

ANTHROPOLOGICAL SCIENCES SEMINAR

ASM 300 – SPRING 2023, 3:00-4:15 MW
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Office Hours: See Canvas

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Course Overview

This undergraduate seminar exposes students in the BS program in Anthropology to the breadth and depth of the anthropological science, as illustrated in the empirical and hypothesis-driven research on the human condition carried out by the SHESC's faculty. A primary goal of the seminar is to introduce students to the diversity of theoretical frameworks and research practices that are used in anthropological science to arrive at explanations for human biology, society, and culture and their changes. Attention is also paid to the articulation between anthropological sciences and other social, life, and physical sciences, as well as an emphasis on the value of quantitative methodologies.

Not all anthropologists employ a scientific approach to learning about humanity. However, this course focuses on how science is done in anthropology, from research design to data collection to hypothesis testing or interpretation of data. Lectures and discussions will cover a wide range of topics in anthropology, as well as theories and methods employed by SHESC faculty in their research.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- articulate what constitutes scientific explanations in anthropology;
- understand and critically evaluate the variety of the scientific methods used in anthropology, including their assumptions, pros and cons, and relevance to different kinds of questions and data;
- be aware of the diversity of theories, approaches, and transdisciplinary teamwork involved in problem-oriented anthropological research; and
- construct an original scientific research proposal relevant to anthropology.

Pre-requisites

- BS in Anthropology major;
- any two of the following courses with a C grade or better: ASB 102, 222 (or 223), AML 100, ASM 104.

Course Format

This course is conducted as a seminar, and all participants are expected to contribute constructively and significantly as professionals. Student-led discussions on the assigned readings will constitute a significant portion of the course, as well as your grade. The first few weeks of the course will be led by the instructor.

For most of the remainder of the course, guest speakers from SHESC will discuss how they approach anthropological questions from a scientific perspective in their research. Except where noted, these presentations will be on Mondays. On each subsequent Wednesday, students will lead a discussion of the

presentation and the readings assigned by the guest speaker, and to stimulate discussion on the scientific aspects of the topics in general. Again, it is imperative that readings are done prior to class so that the entire class can participate in the discussions and make it a more stimulating and valuable experience.

Students are strongly encouraged to ask questions at the end of each guest presentation. It should go without saying that during both student-led discussion and guest lectures, students are expected to act professionally and with consideration toward others.

Course Reading Materials

There is no textbook for this course. Readings will be posted on the course Canvas site (accessible via <http://my.asu.edu>). Speakers will assign many of the readings, so they will be posted as the semester progresses, but at least one week in advance. **Readings should be done before class** and brought to class so that they can be discussed knowledgeably. As this is a seminar style course, class participation in discussions are a major component of the course and will be counted towards your grade.

Expectations and Grading

You will be responsible for material that is covered in class, both in lectures and in discussion. Additionally, each week you will be responsible for assigned readings. Your grade in this course will be based on multiple factors, listed below.

Class Participation (25%)

As this is a seminar course, class participation will likely contribute more to your overall grade compared to other courses. Students are expected to show up for class on time, prepared, and actively and thoughtfully participate in discussions. Your preparation and participation will make the difference in determining whether we sit around in an awkward silence during class, or engage in stimulating discussions on the intersection of science and anthropology. Please note that class participation and class attendance are not synonymous for grading purposes.

Student-led Discussion (10%)

Four or five students will be responsible for leading the discussion of readings following each of the guest lectures. They will be a panel of experts, leading the class in a critical assessment of the research presented orally and in papers. Discussion leaders will be responsible for briefly summarizing the assigned readings, coming prepared with questions to stimulate discussions, and helping to moderate discussions in general. Discussion leaders must post **4 or more questions or discussion points** for the class at **least 1 hour before class time**, so that the rest of the class can be ready for the discussion they lead.

3 Reaction Papers (15%)

You will be responsible for writing **3 “reaction papers”** over the course of the semester, selected from any of the guest lecturers. These papers should be **no more than 2 pages** in length (double-spaced), and are intended to capture your initial response/reaction to our guest speakers. The focus should be on critical assessment of the **content**, and not on the person or the presentation style (e.g., he talked too fast, her slides had too much text). "Critical" means a careful assessment, not criticism. For example: How “scientific” do you view the work discussed? Were the interpretations based firmly on the data collected? How well does it fit into your (or traditional) views of the field of anthropology? What aspects did you find most interesting? You will need to **support your critical assessment with evidence** from the presentation and papers, **not just your opinion**. Papers will be graded on a 6-point scale where 0 is

unsatisfactory, 5 is acceptable and 6 is exceptional. Three acceptable reaction papers will get you the full 15% and any 6-point papers will give you extra credit (for a possible 18 out of 15). As reaction papers are intended to capture your initial reaction to a speaker, papers are due by class time, **within 3 weeks after the lecture discussed**.

