

# Teaching Portfolio\*

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## I. OVERVIEW

### A. Primary Goal

The most basic, if often unstated, goal of teaching is to encourage students to learn. I have never believed that it was my job to fill empty vessels. Both teacher and student bring something to the table – it can become an open exchange of ideas. When students become engaged in a collaborative pursuit of knowledge and understanding in a classroom environment based on mutual respect and tolerance, it becomes possible for the teacher to begin providing them with opportunities to develop the critical, holistic, and comparative skills that are essential not only in academic pursuits but also more generally in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

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\* This Teaching Portfolio is available on-line at <http://www.brianhoey.com>

## **B. Statement of Teaching Philosophy**

Ethnographic work involves an intimate understanding of everyday lives and the participation of individuals who voluntarily provide us with their experience and perspective. As researchers, we have certain basic responsibilities. These primarily include the need to treat people with honor and respect, to appreciate diverse opinions and backgrounds, and to understand what we see and hear within personal, social, and greater historical contexts. This approach is a fundamentally important in an effective classroom, particularly as higher education becomes progressively multicultural. It is my responsibility to impress upon students the centrality of an informed, broadminded engagement with individuals and groups who may possess ways of making meaning that are different from their own. This is what it means to be an educated and responsible person not only in the field of anthropology but also more generally.

Orienting students to the discipline involves not only addressing core ideas and discussing important traditions of the field but also exploring the intellectual and social history of its development as a context for understanding current practice and contemporary debate over its meaning and future direction. Students need to know where anthropology fits within the universe of other approaches to understanding a variety of social problems. I believe this is essential for improving the education of students in the discipline. For anthropology to remain relevant in the lives of students and to gain footing in the forum of public debate over key social issues, as a teacher I need to guide the learning of an anthropological perspective through greater engagement with real world problems. This allows students to see the potential value of its particular outlook and methods to their own lives. This insight can be achieved through the application of theory and method in individual and group projects designed as illustrations of the kind of research anthropologists routinely take on.

I believe that it is the responsibility of a good teacher to encourage students to further develop their own observational skills and an attention to fine details. These skills are essential to effective analysis and critical thinking. Students should be encouraged to carefully record what they are learning not only in the classroom but also in the course of their novice research while learning to apply and evaluate different explanatory models and theories. Together these skills provide a perspective for framing and understanding the world that is basic to anthropology's holistic vision. The importance of sharing this vision is a fundamental part of my philosophy of teaching. I believe passionately that the approach we must take, as responsible citizens, to solving contemporary problems is one that acknowledges and explores cultural, linguistic, historical, and ecological/biological dimensions of the human condition. This is why I support a four-field approach to the teaching of anthropology that also positions the discipline, in a complementary way, amid other fields engaged with these problems in order to show the interconnectivity of ideas and knowledge about people and culture.

I have learned in the field as a practicing cultural anthropologist in five years of fieldwork in three different ethnographic projects that we have a basic responsibility to listen first. The same is true for the effective teacher. I am open to emergent qualities of working from the "bottom" up as I search for patterns that connect with or perhaps challenge existing models or theory. As ethnographers, we take on a role akin to a student or apprentice as we learn from the people we study. There are certainly presuppositions, but these can become empirical questions to be tested in the course of our learning. Immersed in the everyday lives of a group or family as the subject of our research, we are ready to rethink and continuously adjust our approach in response to

ongoing feedback. During the course of teaching in the classroom environment, an effective teacher mimics this process of listening, searching for pattern, making connections, expressing his or her own understanding of what is seen and heard, and continuously adjusting to feedback. This is part of the process of evaluating the effectiveness of my teaching. For good ethnographers and teachers, this is how it is done.

In so doing, the teacher provides an example of what is required for anthropological research. I believe a teacher should serve as a kind of mentor. Although leadership is often emphasized in teaching, my approach is one of informed guidance. This emphasizes the importance of collaboration and recognizing the unique combination of experiences and knowledge that each class represents. It is a matter of respect for the differences brought by diversity and the potential contributions particular to each individual. It is the skill of a teacher and mentor to recognize and encourage these contributions and to find ways that each person's unique skill and background can be shared to enhance everyone's learning experience. By knowing and understanding individual students through interaction in and outside the classroom, a teacher should help them develop greater self-confidence in their own ability to think through and respond to intellectual and real world problems with their own solutions. Serving as a clear example of this process through showing my struggles to make meaning both in the collaborative context of the classroom as well as my experiences while conducting research, I strive to become a mentor. This is why I always explain carefully to students why I want to convey certain information, ask them to read a particular text, or perform some activity – I respect and support students by being explicit about my intent.

