
ANTHROPOLOGY 4300/7300

COMPARATIVE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION



About this course

This course explores the variance in social organization as studied by anthropologists. As part of this course, students will explore topics including kinship, marriage, family, decent and residence patterns, social networks, inequality, and the evolutionary approaches to understanding these topics. In the first part of the course, we will explore major important concepts of kinship, decent, and residence, and marriage. The second part of the course will survey major patterns of social organization from both regional, developmental, and topical perspectives. As part of this course students will read and analyze ethnographic descriptions of various populations, watch documentaries, and engage in discussions of course topics. By the end of the course students will have an understanding of how gender and kinship shape social structures and institutions cross-culturally.

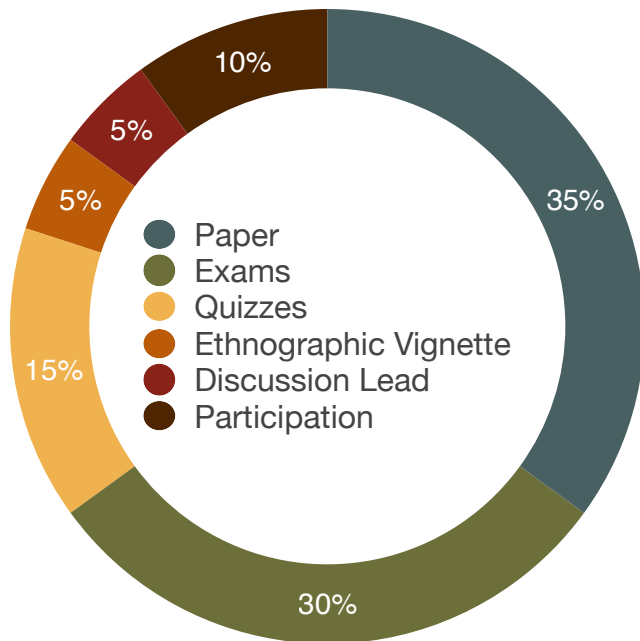
Details

Fall Semester 2022, Tue & Thur 11:00 AM - 12:15 PM
in Arts & Science 203

Instructor is Dr. Sean Prall. My office is in Swallow Hall 224, and my office hours are Tue/Thur from 12:30PM to 2:00 PM. You may contact me via email at sprall@missouri.edu

“Kinship and marriage are about the basic facts of life. They are about ‘birth, and copulation, and death,’ the eternal round that seemed to depress the poet but which excites, amongst others, the anthropologist.”

-ROBIN FOX



Textbooks and readings

The following texts are required as part of this course:

•Stone L and King DE. 2019. ***Kinship and Gender: An Introduction*** (6th Edition). Routledge Press: New York. ISBN: 978-0-8133-5094-3.

•Stockard JE. 2002. ***Marriage in Culture: Practice and meaning across diverse societies***. Wadsworth: Belmont. ISBN: 978-0-15-506368-0.

Other reads will be shared as PDFs via Canvas.

Assignments and grading

Grading for this class will be broken down into the following requirements and assignments as represented in the chart above.

Class Participation - Students will be expected to be present in class, to come prepared having read the assigned readings for that day, and participate in thoughtful discussion.

Quizzes/in-class assignments - At the discretion of the instructor, students will complete a series of short and unannounced quizzes at the beginning of class sessions. Quizzes may be in any format, but will concentrate on assigned reading materials, and subject matter covered since the previous quiz. Occasionally, we will have an in-class assignment in lieu of a quiz.

Leading Discussion - During one class session, each student will act as discussion lead (undergraduates 1x, graduate students 2x), and come prepared to ask questions and lead the class through the assigned readings and topics for that day.

Ethnographic Vignette – During one class session students will present a brief ethnographic vignette relevant to the course topics for that day. Ethnographic vignettes should consist of a brief description of an appropriate population, with particular emphasis made to the daily topic. Students will turn in a short (minimum 2 pg) summary within one week of presentation

Exams - Students will complete two exams during the semester, a midterm and a final. Exams will primarily be in essay format, but may include questions in other formats as well.

Paper - Students will complete a final paper on a topic of their choice. Paper topics will be chosen in advance with help from the instructor, and students will be asked to submit several items as described above in order to provide accountability and ensure progress on the papers throughout the semester. Students will present



Paper Breakdown

- Topic Proposal - 2%
- Short bibliography - 4%
- Short early draft - 4%
- Final Paper - 80%
- Presentation - 10%

papers in the form of a powerpoint to the class at the end of the semester, and this presentation will be calculated into the paper grade as described here. Undergraduate papers should be 10-12 pages, while graduate papers should be 15-20 pages (double-spaced, 12 pt font). A rubric will be provided to the students prior to handing in papers.

