

Portfolio for  
Writing in the Discipline  
Faculty Fellowship

by

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Fall 2007

### ***Learning During the Fellowship***

During the course of this semester, I have learned many new techniques to encourage more writing in and outside the classroom and have found it stimulating and exciting to hear about them in a structured way. John C. Bean's book *Engaging Ideas* main message is to use writing in conjunction with critical thinking and ultimately include active learning in the classroom. The seminars led by Rita Kranidis, faculty discussions, Bean's book and notes by Peter Elbow have served as the main guide in my learning experience.

During the seminars I learned about informal writing, a non-graded assignment, that students can use to write down their ideas without thinking about it being graded. It can be used for a variety of purposes: to write down budding ideas; organize whole or parts of ideas; or as a stimulus to thinking. I have designed two informal writing assignments or mini-tasks that can be used to generate the sharing of ideas in class, and a peer review. The Collage, a collection of pieces of writing or parts of written pieces, is another piece that is interesting to me and may be able to be integrated into the class.

### ***Role of Writing in your Course and Discipline in General***

#### ***Course Goals***

The Introduction to Cultural Anthropology has several goals. The more general goals are to guide the students in understanding other cultures and to gain the anthropological perspective, which is to analyze the cultural system by dividing them into their subsystem components and also apply comparative approaches. Core goals as listed on the syllabus are:

1. to understand the breadth of anthropology and the four field approach
2. to use and explain the anthropological concept of culture
3. distinguish between human universals and culturally specific traits
4. apply cultural relativism to counter ethnocentrism and ethnic stereotyping
5. analyze sociocultural systems by dividing them into their subsystem components (economic, familial, ecological, religious, etc.)
6. apply the comparative approach to explain the reasons for cultural difference
7. identify and analyze the multilevel and shifting basis of ethnicity
8. employ ethnographic techniques to describe and analyze contemporary social systems

Anthropology 101, Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, is a General Education course. Because of its position in the Curricula, it requires that assignments explore "critical literacy; respect for others; creative expression; effective written and oral communication; and respect for the intellectual community tempered with skepticism about unchallenged truths." (Montgomery College Catalog 2007-2008). The course is a content course and the focus is learning the basics of Anthropology but at the same time the goals of a general education course are met. To address these objectives, the formal

assignments in the course foster the expression of creativity, encourage good written and oral papers and presentations, classroom discussion, and critical thinking

### ***Writing in Anthropology***

Writing in Anthropology 101, as it is in the field overall, is important because students use writing to communicate about cultures they observe, summarize their analyses and reactions to their research. Good anthropological writing asks the students to observe their situation broadly and objectively, quantify whenever possible and to interpret the situation using anthropological concepts.

In the Anthropology sections that I teach, I have few students with writing problems. As the students in AN 101 have passed the English requirement EN 101/101A and RD 120 (a minimum requirement), they come to the classroom with solid skills. Except for those who have English as a second language where more errors may occur or the occasional overly brief writer, I have found that writing is actually a strong point for these students.

### ***Summary of Assignments and Their Importance.***

One of the preliminary goals of the course is reinforced by the first formal written assignment. This Internet Assignment helps students investigate the breadth of anthropology and its four fields of Anthropology and explore anthropological information on the internet. The idea of the assignment is that the student can choose to read an article that concerns one of the four fields of Anthropology; then they have to answer specific questions about it or related to it. Some of the answers are in the article but others are at web sites that are suggested in the assignment or that they have to research themselves. It also requires that they cite both printed and internet sources. Part of the assignment is to first take the plagiarism tutorial offered by the Montgomery College library website.

One of the most important assignments in the course is the Participant Observation. This project is designed to get the student started in the participant observation process to develop their observation skills through the description of a cultural scene or subsystem that is unfamiliar to them. They then need to understand and interpret some parts of the event or scene they have observed. This exercise should help them see both some of the powers of the participant observation method as well as some of its limitations or drawbacks.