It appears that too often students are conflicted over a perceived choice between the practical and material needs of the world of work and the spiritual, artistic, or moral needs of the person. This is why I support learning in an institution that holds as basic to its mission providing a reflective, tolerant and engaged environment for the critical exchange of ideas united with an organized, dynamic program committed to real world problems.

I am passionate about learning. Having obtained my doctorate is evidence of my love of ideas and for making meaningful connections between abstract theory and real world problems. It is also evidence of determination. I am wholly determined to share this passion through teaching. Having learned and experienced a great deal over the course of my life through formal education and my own personal journeys of self-discovery, I feel it is my responsibility to give back through helping to prepare young people for careers, of course, but more importantly for life. For students destined for fields both in and outside academia, I want them to find fulfilling ways of contributing to an increasing need for skilled analysts and researchers with sharp critical thinking skills who, like anthropologists, have learned to manage, evaluate, and interpret large volumes of different kinds of data on human behavior. Today's world depends on flexibility. It is a mantra of the post-industrial, service economy. Cultural anthropologists learn to be at ease in unexpected situations. Similarly, the contemporary world requires knowledgeable people who have the ability to confidently adapt and apply their knowledge to new situations. In a world of increasing diversity and complexity, I am committed to fostering greater personal flexibility, broad, open, and global perspectives, holistic knowledge, and the desire to solve human-ecological problems with a culturally sensitive style.

### **C. Position Piece: The Opportunity of Undergraduate Education**

I particularly value the opportunity to work with undergraduate students. When I was an undergraduate, I was in a teacher education program on track to become a secondary school social science teacher. I worked on curriculum design, studied administration, considered ethical questions, and advised and taught students from Kindergarten through grade 12. I have known since my first year in college that I wanted to teach. Where I wanted to teach, however, has changed. By the end of my college years, I knew that I was not interested in teaching (at least as a career) at the high school level. Those are important years for social development, but I feel that it is when the student has moved on to college that things start getting really interesting. Those years are a remarkable time, not only of outward discovery, but also inward exploration. Any one who has shipped off for college knows what I am talking about. Although in the beginning it may not seem this way, over time life begins to make more sense as students engage, often for the first time, with the broad diversity of people, ideas, and opportunities that comes with their undergraduate education. I knew that I wanted to be a part of this critical transitional period as a teacher and mentor.

My first thoughts for wanting to teach at the college level were in large part restricted to my own desire for becoming a scholar in a particular field and contributing to the development of that area of intellectual pursuit. This is what led to obtaining my doctorate. Now that I have achieved my degree aspirations, I see my project as being much larger than making "contributions to the field." While furthering the meaningful pursuit of knowledge continues to be an important part of my overall responsibilities, the most significant contribution that any of us can make as scholars may be investing in our undergraduates. My desire to teach undergraduates is an expression of my desire to serve with more immediate real world impact by being a mentor to students at a critical juncture in their lives as they make decisions about what paths to take in life, whether they be continuing in academia or entering into work life directly.

Only a generation ago, most recipients of bachelor's degrees - particularly those from more "elite" institutions - opted to continue their higher education by going straight into graduate school. One can also point to the fact that until the years following World War II, and even more recently, most of these institutions did not have to serve the diversity of students that they do today. Today's students exhibit an ever-increasing range of backgrounds, interests, and abilities. While continuing on to graduate school may have been the norm before, today these schools are sending most of their graduates directly into the "real" world where they must make their way on the job market within a world of work ever more uncertain as the economy itself is transformed by new models of flexibility and contingency. Not surprisingly, we can point to a shift in undergraduate enrollment toward fields that have the most explicit programs of preparation for the immediate challenges of the workplace. As a consequence, in recent years the numbers of undergraduate degrees in fields with more technical or professional focus have greatly outpaced those in the liberal arts and sciences. As consumers, students have spoken loudly and clearly. As institutions, different places are responding in different ways and with greater and lesser degrees of success.

