

Cultural Difference and Social Change

Anthro 377 (cross-listed with LAST)
Offered in cooperation with the Center for Social Concerns

Instructor: Greg Downey Office: 619
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Class meets: T R 9:30-10:45 Hours: T 3-5 or
by appointment
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Course Description

This course is designed for students returning from summer service projects or study abroad programs in impoverished or "developing" countries. In the class, students will conduct research to better understand the sites that they visited, studying them in relation to broader global, regional, and national patterns. The overall goal of the course will be for students to learn how social science analysis might help us to understand and confront problems in cross-cultural contexts.

The course is a work in progress in many senses. First, it is an experiment, offered this semester for the first time. Second, it is envisioned as part of a larger set of courses to be offered in the future to help students link service experience with academic interests. Third, it is intentionally "incomplete," gaps left in the syllabus that each student will have to fill in for him- or herself. Finally, it is subject to change – and I hope it will change – over the course of our semester. If "we make the road by walking," we'll do so together, and I reserve the right to modify the syllabus to respond to the path we take.

This course is a space more than a point-to-point route. You have this space, alone and together, to write, read, reflect, think, and talk about your experience. We would like you to see it in larger contexts, to think about how it might continue to be part of your life, and to leave something behind, so that what you learn can be shared with those who will follow the road behind you. My goal is to help you to understand and, at the same time, to inspire you to think about how things might be different. There is no reason why you can't take the best parts of what you've

learned, share them with others, and make them permanent parts of your life.

We have been given abundant resources from the Center for Social Concerns and the Helen Kellogg Institute for International Studies to help us, so the outcome of this class is limited only by our imagination and creativity. What makes this course "anthropological" is that we recognize that only through attention to how the people we wish to work with see the world can we cooperate effectively. I assume that every student will participate very actively in class discussions.

Required Texts

David Korten. *When Corporations Rule the World.* Second edition. (Kumarian Press, 2001).

John Isbister. *Promises Not Kept: The Betrayal of Social Change in the Third World.* Sixth edition. (Kumarian Press, 2003).

Norman Uphoff, Milton Esman, and Anirudh Krishna. *Reasons for Success: Learning from Instructive Experiences in Rural Development.* (Kumarian Press, 1998).

Course packet available from the LaFortune Copy Center (packet #159).

Assignments

Annotated bibliography:

Over the semester, I ask you to keep a running list of the articles and books you read and the Internet pages that you found most helpful. Along with each entry, I'd like you to write a sentence or two of notes and reflection:

- Why was this piece useful?
- What do you take away from it?
- How does it relate to what we study?
- Would it be helpful to other students?

I expect that this bibliography will include *at least* twenty items that are not on our syllabus and some not on the handouts I provide.

Short Essays

You will write a series of short essays, most of them reflective pieces, about the class readings, your experiences abroad, and the relations between them. These essays will be graded for content and quality of reflection and some may serve as the basis of your collective assignments. You will be asked to turn in at least two double-spaced pages for **eight of the first ten weeks** (most will find it easy to write much more).

Public and Collective Presentation

This assignment is more open-ended and will be negotiated as the class proceeds. The Center for Social Concerns and the other people sponsoring this class would like, if possible, to make students' work publicly available. That way it can be shared with prospective students, alumni, visitors, and others who are interested.

We have been given funds sufficient to hire technical assistants to help us. We can invite guest speakers, present our work publicly, produce short videos, set up websites, sponsor events on campus, get started on senior theses, get directly involved in community action, or explore future careers. Unless we agree on something else, I would like you to be involved in **two collective projects**. I will review your work individually, including your organizational duties, and do everything in my power to help make your presentations as polished and effective as possible.

Section One: Reorienting Ourselves

Week One: Introduction

August 26 Get acquainted session

August 28 **Paulo Freire**. 1998. "First Letter: Reading the World/Reading the Word." Pp. 17-26.

Internet articles on Re-entry and Reverse Culture Shock.

Visit:

<http://www.nd.edu/~intlstud/services/returnees/tips.htm>
– Notre Dame's own "re-entry" resource page.

Week Two: Lasting impressions

September 2 **Craig Storti**. 2001. Excerpts from *The Art of Coming Home*. (Intercultural). Pp. 138-160.