Research Project Proposal (30%) and Poster (20%)

You will prepare a brief proposal for research you might want to conduct after you graduate. You must submit a paragraph describing your planned topic (5 points) mid-way through the semester (see course outline). The final proposal (25 points) will be **due on the last day of regular class**. The topic of your project proposal is your choice, but you must clearly lay out the rationale for the project through reference to literature and background. The proposal should include the following sections:

1. **Introduction:** present a brief, clear statements regarding your research question and purpose of the study;
2. **Background:** discuss the current state of knowledge concerning your project, including a review of relevant literature (appropriately cited);
3. **Purpose of the study:** describe the goals and objectives of your project, including the specific question(s) and/or hypothesis that your project will address or test;
4. **Methodology:** describe the research methods will you use to collect, analyze, and interpret your data;
5. **Significance:** briefly discuss the wider implications of your project and how your results of the study may affect scholarly research, theory, practice, understanding of current issues, etc;
6. **References:** you must include a full list of all references cited in your proposal.

The scope of the proposal is defined as a project suitable for advanced student research, such as an honor's thesis, and should be **no more than 6 pages of double-spaced text** (figures, tables, etc. are additional). The proposal should emphasize clarity of thought, plan, and significance, and be well written. You are welcome, and strongly encouraged, to discuss the topic of your research proposal with your instructor prior to the due date.

Poster presentation (20%)

You will prepare a poster, in professional meeting format, to be presented as a final exercise for the class. The poster will summarize your research proposal. It should clearly illustrate your methods, hypotheses/research questions, and possible results. Each student will give a brief, **5-minute presentation** on the poster and proposal to the class. The poster should be prepared in digital format rather than paper so that it can be viewed online. Presentations will take place during the regularly scheduled final exam period for the class. You can create your poster in a presentation program (Google Slides, PowerPoint, Keynote, LibreOffice), a word processor, or other program. But **you must export and upload it as a PDF. You must upload it no later than 2 hours before the start of the poster presentation session**. I strongly recommend that you try out the program you will use for your poster and export to PDF a couple weeks before it is due so I can help you if you run into problems.

Late Assignments

Unexcused late assignments will not be accepted. Excuses for an assignment must be made and approved in advance of the due date of the assignment. Requests for excuses must be written, either on paper or by email, and approval must be obtained, either by an email reply or by having the paper excuse signed.

Incompletes

A mark of "I" (incomplete) is given by the instructor when you have completed most of the course and are otherwise doing acceptable work but are unable to complete the course because of illness or other conditions beyond your control. You are required to arrange with the instructor for the completion of the course requirements. The arrangement must be recorded on the Request for Grade of Incomplete form you can obtain at: <http://students.asu.edu/forms/incomplete-grade-request>.

Grade Appeals

ASU has formal and informal channels to appeal a grade. If you wish to appeal any grading decisions, please see <http://catalog.asu.edu/appeal>.

You should keep your graded assignments at least until grades are finalized at the end of the semester in the event you wish to appeal any grades.

Professionalism

It is probably unnecessary to mention this to most of you, but I expect students to act professionally and with consideration toward other participants in the class at all times. Those students enrolled in this class did so because they want to learn about archaeological science. They have a right to the opportunity to do so and deserve to be treated with respect. Speakers volunteer their time to discuss their research with you. Because SHESC faculty are internationally recognized scientists, it is a unique opportunity for you to meet and hear from these individuals first hand. They have a right to be treated with respect and deserve your full attention.

This also means that you must turn off/mute all cell phones or anything else that makes noise during class. Similarly, refrain from using your cell phone (including texting) and non-course related computer activity (e.g., e-mail, IM, Facebook, etc.) during class. Do not show up late to class, or leave early unless you have previously asked and received permission from me.

READ THE IMPORTANT COURSE AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES LISTED AFTER THE COURSE OUTLINE BELOW

COURSE OUTLINE AND SYLLABUS

Jan 09Introduction – What is science?

Excerpts on the scientific method (online)

Shermer, M., 1997. Why people believe weird things: Pseudo-science, superstition, and bogus notions of our time. New York: MJF Books.

Jan 11Science practice: doing science

Bauer, H.H., 1992. Scientific literacy and the myth of the scientific method. University of Illinois Press.

Chamberlin, T.C., 1890. The Method of Multiple Working Hypotheses. *Science* 15, 92–96.

Marks, J., 1996. The anthropology of science part II: Scientific norms and behaviors. *Evolutionary Anthropology: Issues, News, and Reviews* 5, 75–80.

