

# Anthropology

**Chair:** Professor L. Cool

**Faculty:** Professors K. Brison, S. Gmelch (on leave 2011-12), G. Gmelch (on leave 2011-12); Associate Professor S. Leavitt (Dean of Students); Assistant Professor E. Garland; Visiting Assistant Professors P. Christensen, A. Jarrin, J. Witsoe

**Staff:** J. Bazar (Administrative Assistant)

**Requirements for the Major:** Twelve courses including four Foundation courses (ANT-110, ANT-214 (114), ANT-390 (290), and ANT-363), and a two-term senior thesis in cultural anthropology. We strongly encourage majors to go on a full term abroad, preferably one of the two anthropology field terms, Fiji and Tanzania.

**Requirements for the Interdepartmental Major:** Eight courses, including ANT-110, ANT-390 (290), ANT-363, a senior thesis, and three electives.

**Requirements for Honors:** For departmental honors, a major must fulfill the following requirements: (1) a minimum overall G.P.A. of 3.30; (2) a minimum G.P.A. of 3.50 in all anthropology courses; (3) completion of all requirements for the anthropology major or interdepartmental major; (4) a grade of at least A- on the senior thesis.

**Requirements for the Minor:** Six courses including (1) ANT-110, (2) ANT-390 (290) or ANT-363, and (3) four electives.

**Course Selection Guidelines:** The department accepts appropriate AP and transfer credits as electives or in place of ANT-110. In most cases we prefer that students take other required anthropology courses at Union. Students with no previous background in anthropology may take any 100 or 200 level courses, although ANT-110 is a good first course. 200 level courses generally involve more intensive examination of a particular topic while 100 level courses offer more general surveys of particular sub-fields of anthropology. Students intending to major in anthropology are encouraged to take ANT-214 and ANT-390 in their sophomore or junior year. ANT 363 should be taken in spring of the junior year and students anticipating going on a term abroad in spring are encouraged to take ANT-363 in their sophomore year. We strongly encourage students to go on a full term abroad, preferably one of the two anthropology field schools, Fiji and Tanzania.

**Field Program in Anthropology:** (Tanzania-Winter: S. Gmelch). This anthropology field school gives students an intensive, firsthand experience studying another culture. Students live with local families while carrying out full-time field research. Tanzania participants will receive one credit for an independent study in anthropology (ANT-490T), another anthropology credit for a Culture and Ecology course, and a credit for Swahili. Students accepted to the Tanzania term abroad must take Swahili 100 on campus in the fall before going to Tanzania.

## Foundation Courses

**ANT-110. Introduction to Cultural Anthropology.** (Fall, Winter, Spring; Staff). The basic concepts, methodology, and findings of cultural anthropology. Examines the similarities and diversity of human societies through in-depth case studies and cross-cultural comparisons. Emphasis on non-Western cultures. *GenEd: SOCS, LCC*

**ANT-214 (114). Language and Culture.** (Spring; Brison). Examines the complex relationship between culture and language. Case materials drawn from societies in North America, Oceania, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East are used to explore various theories about how language is shaped by, and in turn shapes, culture and social relations. Topics include the acquisition of language by children in various cultures, everyday speech styles, verbal art, and the ways of talking about such things as emotion and illness to show how linguistic categories and patterned ways of using language influence the way we perceive the world around us. *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-363. Qualitative Research Methods.** (Spring; Staff). An introduction to qualitative research methods in anthropology. The course examines the ways anthropologists collect data through participant observation, non-directive interviewing, questionnaires, examining case studies, and doing symbolic and behavioral analyses. We examine the strengths and weaknesses of these methods and compare them to methods of other social sciences to illuminate the anthropological approach to understanding society and culture. Students learn how to formulate research questions and a research project, apply the best methods to a particular research design, and write a proposal. Prerequisite: ANT 110

**ANT-390 (290). Thinking about Culture.** (Winter; Cool). A broad overview of the history of American and European anthropological approaches to studying individuals and societies. Students examine the strengths and weaknesses of contemporary and historical paradigms through critical reading and analysis papers. Prerequisite: ANT 110 *GenEd: LCC*

