Anthropology 306 / Gender 380-006
Kinship and Social Organization
Dr. John Ziker
Spring 2016, MP106, T-TH 12-1:15

Dr. Ziker’s Office Hours: T 1:30-3:00 and W 11:00-1:15 and by appointment

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COURSE OBJECTIVES AND PROSPECTUS Anthropology 306 is an introduction to the evolution and the diversity of human family systems. The nature of anthropological research requires a focus on the family and the family as it relates to larger social groupings. Kinship and social organization is a core subject in our discipline, cross-cutting the subfields of anthropology (social-cultural anthropology, archaeology, and biological anthropology), and connecting us to relevant research in other disciplines as well.

In this course we will learn about and discuss the relevance of kinship and social organization to the human species, our evolutionary past, and our contemporary situation. The topics to be covered include the social organization of human reproduction, systems of kinship, descent, marriage, residence, and family, broader social categories, and the social networks that make up society.

Three conceptual themes will guide the course: (i) evolutionary analysis; (ii) diversity, and (iii) contemporary relevance.

One of the fundamental topics of anthropological investigation with regard to human evolution is the development of social complexity. Why are humans a highly social species? How do humans organize themselves and how do our organizational abilities compare with other social species? The anthropological data on the variability and evolutionary history of kinship and social organization will prepare you to think critically about the assumptions people make about the nature of human sociality.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students who successfully complete all course requirements will be able to:

1. Apply the terminology found in kinship and social organization research to case studies.
2. Identify and summarize the gist of the major debates in the anthropology of kinship and social organization.
3. Identify, explain, apply, and compare the results of professional publications in kinship and social organization.
4. Understand and apply ethological principles to Hominid kinship and social organization.
5. Write meaningful summaries of core reading material and reflect on the depth of your understanding.
Students who successfully complete the Service Learning requirements will be able to:

1. learn how to develop respectful, meaningful, collaborative, and mutually beneficial partnerships with community groups and members;
2. understand the social issues being studied though this course through the service-learning experience;
3. develop observational, descriptive, meta-analytical, and critical self-reflection skills by documenting your service learning experience and producing a written mini-ethnography and a poster presentation.

Students who opt out of Service Learning will be able to:

1. research and write a term paper that meets the Anthropology department term paper rubric providing an opportunity to reassess ethnographic material of a society of your choosing.

REQUIRED READING

1. Selected Course Readings (on blackboard)
4. *Projects in Ethnographic Research* by Michael V. Angrosino

We will read, discuss, and summarize two books as well as some examples of the primary research.

Without a degree of technical competence in kinship theory, it is difficult to adequately understand contributions to the major anthropological journals, read and analyze anthropological monographs on tribal peoples, debate the fundamental issues of human social and biological evolution, and to develop research in archaeology, ethnology, or bio-social anthropology. Linda Stone’s *Kinship and Gender* provides a concise introduction with many case studies.

Bernard Chapais’ Book *Primeval Kinship* is our main text. The book addresses the question of the origin of human society using a comparative approach. Building on the major contributions to kinship theory in anthropology, Chapais takes the view from the comparative primatology to deduce necessary conditions of early human kinship. Chapais handles the most contentious issues in kinship studies and proposes a sane, satisfying, and integrated approach to the topic. Paraphrasing Robin Fox (Rutgers U. Anthropologist), Chapais’ book is one of the most important books in anthropology in the last few decades.

Michael Angrosino’s book is a primer on ethnographic research projects.

PARTICIPATION
You are responsible for guiding yourself through the course materials and completing all the assignments by the due dates.

### COURSE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module 1</th>
<th>Week 1-2</th>
<th>Introduction to the Course, Theoretical Framework, Connecting Course Content to Service Learning</th>
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|          | Topics   | -underlying principles  
|          |          | -Why be social?  
|          |          | -Frans de Waal on Morality  
|          |          | -nature and nurture  
|          | Readings | -Chapais, Preface, Chapters 1 and 2  
|          |          | -Stone, Chapters 1 and 2  
|          |          | -Bateson and Laland, 2013 “Tinbergen’s Four Questions”  
|          | Assignment Due Dates | -Discussion Board 1 (Due 1/19 and 1/21)  
|          |          | -Essay 1 (Due 1/23)  
|          |          | -Test 1 (2/2)  
| Module 2 | Week 3-6 | The Origin of Human Society/Exogamy Configuration Deconstructed |
|          | Topics   | -the phylogenetic method  
|          |          | -uterine kinship and human kinship  
|          |          | -from biological to cultural kinship  
|          |          | -incest avoidance legacy  
|          |          | -from behavioral regularities to institutionalized rules  
|          |          | -Levi-Strauss and the Alliance vs. Descent debate  
|          |          | -Neo-evolutionism in the mid-20th century  
|          |          | -the building blocks of exogamy  
|          | Readings | -Chapais, Chapters 3-9; Angrosino, all.  
|          |          | -Lieberman and Lobe, 2012, “Kinship on the Kibbutz”  
|          | Assignment Due Dates | -Discussion board post and responses (Due 2/9 and 2/12)  
|          |          | -Essay 2 (Due 2/20)  
|          |          | -Test 2 (2/23)  

