

ESSENTIALS OF **CULTURAL**
ANTHROPOLOGY

A TOOLKIT FOR A GLOBAL AGE

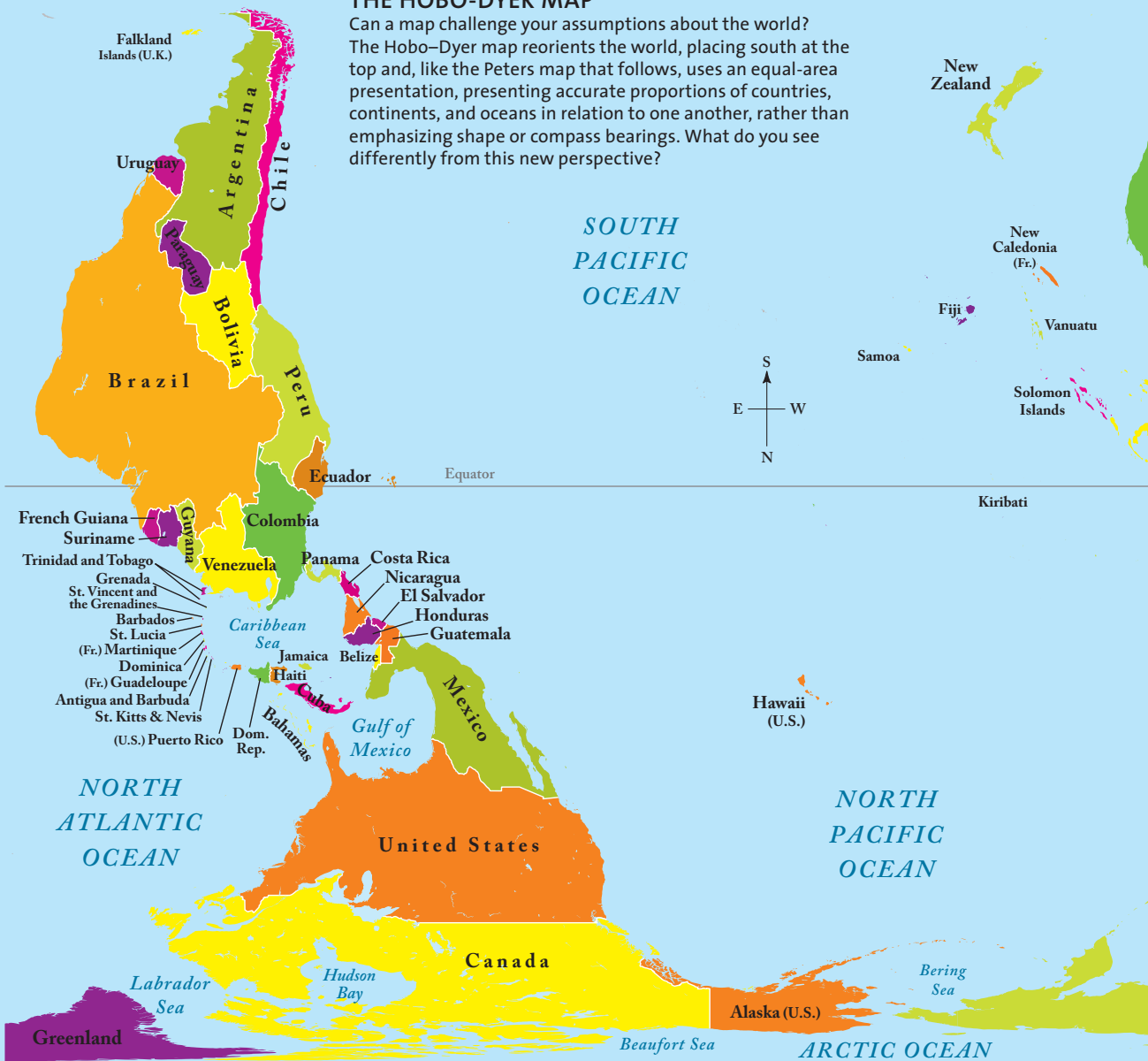
2E

KENNETH J. GUEST



THE HOBO-DYER MAP

Can a map challenge your assumptions about the world? The Hobo-Dyer map reorients the world, placing south at the top and, like the Peters map that follows, uses an equal-area presentation, presenting accurate proportions of countries, continents, and oceans in relation to one another, rather than emphasizing shape or compass bearings. What do you see differently from this new perspective?