#### **Electives**

(only one cross-listed course can count for the major or minor)

**ANT-130. Food and the Self.** (not offered 2011-12). What is the relationship between food and the body? What are the boundaries of food and the body? Are you what you eat or how you eat? This course looks at anthropological approaches to eating, consumption, identity, the body and food, while also examining current controversies such as obesity, genetically modified foods, and food taboos. While much of the course concerns itself with the cultural and historical construction of the American diet, it also draws examples from other cultures. *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-148. Introduction to World Music.** (Same as AMU-120) (not offered in 2011-12). Introduces students to the music of the world and to methodological approaches to the study of music. Surveys the music of various regions of the world while also considering issues such as the connection between society and music, the formation of syncretic music, improvisation vs. composition, and the connection between language and music. Music is presented as an integral part of culture. *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-170. Myth, Ritual and Magic.** (Same as REL-170) (Winter; Bedford). This course examines some of the theoretical issues surrounding myth, ritual and magic as well as specific examples of their cultural expression. How do people make sense of themselves, their society and the world through myth and ritual? How do cosmology and belief systems help them gain and organize knowledge about the world and themselves? The course will be examining a number of "occult" and "esoteric" practices, that is, practices that were not commonly known to all members of society, including sufism, kabbalah, alchemy, and shamanism. *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-184. Contemporary Japanese Society.** (Fall; Christensen). An anthropological introduction to contemporary Japanese society and culture. Provides an historical overview, then explores in greater depth of such topics as family structure, education, religious traditions, the work place, women, and contemporary social problems. *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-210. The Anthropology of Poverty.** (Spring; Witsoe). Why has urban poverty remained so entrenched in the United States, even amidst the unprecedented economic expansion of the post-war period? This course will seek to answer this question by exploring the relationships between race, public institutions, economic change and inequality within American society. In doing so, the course will examine the theoretical and practical dimensions of anthropology's engagement with poverty. We will begin by examining theoretical approaches for understanding the persistence of

poverty in the United States, as well as the major policy frameworks that seek to reduce poverty. In addition, the course will cover anthropological critiques of these approaches and anthropological accounts of the everyday realities and struggles of poor people. Students will do internships in local organizations dealing with poverty and will use this experience to reflect on larger debates.

**ANT-220. Women's Lives Across Cultures.** (not offered in 2011-12). Examines women's lives in different cultures through detailed case studies and film, focusing on common experiences (e.g., motherhood, work), gender-based inequality, and sources of women's power and influence. It also examines topics that exclusively or disproportionately affect women (e.g., female genital cutting, domestic violence, rape, sex tourism) as well as the varied forms feminism takes in other cultures. *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-222 (125). Childhood in Anthropological Perspective.** (not offered in 2011-12). The comparative study of childhood: examines child-rearing practices in various cultures including the U.S. Topics include theories of gender difference, play as socialization, education across cultures, and socialization practices. *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-225. Gender and Society.** (Fall; Jarrin). An examination of the role gender plays in human life. How does being labeled and socialized to be male or female shape peoples' daily life and life chances? How do our culture and others regard people who do not fit mainstream conceptions of maleness or femaleness? The course will discuss the concepts of gender and sex, gendered behavior and expectations, "third genders" (e.g., the North American berdache, the Indian hijra), homosexuality, transgendered individuals and sex-reassignment surgery, and cross-cultural similarities and differences. *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-226 (146). Education and Culture.** (not offered 2011-12). Examines theories of learning and education systems across cultures. How are schools shaped by cultural values? What is the role of education in reproducing or challenging social systems? *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-228. Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Race.** (not offered 2011-12). Does race matter in today's world? Has race always existed as a human category of difference? Is race just a black and white thing? How do other cultures outside the U.S. configure race? To address these and other questions we will focus on the historical and cultural peculiarities of race. This course asks students to move conceptually from the era of European colonialism and the invention of the modern conception of "race" to the U.S. Civil War period to the ascension of negritude, and, finally, race in contemporary times. We will investigate the diversity and complexity of "racialization" in various places, such as Detroit, Rio de Janeiro, Martinique, China, Paris, and Capetown. *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-229. Ruminations on Violence.** (not offered in 2011-12). Is violence best understood as a set of "random acts" marginal to society? Or do societies need violence to make culture systematic and to make hierarchy function? We will address three major issues: the extent to which "violence" is culturally relative or a human universal; different types of violence; and the ways social groups turn violence into an aesthetic object and an artistic project. To accomplish our task, we will adopt both an ethnographic and theoretical approach. *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-230. Medical Anthropology.** (Fall; Jarrin). An examination of beliefs about illness, healing, and the body and how these are shaped by culture and society. Topics include non-Western healing practices, political forces shaping medical practice in the U.S., and birthing practices in different cultures. *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-232. Bombs to Buddhism: Fatalism, Technology, and Modern Japanese Culture.** (Winter; Matsue). An exploration of Japanese culture through critical reading of a variety of texts including classic literature, historical accounts, contemporary fiction, *manga* (Japanese comics), *anime* (Japanese animation), and film. Throughout the course, students will question what religious beliefs, natural disasters and historical events have shaped Japanese media, which, in turn, will deepen our understanding of contemporary Japanese society. The importance of such disparate phenomena as Buddhism, the dropping of the nuclear bomb, the 1954 film "Godzilla," and the mega-manga "Akira" will be considered. *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-235. Fundamentalism.** (not offered 2011-12). This course examines the spread of fundamentalist and evangelical religions around the world, and at theories about the appeal and impact of fundamentalism. We will start

