

# SANT 203: Introduction to Anthropology

Spring 2017

Tuesdays and Thursdays

Section 1: 8-9:15am; Section 2: 9:25-10:40a

Dr. Ashanté Reese  
Department of Sociology and Anthropology  
Office: Giles 319

Email: [areese9@spelman.edu](mailto:areese9@spelman.edu)  
Phone: (404) 270-6054  
Office Hours: Tues. (3-5);  
Wed. (3-5), and by appt.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

What does it mean to be human? That question is central anthropological inquiry. What does it mean for groups of people to “do life” similarly or differently? When we talk about culture what do we really mean? What does it look, feel, sound, and taste like when different cultures interact or, potentially, collide? These are just a few of the questions that anthropologists examine in their work, and they are some of the questions we will explore in this course. Anthropology provides a very broad perspective for looking at what it means to be human: who you are, how we as humans got to where we are, how we’ve survived and changed, how and why we’re so diverse, how and why we’re similar, and some potential future directions for our species.

This course is designed to introduce major concepts and methods in the study of anthropology. This class is wide-ranging, covering aspects of human life in various contexts as a way to help us reflect on and perhaps reexamine how we think about culture and humanity. Some of the topics we will study include: culture, language, gender, race, class, and economic systems. Our goal is not just to understand “others” but also to learn to see ourselves as products of particular cultural, political, and historical processes. We will learn to look at (perhaps familiar) concepts with wonder while questioning ourselves as we learn about others. By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Describe anthropological approaches to studying culture.
- Understand major debates within anthropology.
- Develop critical thinking skills to analyze race/ethnicity, gender, class, and sexuality (and other sociocultural formations) within various cultural contexts.
- Articulate anthropological concepts for broad audiences.
- Apply anthropological concepts to contemporary issues and problems.
- Notice, reflect on, and explain cultural formations in their own lives.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

(available at the Spelman College Bookstore)

- 1) *Asking Questions about Cultural Anthropology*. Robert L. Welsch and Luis A Vivanco, Oxford, 2015.
- 2) *Dancing Skeletons: Life and Death in West Africa*. Katherine A. Dettwyler. Waveland, 2014.
- 3) *Purchasing Power: Black Kids and Consumer Culture*. Elizabeth Chin, University of Minnesota Press, 2001.
- 4) *Labor and Legality: An Ethnography of a Mexican Immigrant Network*. Ruth Gomberg-Munoz, 2011.
- 5) *All other required readings, films, and audio will be posted on Moodle*

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**CLASS PREPARATION AND PARTICIPATION (20%):** Attending class, synthesizing readings, and participating contribute to your understanding of the material covered in this course...and your grade! While I will present lectures, participation in small group and class discussions is an integral part of this course. Yes, this is an introductory course, but that doesn't mean you don't have something valuable to contribute. Class preparation and participation **includes quizzes, homework assignments, and attendance**. Please note the attendance policy that is described fully later in this syllabus. **HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS ARE EMBEDDED WITHIN THE SYLLABUS**

**AUTOETHNOGRAPHY (15%):** **DUE: February 16**

**MIDTERM EXAM (25%):** The in-class midterm exam will be administered on **March 9**

**PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION ASSIGNMENT (15%):** **DUE: April 4**

**FINAL (25%):** **TBA**

## SELF-CARE STATEMENT

As budding scholars, I know you are committed to your pursuit of excellence. I consider it an important part of your journey to take care of yourselves. As Audre Lorde stated, "caring for myself is not self-indulgence; it is an act of political warfare." We could debate the merits of this statement, but what is shown in research is that black women often develop stress-related conditions that are sometimes avoidable. As you create your schedules and get in the swing of the semester, I encourage you to consider what makes you feel healthy and whole and include those things in your semester, weekly, and daily planning.

As your professor, I hold the same standards for myself. My job includes: teaching you, meeting with you about your progress in the course, grading your work, attending faculty and committee meetings, writing scholarly articles and books....the list could go on. Outside of work, I am invested in my loved ones and supporting justice work. In short, this means I have many commitments. I consider myself not only as your professor, but as a person who should model holistic learning and healthiness. As such, I have some self-care policies related to teaching that help me be healthy and whole enough to teach you with integrity and rigor:

- **I do not check email after 6pm**, and emails sent on weekends and holidays are likely to get a response on the following business day. If you do not get an immediate response from me, **I am not ignoring you**. If you have an emergency, please note **EMERGENCY** in the subject line of your email.
- **I will consistently and firmly honor the office hours that are posted**. Unless you schedule an appointment or office hours have been rescheduled by me in advance, the only times I am available are those listed in

the syllabus. This is not because I don't want to see you. I do, in fact, want you to come to office hours as often as you can. Instead, this is to ensure that I can meet the high standards of the other components of my work.

- **If you schedule a meeting and need movement, I am happy to walk with you, stretch with you, or some other form of conscious movement.** Sometimes we get so busy, we forget to move around. If you need to get some movement in your day, I am open to meetings that include movement. "Movement" here is broadly defined, and I am happy to "move" any agreed upon ways that accommodate a variety of abilities/disabilities. Please indicate your desire for a movement meeting when scheduling.
- **You can come to me with academic and nonacademic questions or concerns, but please know that if I feel it is outside my ability to help you, I will point you in the direction of others who can.** I encourage you to come talk to me as often as you need, but I may not be equipped to directly support you in all things. However, you can trust I will help you find the resources and help you need.
- **I cannot write a recommendation for you at the last minute.** Professors put a lot of time into those recommendations we write for you. We want you to get that prestigious fellowship, that job, or admission into that graduate program. However, your planning helps me help you. Please ask for your recommendation at least two weeks in advance (longer is better), and if I consent to writing it, have your resume, a description of how you see yourself as a student in my course(s), and whatever documents you have prepared for your application available.
- **I welcome invitations to your events and special moments.** Because I am committed to your holistic learning and wellness, I recognize that you are much more than a student in my class. If you want me to attend events, please feel free to invite me! I may not always be able to attend but when I can, I will.