Antarctica



SOUTH
ATLANTIC
OCEAN

INDIAN
OCEAN

Australia

Papua
New
Guinea

Indonesia

East Timor

(Fr.) Réunion
Mauritius

South
Africa

Lesotho

Swaziland

Madagascar

Botswana

Namibia

Zimbabwe

Mozambique

Zambia

Angola

Comoros

Tanzania

Burundi

Rwanda

Kenya

Uganda

Democratic
Republic
of the
Congo

Congo

Gabon

Equatorial
Guinea

Sao Tome
and
Principe

Côte d'Ivoire

Liberia

Sierra Leone

Guinea-
Bissau

Gambia

Senegal

Cape
Verde

Seychelles

Equator

Maldives

Sri Lanka

India

Arabian Sea

Bay of Bengal

Thailand

Laos

Myanmar

China

Bangladesh

Nepal

Bhutan

Pakistan

Afghanistan

Tajikistan

Kyrgyzstan

Uzbekistan

Turkmenistan

Kazakhstan

Iran

Azerbaijan

Georgia

Armenia

Turkey

Moldova

Ukraine

Belarus

Poland

Lithuania

Latvia

Estonia

Finland

Sweden

Norway

Iceland

Russia

Palau

Micronesia

Philippines

Malaysia

Brunei

Cambodia

Taiwan

East
China
Sea

Sea of
North
Korea

Japan

South
Korea

Sea of
Japan

Sea of
Okhotsk

Lake
Baikal

Laptev Sea

Kara Sea

Barents Sea

Mediterranean Sea

Black Sea

Caspian Sea

Aral Sea

Red Sea

Terrace

Oman

Yemen

Saudi
Arabia

U.A.E.

Qatar

Bahrain

Persian
Gulf

Jordan

Iraq

Israel

Lebanon

Cyprus

Greece

Alb.

Kos.

Mont.

B.H.

Italy

Rom.

Slo.

Aus.

Switz.

France

Lux.

Spain

Portugal

Belgium

Neth.

U.K.

Ireland

North
Sea





THE PETERS WORLD MAP

How do maps shape the way you think about the world and its people? The Earth is round. So every flat, rectangular map involves distortions. But which distortions? The Peters world map is an equal-area map, showing countries and continents in accurate proportion with one another and reducing the visual dominance of the Northern Hemisphere by shifting the equator to the middle of the map, both in sharp contrast to the more familiar Mercator projection.

WORLD • POLITICAL

NATIONAL BOUNDARIES

While humanity's impact is quite evident, and even striking, on many remotely sensed scenes, sometimes, as in the case with most political boundaries, it is invisible. State, provincial, and national boundaries can follow natural features, such as mountain ridges, rivers, or coastlines. Artificial constructs that possess no physical reality—for example, lines of latitude and longitude—can also determine political borders. This world political map represents the results of humanity's efforts to slice and divide Earth into discrete spheres of influence.

The National Geographic Society recognizes 192 independent states in the world as represented here. Of those nations, 185 are members of the United Nations.



Winkel Tripel Projection



Essentials of Cultural Anthropology

Second Edition

Essentials of Cultural Anthropology

A Toolkit for a Global Age

Second Edition



Kenneth J. Guest

Baruch College
The City University of New York



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About the Author

Kenneth J. Guest is Professor of Anthropology at Baruch College, CUNY, and author of *God in Chinatown: Religion and Survival in New York's Evolving Immigrant Community* (2003). His research focuses on immigration, religion, globalization, ethnicity, and entrepreneurialism.

Professor Guest's ethnographic research in China and the United States traces the immigration journey of recent Chinese immigrants from Fuzhou, southeast China, who, drawn by restaurant, garment shop, and construction jobs and facilitated by a vast human smuggling network, have revitalized New York's Chinatown. His writing explores the role of Fuzhounese religious communities in China and the United States; the religious revival sweeping coastal China; the Fuzhounese role in the rapidly expanding U.S. network of all-you-can-eat buffets and take-out restaurants; the higher education experiences of the Fuzhounese second generation; and the contestation over Chinatown's future in the face of Manhattan's rapid gentrification.

A native of Florida, Professor Guest studied Chinese at Beijing University and Middlebury College. He received his B.A. from Columbia University (East Asian Languages and Cultures), an M.A. from Union Theological Seminary (Religious Studies), and the M.A., M.Phil., and Ph.D. from The City University of New York Graduate Center (Anthropology).



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Preface

Anthropology may be the most important course you take in college. That may seem like a bold statement. But here's what I mean.

CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY: A TOOLKIT

The world in the twenty-first century is changing at a remarkable pace. We are experiencing an interaction with people, ideas, and systems that is intensifying at breathtaking speed. Communication technologies link people instantaneously across the globe. Economic activities challenge national boundaries. People are on the move within countries and between them. As a result, today we increasingly encounter the diversity of humanity, not on the other side of the world but in our schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, religious communities, and families. How will we develop the skills and strategies for engaging and navigating the complex, multicultural, global, and rapidly changing reality of the world around us?

Anthropology is the toolkit you are looking for. Cultural anthropology is the study of humans, particularly the many ways people around the world today and throughout human history have organized themselves to live together: to get along, to survive, to thrive, and to have meaningful lives. This second edition of *Essentials of Cultural Anthropology: A Toolkit for a Global Age* will introduce you to the fascinating work of anthropologists and the research strategies and analytical perspectives that anthropologists have developed—our tools of the trade—that can help you better understand and engage today's world as you move through it.

I teach Introduction to Cultural Anthropology to hundreds of students every year at Baruch College, a senior college of The City University of New York. Baruch has an incredibly diverse student body, with immigrants from more than a hundred countries, speaking dozens of languages and thinking about culture, race, gender, and family in as many different ways. Some of my students will become anthropology majors. More will become anthropology minors. But at Baruch, in fact, most students will become business majors.

This book emerges from my efforts to make anthropology relevant to all of my students as they navigate their everyday lives, think about the world as it is and as it is becoming, and consider tackling the crucial issues of our times. On a practical level, we all employ the skills of anthropology on a daily basis. Every

time you walk into a room and try to figure out how to fit into a new group of people—in your classroom, in a student club, at the office, at a party, in your religious community, when your new love interest takes you home to meet the family—how in the world do you deduce what the rules are? Where you fit in? What you're supposed to do? What the power dynamics are? What you can contribute to the group? *Essentials of Cultural Anthropology: A Toolkit for a Global Age, Second Edition* is designed to help you develop those skills—to think more deeply and analyze more carefully—and to prepare you to use them in a diversity of settings at home or around the world.

WHY A NEW TEXTBOOK?

The world has changed dramatically in the past forty years and so has the field of anthropology. *Essentials of Cultural Anthropology: A Toolkit for a Global Age, Second Edition*—like the parent version, *Cultural Anthropology*—presents the theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical innovations that are transforming anthropology and highlights both historical and contemporary research that can provide students with insight into the ways in which anthropologists approach the crucial challenges and questions of our times. *Essentials* contains 15 concise chapters that I hope will easily fit into most courses—either as a stand-alone text or paired with additional primary readings and assignments. My goal with *Essentials* is to place at students' fingertips a lively, compelling presentation of the key concepts and debates at the heart of anthropology today in a shorter text—written without boxes and special features—that allows faculty increased flexibility in course development and design.

Globalization. As the world is changing, so too are the people anthropologists study. Even the way anthropologists conduct research is changing. In the contemporary period of rapid globalization, the movement, connection, and interrelatedness that have always been a part of human reality have intensified and become more explicit, reminding us that our actions have consequences for the whole world, not just for our own lives and those of our families and friends. This book integrates globalization into every chapter, analyzing its effects throughout the text rather than in a series of boxes, icons, or the occasional extra chapter so commonly seen in contemporary textbooks. The introductory chapter, “Anthropology in a Global Age,” establishes an analytical framework of globalization that is developed in every succeeding chapter—whether the topic is fieldwork, language, ethnicity, economics, or kinship—and gives students the tools to understand its impact on people's lives as they encounter them in ethnographic examples throughout the book.

Reframing the Culture Concept. The concept of culture has been central to anthropological analysis since the beginning of our field. But anthropologists have significantly reframed our thinking about culture over the past forty years. In the 1960s, Clifford Geertz synthesized anthropological thinking about culture as a system of meaning—shared norms, values, symbols, and categories. In the ensuing years, anthropologists have paid increasing attention to the relationship of power to culture, building on the work of Antonio Gramsci, Michel Foucault, and Eric Wolf to examine the ways cultural meanings are created, learned, taught, enforced, negotiated, and contested. *Essentials of Cultural Anthropology: A Toolkit for a Global Age, Second Edition* integrates this holistic and complex concept of culture into every chapter, exploring both meaning and power in human culture. Chapter 5, for example, is titled “Race and Racism,” acknowledging that not only is race a social construction of ideas but also that ideas of race can be expressed and made real through cultural processes, institutions, and systems of power—racism—in ways that create patterns of stratification and inequality in U.S. culture and in cultures around the world.