with a series of general, comparative works analyzing the rise of fundamentalist strains of Christianity, Islam, and other religions around the world. We will then move to specific case studies analyzing the impact and appeal of various fundamentalist religions in the Pacific, in the Caribbean, in South Africa, in the US, in the Middle East and in the Indonesia. Issues covered will include: the relationship between fundamentalism and modernity; the place of women in fundamentalist religious movements and so on. *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-236. Youth and Popular Cultures.** Over the past decade, anthropologists have become increasingly aware of the importance of popular culture as a powerful field where people not only express themselves but an arena that also shapes some of the basic tenets of society. In this course we will examine the Internet and other “virtual” community formations, television, advertising, shopping malls, mobile homes, sports fandom, spirituality, hip-hop, “grrl” movements, and drug “cultures.” This course provides an opportunity to turn an anthropological lens onto the everyday life of teenagers and the flavor-of-the-month styles of popular culture and consumerism. *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-239 (139). Family and Kinship.** (not offered in 2011-12). This course provides an analysis of families in the U.S. and other cultures. The aim is to develop an appreciation for the variety of ways that family life can be organized as well as an understanding of the causes and consequences of different family and kinship patterns. *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-240. Technology, Culture & Society.** (Winter; Jarrin) Examines the role of technology in cultural change and the role of culture in technological change. Particular attention will be given to: the Internet and other so-called “virtual community” formations, graphic design and other media, “reality” TV, cross-cultural advertising, and popular music. *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-241. Environmental Anthropology.** (not offered in 2011-12). This course examines anthropological approaches to the environment and environmentalism. It asks questions such as: How does culture shape our perception of nature? What can conflicts over environmental protection, natural resources and human manipulations of natural materials tell us about contemporary societies? What does it mean to call an issue “political” or “cultural,” versus “scientific” or “technical”? Students will develop the critical analysis skills to examine the natural world as a site of cultural politics, using anthropological concepts to examine environmentalism in diverse geographical and historical settings, including the Amazon, the Niger Delta, the suburban mall, and the Union campus. *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-242. Economic Anthropology.** (not offered in 2011-12). This course explores the social and cultural dimensions of production, exchange and consumption. Do all people everywhere seek to accumulate property, and to maximize profits? Is “rationality” the same in every culture? Do all think the same way about debt, bribery, gambling or marriage payments? Do human economies evolve inexorably—for example, from public to private property, from cowrie shells to electronic money, or from gifts and barter to sale and credit? Or is the picture more complex and the direction inconstant? Is there really any such thing as a “free” gift? What does *The Godfather* have to do with the exchange of necklaces and armbands in the South Pacific? Who wins and loses from “globalization”? Why do people value things? *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-243. Anthropology and International Development.** (not offered in 2011-12). Faith in twentieth-century development and progress has been severely shaken by the environmental crisis and the failures of the international development assistance. What is development? What is the third world? How was it made? What problems does it face and how is it changing? What are the causes of failure in development / aid programs? Drawing on a variety of ethnographic materials and case studies, this course discusses the nature of economic and social changes in post colonial societies and underdeveloped areas in the West / North, offers a critical analysis of sustainable development, and introduces the students to the practices, anthropological and otherwise, of planning policy interventions. The course shows how anthropological knowledge and understanding can illuminate “development issues” such as rural poverty, environmental degradation and the globalization of trade. *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-245. Sport, Society, and Culture.** (Winter; Christensen). The comparative study of the role of sport in society. Topics include the meaning of play and sport; the evolution of sport; sport and socialization; ritual in sport; sport and gender; sport and race; sport and education; sport, conflict and violence; and sport and cultural change.