In my research with life-style migrants, people who used physical relocation away from high stress jobs and crowded metropolitan environments to rural places of perceived refuge in order to redefine their work and family lives through choice of life-style, I found that they did not want to have to choose between investing in themselves either as workers or as persons. It was often

difficult for them to do both given impact on personal life of what has been called the "time bind." With students, we see a similar thing. Students may find themselves in a situation where they are torn between feeling the need to choose the so-called practical subjects, which seem to clearly help them prepare for the workplace, and wanting to also choose those areas of study that enrich the mind and spirit. At its base, it is again a choice between the practical or material needs of the world of work and the spiritual, artistic, or moral needs of the person. It is a choice that nobody should be forced to make in their fundamental quality of life.

Applying this concern to the question of undergraduate education, a potential solution lies in providing students with ways of integrating both aspects by learning in an institutional setting where the basic liberal arts mission of providing a reflective, tolerant and engaged environment for the critical exchange of ideas is allied with organized and dynamic program of practical engagement with real world problems. Learning with proactive mentorship, or even a kind of apprenticeship, in such an environment may lead students to challenge each other to explore, understand and improve themselves, society and the world. There can be no greater contribution, no more substantial act of scholarly service, than that.

I believe that being involved in shaping the learning environment and experiences of undergraduates provides a unique opportunity wholly distinct from that of work with graduate students. While this too is a serious and important commitment for a fully credentialed scholar in his or her field, the contribution in this case tends to be focused on mentorship for the purpose of establishing the independent profession of another scholar. I value this tremendously. However, I feel very strongly about working with undergraduates. Although some of my peers may argue with my stand, I would assert that the stakes are higher at this level. So, what are some practical considerations of this position? I have already alluded to the fact that in order for such an integrated approach to undergraduate education to be truly successful, there needs to be an institutional commitment. For many smaller colleges, such a commitment may already exist. For larger places, these initiatives may come from points lower in the hierarchy and be restricted to limited areas with more bureaucratic obstacles to realizing greater integration. In any case, there needs to be active institutional support to create organized programs that make it easier for students to combine areas of study such as through offering double and dual majors enhanced by faculty willing and able to teach across disciplinary boundaries. Students should also clearly understand their opportunities for applying knowledge in real world situations through co-op programs, internships, and fieldwork of different kinds where they are involved in the "doing" of work within their particular area of study.

Ultimately, however, simply having the structures in place is not enough. There needs to be a commitment on the part of faculty as well to teach in ways that reinforce connections between ideas and between different fields as well as between the presumed Ivory Tower and the application of theory in the pursuit of solutions to both intellectual and practical problems with immediate relevance to students. Many faculty have no doubt long been dedicated to doing this kind of work in and outside the classroom. Their approach may flow from a personal commitment to being scholars engaged in work not only for the "sake of knowledge" but also for the part they may play in informing public debate on important issues. Being able to act on this personal orientation within a more broadly supportive institutional setting can be very liberating and promote further development not only in such programs of integrated study but also unique opportunities for collaborative research. With a mandate to further these connections, faculty are in a better position to seek opportunities for collaboration in teaching and research.

Team teaching is one way that faculty can provide students with an important experience in how practical problems may be worked out through the application of ideas. Both in and outside the classroom, the dynamic interaction between colleagues, especially those from different disciplines, can express the way that learned people translate different meanings, approaches, and experiences and find common ground in order to understand each other and to make something work. This is a skill that all students will need in order to achieve personal success in the world. Collaborations can also come in the form of team learning. Students may be given problems to solve as teams which require the coordinated efforts of several engaged researchers applying their knowledge and relying on their ability to identify not only common areas of interest and concern but also unique capacities within a group and how these can best be utilized to develop the project and find their own solution. If these kinds of experiences take place within the context of a well-defined purpose at a higher institutional level rather than the odd, isolated classroom or instructor, then the benefits to students are greatly enhanced.

It is an exciting time to be at the beginning of a career in college education and scholarship. These are also uncertain times. It seems excitement and uncertainty often arrive together. The uncertainty here is not limited to students as would be workers in the post-industrial world of the new economy; it extends to the schools that would prepare them for that world. At the very center of this, we should not forget, is the teacher/mentor. Institutions can empower both students and teachers by making a clear commitment to an integrated approach that combines the work of the more abstract concerns of traditional liberal arts education with that of practical engagement. My own experience as an undergraduate in a school no larger than 200 students gave me a sense for the power of being small for promoting innovation and evoking clear purpose. I have also seen much larger places struggle to find ways to do the same thing. Ultimately, the success of any school or program will depend on maintaining relevancy in a rapidly changing world. I am confident that I have the personal and professional experience to do my part in contributing to the critical need to provide meaningful, integrated, and relevant education to undergraduates.