Anthropology for the Twenty-First Century. *Essentials of Cultural Anthropology: A Toolkit for a Global Age, Second Edition* reflects the field of anthropology as it is developing in the twenty-first century. While carefully covering the foundational work of early anthropologists, every chapter has been designed to introduce the cutting-edge research and theory that make anthropology relevant to today’s world. Chapters on classic anthropological topics such as language, religion, and kinship incorporate contemporary research and help students understand why anthropological thinking matters in day-to-day life. Chapters on sexuality, the global economy, class and inequality, and health, illness, and the body give students a sense of historical and contemporary research in the field and bring the presentation of anthropology fully into the twenty-first century.

Ethnography. Anthropologists conduct fascinating research about the lives of people all over the world. In many ways ethnography is at the heart of anthropology, reflecting our unique research strategies, our analytical methodologies, and our deep commitment to the project of cross-cultural understanding and engagement in our attempts to make the world a better place. But ethnographies often get lost in introductory textbooks. *Essentials of Cultural Anthropology: A Toolkit for a Global Age, Second Edition* introduces scores of ethnographic studies set in dozens of different countries, presenting both new research and classic studies in ways that are accessible to undergraduates so that the rich work of anthropologists comes alive over the course of the semester.

Relevance. *Essentials of Cultural Anthropology, Second Edition* responds to my students' request for relevance in a textbook. Each chapter opens with a recent event that raises central questions about the workings of human culture. Key questions throughout the chapter guide students through an introduction to the anthropological strategies and analytical frameworks that can enable them to think more deeply about the chapter-opening event and the underlying issues they may confront in their own lives. "Thinking Like an Anthropologist" sections wrap up each chapter and challenge students to apply what they have learned.

What's New in the Second Edition

Reflecting the dynamic nature of cultural anthropology, this new, second edition of *Essentials of Cultural Anthropology: A Toolkit for a Global Age* includes revisions and updates to every chapter that introduce cutting edge developments in the discipline, new theoretical frameworks, and new ethnographies. New chapter openers and examples continue the book's pedagogical approach to engage students in thinking like an anthropologist and provide them with an anthropological toolkit for analyzing and engaging the world around them.

NEW CHAPTER ON ART AND MEDIA

A new chapter on art and media explores the unique approach anthropologists take to the study of art, the many ways in which art reflects and transforms culture, and the ways in which globalization and new forms of media are transforming art and its dissemination. Through ethnographies of Brazil, west Africa, the Middle East, and the United States, the chapter explores how art is embedded in communities, how it connects to social norms and values, as well as economic and political systems and events.

NEW CHAPTER OPENING STORIES ON FAMILIAR TOPICS AND CURRENT EVENTS

Ferguson, the Flint water crisis, a Happy Meal, Bangladesh's Sundarban tidal forest, women Army Rangers, protesting sexual violence on campus, football concussions, Pope Francis and the television show *Transparent*: Nine new chapter openers challenge students to ask big questions and apply their anthropological toolkit to the real world challenges of today.

NEW ETHNOGRAPHIES ADDED THROUGHOUT THE TEXT

Ethnographies are at the heart of anthropological inquiry. This edition introduces new ethnographies set in places including: Bolivia, Brazil, Denmark and Sweden, Egypt, Eritrea, India, Japan, Taiwan, the United States, and Tanzania.

NEW COVERAGE OF ENGAGING, CUTTING-EDGE TOPICS

- **The environment and climate change.** Humans are reshaping the natural environment, leading scholars to rename the current geological period the Anthropocene. The book's focus on the environment begins in chapter one with a new section on the Anthropocene, and ethnographies and explorations of current issues and events throughout the book, including: A Coca-Cola bottling factory in India; water crises in Flint, Michigan and Mumbai, India; environment and health disparities in Harlem; and climate activists in Bangladesh, Paris, and U.S. college campuses.
- **The anthropology of the body.** Cross-cultural anthropological studies have challenged the notion of the body as isolated, natural, and universal and revealed a more complex picture of human bodies as products of specific environments, cultural experiences, and historical contexts. In addition to discussion of health and illness, the second edition adds new material on sickness.
- **Disabilities.** Anthropology's increasing attention to the body has been accompanied by a recent expansion of work on issues of disability. Anthropologists have begun to bring their distinctive ethnographic methods to the task of understanding the embodied experiences of people with impairments and analyzing those experiences within broader forms of social inequality. New content has been added in chapters on Health, Illness, and the Body and Sexuality.
- **The anthropology of food.** Always central to anthropological studies, food has received increased attention in recent years. The anthropology of food is explored throughout the book, including food production; food and colonialism; religious symbolism of food; water and inequality in Flint, Michigan and Mumbai, India; soda bottling; the social life of a chocolate bar; the global trade in tuna; food and ethnic identity; migration of Chinese restaurant workers; and a new chapter opener on the Happy Meal.
- **Anthropology's biocultural perspective.** *Essentials of Cultural Anthropology* presents the latest thinking on human evolution, development, and adaptation as an ongoing biocultural process in which biology, culture, and the environment are deeply intertwined

