Anthropology 402:
Dynamics of Biocultural Diversity

Fall 2016 / Taught Online, via Blackboard, by Dr. EJ Sobo (esobo@mail.sdsu.edu)
Voice mail (for use only when your email is not working): 619.594.6591
Office Hours: Wednesdays 10-11 am (check Blackboard for details!), and by appointment in AL 411

This syllabus is intended to guide us through the course. If circumstances change the syllabus will be changed too, as needed, to ensure that we fulfill the objectives of the course. You will receive full and fair notification regarding any such changes.

As per SDSU policy, students with disabilities or religious needs requiring special accommodation (e.g., tests) must provide at least 2 weeks’ notice. Disability accommodation requires documentation from SDS.¹ Athletes also must provide at least 2 weeks’ notice and appropriate documentation if accommodation is sought.

Course Scope and Purpose
The focus of this course is the synergistic interaction of biology and culture in human populations over time. The course is directly relevant to our quest to understand the historical and contemporary basis for the biocultural diversity of humanity, and to ensure a healthful future for people in all parts of the world and in all walks of life.

Course teachings have immediate relevance to our day-to-day lives, too, as we struggle to decide (for example) what to eat and who to eat with, or whether or not to get immunized. They illuminate how even the most seemingly ‘universal’ and ‘biological’ human experiences (e.g., sleeping, family building) are actually quite cultural and, as such, can vary quite drastically from group to group.

The principles we will study have relevance not only for how we think about bio-cultural differences and similarities but also for views on local, state, national, and even global policies related to these, such as those related to emerging epidemics or current bioethical debates (e.g., regarding the distribution of pharmaceuticals, medicine availability). The principles we will study have relevance not only for how we think about bio-cultural differences and similarities but also for views on local, state, national, and even global policies related to these, such as those related to emerging epidemics or current bioethical debates (e.g., regarding the distribution of pharmaceuticals, medicine availability).

¹ If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.
drugs or epigenetic engineering). Through this course, you will come to see that even small changes in the biocultural status quo can have—and have had—extraordinary effects on the trajectory of humankind.

**Course Prerequisites**

**Online Learning Prerequisite:** Enrollment in this course requires total computer-based online or distance learning preparedness; computer problems on your end are not an acceptable excuse for non-completion of course work. Take SDSU’s ‘readiness survey’ ([https://sunspot.sdsu.edu/pls/webapp/survey.hybrid_learning.main](https://sunspot.sdsu.edu/pls/webapp/survey.hybrid_learning.main)) to see if online learning is right for you. If yes, then prepare your computer for the course as follows:

- Get speakers or a headset
- Download (for free) all necessary software, including the latest versions of: Adobe’s Acrobat Reader and Flash Player, QuickTime Player, and Java.
- Download Respondus Lockdown, for test taking
- Download Mozilla’s Firefox if you are using Explorer (Explorer won’t work well with Blackboard).
- Formulate a backup plan for fulfilling course obligations when/if your computer malfunctions. For example, to find out about computers at the library; go to [http://scc.sdsu.edu/home.php](http://scc.sdsu.edu/home.php).
- If you need to learn how to use Blackboard, go to: [http://its.sdsu.edu/blackboard/student/](http://its.sdsu.edu/blackboard/student/)
- Make sure that the email address Blackboard has for you is one that you check daily.
- Make sure you know how to make a ‘screen shot’ on your computer (e.g., by pressing ‘Ctrl + PrntScr’) so that if you need to show me what you are seeing you can do so properly; phone photos never work.
- Turn off any ‘auto-updates’ your computer may be running (to avoid a test being disrupted and lost).

**Biology Prerequisite:** The prerequisite for enrolling in ANTH 402 is completion of the General Education requirement in Foundations of Learning II.A.2. Life Sciences. If a biological sciences course is not taken to satisfy Foundations of Learning II.A.2. Life Sciences, a college course in biological sciences is required. Because everything is online, you can check the materials yourself (particularly those correlating with Chapters 2 and 3 in our textbook) to determine whether you are prepared.

