in hard copy. The time stamp on the Dropbox copy will be used to determine if your essay is in on time. IF YOU DO NOT submit both an electronic AND a hard copy, you will be docked marks.**

Assignments

- **Active Participation:** Every student must contribute to discussions and in-class activities, including active participation in “The Village”. Contributions, furthermore, must be relevant to the topic and/or derive from readings, films, or previous discussions. The instructor will keep track of contributions to in-class discussions and group activities.
- **Journal:** You should have at least one entry per week, of at least 1- 1 ½ pages. This is not “research” – it is your responses and reflections based on your role in and our activities surrounding “The Village”. I expect to see 1-2 paragraphs each month developing your “character”: adding characteristics, relationships to others, feelings towards others, etc. I also want to see 1-2 paragraphs in which you reflect on context of course materials (readings, lectures) from the perspective of your role. How does it matter to you as a “Village” resident? These will be collected last day of every month
- **In-Class quizzes:** These may be unannounced in advance, and are completed in class. Five (5) of these will be given throughout the semester. Your four *best* results will be counted towards your final grade. This means that if you are not in class for one of these unannounced quizzes, the four you do complete will all be counted. If you miss more than one, you will receive a zero for each quiz not completed.
- **Research Paper.** You will choose a topic based on your own interests that relates to the ethnology of Melanesia. This might be based around the practice and understandings of a given concept, activity, ritual, social structure, intervention, or conflict in a particular social context; an item of material culture that has significance within a given society; or you might compare a specific institution (such as marriage or leadership) between two specific societies. You will describe and analyze the topic of your choosing in the context of theories and concepts discussed in this course and with the incorporation of appropriate peer-reviewed anthropological literature. You will be required to submit both a **paper proposal** and a **final paper**.
- Your essay **PROPOSAL** outlines your chosen topic, demonstrates the line of argument and/or analysis you plan to take, and identifies at *least* three (3) scholarly, peer reviewed sources. Expected length is 250-500 words (1-2 pages double spaced, 12 pt font).
- **Your final paper** will develop the analysis to 1750-2000 words (7-8 pages double spaced, 12 pt font), and be appropriately referenced with at *least* five (5) scholarly, peer reviewed sources (academic books, edited volumes, or journal articles).
- **Take Home Final Exam:** Will be released during the last week of classes, and will need to be submitted within ONE WEEK of the day it is given out. **LATE FINAL EXAMS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

ACADEMIC PROBLEMS

Please see me if you are having problems with any aspect of this course. I will do my best to help you get back on track. Come early and come often during office hours, or make an appointment to see me. I am also happy to see you if you are not having a problem, but just want to ask questions or discuss particular aspects of the course that you might not have had the opportunity to bring up in class.

Help can also be obtained from the **Writing Centre** which facilitates the development of effective writing skills in students and helps those who encounter difficulties in their studies. **The Learning Studio** offers language support for International students as well as technology support for on-on-one or small group support to students who need assistance with technology-based learning resources. If you have trouble expressing yourself clearly when you write, or have difficulty with things like grammar and punctuation, please avail yourself of these services!

The Writing Centre is located in Room 115 of the Burke Building, and you can check their opening hours and services at <http://www.smu.ca/academics/writing-centre.html>. They have drop-in hours or you can make an appointment online, by calling 902-491-6202 or by email at writing@smu.ca

LECTURE PROGRAMME AND READING LIST

The following is a week-by-week programme of lectures and readings. If changes are necessary, they will be announced in class. Announcements will also be emailed and/or posted on Brightspace.

WEEK 1 *Introducing Melanesia and “the Village”*

Wed, Sept 5

Where and what is Melanesia, and why is it so important in anthropology? Course overview and introduction

Required reading: none

WEEK 2 *Key aspects of Melanesia*

Mon, Sept 10

Prehistory, colonialism and independence

Required reading: Kirch, Patrick V. (2010). Peopling of the Pacific: A Holistic Anthropological Perspective. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 39:131-148.

Wed, Sept 12

Melanesia in Anthropology

Required reading: Knauff, Bruce (1999). Chapter 1: Melanesia as “Culture Area” in *From Primitive to Postcolonial in Melanesia and Anthropology*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, pp. 1-20.

WEEK 3 *Fieldwork in Melanesia*

Mon, Sept 17

Fieldwork

Required reading: Knauff, Bruce (2013). Introduction & Chapter 1 in *The Gebusi: Lives Transformed in a Rainforest World*, 3rd Ed (pp.1-23)

Wed, Sept 19

“A Sacred Place” in anthropology: The Trobriand Islands

FILM: *The Trobriand Islanders of Papua New Guinea* (1990)

Required reading: Weiner, Anette (1988). Intro & Chapter 1 in *The Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea* (pp.1-32)

WEEK 4 *Life and Death in Melanesia*

Mon, Sept 24

Living in the Land of the Unexpected

Required reading: Chapter 2 in *The Gebusi: Lives Transformed in a Rainforest World*, 3rd Ed. (pp.24-37)

Wed, Sept 26

Death and Mourning

Required reading: Chapter 2 in *The Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea* (pp.33-50) AND Chapter 3 in *The Gebusi: Lives Transformed in a Rainforest World*, 3rd Ed. (pp.38-53).