A second assignment is a Museum Assignment. The Anthropology students are reading and viewing ethnographic portraits of a wide variety of cultures. The goal for the student is not only to learn about and understand the people and their way of life, but also to understand the techniques used to try to achieve neutral yet realistic descriptions. Museums, like films and books, provide another venue for learning about other cultures. In this assignment, the main objective is to relate the examples of the material culture they encounter at the museum to the concepts and ideas regarding culture that they have

learned in class. At the same time, they should also be thinking about the efficacy of a museum exhibit to teach about another culture.

## ***II. Mini Tasks with Peer Review***

### ***I. “Warm up” for the Formal Participant Observation, AN 101***

Purpose: The Participant Observation assignment, a formal writing assignment, in AN 101 asks students to observe objectively a cultural event that can range from a football game, mosh pit or religious service. They often have trouble using anthropological concepts in their analysis of their chosen cultural event. As a warm up, I would like to assign the following un-graded mini-task of informal writing and incorporate a peer review in the assignment. The peer review will be a version of a “response-centered review” but will be verbal rather than written.

#### ***Mini Task I***

You are about to embark on your own participant observation of an event. You may not realize it but most events that have large groups of people such as football games, rock concerts and protests have elements of rituals. Your text by Peoples and Bailey states that a ritual is an “organized, stereotyped symbolic behaviors intended to influence supernatural powers.” Other writers broaden the definition to include “secular rituals ... which are patterned forms of behavior with no connection to the supernatural realm.” (Miller 2007). Football games do not influence supernatural powers, but they do have “organized, stereotyped symbolic behaviors.” An analysis of those behaviors can determine the sequencing of the events and the importance of the participant groups. The symbolism of places, objects, or language, can reinforce meanings and help express the core beliefs and values of the event and the people engaged in it.

Take a few minutes to write about the elements of ritual behavior that you have observed and anthropological concepts that you think are exhibited during this ritual.

#### Peer Review

Each person from Groups of 4 people each will discuss the main ideas of their writing with one member of the group and verbally solicit their feed back about their analysis of the ritual. The respondent should summarize the pluses and minuses of the work with the writer. After this one-on-one discussion, all students within that group share and discuss their work and ideas with the other students.

#### ***Mini Task II***

Purpose: Anthropology AN 101 students had a chance to hear Clea Koff, a forensic anthropologist, discuss her new book *Bone Woman* recently. She is a “real” anthropologist who has worked in the field at massacre sites in Africa and Eastern Europe (not an armchair anthropologist obviously)! This is a first experience for these introductory students to have contact with a practicing anthropologist other than their professors. This informal assignment will give them an opportunity to write about their

new perceptions of Anthropology after hearing a talk by a professional who combines physical anthropology with human rights and history.

Informal Writing Assignment: Please write a one or two paragraph letter to a friend and tell them about the complexities of her work – what would you tell your friend are the pros and cons of forensic anthropological work?

Expectations: (1) that the student will see the interrelatedness of the sub-disciplines of Anthropology and other disciplines outside of Anthropology; (2) that they will discover that the anthropologist's written work is shaped by their goals and experiences; (3) that anthropologists evolve as they work in their discipline.

Peer discussion:

Students will exchange their informal writing with their partners in groups of 4 and the group will summarize their ideas and present them to the whole class.

### ***III. Formal Internet Assignment***

This assignment consists of reading **one** article from *Applying Anthropology* – each article listed below represents different subfields of Anthropology and then answering questions about it using the article and pertinent information from the Internet. The purpose of this assignment is to familiarize you with research about different aspects of Anthropology while we are working on understanding the subfields of Cultural Anthropology in class. I am also concerned about your knowledge of what is plagiarism and how to cite written and web sources. Because of these latter concerns, I would like you to do the **First** step below.