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**How does this course ‘work’?**

**Organization and Pacing**

- The course is organized into three Sections or parts, each covering four to five of our textbook chapters and complementary material using what we term ‘Lesson Modules.’
- In one typical semester week, we generally cover one chapter using two lesson modules (holidays may cause exceptions; as well, at the end of a Section, the last chapter covered is generally given one module only).
  - Each module serves as a stand-alone lesson unit
  - In addition to referring you to specific portions of the relevant chapter, a module may contain short videos, readings, and so on for you to learn with.
• The module introducing a chapter also will contain a pre- or ‘prep quiz’. This is an ungraded (but credited) quiz activity. It will help orient you to the work.
• You also may be asked to undertake an ‘activity’, such as to make a discussion board post or play an online game. Often this occurs in the second module in a set.

➢ At the end of each module where you finish a chapter, you will take a brief Chapter Quiz to self-check your learning.
➢ At the end of each Section—i.e., about every five weeks in a typical semester—there is a cumulative, graded Section Test.

To do course work, simply go to Blackboard, enter the relevant section (starting with 1), and work through the modules within the section by engaging with assigned materials (readings, videos, etc.) in the order presented. Please note that although you may work at your own pace week by week, making this course ideal for anyone with a complicated schedule, you must complete all work by the end of the day (23:59 hours) on the closing dates provided. Deadlines keep students on track and ensure that the workload entailed in this course—for you, for me, and for our TA (if we have one)—is evenly distributed for the duration of our time together.

Like all other rules set out in this syllabus, the work completion deadline rule applies to everyone—including students who add or crash the course. I do appreciate how difficult it can be to balance school, work, family, and so on. However, I cannot extend deadlines or waive requirements for students who overextend themselves (or those who join late). Please think twice about enrolling if you are overcommitted, or if you have a history of missing deadlines or following written instructions. Please do not ask me to break rules for you. I cannot do so.

Documentation
This is an online course. You can work at your own pace from week to week, so long as you complete assigned work by our set deadlines. You can work where you want, when you want. However, because this is an online course, we won’t have any time together during which I can lay out instructions for you verbally. That means we have to rely heavily on course documents such as this one.

This, and the lesson by lesson schedule, provide for you a detailed map of the course and a plan for success as you move through the semester with me. I say ‘with me’ because I am going to be here with you every step of the way and I value highly teacher-student interaction. The documentation simply anticipates and answers questions students will have about the course so that they don’t need to be asked, saving you time and protecting you from the anxiety that can accompany vague instructions.

Technology
This is a computer-based online course. You are responsible for your own connectivity. Information technology or IT challenges can and often do come up. Be prepared for them.
Please be assured that if and when problems occur on the SDSU end you will not be penalized. However, when problems occur on your end, the story is different: You are responsible for your computing needs; student IT problems are not an acceptable excuse for non-completion of work.

When problems occur on your end, you must fix them prior to any deadlines implicated. You can go to the Student Computing Center in Love Library for help or to use their computers; call (619) 594-3189; email scc@rohan.sdsu.edu; or click http://scc.sdsu.edu/home.php. The instructor cannot provide IT support.

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**Required Learning Resources (required readings/media)**

‘Learning Resources’ for this course—the materials that you are required to read, view, etc.—include a textbook that was custom made for the course as well as numerous online readings, videos, and interactive Web sites. The textbook is: Dynamics of Human Biocultural Diversity: A Unified Approach (DBD), by Elisa Sobo (LeftCoast Press, 2013).

It is available at KB Books (http://www.kbbooks.com/sdsu/home.aspx) and the SDSU bookstore (www.sdsubookstore.com, 866-388-7378). The list price is $39.99. However, it sells new on Amazon for less than $33. Also, I have organized a discount for students who buy it from the press directly (http://www.lcoastpress.com/book.php?id=408). The code you will need is posted on Blackboard.

With the exception of our book, you will access all other learning resources (short readings, videos) via clickable links in our Blackboard course. A bibliographic list of this course’s learning resources (which will be helpful when you want to cite one of our required readings in a paper) and a list of supplementary texts is on our Blackboard Website.

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E-mail: SDSU does not share your phone number or address with me. The only way that I can communicate with you is via email. It is your responsibility to ensure that you can receive email from Blackboard. It is your responsibility to check daily for email regarding the course, and every few hours if you are looking for a reply from me. I do answer promptly and I expect you to read my answers promptly as well.

Make sure that your email address within the system is correct. Some email systems block Blackboard mailings as if they are spam. If yours does, fix this (generally by altering your security settings), or get an SDSU account (go to: http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/newstudacct.shtml.)

- When sending me email, you must include your first and last name in the subject line.
- You also must include the course name/number in the subject line.