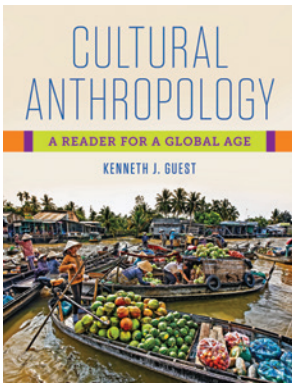
in an ongoing interplay and interaction through which humans are continually evolving and changing, both on a species level and in our individual lifespans.

- **The anthropology of global financial markets.** The 2008 fiscal crisis revealed how global financial markets, firms, and financial instruments like derivatives are reshaping the global economy. New content provides insight into the value that anthropological perspectives bring to analyzing these changes.

Additional Resources

Learn more at www.norton.com/instructors and digital.www.norton.com/essculturalanthro2

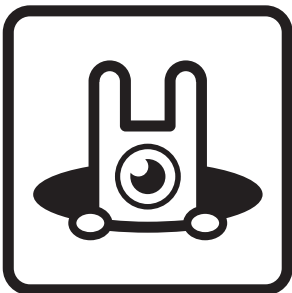
CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY: A READER FOR A GLOBAL AGE



In *Cultural Anthropology: A Reader for a Global Age*, Ken Guest presents the essential readings and diverse voices that will help students understand and engage their rapidly globalizing world. This concise, affordable reader is designed to complement any introductory syllabus and is the perfect companion for *Essentials of Cultural Anthropology: A Toolkit for a Global Age, Second Edition*. Each chapter in the *Reader* includes two or three readings that correspond directly to the chapters in *Essentials*. Selections focus on cutting edge topics that students care about, like the environment, the body, income inequality, sexuality, race and racism, migration, and more. In addition, Guest's rich headnotes and smart discussion questions help students understand important contexts and apply what they learn in the readings to the world around them.

(NEW) INQUIZITIVE

Available at digital.www.norton.com/essculturalanthro2

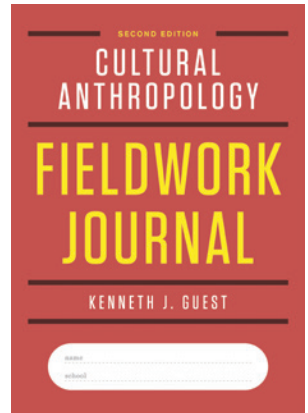


Norton's award-winning, easy-to-use adaptive learning tool personalizes the learning experience for students and helps them master—and retain—the learning goals outlined in each chapter of *Essentials of Cultural Anthropology*. Used as a prelecture tool, InQuizitive helps students improve their reading comprehension and critical thinking skills so that they come to class better prepared to think like anthropologists. InQuizitive can also improve students' test grades when assigned consistently for points, as a part of the overall course grade. The convenience of LMS integration saves you time by allowing InQuizitive scores to report right to your LMS gradebook.

CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY FIELDWORK JOURNAL

Ethnographic fieldwork is one of the most fundamental (and for students sometimes daunting) tools for anthropological study. Ken Guest's *Cultural Anthropology Fieldwork Journal*, Second Edition, provides 17 step-by-step exercises to help students apply the concepts they are learning in class while out in the real world. Designed to complement *Essentials of Cultural Anthropology: A Toolkit for a Global Age, Second Edition*, every activity in the *Fieldwork Journal* enhances students' understanding of the concepts covered in the parent textbook. Compact and easy to use, the *Fieldwork Journal* includes space to write notes and record data. The *Fieldwork Journal* can be packaged for free with *Essentials of Cultural Anthropology*, Second Edition.