| Module 3 | Week 7-9 | The Exogamy Configuration Reconstructed | -ancestral male kin group  
- evolution of pair bonding  
- transformation of siblingships  
- beyond the local group  
- male philopatry and residential diversity  
- brothers-sisters and exogamy | - Chapais, Part 3 (Chapters 10-16)  
- Mattison, Scelza, and Blumenfeld, 2014, “Paternal Investment … among the Matrilineal Masuo” | - SL diaries to end of service  
-Discussion board post and responses (Due 3/1 and 3/3)  
-SL Meta-Analysis 1 or Ethnography Analysis (Due 3/8)  
-Essay 3 (Due 3/12)  
-Test 3 (3/15) |
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| Module 4 | Week 10-12 | Unilineal Descent | - filiation vs descent  
- origins of unilineal descent  
- contingency in human society | - Chapais, Part 4 (Chapters 17-20)  
- Stone, Chapters 3 - 6  
- Opie, Shultz, Atkinson, Currie, and Mace, 2014 “Phylogenetic reconstruction of Bantu kinship challenges Main Sequence Theory of human social evolution” | - Discussion board post and responses (Due 3/29 and 3/31)  
-SL Meta-Analysis 2 or Term Paper 1st draft (Due 4/5)  
-Essay 4 (Due 4/9)  
-Test 4 (4/12) |
| Module 5 | Week 13-15 | The Diversity of Human Kinship and Social Organization | - patrilineal, matrilineal, double, and cognatic descent  
- marriage forms  
- Euroamerican kinship, contemporary | - Stone, Chapters 7 – 10  
-article tba. | - Discussion board post and responses (Due 4/19 and 4/21)  
-Mini-Ethnography or Term Paper and Posters (Due 4/26) |
ASSESSMENTS AND GRADES

I have set up a variety of assessments to give you a range of opportunities to succeed. Daily discussion and in-class labs, 5 online quizzes and 4 tests, discussion board participation in each module, and a written essay for each module will help you master the course content. A final exam and a culminating written assignment will allow me to evaluate the degree to which you have mastered the content of this course.

The point breakdown is as follows:

1. Five in-class labs (20 points each, 100 total)
2. Five quizzes (10 points each, 50 total)
3. Four tests (50 points each, 200 total)
4. One Discussion Board post (and 2 responses) per module (20 points each, 100 total)
5. Five essays (50 points each, 250 total)
6. Final Exam (100 points total)
7. Service Learning Mini-Ethnography and Poster (200 points)

Or

Ethnography Analysis, Term Paper, and Poster assignment (200 points).

The total number of points in the course is 1000, and individual assessments may be weighted according to the scheme above. Assignment of letter grades at the end of the semester is at the discretion of the instructor and follows standard practice (> 90% = A, 80-89.9% = B, etc.). Pluses or minuses within a letter-grade tier are used to reward significant improvement in effort throughout the course, rather than to penalize those on the lower end of a letter grade tier. The course will make use of the
Blackboard system. Please check that you can access your Blackboard account and that this course appears on your homepage. Announcements, readings, tests and assessment instructions will appear on Blackboard. I am available for consultation and discussion during my office hours. I highly encourage you to stop by for any reason pertaining to the course. Please don't wait until the last minute to confer with me on lectures, readings, or problems!

SERVICE LEARNING

Service learning is an active learning strategy that integrates course content with relevant community service. Through assignments, class discussions, and individual reflection, the service learning component of this course provides opportunities to leverage experiences outside the classroom to increase understanding of course content, gain a broader appreciation of, and skills in, the discipline, and enhance sense of civic responsibility.

The service-learning component of the course provides a structured way for you to make contact with people that wouldn’t normally, giving you a controlled and safe opportunity to do ethnographic fieldwork. As a final product for this course, you will write up a mini-ethnography of your service-learning field experience, provide that to your sponsoring organization (if requested), and give oral reports to class.

The Service Learning project will include journal entries, meta-analyses, class discussion, a final paper (the “mini-ethnography”) and a poster presentation. If you opt out of service learning for this course, there will be a term paper (testing the hypotheses of Chapais in the ethnographic record) and related assignments including an ethnography analysis and poster assignment.

If you choose to participate in the service-learning option, you will need to register for a service project via OrgSync by January 23. To register on OrgSync, please go to the Service-Learning Program’s website under Service Learning Project Registration—for Integrated Classes: [http://servicelearning.boisestate.edu/students/project-registration/](http://servicelearning.boisestate.edu/students/project-registration/)

If you have any questions or concerns regarding OrgSync or registering for a project, please contact the Service-Learning Program at servicelearning@boisestate.edu or 426-1004.

The timeline for contacting the agency and beginning and completing service will follow the standard SLP semester timeline adopted for this course (provided separately). No changes in SL assignment will be allowed after week six.

SCHOLARSHIP

Scholarship is defined as: the sphere of polite learning. Scholarship should be purposeful, academic, and focused, and this course aims to provide a high quality academic environment, engaging students in relevant theoretical and practical issues. In order for us
to pursue our scholarly goals, I ask that all students maintain a high level of respect and politeness. This respect and politeness is not only for your teacher and the university, but also for your fellow students who are attending class to learn. Late work will be accepted at the discretion of the instructor. Please plan your schedule accordingly. You must adhere to all provisions of the University code of conduct. Plagiarizing, stealing, or passing off the words and ideas of others as one’s own, is unacceptable. Plagiarism also includes submitting your own paper in more than one course without permission. See the definition of plagiarism on the Albertson’s Library website:
http://library.boisestate.edu/plagiarism/introduction.htm