I generally answer email upon receipt. However, for general inquiries please allow for a 24-hour turnaround (not including holidays and weekends). Email does sometimes go awry: If you do not hear back from me in due time, please try again with a different heading (in case the original was recognized as spam) and/or call me. For urgent inquiries (for instance in regard to a test or paper problem) you can expect a faster reply and it is your responsibility to be at your inbox so that you can receive and act upon my reply with immediacy.
Grades

A. Overview
Although every student willing to engage her- or himself should do well, please remember that this is an upper division course and the workload is therefore heavier than you would find at the lower levels.

Grade weighting
Your final grade in the course is determined on a percentage basis (not a point scale) as per the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Deliverables</th>
<th>Proportion of Grade</th>
<th>Due Dates*</th>
<th>Blackboard Submission Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prep Quizzes &amp; Activities</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>End of relevant week (check the Schedule Appendix or LxL Schedule)</td>
<td>Within relevant modules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Quizzes (best 10 of 13)**</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>End of each week</td>
<td>Sidebar link: Chapter Quizzes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section Tests and Final Test (best 3 of 4)**</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>End of each Section and at the course’s end (every 4-5 weeks and during the last week: see LxL Schedule and Blackboard)</td>
<td>Sidebar link: Section Tests</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Weeks end on Sunday for this course, and they end at 23:59 hours or 11:59 pm.
**Dropping lowest test and quiz grades helps insure against one-time problems damaging your overall grade.

Due Dates and Times
All work, including tests, must be received on time to count toward your grade. Times as stated refer to San Diego or Pacific Standard Time. This is the time standard used by Blackboard’s internal clock. Our standard ‘deadline’ time is 23:59 hours.

This does not mean you should press ‘submit’ at 23:59 hours. You need to allow time for internet traffic, just as you need to allow time for freeway traffic and parking (etc.) when you have to appear somewhere on time. I suggest submitting by 23:30 hours (11:30 pm).

Please be aware that deadlines placed on Sundays at 23:59 hours (vs. at the close of business on Friday) are placed there as a courtesy to working students; weekend and night-time help with content-related questions or technological problems is not guaranteed. In the face of either, deadlines remain in effect.

Academic integrity
Academic integrity is required of all students at SDSU. Breaches of academic integrity (academic dishonesty) include but are not limited to cheating, plagiarizing, falsifying records, and assisting another individual in any of these actions. Please familiarize yourself with SDSU’s policies by clicking into the following website:
http://csrr.sdsu.edu/

If you engage in ANY form of academic dishonesty you will receive an "F" for the course grade. Students engaging in academic dishonesty will be reported to SDSU’s Judicial Coordinator, who will then take appropriate
action. Students in the major also will be reported to the Anthropology Department's Undergraduate Coordinator. Remember that any temptation to cheat affects not only you but the class as a whole.

B. Components of final grade

Below, the components of the final grade are listed. How they are weighted is explained above. More general grading information is provided in the section that follows.

1. Module Prep Quizzes & Self-Assessment Activities. Every module where a chapter starts includes an ungraded pre- or prep quiz. Some modules include ungraded self-assessment activities. “Ungraded” does not mean “unnecessary”: prep quizzes and self-assessment activities are required. Credits or points are awarded for all prep quizzes and activities completed. At the end of the course, you will have earned a percentage score based on the number of prep quizzes/activities completed (i.e., the number of credits or points accrued; and see ‘Results’ below for information regarding our grading scale). The number of prep quizzes and activities (i.e., credits) available for completion will be about 25-30.

While prep quizzes come at the beginning in a given module, activities generally come at the end. The activities ask you to apply, practice, or otherwise demonstrate and self-assess what you have just learned. The aim of completing the prep quizzes is to orient you to the work of the week. The aim of the activities is to practice and hone understanding so that you do as well as possible on the graded work you will submit later.

Prep quiz and activity due dates are clearly stated on Blackboard and in your Lesson by Lesson schedule (available on our Blackboard Website). In brief, they must be completed by 23:59 hours on Sunday at the end of the relevant week. Credit will only be given for prep quizzes and activities completed on time and that represent a good faith effort (this means that, for this portion of the grade, it is very easy to get an A—you should take advantage of that fact!).

I should note here that not all 'active' work you do counts as an 'activity'. A few of the learning resources I will ask you to examine over the course of our class include interactive features, such as quizzes or games. Although you should complete these they cannot count toward your 'activity credits' because they are undertaken on external Websites and cannot be monitored.