WEEK 5 Kinship and social organization

Mon, Oct 1

Kinship

Required reading: Chapter 3 in *The Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea* (pp.51-64) AND Chapter 4 in *The Gebusi: Lives Transformed in a Rainforest World*, 3rd Ed. (pp.54-67)

Wed, Oct 3

Gender and sexuality

Required reading: Chapter 4 in *The Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea* (pp.65-80) AND Chapter 5 in *The Gebusi: Lives Transformed in a Rainforest World*, 3rd Ed. (pp.68-79)

WEEK 6 Rituals and Rites of Passage

Mon, Oct 8

NO CLASS: Thanksgiving Holiday

Wed, Oct 10

Life cycle rituals

Required reading: Chapter 6 in *The Gebusi: Lives Transformed in a Rainforest World*, 3rd Ed. (pp.80-94) and Herdt, Gilbert (1987). Transitional Objects in Sambia Initiation. *Ethnos* 15(1):40-57.

WEEK 7 Political Organization

Mon, Oct 15

Big Men, Great Men, and Chiefs: equality and inequality

Required reading: Chapter 6 in *The Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea* (pp.97-110) AND Sahlins, Marshall (1963). Poor Man, Rich Man, Big-Man, Chief: Political Types in Melanesia and Polynesia. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 5(3):285-303.

Wed, Oct 17

Land and Land Tenure

Required reading: Chapter 5 in *The Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea* (pp. 81-96) AND Bonnemaïson, Joel (1984). Social and Cultural Aspects of Land Tenure. In *Land Tenure in Vanuatu*, P. Lamour (ed). Suva: University of the South Pacific, pp.1-7.

WEEK 8 Exchange

Mon, Oct 22

Reciprocity, redistribution, and gift economies

Required Reading: Chapters 7 & 8 in *The Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea* (pp.111-138)

Wed, Oct 23

Kula

Required reading: Chapter 9 in *The Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea* (pp.139-158)

WEEK 9 Social Change: Religion

Mon, Oct 29

Magic, sorcery and witchcraft

Required reading: Eves, Richard (2000). Sorcery's the Curse: Modernity, envy and the flow of sociality in a Melanesian Society. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 6(3):453-468.

Wed, Oct 31

Christianity and other world religions in Melanesia

Required reading: Chapters 7 & 11 in *The Gebusi* (pp.96-115, pp.160-171)

WEEK 10 Social Change: Markets, Development, and Globalization

Mon, Nov 5

The “promise” of development

Required reading: Sillitoe, Paul (2000). Chapter 1: Social Change and Development in *Social Change in Melanesia: Development and History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-12 AND Lindstrom, Lamont (2018). Cargo Cults. In *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Anthropology*. Online at <https://www.anthroencyclopedia.com/entry/cargo-cults>

Wed, Nov 7

Changing economies

Required reading: Chapter 8 in *The Gebusi* (pp.116-129) and Jacka, Jerry (2000) Coca-Cola and *kolo*: Land, ancestors and development. *Anthropology Today* 17(4):1-8.

WEEK 11 Fall Semester Break: No Classes

WEEK 12 Social Change: Exchange and Extraction

Mon, Nov 19

Currencies

Required reading: none

FILM: *Pig Tusks and Paper Money* (1999)

Wed, Nov 21

Logging and Mining

Required reading: Banks, Glen (2008). Understanding ‘resource’ conflicts in Papua New Guinea. *Asia-Pacific Viewpoint* 49(1):23-34 AND Hviding, Edvard (2015). Big Money in the Rural: Wealth and dispossession in Western Solomons political economy. *The Journal of Pacific History* 50(4):473-485.

WEEK 13 Social Change: Technology and communications

Mon, Nov 26

Mobile phones

Required reading: Taylor, John P. (2016). Drinking Money and Pulling Women: Mobile Phone Talk, Gender, and Agency in Vanuatu. *Anthropological Forum* 26(1):1-16.

Thurs, Nov 29

Social Media

Required reading: Dalsgaard, Steffen (2016). The Ethnographic Use of Facebook in Everyday Life. *Anthropological Forum* 26(1):96-114.

WEEK 14 Social Change: Tourism

Tues, Dec 4

Required reading: MacCarthy, Michelle (2013). ‘More than grass skirts and feathers’: Negotiating culture in the Trobriand Islands. *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 19(1):62-77.

TAKE HOME FINAL: Due Dec 10 by end of day