**ANT-246. Anthropology of Human Rights.** (Winter; Witsoe). In recent years, anthropological discussions of human rights have gone beyond the traditional debate between universalism and relativism sparked by the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Marginalized peoples who are the traditional subjects of anthropological research are increasingly using human rights rhetoric to advance their own causes or draw attention to their plight. This course will examine philosophical and anthropological discussions of human rights and contemporary debates and controversies surrounding human rights. In particular, we will examine the deployment of truth commissions in the aftermath of political violence, the role of human rights NGOs, contested claims of suffering, and human rights interventions. *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-247. Living With Globalization.** (not offered in 2011-12). In recent decades, technologically-enabled increases in flows of capital, people, things, images and ideas around the world have resulted in the process of global integration and compression commonly called “globalization.” In this course we will explore globalization from the perspective of anthropology, tracing its consequences both for the world’s economic and political systems, and for the everyday lives of people around the globe. Topics will include: cultural dimensions of changing labor practices and systems of production, the role of globalization in cultural homogenization and differentiation, the ways the migrants, refugees, tourists and others forge new supra-national forms of sociality and identity, and the role of media flows and commodity consumption in the production of global identities. *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-248. Sustainable Culture** (Winter; Garland). This course is premised on the contention that the challenge of achieving environmental sustainability is as much a matter of culture as it is of technical capability, or even political will. By exploring a particular environmental topic in depth over the course of the term, the class will gain insight into the ways that our interactions with the natural world are shaped by, and refract through, our core identities, values, and cultural beliefs. As we will see, attempts by policy-makers to promote environmentally sustainable behavior often founder precisely because they fail to consider cultural factors adequately, and one of our key goals will be to think about how to improve environmental policy in this regard. The course will consist of readings and lectures about a particular environmental issue (the issue will change from year to year), considered in a range of ethnographic and geographic contexts, and from a variety of theoretical perspectives – including those of natural scientists, who will be invited to guest lecture in the course as appropriate. Working together, the class will attempt to identify common elements and dynamics that connect the various perspectives and case studies, in effect collectively developing an analytic framework for thinking about the environmental issue in question by synthesizing social and cultural angles with scientific and policy considerations. As part of the course, students will complete an independent research project resulting in a policy position paper. The course is designed to complement ANT 241 (Environmental Anthropology), and the two courses may be taken individually or both, in either order. *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-250. Humans and Animals.** (not offered in 2011-12). This course explores the cultural dimensions of human relationships with animals. Topics to be covered include the diversity of relationships between people and animals around the world, the nature and significance of the boundary between humans and animals, and the ways in which people use animals to create, think through, and naturalize human social dynamics, particularly in relation to distinctions of race, gender, sexuality, and class. Drawing on a combination of symbolic and historical analysis, we will examine subjects such as animal husbandry, the display of animals in zoos and museums, the animal rights movement, wildlife conservation and hunting, and the challenges increasingly being posed to the notion of species by new, technologically-enabled life forms like clones, cyborgs, and chimeras. *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-251. Anthropology of Aging.** (not offered 2011-12). Using anthropology’s cross-cultural approach, this course examines both universal patterns and particular aspects of aging in a variety of cultures, including the U.S.