**First...** Please take the College's on-line tutorial on plagiarism (<http://www.montgomerycollege.edu/library/plagiarismintro.htm>) by **September 13** on the Montgomery College web site. The results of this will be sent back to me. For how to cite sources, refer to either the library's APA and MLA style, or try <http://citationmachine.net/>

**Second ...** Choose **one** of the following articles to explore, and answer the questions using your article and work on the web. Choose your internet information carefully – make sure your source is a reputable university, organization, individual, or journal. Then, answer the questions that relate to your article in your own words in about two double spaced typewritten pages.

#### ***Archaeology(Cultural Ecology and Religion)***

**1. “The Secrets of Ancient Tiwanaku Are Benefiting Today’s Bolivia” by Baird Straughan (Podolefsky, 94-99).**

1. Go to the internet and find out who Baird Straughan is.

2. Many researchers have linked population growth and increased agricultural production to the growth of city-states. In the specific case of Tiwanaku, what evidence is there for large population size and successful agricultural production?
3. What are the theories that explain how massive andesite boulders were transported to Tiwanaku for the building of temples? “Experimental Archaeology” will take you to the answer. If you want to see these sacred buildings and other constructions as well as a map, go to <http://www.crystalinks.com/tiahuanaco.html>.
4. This project was originally focused on excavating structures like the Akapana Pyramid. How did the project evolve to have a practical application for the Aymara farmers?

***Physical Anthropology (forensics)***

**2. “Identifying Victims After a Disaster” by Dick Gould (Podolefsky, 66-68).**

1. Aside from DMORT, what are some of the other organizations that perform forensic studies and what are their specializations?
2. Distinguish between a Forensic Anthropologist and a Physical Anthropologist in terms of training, qualifications, and job tasks. What is Dick Gould’s professional training?
3. Are there standards, a code of ethics or certifications for forensic anthropologists, and do you think this is necessary? Which organization regulates these?
4. Discuss three of the methods that forensic anthropologists use to identify remains.

***Physical Anthropology and Archaeology (repatriation)***

**3. “Battle of the Bones” by Robson Bonnichsen and Alan L. Schneider (Podolefsky, 72-77).**

1. Who is Kennewick man and why is there a dispute about his repatriation under the NAGPRA law?
2. What is the significance of the dispute from the perspective of anthropology versus the perspective of Native Americans, including the differences between a scientific approach and one based on beliefs.
3. What are the implications of defining the cultural origins/ancestry of Native Americans.
4. Go to the internet and find out what roles Robson Bonnichsen and Alan L. Schneider have played in the Kennewick issue. What are their professions and why are they involved in this legal debate? Who is Douglas Owsley?
5. What is the perspective/bias of this article? Are the authors upfront about it?

***Cultural Anthropology (and religion)***

**4. “Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflection on Cultural Relativism and Its Others” by Lila Abu-Lughod (Podolefsky pp. 281-287)**

1. Who is Lila Abu-Lughod?
2. Using the internet, explore the pros and cons of veiling in Turkey, France and Iran. What does veiling symbolize in these societies? Does it have multiple meanings?
3. What has been the attitude of the United States about veiling as represented by Laura Bush’s statements?
4. Does the information you found on the internet and in this article help you understand more about cultural relativism. How?

*Cultural Anthropology (Ritual and Ethnocentrism)*

**5. “Body Ritual Among the Nacirema” by Horace Miner. (Podolefsky, 118-121)**

1. What are the basic Nacirema attitudes/beliefs/values according to Miner? Do they differ from our (U.S.) own?
2. After you have finished question #1, describe exactly who the Nacirema are. When did their identity become clear to you?
3. Why do you think this seemingly ethnocentric article has become a “classic”?
4. Read another of the short articles written in the same style (e.g. “The Sacred Rac”, “Jabberturkey,” “The Magical Mass Migration of the Nacirema”). Do you agree that this an accurate representation of Nacirema culture?

