

Basic Principles of Social and Cultural Anthropology

Code: 106972
ECTS Credits: 6

2025/2026

Degree	Type	Year
Sociocultural Gender Studies	FB	1

Contact

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Teaching groups languages

You can view this information at the [end](#) of this document.

Prerequisites

No prerequisites are necessary to take this course.

Objectives and Contextualisation

This course provides an introductory exploration of the theoretical and epistemological foundations of anthropology as a scientific discipline focused on the comparative study of human sociocultural diversity. It aims to foster a critical understanding of the ways in which societies organize social and cultural life, as well as the narratives through which difference and social hierarchies are constructed and legitimized.

Through the study of key concepts, theoretical approaches, and ethnographic cases, the course encourages students to develop an anthropological perspective that questions cultural assumptions and analyzes the symbolic, social, and political systems that shape human practices. It also promotes reflection on the historical conditioning of anthropology as a discipline and supports the adoption of contemporary critical perspectives.

The course equips students with tools to interpret cultural and social diversity in an informed and reflective way, integrating the analysis of power relations, gender norms, and other axes of inequality. At the same time, it strengthens students' ability to construct coherent and well-founded arguments aimed at promoting a respectful and engaged understanding of human life in all its complexity.

Learning Outcomes

1. CM04 (Competence) Identify the effects of sex and gender variables in empirical analyses.
2. CM05 (Competence) Assess how gender stereotypes and roles can affect professional situations.
3. KM10 (Knowledge) Draw on the basic ideas of social and cultural anthropology in order to understand specific examples of social relations between different human groups in situations where cultures interact.
4. SM05 (Skill) Critically analyse a current event or phenomenon from a gender-based, ethnographic perspective.
5. SM07 (Skill) Use inclusive language in both oral and written expression in all academic situations.

Content

The contents of this course provide students with a solid and structured introduction to the fundamental concepts of Social and Cultural Anthropology. The course is organized according to a classical thematic structure, which allows for the exploration of key dimensions of social life-such as kinship, economy, politics, and religion-and the construction of a conceptual foundation for understanding the discipline.

This approach is accompanied by sustained attention to contemporary critical perspectives, particularly contributions from gender studies and intersectionality theory. These perspectives are integrated transversally across all units, enhancing students' ability to understand how power relations, gender norms, and other axes of inequality permeate all spheres of social and cultural organization.

The course also incorporates a variety of sources-academic readings, audiovisual materials, case studies, and guest lectures-that allow for the exploration of diverse practices and discourses, with particular emphasis on the social construction of difference, processes of domination, and forms of resistance.

The course content is organized into the following thematic units:

1. Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology
Object of study, comparative perspective, and methods. Ethnography, fieldwork, and reflexivity. Origins of the discipline and its androcentric biases.
2. Culture, Diversity, and Otherness
Cultural construction of difference. Ethnocentrism, cultural relativism, and social hierarchies. Gender and otherness. Sexual difference as a social construction.
3. Gender Perspectives in Anthropology
The sex/gender system. Feminist critiques of scientific neutrality. Intersectionality as an analytical tool. Androcentric societies and practices of resistance.
4. Kinship, Family, and Marriage
Diverse forms of family organization. Gender and kinship norms. Heteronormative marriages and alternative models. Debates on filiation and reproduction.
5. Economy, Work, and Subsistence
Economic organization and the social division of labor. Reproductive labor and invisible economies. The impact of globalization from a gender perspective.
6. Politics, Power, and Hegemony
Authority, leadership, and domination. Patriarchy and power relations. Social movements and feminisms as forms of resistance.
7. Beliefs, Spirituality, and Religion
Body, ritual, and identity. Religion and gender normativities. Dissident spiritualities and feminist spiritualities.

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Master classes	50	2	CM04, CM05, KM10, SM05, SM07, CM04
Type: Supervised			

Oral presentations and written tests	25	1	CM04, CM05, KM10, SM05, SM07, CM04
Type: Autonomous			
Collaborative essay	75	3	CM04, CM05, KM10, SM05, SM07, CM04

Learning activities

- Theoretical lectures and guided debates.
- Reading of texts and group discussions.
- Analysis of audiovisual materials relevant to the course content.
- Writing and presentation of assignments (individual and group work).
- Independent study.
- Assessment tasks.

Teaching methodology

- Lectures supported by digital technologies (ICT).
- Whole-class debates and discussions.
- Critical reading and discussion of selected texts.
- Viewing and collective analysis of documentaries and films.
- Group oral presentations.
- Writing of press article reviews and short essays (in groups), based on a structured guide.
- Creation of diagrams, concept maps, and summaries.
- Development of a written paper (individual or group), following specific guidelines.

Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

Assessment

Continuous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Collaborative essay	40%	0	0	CM04, CM05, KM10, SM05, SM07
Final exam	40%	0	0	CM04, CM05, KM10, SM05, SM07
Oral presentations and discussion	20%	0	0	CM04, CM05, KM10, SM05, SM07

The continuous assessment consists of 3 modules, each with a different weight toward the final grade:

- Module 1. A critical and well-argued essay on a current issue related to one of the thematic blocks of the course, based on readings, audiovisual materials, and a small press dossier compiled by the students. (*Group activity, 40% of the final grade*). Instructions and the assessment rubric will be posted on Moodle at the beginning of the course.
- Module 2. Oral presentations using technological support, based on the course's thematic blocks. (*Group activity, 20% of the final grade*). Instructions and the assessment rubric will be posted on Moodle at the beginning of the course.
- Module 3. A final multiple-choice test on the course content (Individual activity, 40% of the final grade).