Attention will be given to creating a future environment that may better satisfy the cultural and social needs of older people in the U.S. *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT 252. Global Christianities.** (not offered in 2011-12). Although Christianity has its historical roots in the Mediterranean world, during its 2000 year history it has migrated to almost every geographical area of the globe giving rise to many vibrant local Christianities with distinct and culturally specific identities. While many people associate contemporary Christianity with Euro-Americans, scholars point to Christian churches dating from the 5<sup>th</sup> century in North Africa and in India. Scholars argue that the demographic center of Christianity has already shifted to the Global south. This course investigates the ways Christianity has been shaped by contact with different world cultures and the social processes and religious changes implicit in the acculturation of Christianity in diverse geographical regions and cultural contexts. Questions addresses will include: i) how has Christianity been localized in various areas of the world?; ii) what is the appeal to Pentecostalism in the global south? Is it a conservative force directing attention away from social inequalities or does it challenge social inequalities? iii) what kinds of transnational networks are formed by contemporary Christians and how do these shape new kinds of identities?; iv) what is the appeal of apparently patriarchal and conservative forms of Christianity to women, who form the majority of Christians in most areas? *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-254 (150). Anthropology of Religion.** (not offered in 2011-12). Comparative study of religious behavior and ideology. Examines the ways that a wide array of religions help individuals to cope with life problems and reinforce social groups. Examines debates about the extent to which religion shapes human motivation and about the relationship between religion and society. *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-255T. Culture and Work.** (not offered in 2011-12). This course takes a broad perspective on the relationship between culture and work. Course readings, assignments and discussions, will prompt students to consider how work activities are shaped by culture and the larger social context by examining: I) institutional cultures involving idiosyncratic authority structures, routines, shared knowledge and so on; ii) how local cultures are influenced by their place in larger international production chains. *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-260. Tourists and Tourism.** (Fall; Garland). This course examines the practice of tourism as a way of knowing the world and constituting the self. It also explores the role of tourism in the lives of those who act as hosts to tourists. Topics include the role of tourism in the essentialization and commodification of culture, the emergence, organization, and effects of mass tourism, the cultural dynamics surrounding several kinds of niche tourism, and the possibility of socially and ecologically responsible tourism development. *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-262 (160). Photographing Culture.** (not offered in 2011-12). This course examines the various uses of photography to depict, understand, and influence human behavior, focusing on the visual depiction of non-Western peoples (e.g., in National Geographic, contemporary advertising, early government and ethnographic reports, in boarding school and orphanage literature). It also discusses interpretation and the manipulation of photographic "evidence." Other topics include tourist photography, the photographic conventions used by different cultures, and the use of photography as a research method. Emphasis on student projects. *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-265. The Museum: Theory & Practice.** (same as HST-265) (Spring; Staff). This course is designed to introduce students to the work of museums through an internship at the Schenectady Museum and accompanying seminar. Articles from anthropology and history (including art history) expose you to the range of practical (e.g., exhibit design, collections policy, planning educational programs) and theoretical issues scholars study (e.g., intellectual property, commodifying culture, whose voice and history should be heard). The internship at the Schenectady Museum gives hands-on experience with museum work and the day-to-day issues museum staff confront. Several fieldtrips introduce different types of museums.

**ANT-267. Corporate Cultures.** (not offered in 2011-12). This course provides an overview of the theories and methods of the anthropological study of organizations and organizational culture: the perspective that organizations and

subsets within organizations develop their own ideological, sociopolitical, and material culture. This perspective can be used to understand the full range of organizations: large and small, corporate and non-profit, government and non-government, local and multinational. An understanding of organizational culture offers a means to organize information, symbols, values, and people in ways that influence planning, evaluation, policy, regulatory issues, and resource allocation. Through readings, discussion, guest speakers, and participant observation, students will become familiar with how organized culture can impede or enhance productivity and the success of organizations.