[https://doi.org/10.1002/\(SICI\)1520-6505\(1996\)5:3<75::AID-EVAN2>3.0.CO;2-V](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1520-6505(1996)5:3<75::AID-EVAN2>3.0.CO;2-V)

Optional

Sagan, C., 1996. Does Truth Matter? Science, Pseudoscience, and Civilization. *Skeptical Inquirer* 20.2.

Jan 16Martin Luther King Day (no class): How to read a scientific article

Read these short guides to help you with the rest of the class

Purugganan, M., Hewitt, J., 2004. How to read a scientific article. Rice University.

Raff, J., 2016. How to read and understand a scientific paper: a guide for non-scientists. *Impact of Social Sciences Blog*. URL <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/> (accessed 1.4.23).

Jan 18Scientific explanation: how we know what we know

Dennett, D.C., 1995. Darwin's Dangerous Idea. *The Sciences* 35, 34–40.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2326-1951.1995.tb03633.x>

Ruse, M., 1999. *Mystery of mysteries: is evolution a social construction?* Harvard University Press Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Wylie, A., 2000. Questions of evidence, legitimacy, and the (dis)union of science. *American Antiquity* 65, 227–238.

Optional

Dunnell, R.C., 1982. Science, social science, and common sense: the agonizing dilemma of modern archaeology. *Journal Anthropology Research* 38, 1–25.

Jan 23Speaker and topic: Thomas Morgan - Culture and non-genetic forms of inheritance

Jan 25Discussion of papers

Jan 30Speaker and topic: Michael Barton - Complexity in human systems

Feb 01Discussion of papers

Feb 06Speaker and topic: Ann Stone

Feb 08Discussion of papers:

Feb 13Speaker and topic: Matt Peeples

Feb 15Discussion of papers

Feb 20Speaker and topic: Amber Wutich - Bad Relations? Cross-cultural Patterning in Water Sharing & Mental Ill-health

Feb 22Discussion of papers

Feb 27Speaker and topic: Kelly Knudson

Mar 01Discussion of papers PROPOSAL TOPIC PARAGRAPH DUE 3/1/23

Mar 06Spring Break (no class)

Mar 08Spring Break (no class)

Mar 13Speaker and topic: India Schneider-Crease: Disease ecology and zoonoses in a One Health framework

Mar 15Discussion of papers

Mar 20Speaker and topic: Chris Campisano - Reconstructing Environments in Paleoanthropology

Mar 22Discussion of papers:

Mar 27.....Speaker and topic: Denise Su

Mar 29Discussion of papers

Apr 03.....Speaker and topic: Elisabeth Ilboudo Nebie - Adapting to climate variability & food insecurity in the Sahel of West Africa

Apr 05.....Discussion of papers

Apr 10.....Speaker and topic: Yohannes Haile-Selassie

Apr 12.....Discussion of papers

Apr 17Discussion of papers

Apr 19Speaker and topic: Dan Hrushka

Apr 24Speaker and topic: Robin Nelson

Apr 26Discussion of papers

RESEARCH PROPOSALS DUE

May 5Poster presentations during regularly scheduled finals time (2:30-4:20)

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND STANDARDS

Absences

- Inform your instructor ahead of time for expected absences and be prepared to make up missed work.
- Information on excused absences related to religious observances/practices that are in accordance with ACD 304–04 “Accommodations for Religious Practices.”
- Information on excused absences related to university sanctioned events activities that are in accord with ACD 304–02 “Missed Classes Due to University-Sanctioned Activities.”

Student Standards

Students are required to read and act in accordance with university and Arizona Board of Regents policies, including the ABOR Code of Conduct: Arizona Board of Regents Policies 5-301 through 5-308: <https://students.asu.edu/srr>

Expected classroom behavior

Be sure to arrive on time for class and be respectful of your fellow students in class discussions and interactions.

Policy against threatening behavior

All incidents and allegations of violent or threatening conduct by an ASU student (whether on-or off campus) must be reported to the ASU Police Department (ASU PD) and the Office of the Dean of Students. If either office determines that the behavior poses or has posed a serious threat to personal safety or to the welfare of the campus, the student will not be permitted to return to campus or reside in any ASU residence hall until an appropriate threat assessment has been completed and, if necessary, conditions for return are imposed. ASU PD, the Office of the Dean of Students, and other appropriate offices will coordinate the assessment in light of the relevant circumstances.

If you have any questions, please refer to ACD-304-10 Course Syllabus or contact the CLAS Dean’s Office at (480) 965-6506.

Sexual Harassment and Discrimination

Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person be excluded on the basis of sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex is prohibited. An individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassed on the basis of sex can seek support, including counseling and academic support, from the university. If you or someone you know has been harassed on the basis of sex or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources at <https://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/faqs>.

As a mandated reporter, I am obligated to report any information I become aware of regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination, including sexual violence and dating violence. ASU Counseling Services, <https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling> is available if you wish to discuss any concerns confidentially and privately. ASU online students may access 360 Life Services, <https://goto.asuonline.asu.edu/success/online-resources.html>.

