

ANTH 112,21 Introduction to Socio-cultural anthropology
Winter 2019

I acknowledge that St FX is in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People.

Jan 8, 10: Introduction to course: What is anthropology? What are its ethical challenges?

READ: *Perspectives*: Laura Nader “The Development of Anthropological Ideas”
Perspectives: “Anthropology in Our Moment in History: Interview with Philippe Bourgois”

American Anthropological Association. 2012. “Statement on Ethics.”

<http://ethics.americananthro.org/category/statement/>

[What is anthropology](http://prezi.com/vmvomt3sj3fd/this-is-anthropology/) : University of South Florida graduate student response
(<http://prezi.com/vmvomt3sj3fd/this-is-anthropology/>)

Note Moodle quiz that will be available next week using Nathan’s article to learn about different forms of plagiarism.

Effective reading:

- what type of article is it?
 - is it an academic article? (i.e. in a refereed journal; has an argument; presents evidence that is analysed using definitions, concepts, theory; takes the form of an essay)
 - is it an academic review article?
 - a polemical article? (i.e. is an argument, but tends to be light on the evidence and analysis)
 - is it a “text”, presenting terms, concepts, information for educational purposes?
 - a report? (i.e. simply presents information, with perhaps a conclusion based on evidence, but is not a theoretically analysed work)
 - is it a policy? Does it give rules and guidelines to be followed by members of a group?
 - a popular press article? (i.e. is in a newspaper or magazine; tends to present information in accessible language)
- related to the above question is to ask why you are reading the article, or why your professor chose it – in the latter case, use cues from the course outline; for example, if it is in a section called “theory,” then you can assume that the work is being used to represent a specific theory
[since, apart from the “text,” most of what you will read in this course constitute academic articles, the rest of the questions assume that]
- what is the argument? (Look for words like “argument,” “suggest,” “takes the view,” etc.)
- what assumptions are made, or what definitions and theoretical framework are being used or presented?
- what is the type of evidence being used? Is there a case study? If so, of what?

- what methodology was used to gather the evidence?
- what evidence does the author think is important?
- reflect on the argument and analysis to figure out if you are convinced, or what other implications it might have

- Anthropology: study of the diverse socially generated and sustained ways there are of being human

- “who are they?”; “who are we?”

Four sub-disciplines

- archaeology: study of the past through material remains
 - prehistory and historical
- biological/physical anthropology:
 - primatology
 - paleoanthropology: (hominid evolution)
 - human (physical) variation
- linguistic anthropology
 - historical linguistics
 - descriptive/structural linguistics
 - sociolinguistics
- socio-cultural anthropology

- Nader and Bourgois both emphasise anthropological work on power, inequality, and domination
The AAA Ethics Statement also points to power inequalities and politics in doing anthropological work.

- while not all anthropological work focuses on power, the core concept of cultural relativism predisposes the discipline to think about the value of all ways of life

Important concepts:

- culture; (enculturation)
- holism
- comparative
- cultural relativity (absolute versus critical)
- ethnocentrism
- participant observation
- plasticity

- what do Nader and Bourgois say about the range of peoples and topics that can be studied by anthropologists?

- what role has colonialism, political domination, globalization had in changing the lives of people around the world?

- note that anthropologists might study a group of people in a distant place who have been affected by a global process (for example, war, trade, development, etc.), or people who have implemented that process, or people in dominant countries who have benefited or

suffered from that process.

- what kinds of assumptions about cultures might anthropologists challenge, and why is this important?

AAA Ethics statement:

- who are the different types of “others” with whom anthropologists engage?
- do no harm
- be open and honest regarding your work
- obtain informed consent and necessary permissions
- weigh competing ethical obligations due collaborators and affected parties - note the central responsibility to vulnerable populations
- make your results accessible
- protect and preserve your records
- maintain respectful and ethical professional relationships