The media package for *Essentials of Cultural Anthropology: A Toolkit for a Global Age, Second Edition* provides additional pedagogical tools that inspire students to *do* anthropology and apply it to their own lives. Instructors have everything they need to make traditional and online classes easier to manage: documentary film clips that will enliven lectures and spark discussion; illustrated PowerPoints that include instructor-view lecture notes; and a fully customizable coursepack for Blackboard and other course-management systems. The coursepack includes optional access to InQuizitive, our new adaptive learning system.



EBOOK

Available at digital.wwnorton.com/essculturalanthro2

Essentials of Cultural Anthropology is also available as an ebook. An affordable and convenient alternative, the ebook retains the content of the print book and allows students to highlight and take notes with ease.

POWERPOINTS

David Anderson, Radford University/Roanoke College

Downloadable from [wwnorton.com/instructors](https://www.wwnorton.com/instructors) and perfect for classroom presentation, these resources include:

- **Lecture PowerPoints:** Illustrated with images from the text, these lecture PowerPoint slides feature a suggested classroom lecture outline in the notes field that will be particularly helpful to first-time teachers.
- **Art PowerPoints and JPEGs:** All of the art from the book and from the coursepack is sized for classroom display.

DOCUMENTARY VIDEO CLIPS

Russell Sharman

These documentary and ethnographic film clips are ideal for initiating classroom discussion and showing students how anthropology is relevant to their

lives. Filmmaker and anthropologist Russell Sharman has selected clips that are both engaging and pedagogically useful. Each clip is available in the coursepack and is accompanied by an exercise.

COURSEPACK

David Anderson, Radford University/Roanoke College; Chad T. Morris, Roanoke College; and Maisa C. Taha, Montclair State University

Essentials of Cultural Anthropology's coursepack offers assessment and review materials for instructors who use Blackboard, Moodle, Canvas, and other learning-management systems. In addition to chapter-based assignments, test banks and quizzes, and an optional ebook, the coursepack includes interactive learning tools that will enliven hybrid, online, or traditional classrooms. Features include:

- A pre-test for each chapter
- Review and key term quizzes for each chapter
- "Thinking like an Anthropologist" and "Your Turn: Fieldwork" exercises and activities
- Streaming film clips from the Instructor DVD, each supported by a quiz or exercise
- InQuizitive (Optional)

TEST BANK

Alexandra Lancey, University of South Florida; Pilar Rau, Rutgers University

The test bank for *Essentials of Cultural Anthropology* is designed to help instructors prepare exams. Devised according to Bloom's taxonomy, the test bank includes 50–60 multiple-choice questions per chapter. In addition to Bloom's, each question is tagged with metadata that place it in the context of the chapter, as well as difficulty level, making it easy to construct tests that are meaningful and diagnostic.

INTERACTIVE INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE

Now in a newly redesigned and easier-to-navigate platform, the Interactive Instructor's Guide makes lecture development easy with an array of teaching resources that can be searched and browsed according to a number of criteria. Resources include chapter outlines and summaries; lecture ideas; discussion questions, recommended readings, author videos, and websites; video exercises with streaming video; and activities with downloadable handouts. Instructors can subscribe to a mailing list to be notified of periodic updates and new content.

Acknowledgments

Writing a book of this scope is a humbling experience. I have been awed by the remarkable work of the anthropologists I have encountered, whether through written texts, films, or one-on-one conversations. And I have been inspired by the commitment of my fellow anthropologists to deep understanding of people and cultures, to the search for insights into how the world really works, and to engagement with the world and its people in ways that may help make the world a better place. I have learned a great deal, personally and professionally, on this journey. Along the way it has been my privilege to have the support and encouragement of a remarkable array of people.

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Finally, I would like to thank my students at Baruch College who every class ask to be introduced to an anthropology that is relevant to their daily lives, that tackles significant contemporary issues, and that provides them the tools of analysis and empowerment to live awake, conscious, and engaged. This book is dedicated to you and your potential to make the world a better place.

Perhaps the quintessential human task is to pass to the next generation the accumulated insights, understandings, and knowledge that will empower them to live life fully and meaningfully and to meet the challenges confronting humanity and the planet. I hope this book might contribute to that existential endeavor.

Essentials of Cultural Anthropology

Second Edition

Part 1

Anthropologists in the twenty-first century engage a world that is experiencing an unprecedented interaction of people, ideas, images, and things that continues to intensify. Communication technologies link people instantaneously across the globe. Economic activities challenge national boundaries. People are on the move between countries and within them. How can you use the tools of anthropology to engage this world on the move?