**ANT-270. Political Anthropology.** (Fall; Witsoe). The course introduces anthropological approaches to the study of politics. We will examine influential theories of power, democracy and the state and apply them to understanding particular cases in various areas of the world. Topics covered will include: ethnographies of local politics, democratic elections, ethnographies of bureaucracy and other state institutions, ethnographic accounts of the political implications of development practice, and ethnographies in and of the “world system.” We end by exploring the implications of globalization for studying politics and the state. *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-274. Music and Culture.** (same as AMU-220) (not offered in 2011-12). Introduces students to the discipline of ethnomusicology, with particular emphasis on ethnographic methods, through readings on the history and development of the field, considering the major theoretical approaches, and supplemented by readings on specific world music areas. Students will conduct an extensive fieldwork project on music-making in the community.

**ANT-280. Contemporary India.** (Fall; Witsoe). The second-fastest growing major economy in the world, India is also a country with hundreds of millions of people living in extreme poverty. Arguably the most successful democracy in the postcolonial world, Indian politics is also pervaded by corruption and violence. The course will examine recent political developments in India such as the rise of Hindu nationalism, the spread of lower-caste politics, and economic liberalization. We focus on the challenges that India faces in the twenty-first century, including land and water scarcities, the already visible effects of global warming, and growing inequalities between regions and social groups. This will add complexity and balance to the now widespread image of India as a rising economic superpower within an emergent “Asian Century.” *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-281 (182). Anthropology of Mediterranean Europe.** (not offered in 2011-12). Sources of similarity and diversity in the rural and urban cultures of Mediterranean Europe from Spain to Greece. Emphasis on modes of social relationships such as patronage and on cultural formulations such as honor and shame. Economic development and change in rural communities, urban life and the urbanization of migrants, and the rise of ethnic and regional movements are analyzed. *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-283 (183). Peoples and Cultures of Latin America.** (Winter; Jarrin). Examines the peoples and cultures of Latin America in historical and contemporary perspectives. Uses case studies, accompanying articles, and a range of media. Themes include: colonialism, identity politics, expressive culture, religion, gender, race, ethnicity, nationalism, and political economy. *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-284 (189). East Asia in Motion.** (not offered in 2011-12). East Asia has a long history of constantly shifting borders, diaspora populations, and unstable identities. Going beyond the idea of the bounded national cultures such as China, Japan and Korea, this course takes East Asian as region in order to examine how cultural forms and people have changed as a result of globalization forces. The course will cover anthropological categories such as diaspora, race, gender, identity, tourism, memory, and sports, but will reconsider them within the East Asian context(s). *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-285T (185T). Peoples and Cultures of the Pacific.** (not offered in 2011-12). An overview of the cultures of Polynesia (including Fiji, Tonga and Samoa), focusing particularly on kinship, religious beliefs, economic systems, and the impact of colonization and missionization. Offered on the Fiji Term Abroad. *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-287. Postcolonial Africa.** (not offered in 2011-12). This course explores sub-Saharan Africa in the aftermath of European colonization of the continent. African people have responded to the experience of colonial conquest in varied and imaginative ways, integrating this history with their pre-existing cultural practices and frameworks for understanding

the world, and in the process developing new cultural forms that are “postcolonial” in nature. Drawing on a range of examples from East, West, and Southern Africa, this course will expose students to the diversity of contemporary African cultural forms, while providing the background and analytic tools necessary to make sense of the many challenges and opportunities African people face. Anthropological approaches will be used to understand political conflict, disease, and natural resource use. *GenEd: LCC*

**ANT-295H & ANT-296H. Anthropology Honors Independent Project 1 & 2.** (Tutorial for Union Scholars Sophomores; permission of instructor required.)

**ANT-490-492. Independent Study.** (Fall, Winter, Spring). Tutorial for individual students. Prerequisite: minimum GPA of 3.2.

**ANT-490T. Independent Study Abroad.** (Winter). Tutorial for individual students.

**ANT-498. Senior Thesis.** (first term)

**ANT-499. Senior Thesis.** (second term)