2. Chapter Quizzes. At the end of each week you will generally have completed a chapter of our textbook. When this occurs you will take a brief, multiple choice Chapter Quiz. You may access your Chapter Quizzes through the sidebar menu link ('Chapter Quizzes') any time that week when you are ready but always before the scheduled due date.

On each quiz, you will receive a randomly generated subset of questions drawn from a large pool of questions, so that no two quizzes are alike. Note that because the quizzes are brief, not all information that is relevant for the Section Tests can be included. Also because they are brief, grading will be eased via a slightly reduced
denominator (e.g., a 10 question quiz will be graded as if there were 9.5 questions so that 9 correct answers will result in an ‘A’ versus the lowest possible ‘A-.’ Likewise, 7 correct will result in a ‘C’ versus a low ‘C-,’ and so on.

There are thirteen chapters. In appreciation of the fact that everyone experiences a rough week now and then, the **ten highest scores will be averaged to determine your overall Chapter Quiz grade.** (See ‘Results’ below for information regarding our grading scale.)

**3. Section Tests and Final Test.** Students will complete an online test at the end of every section of the course, and at the end of the course as a whole. The last test is comprehensive or cumulative, covering key concepts used throughout the course. It is the same length as a typical Section Test, and worth the same proportion of the final grade.

Because we are doing writing in many of our activities, there is no writing on the tests; they are mainly multiple choice. Questions directly reflect (are written based on) our specified learning outcome objectives, the topics/terms found at the start of each module.

The **three highest scores will be averaged to determine your overall Section Test grade.** Dropping the lowest score protects you from harm if you experience a one-time difficulty. (See ‘Results’ below for information regarding our grading scale.)

Note that most test problems stem from the use of computers that are not properly prepared. Although students have ample opportunity prior to the onset of testing to prepare their computers, and you are expected to have all anticipatable technological problems sorted out prior to the first ‘real’ test, the dropped test policy provides an ‘across the board’ free pass for one test if things go wrong.

**Test dates and times:** Tests are open as indicated in the Lesson-by-Lesson Schedule (Appendix) and on Blackboard. They are open from 00:01 hours on the first date given. Blackboard will close them at 23:59 hours (midnight) on the last date given for the test in question.

Please check the dates posted and clear your calendars now to ensure that you are available for every test. Also note that because of the broad ‘window frame’ for testing, your scheduling issues or minor infirmities are never grounds for a makeup exam.

**Overtime tests:** Although you may begin testing any time within the testing window, you will receive a set number of minutes to complete the test once you have opened it, and tests must be completed in one sitting. Blackboard provides a test timer, which starts when you begin a test. Although we generally set tests to auto submit or stop themselves when the time is up, there are circumstances in which this is not possible; it is **your responsibility to submit your test prior to when your time expires.**

Also please note that Blackboard does not grade tests submitted after ‘time allowed’ runs out. Those must mark by hand (if warranted). Here is exactly how we will handle them:
Any test-taker who takes more than his or her share of time may receive an ‘F’ for the effort. We will overlook up to 59 seconds of overtime on the assumption that submitting does, itself, take a few seconds. But any more than that will result in a lower score as per the following rule set:

- Tests running 1 - 2 minutes over, as per Blackboard’s timestamp, will be reduced by 5% (e.g., a grade of 84% becomes a grade of 79%) or, if a previous test also has come in overtime, on the second offense the student will receive a 0.
- Tests running 3 - 4 minutes over, as per Blackboard’s timestamp, will be reduced by 15% (e.g., a grade of 84% becomes a grade of 69%) or, if a previous test also has come in overtime, on the second offense the student will receive a 0.
- Tests running 5 minutes over, as per Blackboard’s timestamp, will be reduced by 30% (e.g., a grade of 84% becomes a grade of 54%) or, if a previous test also has come in overtime, on the second offense the student will receive a 0.
- All tests marked at 6+ minutes overtime and above will receive a 0.

Overtime penalties are not negotiable. To protect yourself, press SUBMIT prior to the final minute of your time allotment. The number of questions on each test will be set to fit well within the time allotted.

**Use of notes.** Although you can certainly access your notes and our learning resources while taking each test, the tests are not intended to be open book exams. Approach each test just like you would approach an exam you might take sitting in a classroom. In other words, ‘know your stuff’. Any student who cheats will, at a minimum, receive an F.