Anthropology for the 21st Century





Coca Cola

Go Back
Go Back
NAPM

Chapter 1

Anthropology in a Global Age

Every morning the women of Plachimada, a rural area in southern India, begin a 5-kilometer (3-mile) trek in search of fresh water. The morning journey for water is a common task for many women across the world, for one-third of the planet's population live with water scarcity. But such scarcity is new for the people of Plachimada, an area of typically rich agricultural harvests.

Local residents trace the changes to March 2000, when the Coca-Cola Company opened a bottling plant in the village. The plant is capable of producing 1.2 million bottles of Coke, Sprite, and Fanta every day. Nine liters of fresh water are needed to make one liter of Coke, so Plachimada's large underground aquifer was an attractive resource for the company. But according to local officials, when the company began to drill more wells and install high-powered pumps to extract groundwater for the factory, the local water table fell dramatically—from



Indian village women protest the Coca-Cola company's exploitation of underground water supplies.

45 meters (147.5 feet) below the surface to 150 meters (492 feet), far more than could be explained by periods of limited rainfall. Hundreds of local non-Coca-Cola wells ran dry, and harvests became much less productive. Local residents also claimed that Coca-Cola workers were dumping chemical wastes on land near the factory and that the runoff was polluting the groundwater. Local women organized protests and a sit-in at the factory gates.



MAP 1.1
Plachimada

With the assistance of local media and international human rights networks, the protestors' activism drew national and international attention. It even spurred solidarity actions, including support from university students in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Norway. As a result, the local village council withdrew the Coca-Cola factory's license. But the state government maintained its support. The case finally reached the highest state court, which ruled that Coca-Cola must cease illegal extraction of groundwater in Plachimada. Coca-Cola closed the bottling plant in 2005. But similar battles over water use and pollution have erupted across India in the years since (Aiyer 2007; India Resource Center 2015; Shiva 2006).

For those of us who often enjoy a Coke with lunch or dinner—or breakfast—the story of the women of Plachimada offers a challenge to consider how our lives connect to theirs. It is a challenge to explore how a simple soft drink, made by a U.S. corporation with global operations, may link people halfway around the world in ways both simple and profound. This is also the challenge of anthropology today: to understand the rich diversity of human life and to see how our particular life experiences connect to those of others. By bringing these perspectives together, we can grasp more fully the totality and potential of human life.

At the same time, the world is changing before our eyes. Whether we call it a global village or a world without borders, we in the twenty-first century are experiencing a level of interaction among people, ideas, and systems that is intensifying at a breathtaking pace. Communication technologies link people instantaneously across the globe. Economic activities challenge national boundaries. People are on the move within countries and among them. Violence and terrorism disrupt lives. Humans have had remarkable success at feeding a growing world population, yet income inequality continues to increase—among nations and also within them. And increasing human diversity on our doorstep opens possibilities for both deeper understanding and greater misunderstanding. Clearly, the human community in the twenty-first century is being drawn further into a global web of interaction.

For today's college student, every day can be a cross-cultural experience. This may manifest itself in the most familiar places: the news you see on television, the music you listen to, the foods and beverages you consume, the women or men you date, the classmates you study with, the religious communities you attend. Today you can realistically imagine contacting any of our 7.2 billion co-inhabitants



In the twenty-first century, people are experiencing unprecedented levels of interaction, encounter, movement, and exchange. Here, traders gather at the port of Mopti, Mali, the region's most important commercial center at the confluence of the Niger and Bani rivers.

on the planet. You can read their posts on Facebook and watch their videos on YouTube. You can visit them. You wear clothes that they make. You make movies that they view. You can learn from them. You can affect their lives. How do you meet this challenge of deepening interaction and interdependence?

Anthropology provides a unique set of tools, including strategies and perspectives, for understanding our rapidly changing, globalizing world. Most of you are already budding cultural anthropologists without realizing it. Wherever you may live or go to school, you are probably experiencing a deepening encounter with the world's diversity. This phenomenon leads to broad questions such as: How do we approach human diversity in our universities, businesses, families, and religious communities? How do we understand the impact of global transformations on our lives?

Whether our field is business or education, medicine or politics, we all need a skill set for analyzing and engaging a multicultural and increasingly interconnected world and workplace. *Essentials of Cultural Anthropology: A Toolkit for a Global Age* introduces the anthropologist's tools of the trade to help you to better understand and engage the world as you move through it and, if you so choose, to apply those strategies to the challenges confronting us and our neighbors around the world. To begin our exploration of anthropology, we'll consider four key questions:

- **What is anthropology?**
- **Through what lenses do anthropologists gain a comprehensive view of human cultures?**

- What is globalization, and why is it important for anthropology?
- How is globalization transforming anthropology?