Academic Integrity

Academic honesty is expected of all students in all examinations, papers, laboratory work, academic transactions and records. The possible sanctions include, but are not limited to, appropriate grade penalties, course failure (indicated on the transcript as a grade of E), course failure due to academic dishonesty (indicated on the transcript as a grade of XE), loss of registration privileges, disqualification and dismissal. For more information, see <http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity>.

If you fail to meet the standards of academic integrity in any of the criteria listed on the university policy website, sanctions will be imposed by the instructor, school, and/or dean. Academic dishonesty includes borrowing ideas without proper citation, copying others' work (including information posted on the internet), and failing to turn in your own work for group projects. Please be aware that if you follow an argument closely, even if it is not directly quoted, you must provide a citation to the publication, including the author, date and page number. If you directly quote a source, you must use quotation marks and provide the same sort of citation for each quoted sentence or phrase. You may work with other students on assignments, however, all writing that you turn in must be done independently. If you have any doubt about whether the form of cooperation you contemplate is acceptable, ask the TA or the instructor in advance of turning in an assignment. Please be aware that the work of all students submitted electronically can be scanned using SafeAssignment, which compares them against everything posted on the internet, online article/paper databases, newspapers and magazines, and papers submitted by other students (including yourself if submitted for a previous class).

Note: Turning in an assignment (all or in part) that you completed for a previous class is considered self-plagiarism and falls under these guidelines. Any infractions of self-plagiarism are subject to the same penalties as copying someone else's work without proper citations. Students who have taken this class previously and would like to use the work from previous assignments should contact the instructor for permission to do so.

Prohibition of Commercial Note Taking Services

In accordance with ACD 304-06 Commercial Note Taking Services, written permission must be secured from the official instructor of the class in order to sell the instructor's oral communication in the form of notes. Notes must have the note taker's name as well as the instructor's name, the course number, date.

Student Support and Disability Accommodations

In compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, professional disability specialists and support staff at the Disability Resource Center (DRC) facilitate a comprehensive range of academic support services and accommodations for qualified students with disabilities.

Qualified students with disabilities may be eligible to receive academic support services and accommodations. Eligibility is based on qualifying disability documentation and assessment of individual need. Students who believe they have a current and essential need for disability accommodations are responsible for requesting accommodations and providing qualifying documentation to the DRC. Every effort is made to provide reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities.

Qualified students who wish to request an accommodation for a disability should contact their campus DRC at: <http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc/>. If you are a student in need of special arrangements for we will do all we can to help, based on the recommendations of these services. For the sake of equity for all students, we cannot make any accommodations without formal guidance from these services.

Drop and Add Dates/Withdrawals

Please refer to the academic calendar on the deadlines to drop/withdraw from this course. Consult with your advisor and notify your instructor if you are going to drop/withdraw this course. If you are considering a withdrawal, review the following ASU policies: Withdrawal from Classes, Medical/Compassionate Withdrawal, and Drop/Add and Withdraw.

Email Communications

All email communication for this class will be done through your ASU email account. Your email communications should be professional and succinct. You should be in the habit of checking your ASU email regularly as you will not only receive important information about your class(es), but other important university updates and information. You are solely responsible for reading and responding if necessary to any information communicated via email. For help with your email contact the help desk. Your email communications should be professional and succinct. General guidelines for email include:

- Expect faculty to respond to emails between 9am and 5pm on Monday through Friday with a forty-eight hour lag time.
- For any concerns about grades, meet with your professor or TA face-to-face.
- Before sending questions via email, make sure that your question is not answered on the course syllabus or website.
- Be specific about the subject of the email in the mail subject heading and use proper salutation (e.g. Dear Professor XXXX) and check spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Campus Resources

As an ASU student you have access to many resources on campus. This includes tutoring, academic success coaching, counseling services, financial aid, disability resources, career and internship help and many opportunities to get involved in student clubs and organizations.

- Tutoring: <https://studentsuccess.asu.edu/student-services/tutoring>
- Counseling Services: <https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling>
- Financial Aid: <http://students.asu.edu/financialaid>
- Disability Resource Center: <http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc/>
- Major/Career Exploration: <http://uc.asu.edu/majorexploration/assessment>
- Career Services: <http://students.asu.edu/career>
- Student Organizations: <http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/mu/clubs/>

For more information about the School of Human Evolution and Social Change, including our degree programs, research opportunities and advising information, please go to: <http://shesc.asu.edu/undergraduate/undergraduate-studies> . Our advisors are always willing to discuss career and guidance options with you.

Note: this syllabus is not a contract. It is subject to further change or revision, to best realize the educational goals of the course. Revisions will be announced in class or in course materials online with appropriate prior notice.