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and, at a minimum, a plagiarized piece of work will receive 0 points (an ‘F’). An F in the course also may result. See also: [http://infodome.sdsu.edu/infolit/learningpackets.shtml#plagiarism](http://infodome.sdsu.edu/infolit/learningpackets.shtml#plagiarism).

On each test, each student will receive a randomly generated subset of questions drawn from a large pool of questions, so that no two tests are alike. While you therefore will not be asked about every single topic and term, the questions you do receive 'spot check' your comprehension and thereby provide us with an excellent measure of your total grasp of all course materials / objectives.

You must take all examinations (quizzes included) by yourself, without the unauthorized assistance of others in any way, shape, or form. If you know that other students are cheating, you should report them. If you have any questions about SDSU’s policy regarding cheating (including plagiarism), see [http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/srr/academics1.html](http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/srr/academics1.html).

**Crashed tests.** If your test crashes for reasons you think may be on our end, let me know right away through an email to esobo@mail.sdsu.edu. Follow the instructions provided for you on Blackboard, which in summary say: email to tell me exactly what happened, and check back regularly for my response. Stand by for my
instructions. And remember, although I can reset a crashed test for you if the problem is on our end, I do need ample notice. With a reset, all prior work disappears; you receive a whole new question set.

Finally, please note: the Blackboard system is busiest in the hour prior to any deadline. It can even lock up and lock you out. So do not wait too long to take your test. Tests—even reset tests—always are due by the end of the testing window.

**Missed tests (make-ups).** Because tests are taken online, because you have a very broad window of time to take each test, and because your lowest test grade will be dropped, make-ups will only be permitted in the direst of unexpected and unanticipated circumstances (e.g., hospitalization, extradition), provided that appropriate and legitimate documentation has been supplied. Your scheduling issues, travel, or minor infirmities are never grounds for a makeup exam. Except in the direst of circumstances, makeups must be arranged for within 5 days of any missed exam.

### C. Results

**Grade posting and feedback.** Grades (or credits; e.g. for activities) are posted on Blackboard as soon as they are available. For purely objective tests, this generally occurs two days after they expire (that gives me time to double check the scoring, etc.). When tests include written or hand-marked answers, and for other types of assignments (e.g., discussion board posts), the process can take a few more days; it may even take a week or two depending on enrollment.

You are responsible for tracking your grades. This includes making sure that the tests and papers you believe to have been submitted actually were submitted with success to the Blackboard system. Be sure to print your submission receipts or otherwise save them. If you notice a mark missing, **alert me immediately** and send me your proof of submission so that I can help you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Grade pts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-59.99 %</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-63.99 %</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64-66.99 %</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67-69.99 %</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-73.99 %</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74-76.99 %</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77-79.99 %</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-83.99 %</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84-86.99 %</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89.99 %</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-93.99 %</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94-96.99 %</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97-100 %</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grade calculations.** *All scores in this course are converted to percentages.* The table here shows how we move from a percentage to a letter grade and then a grade point figure. This process is applied not only to the tests, projects, and accrued activity point totals but to the final grade as a whole. Please be advised that we do not automatically round up (e.g., 79.5% = C+ while 80% = B-).

With the percentage system, as opposed to the curve system, it is possible for every student who knows the material to earn an A. However, I reserve the right to alter the grading method on the off chance that the percentage system is not adequately differentiating students.

**Grade queries.** Grades are very carefully determined and checked prior to being accepted into or entered in the Grade Book record. I take assessment of student performance very seriously and would rather we ‘get it right the first time’ than rush and make errors. But if you do find an error or have a question, please feel free to
ask about it! It pleases me greatly to raise grades when warranted. On the flip side, some students push for points when they are not warranted; this is disrespectful to your peers and yourself—so please avoid it. Reconsideration, if requested, will take your entire test and, in some cases, your entire record into account and may result in lower as well as higher grades.

Learning Objectives & Outcomes
This course introduces students to systems thinking and the idea of adaptation and then explores, from the ‘systems’ standpoint, human adaptation to geography or the ‘natural’ environment, the ‘man made’ environment, and culture itself. In other words, students examine the relationship between ‘the human experience’ and geographically, socially, and culturally-derived ‘environmental pressures’. In this equation, health is a key index of adaptation and human groups are viewed as complex adaptive systems embedded within larger such systems and containing smaller ones. Knowledge of our organizational strategy and systems standpoint will help students to focus their effort and attention throughout the semester.