What Is Anthropology?

anthropology

The study of the full scope of human diversity, past and present, and the application of that knowledge to help people of different backgrounds better understand one another.

Anthropology is the study of the full scope of human diversity, past and present, and the application of that knowledge to help people of different backgrounds better understand one another. The word *anthropology* derives from the Greek words *anthropos* (“human”) and *logos* (“thought,” “reason,” or “study”). The roots of anthropology lie in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as Europeans’ economic and colonial expansion increased that continent’s contact with people worldwide.

BRIEF BACKGROUND

Technological breakthroughs in transportation and communication during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—shipbuilding, the steam engine, railroads, the telegraph—rapidly transformed the long-distance movement of people, goods, and information, in terms of both speed and quantity. As colonization, communication, trade, and travel expanded, groups of merchants, missionaries, and government officials traveled the world and returned to Europe with reports and artifacts of what seemed to them to be “exotic” people and practices. More than ever before, Europeans encountered the incredible diversity of human cultures and appearances. *Who are these people?* they asked themselves. *Where did they come from? Why do they appear so different from us?*

From the field’s inception in the mid-1800s, anthropologists have conducted research to answer specific questions confronting humanity. And they have applied their knowledge and insights to practical problems facing the world.

Franz Boas (1858–1942), one of the founders of American anthropology, became deeply involved in early-twentieth-century debates on immigration, serving for a term on a presidential commission examining U.S. immigration policies. In an era when many scholars and government officials considered the different people of Europe to be of distinct biological races, U.S. immigration policies privileged immigrants from northern and western Europe over those from southern and eastern Europe. Boas worked to undermine these racialized views of immigrants. He conducted studies that showed the wide variation of physical forms within groups of the same national origin, as well as the marked physical changes in the children and grandchildren of immigrants as they adapted to the environmental conditions in their new country (Baker 2004; Boas 1912).

Audrey Richards (1899–1984), studying the Bemba people in the 1930s in what is now Zambia, focused on issues of health and nutrition among women and children, bringing concerns for nutrition to the forefront of anthropology. Her ethnography, *Chisungu* (1956), featured a rigorous and detailed study of the coming-of-age rituals of young Bemba women and established new standards for the conduct of anthropological research. Richards’s research is often credited with opening a pathway for the study of nutritional issues and women’s and children’s health in anthropology.

Today anthropologists apply their knowledge and research strategies to a wide range of social issues. For example, they study HIV/AIDS in Africa, immigrant farmworkers in the United States, ethnic conflict in the Dominican Republic, financial firms on Wall Street, street children in Brazil, and Muslim judicial courts in Egypt. Anthropologists trace the spread of disease, promote economic development in underdeveloped countries, conduct market research, and lead diversity-training programs in schools, corporations, and community organizations. Anthropologists also study our human origins, excavating and analyzing the bones, artifacts, and DNA of our ancestors from millions of years ago to gain an understanding of who we are and where we’ve come from.

More than half of anthropologists today work in *applied anthropology*—that is, they work outside of academic settings to apply the strategies and insights of anthropology directly to current world problems (American Anthropological Association 2015). Even many of us who work full time in a college or university are deeply involved in public applied anthropology.

ANTHROPOLOGY’S UNIQUE APPROACH

Anthropology today retains its core commitment to understanding the richness of human diversity. Specifically, anthropology challenges us to move beyond **ethnocentrism**—the strong human tendency to believe that one’s own culture or way of life is normal, natural, and superior to the beliefs and practices of others. Instead, as we will explore throughout this book, the anthropologist’s toolkit of research strategies and analytical concepts enables us to appreciate, understand, and engage the diversity of human cultures in an increasingly global age. To that end, anthropology has built upon the key concerns of early generations to develop a set of characteristics unique among the social sciences.

ethnocentrism

The belief that one’s own culture or way of life is normal and natural; using one’s own culture to evaluate and judge the practices and ideals of others.

Anthropology Is Global in Scope. Our work covers the whole world and is not constrained by geographic boundaries. Anthropology was once noted for the study of faraway, seemingly exotic villages in developing countries. But from the beginning, anthropologists have been studying not only in the islands of the South Pacific, in the rural villages of Africa, and among indigenous peoples in Australia and North America, but also among factory workers in Britain