*Language*

**6. Preserving Language Diversity by Russell Bernard**

**<http://faculty.ed.umuc.edu/~jmatthew/articles/langdiverse.html>**

1. Who is Russell Bernard?
2. Why does he think it is important to preserve language diversity and what relationship does it have to culture?
3. What technology is he using to preserve languages?
4. Will people lose the tone of their language or their oral traditions if they turn to the technology used by Bernard?
5. Another example of preserving native language exists at [www.uaf.edu/anlc/mission.html](http://www.uaf.edu/anlc/mission.html). What is the mission statement of the Alaskan Native Language Center?

### ***V. Rubric for the Internet Assignment***

The rubric for the internet assignment is designed to assess many aspects of the written assignment. It includes evaluation of the mechanics, organization, development of the writing. It also assesses the citation of written and internet works, identifying sources, and the documentation of sources. Further, it assesses the content of the assignment and the use of the discipline terminology.

### **RUBRIC FOR AN101 INTERNET ASSIGNMENT**

	Above standard	Standard	Below standard	Points
Mechanics and style	Few or no sentence structure, grammar, spelling, or punctuation errors. Appropriate word choice	Few sentence structure errors. Some grammar, spelling, or punctuation errors, but these don't interfere with the reader's comprehension. Some word choice is inappropriate	Sentence structure, grammar, spelling, or punctuation errors significantly hamper comprehension. Word choice is consistently inappropriate.	3 to 0
Organization	Paper is logically organized. Main ideas are clear and supported in well-constructed paragraphs	Paper has basically logical construction. Most paragraphs are well-constructed; main ideas are evident in most	Little or no overall organization. Paragraphs may be poorly constructed or confusing.	3 to 0
Development	Paragraphs use relevant evidence, such as examples, quotes, or paraphrases to support main ideas. Substantive and factual information is used throughout.	Most paragraphs have some relevant examples, paraphrases, or quotes as evidence to support main ideas. Content is relevant, but may include some "fluff".	Paragraphs have few examples, paraphrases, or quotes. Much of content is irrelevant or immaterial.	3 to 0
Effective use of Works Cited	Has complete, accurately formatted, works cited	Works cited are complete, but has some format or content errors	Incomplete: missing entries or many format errors.	3 to 0
Identifying sources	Correctly selects from popular and academic sources, considering accuracy and sources	Usually selects current, accurate, popular academic sources	Chooses outdated or inappropriate sources for the assignment	3 to 0
Use and documentation of sources	Summarizes or paraphrases source	Sometimes summarizes or	Does not summarize or paraphrase source	3 to 0



	material in own words, quotes verbatim sparingly, using proper in-text citations	paraphrases source material in own words, but quotes verbatim too often. Inconsistently uses in-text citations	material accurately; uses verbatim quotes extensively with inaccurate or no in-text citations	
Mastery of site(s) content	Answers the specific questions in a complete, clear, detailed manner.	Partially answers the questions, but not giving much detail	Incorrectly or inadequately answers the questions	3 to 0
Concept application	Detailed and thorough explanation of concept application.	Adequate explanation of concept application	Limited or no understanding of concept application	3 to 0
Discipline language	Discipline terminology incorporated smoothly and accurately.	Discipline terms used accurately, but may be some errors or incorporation may be awkward.	Discipline terms not used or not used correctly.	3 to 0

## ***Appendix 1.***

### **Syllabus**

#### AN 101 – INTRODUCTION TO CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Classroom location: 222 Humanities

#### **Professor:**

Dr. Eugenia J. Robinson

Office phone: 240-567-7513; office location: 227 Humanities

Mail box location: Suite 224, Humanities. Please address your correspondence to me and put your name on it.