Dawn Kepets, *Back in the USA* (will be passed out – begin work)

September 4 *Share each other's work.*

Week Three: Where we were

September 9 *Readings from small group syllabi on specific regions and independent research. See course webpage for on-line resources.*

September 11 *Small group discussion of sites and orientation. Propose group project (website, orientation materials...).*

Week Four: Motivations and goals

- September 16 **Rebecca Anne Allahyari.** 2000. "Introduction: Studying Visions of Charity." Pp. 1-27.
- Bill Donahue.** 2001. "My Virtuous Vacation." Pp. 68-74.
- September 18 **James Jasper.** 1997. "Culture and Biography: The Pleasures of Protest." Pp. 210-228.
- Jeffery L. MacDonald.** 1996. "Crossing the Minefield: Politics of Refugee Research and Service." Pp. 255-262.

Week Five: Economics and democracy

- September 23 **David Korten,** *When Corporations Rule the World.* Read pp. 27-74.
- September 25 **David Korten,** *When Corporations Rule the World.* Read pp. 75-120.

Section Two: Confronting Problems

Week Six: Breaking down complex problems

- September 30 **Peter Taylor,** 2001. "Distributed Agency within Intersecting Ecological, Social, and Scientific Processes." Pp. 315-332.
- Daniel Gross.** 1971. "The Great Sisal Scheme." Pp. 255-260.
- October 2 **David Korten,** *When Corporations Rule the World.* Read pp. 123-174.

Week Seven: Money, poverty, and change

- October 7 **David Korten,** *When Corporations Rule the World.* Read pp. 177-185, 205-229 & 265-284.
- October 9 **John Isbister,** *Promises Not Kept.* Read pp. 1-29.

Week Eight: Underdevelopment and imperialism

- October 14 **John Isbister,** *Promises Not Kept.* Read pp. 30-101.

October 16 **John Isbister**, *Promises Not Kept*. Read pp. 148-191.

Mid-semester break: October 20-26

Week Nine: Foreign policy and justice

October 28 **John Isbister**, *Promises Not Kept*. Read pp. 192-241.

October 30 *Readings from small group syllabi on specific regions and independent research. See course webpage for on-line resources.*

Week Ten: Case studies of complex problems

November 4 *In-class work on breaking down complex problems.*

Please turn in a copy of your running bibliography by now if you haven't already!

November 6 *In-class, informal presentations by groups.*

Instructor will offer each student an individual progress report, broken down into various categories, to help the student anticipate what he or she wants to do to complete the course.

Section Three: Proposing Change

Week Eleven: Local problems, local solutions

November 11 **Sally Engle Merry**. "Changing Rights, Changing Culture." 2001. Pp. 31-55.

Richard Flacks. "Think Globally, Act Politically." 1995. Pp. 251-263.

Norman Uphoff et al. *Reasons for Success*. Read pp. 1-44.

November 13 **Margaret Casey**. "Development in Madura: An anthropological approach." 1993. Pp. 110-137.

Norman Uphoff et al. *Reasons for Success*. Read pp. 45-87.

Weeks Twelve: Finding resources in the community

November 18 **Stacy Leigh Pigg.** " 'Found in Most
Traditional Societies': Traditional Medical
Practitioners between Culture and Development." 1997. Pp. 259-290.

Norman Uphoff et al. *Reasons for Success.* Read
pp. 88-111.

November 20 **Anirudh Krishna with Roland Bunch.** "Farmer-
to-Farmer Experimentation and Extension:
Integrated Rural Development for Smallholders in
Guatemala." 1997. Pp. 137-152.

Norman Uphoff et al. *Reasons for Success.* Read
pp. 112-156.

Weeks Thirteen: Looking for inspiration

November 25 **Aviva Chomsky.** " 'The Threat of a Good
Example': Health and Revolution in Cuba." 2000.
Pp. 331-357.

Norman Uphoff et al. *Reasons for Success.* Read
pp. 157-195.

November 27 *Readings from small group syllabi on specific
regions and independent research. See course
webpage for on-line resources.*

Norman Uphoff et al. *Reasons for Success.* Read
pp. 196-217.

Week Fourteen: Work week

December 2 *Readings from small group syllabi on specific
regions and independent research. See course
webpage for on-line resources.*

December 4 **class presentations and discussion**

Week Fifteen: Conclusion

December 9 **class presentations and discussion**