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Daily Topic	Paper Due Dates
Week 1	8/23	Why should we care about kinship?	
	8/25	The Kinship Code	
Week 2	8/30	The Evolution of Kinship	
	9/1	Marriage types and implications, Nyinba Polyandry	
Week 3	9/6	!Kung and traditional Chinese marriage	
	9/8	Why polygyny?	
Week 4	9/13	Divorce, Parent-offspring conflict in the !Kung	
	9/15	Arranged marriage documentary	
Week 5	9/20	Historical Iroquois & Nyinba marriage	
	9/22	Individual meetings/paper proposals	Topic proposal 9/23
Week 6	9/27	Patriline, Nuer & Brahmins	
	9/29	Matriline, Navajo, Nayer, & Mosuo	
Week 7	10/4	Other descent types	
	10/6	Exam 1	
Week 8	10/11	Family: family size, alloparenting	
	10/13	Family: paternity	Short bibliography 10/14
Week 9	10/18	Family: Parental investment	
	10/20	Band-level societies, Netsilik Family	
Week 10	10/25	Local Level and African social organization	
	10/27	Pastoralism	
Week 11	11/1	Pastoralism documentary	
	11/3	"Big Man" groups and the N-cluster	
Week 12	11/8	Regional Polity and the Chiefdom	
	11/10	O-Cluster	Short early draft 11/12
Week 13	11/15	C-Cluster	
	11/17	Euro-American Kinship	
Week 14	11/29	Practicing cultural relativism	
	12/1	Exam 2	
Week 15	12/6	Student Presentations	Presentation
	12/8	Student Presentations	Presentation
Finals	12/15	No Class	Final Paper

Course Policies and Expectations

Attendance

Students are expected to be present for class. Attendance will not be taken, but students who fail to attend may miss pop quizzes and valuable in-class learning opportunities. Students who have a *legitimate* reason to miss class must alert the instructor BEFORE

class (at least 24 hours in advance). Students who miss class without legitimate reasons and advance warning may not make up missed quizzes, exams, or hand in materials late. No make up quizzes or exams will be offered.

Weather Policy

As a university policy change for spring of 2021, severe inclement weather will no longer result in class cancellation. In the event face-to-face classes cannot be held due to weather, class will be held on Zoom unless otherwise notified. Students will receive an email with instructions and a link. Do not assume class will be moving to Zoom until you receive announcement on canvas or hear an official announcement from the university that classes will not be held on campus

Decreasing the Risk of COVID-19 in Classrooms and Labs

If you have tested positive for COVID-19 or have been identified as someone who needs to quarantine, do not attend class in person until the mandated period for isolation or quarantine has passed. Your instructor will work with you on arrangements to access class material while you are in isolation or quarantine. Additionally, if you are experiencing any COVID-related symptoms, or are otherwise feeling unwell, do not attend in-person classes and contact your health care provider and/or student health immediately. COVID symptoms include: fever greater than 100.4 or chills; cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing; fatigue; unexplained muscle or body aches; headache; new loss of taste or smell; sore throat; congestion or runny nose; nausea or vomiting; diarrhea. Instructors or students with concerns about how a student is following any University-mandated COVID-19 policies and protocols should report those concerns to the Office of the Dean of Students. Concerns can be documented on a COVID Safety Measures Reporting Form. Please consult Show Me Renewal for further guidelines.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards breaches of the academic integrity rules as extremely serious matters. Sanctions for such a breach may include academic sanctions from the instructor, including failing the course for any violation, to disciplinary sanctions ranging from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, collaboration, or any other form of cheating, consult the course instructor or the Office of Academic Integrity. Students are expected to adhere to this honor pledge on all graded work whether or not they are explicitly asked in advance to do so: "I strive to uphold the University values of respect, responsibility, discovery, and excellence. On my honor, I pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on this work."



Grading scale

97 - 100% = A+
93 - 96% = A
90 - 92% = A-
87 - 89% = B+
83 - 86% = B
80 - 82% = B-
77 - 79% = C+
73 - 76% = C
70 - 72% = C-
67 - 69% = D+
63 - 66% = D
60 - 62% = D-
Under 60% = F

Arts and Sciences Diversity Requirement

This course satisfies the DI requirement for students in the College of Arts and Sciences by focusing on cross-cultural perspectives in identity, kinship, gender, and reproduction. In particular this class explores (1) how sex and gender are perceived cross-culturally and the diversity of ways in which gender is enacted, (2) how female autonomy and gender inequality are shaped through subsistence and inheritance practices, social institutions, and the evolution of cultural norms, including the evolution of sexual double standards as a result of inheritance practices and Christianity in Euroamerican societies, (3) the diversity of marital and reproductive systems, their socio-ecological underpinnings and implications for variation in social structures and institutions, (4) the evolution of persistent institutionalized inequality as it pertains to material wealth transmission, economic defensibility, and population and resource pressures. As part of these goals, students will explore cultural diversity, from traditional foragers and pastoralists to emerging market economies. Students will learn about these diverse groups with vastly different norms and patterns of behavior, and expected to think critically about these groups within changing environmental and social contexts. Students will also be asked to explore a related topic of their choosing as part of a final paper, as well as lead discussions on the course topics listed in the schedule.

Academic Inquiry, Course Discussion and Privacy

When students record something that happens in a course (a lecture, class discussions, meetings, etc.) it has an impact on the rights of the people captured in that recording. For example, the instructor and the University may have rights to the intellectual property contained in that recording. At the same time, another student who may have been recorded has the right to privacy. In order to protect these rights, MU employs a policy (called "Executive Order No. 38") to govern both situations you may encounter while taking a course – when an instructor allows recordings and when they do not. In this class, students may not make audio or video recordings of course activity, except students permitted to record as an accommodation under section 240.040 of the Collected Rules. Students who violate this policy are subject to discipline in accordance with provisions of section 200.020 of the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri pertaining to student conduct matters.

Additional MU Policies and Expectations, which apply to this and all courses at Mizzou, can be found [here](#).

Please note that course schedule and any deadlines listed are subject to change. Instructor may change course content, assignments, grading, and reading at his discretion. Students will be notified of updates to this syllabus as they occur.