Office hours: M, W 11-12 p.m.; M 1:30-2:30 pm.; TH 12:30-1:30 pm or by appointment

e-mail: eugenia.robinson@montgomerycollege.edu

#### **Course Description:**

Anthropology is concerned with the diversity of human existence. By attempting to understand the ways of others we can begin to better understand ourselves. This course is designed to introduce students to the general principles and findings of anthropology as well as the value of an “anthropological perspective” in everyday life.

#### **Objectives:**

This course has seven major objectives:

- use and explain the anthropological concept of culture
- distinguish between human universals and culturally specific traits
- apply cultural relativism to counter ethnocentrism and ethnic stereotyping
- analyze sociocultural systems by dividing them into their subsystem components (economic, familial, ecological, religious, etc
- apply the comparative approach to explain the reasons for cultural differences
- identify and analyze the multilevel and shifting basis of ethnicity
- employ ethnographic techniques to describe and analyze contemporary social systems

#### **Text and Readings:**

James Peoples and Garrick Bailey. *Humanity*. Thomson 2006

Shostak, Marjorie. *Nisa: The Life and Words of a !Kung Woman*, Vintage Books, 1983.

Podolefsky, Aaron. *Applying Anthropology*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition, McGraw Hill, 2007

## **Course Requirements:**

### **Assignments:**

**1. *Cultural Anthropology and the Internet*:** choose one article and research themes from a variety of internet sites, designed to introduce you to cultural anthropology on the web. Due **September 20<sup>th</sup>** with specifics given out in class. The plagiarism portion is due September 12<sup>th</sup>.

**2. *Focus groups and articles from Podolefsky*:** During the course of the semester we will work on articles in Podolefsky in focus groups. We will organize into groups to work on a summary of an article, a one-page biography of the author, and a list of questions the article raises and answers. Details of this assignment will be handed out in class.

**3. *MNAI Project*:** museums are another venue which describe cultural systems. You will be asked to go to the National Museum of the American Indian to an exhibit and view exhibits on of art, belief and/or ethnicity. A description of the exhibit and the questions to be considered will be given out in class. Due the week of **Oct. 23<sup>rd</sup>**.

**3. *Participant Observation*.** Some say the only way to really learn anthropology is to do it, so a 5 page observation paper will be due on the week of **November 20<sup>th</sup>**. A guide for this assignment will be handed out in class.

4. There will be **two hourly in-class tests and a take-home final exam**.

### **Evaluation:**

Grades will be based on the Cultural Anthropology and the Internet project (10 %), the focus groups (5%); museum project (15%), the participant observation project (20%), the two tests (30%), and the final exam (20%).

The Interdisciplinary Doctoral Fellowship (IDF) provides a unique opportunity for outstanding Ph.D. students who are engaged in interdisciplinary research to study with faculty at one of the University's interdisciplinary research centers or institutes during the fellowship year. Applicants designate the host center or institute they believe is the best match with their planned dissertation topic, contingent upon endorsement by the host center or institute. Student Writing Support in the Center for Writing offers individual consultations and online resources to help graduate students develop and revise their research proposals. The research integrates disciplines not currently represented in the student's graduate program. The importance/potential impact of the research is clear.

**Cohort Fellowship Programs.** Are you interested in developing your own awareness of conventions of writing in your discipline for proposals, articles, and dissertations? Would you like to gain experience in leading a group, facilitating others' writing development, and collaborating with your graduate program director in creating professional development support within your department? Consider making a 2-semester commitment as a Writing Fellow in your graduate program. This year, the program has gone fully virtual, and writing groups will provide an important opportunity for connection and acc

**International Faculty Recruitment. Postdoctoral Fellowship: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).** International Faculty Recruitment. International recruitment initiative. Recruitment Information. What disciplines is international faculty being hired by HSE University? At present, HSE University international postdoctoral recruitment programme covers various disciplines including economics and finance, management and business informatics, politics and international relations, philology and linguistics, sociology, mathematics, statistics, public policy and public administration, law, education, media, history, philosophy, psychology and other. What positions are available for the postdoctoral fellows at the University?