This course does not offer the option of single assessment.

General Criteria:

- To pass the course, students must obtain a minimum average grade of 5 (on a scale of 0 to 10) from all assessment activities.
- To be eligible for assessment, students must have taken part in Modules 1 and 3, regardless of the grades obtained.
- To pass the course, students must obtain a minimum grade of 5 in both Module 1 and Module 3.

Resit (Recovery Assessment):

- Students may take part in the resit if they have completed Modules 1 and 3 and have obtained a final average grade between 3.5 and 4.9.
- The resit will consist of a single test, an individual exam covering the content of the course.
- This test will be held on the date set by the Academic Office and announced on Moodle.

Other Provisions:

- Once the course has been passed, it cannot be reassessed to improve the final grade.
- Any academic misconduct (e.g., cheating, plagiarism) will result in a grade of 0 for the activity in question, loss of the right to resit, and failure of the entire course.
- The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools is permitted as part of coursework, provided the use is transparent and declared, and the final output reflects a significant personal contribution from the student.
- Opaque or fraudulent use of AI will be considered academic dishonesty and may result in penalties or more serious sanctions.
- Activities submitted after the deadline will be considered not submitted.
- Grade reviews will be conducted in virtual and/or in-person tutorials by appointment.

Bibliography

Introductory and general texts

- Barnard, Alan (2000). *History and Theory in Anthropology*. Cambridge University Press.
- Delaney, Carol et al. (2011). *Investigating Culture: An Experiential Introduction to Anthropology*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Eriksen, Thomas H. (2001). *Small Places, Large Issues. An Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology*. Pluto Press.
- Rapport, Nigel (2014). *Social and Cultural Anthropology. The Key Concepts*. Routledge.
- Ingold, Tim (1994). *Companion Encyclopedia of Anthropology*. Routledge.
- Abu-Lughod, Lila (1991). Writing Against Culture. In *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*. School of American Research Press.

Culture, diversity and otherness

- Bohannan, Paul (1996). *Para raros, nosotros: Introducción a la antropología cultural*. Akal.
- Wade, Peter (2014). *Raza, ciencia, sociedad*. *Interdisciplina*, 2(4), 35-62.
- Povinelli, Elizabeth A. (2006). *The Empire of Love: Toward a Theory of Intimacy, Genealogy, and Carnality*. Duke University Press.
- Tinsley, Omise'eke Natasha (2018). *Ezili's Mirrors: Imagining Black Queer Genders*. Duke University Press.

Kinship, family and marriage

- Héritier, Françoise (1996). *Masculino/Femenino. El pensamiento de la diferencia*. Ariel.
- Weston, Kath (1991). *Families We Choose: Lesbians, Gays, Kinship*. Columbia University Press.

- Lewin, Ellen (2009). *Gay Fatherhood: Narratives of Family and Citizenship in America*. University of Chicago Press.

Economy, work and subsistence

- Fassin, Didier (2017). *La Razón Humanitaria. Una Historia Moral del Tiempo Presente*. Prometeo.
- Federici, Silvia (2012). *Revolución en punto cero. Trabajo doméstico, reproducción y luchas feministas*. Traficantes de Sueños.

Politics, power and hegemony

- Comas d'Argemir, Dolors (2017). *La antropología importa*. En Palenzuela, P. (coord.). *Antropología y compromiso*. Icaria.
- Marcus, George y Clifford, James (1991). *Retóricas de la antropología*. Júcar.
- Haraway, Donna (1988). *Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective*. *Feminist Studies*, 14(3), 575-599.

Beliefs, spirituality and religion

- Le Breton, David (2021). *Antropología del cuerpo y modernidad*. Prometeo.
- Sered, Susan Starr (1994). *Priestess, Mother, Sacred Sister: Religions Dominated by Women*. Oxford University Press.
- Asad, Talal (1993). *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

Gender, sexuality and identity

- Butler, Judith (1990). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge.
- Blackwood, Evelyn & Wieringa, Saskia (2008). *Female Desires: Same-Sex Relations and Transgender Practices Across Cultures*. Columbia University Press.
- Preciado, Paul B. (2008). *Testo Yonqui*. Espasa / Editorial Anagrama.

Complementary readings

- Kottak, Conrad (2002). *Antropología cultural. Espejo para la humanidad*. McGraw-Hill.
- Scheper-Hughes, Nancy (1997). *Muerte sin llanto. Violencia y vida cotidiana en Brasil*. Ariel.
- Velasco, Honorio (Comp.) (2010). *Lecturas de antropología social y cultural. La cultura y las culturas*. Trotta.
- Kulick, Don (1998). *Travesti: Sex, Gender, and Culture among Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes*. University of Chicago Press.

Software

That provided by UAB.

Groups and Languages

Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2025. You can check it through this [link](#). To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject.

Name	Group	Language	Semester	Turn
(PAUL) Classroom practices	1	Catalan/Spanish	first semester	morning-mixed