Outcomes expected. Upon completing the course, students should be able to: Apply systems thinking and a scientific perspective in describing and explaining:

- Human biological adaptation;
- The adaptive emergence of culture and the global spread of behaviorally modern humans;
- How intensified subsistence strategies entailed diverse environmental changes that humans, in turn, adapted to in diverse ways.
- How local and global structural (political-economic) arrangements diversely affect human health.
- How culture differentially affects our expectations for, and experiences of, our bodies.

Students also will have built academic skills, for instance in information literacy and plagiarism avoidance.

Specific outcomes expected and where to find them. Section-specific learning outcome expectations are detailed in the Lesson by Lesson Schedule (which exists as an appendix to this document). They are repeated again at the start of each online lesson module.

In addition to listing all course resources and activities (and relevant due dates) the Schedule also lists all key concepts and terms, and contains important calendar information. The Schedule therefore serves not only as an overall tool to help keep us on track but also as a study guide for the course as a whole.

Take some time now to have a look at the Schedule and to acquaint yourself with how it works. You should print out the Schedule (and this syllabus) for easy reference.

Please note that this course is not only an upper division course but it also serves as a theory course within the undergraduate anthropology degree. Therefore, you can expect to learn (and will be expected to be able to identify and describe) several anthropological theories during our time together.
As suits SDSU’s General Education parameters,² the overarching aim of the course is to help students understand and appreciate the synergistic relationship between culture and biology through a scientific, systems oriented examination of varied geographic and socio-cultural (including political economic) explanations for human bio-cultural diversity, past and present.

**General Roadmap for our Journey**

The overarching aim of the course is to help students understand and appreciate the synergistic relationship between culture and biology through a scientific, systems oriented examination of varied geographic and socio-cultural (including political economic) explanations for human bio-cultural diversity, past and present.

To begin our learning journey, after reviewing the syllabus and schedule, and getting to know our Blackboard Website, we are introduced to anthropology, and to the scientific method. We examine and adopt the ‘systems’ approach, which we will apply in all subsequent lessons. Next, we focus on the processes entailed in adaptation. We investigate the links between geography and the rise of human biological diversity. Culture’s emergence as an adaptive mechanism is explored. The material covered highlights the important role of the physical (‘natural’, geographic) environment.

Next, we examine humanity’s impact on the environment and how that, in turn, affects inter- and intra-societal variations in health and wellness. We investigate the varied relationships between ‘man-made’ environments (e.g., those created by intensified subsistence strategies, social evolution, regional/global linkages) and health. We examine the role of disease ecology in explaining diverse epidemiological profiles as well as the varied effects of political economy and other expressions of power and hierarchy (e.g., structural violence).

Finally, we explore the importance of cultural context and also of cultural relativism. We will examine how even experiences as apparently basic and universal as family-building can be experienced in bio-culturally diverse ways. This understanding is extended as we explore the literal embodiment of culture, for example in bodily size, shape, and decoration.

As the course progresses, we learn more and more about bio-cultural diversity’s origins and its relationship to every-day life in today’s world. Detailed learning outcome expectations as well as work requirements and relevant due dates are provided in the Appendix to this syllabus (i.e., the Lesson by Lesson Schedule). The Appendix serves as the detailed itinerary for the learning journey on which we are about to embark and which I look forward to sharing with you!

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² *General Education parameters.* Course objectives were prepared in light of the university’s criteria for cultural diversity courses in general education. Among other things, "The course must have a primary focus on non-dominant perspectives, cultures, views, and traditions." This course does so. Further, ANTH 402 is a 3-unit Explorations course. Courses that fulfill the 9-unit [total] requirement for Explorations in General Education take the goals and skills of GE Foundations courses to a more advanced level. Your three upper division courses in Explorations will provide greater interdisciplinary, more complex and in-depth theory, deeper investigation of local problems, and wider awareness of global challenges. More extensive reading, written analysis involving complex comparisons, well-developed arguments, considerable bibliography, and use of technology are appropriate in many Explorations courses.

This is an Explorations course in Natural Sciences. Completing this course will help you learn to do the following with greater depth: 1) explain basic concepts and theories of the natural sciences; 2) use logic and scientific methods to analyze the natural world and solve problems; 3) argue from multiple perspectives about issues in natural science that have personal and global relevance; 4) use technology in laboratory and field situations to connect concepts and theories with real-world phenomena. [Please note that ANTH 402 support for #4 is generally conceptual rather than hands-on; nonetheless, concepts taught in this course will apply in your future lab and field experiences.]