I am very interested in this topic - both intellectually and practically. I think it is fascinating from an intellectual point of view as an area of study in institutions or organizations changing over time. It is even more importantly of practical concern, as I become an integral part of this world and a major stakeholder. I welcome any comments or questions. In the coming sections, I will speak more directly about some of my own pedagogical approaches.

## **II. TEACHING APPROACH**

### **A. Courses**

#### **Marshall University**

*Introduction to Cultural Anthropology* [Introductory] - Fall 2007; Spring 2008

This course explores how culture is continually in a process of change and reproduction by individuals as they respond to the conditions of everyday life. Why do some ways of doing things persist while others seem to fade away? How do new ideas become introduced and eventually established as status quo in social systems? Having an effective model to approach

these questions is an essential part of the theoretical toolkit of any social scientist. While providing a brief overview of theoretical traditions in cultural anthropology, this course deals with many different ways that anthropologists have attempted to explain the mechanisms through which particular social orders are maintained or altered over time. We will give special emphasis to how such phenomena as colonization and globalization have shaped the experience of culture around the world. In this course, we will develop a culturally-sensitive anthropological perspective that enables us to appreciate the richness of human diversity, the historical and political conditions under which particular cultures develop, and the human potential for transformation.

*Anthropology of Global Problems* [Intermediate/Advanced] – Spring 2008

This course will investigate changing cultural values and social relations of capitalism from the Industrial Revolution and models of Fordist production to an increasingly post-industrial and global economy. We will examine an ongoing transformation of basic social institutions, changing values and practices of corporations, and shifting meanings of consumption and production. We will employ critical cultural analysis in our consideration of a broad range of social and environmental issues with special emphasis on the varied impact of a culture of capitalism on indigenous peoples, as well as different forms of resistance to globalizing forces. The course will explore these issues in depth through a number of case studies, including the infamous Exxon-Valdez oil spill of 1989. Although we will be taking the approach of an applied anthropology, this class will be of use to students interested generally in contemporary global problems and the potential role of advocacy in social science research. Students are expected to participate regularly in discussion, write reaction papers to readings, conduct media analyses, and make a final presentation.

*US Culture & the Changing Family* [Introductory] – Spring 2008

This course does not take US culture as a given. We will examine the causes, contours, and consequences of a changing cultural, social, and economic landscape in the United States through careful examination of the meanings of family, work, and community. In particular, we will explore theoretical and political debates that the changing family has spawned. Family patterns in the contemporary United States bear little resemblance to a persistent cultural model of the breadwinner-homemaker household. While popularly conceived of as "traditional," we can trace this family form to the social and cultural transformations engendered by the Industrial Revolution and an emergent culture of consumer capitalism. How should we speak of family now that the dominant form of the past century has dwindled from as much as 70 percent of American households in 1960 to less than 15 percent today? We will trace the cultural history of the normative American family from late-nineteenth century to its gradual fragmentation in modern time. We will consider the diversity of contemporary arrangements, including dual-earning couples, single-parent households, "blended" families, and boundary-pushing forms. We will pay careful attention to social construction of kinship and ways in which practices, experiences, and understandings vary with gender, class, and ethnicity. Students are expected to participate regularly in discussion, write position papers on readings, complete a variety of small projects and exercises, and take three in-class written essay quizzes.

*Anthropological Research Methods [Advanced] - Fall 2007*

Doing field ethnography defines the American cultural anthropologist. This tradition was begun in the early 20th century by Franz Boas who wanted a corrective to what he saw as the increasing tradition of “armchair” speculation and analysis that so other early anthropologists many were engaged in. Boas wanted anthropologists and others interested in other documenting other cultures and lives, to get out of that chair and actually \*do\* anthropology, to actually engage in the practice of fieldwork and participate in as well as observe the lives of others. That’s what this course is about. Each of you are going to get out there and understand how the science of anthropology actually works, not only in theory but in practice.

I sometimes get a blank look when I say to people, “I’m an anthropologist.” Sometimes there is the slow head nod, sometimes there is a pensive musing look and then, “oh, ahh...I love dinosaurs, they’re great!” Sometimes the reply is the simple query, “oh, so you dig?” Another Indiana Jones. What exactly is it that defines what anthropologists do? Anthropology is sometimes referred to as a “four-field” science that includes archaeological, physical, linguistic, and cultural areas of inquiry. We will be exploring the methods particular to the sub-field of cultural anthropology, a sub-discipline also known as “ethnology” whose primary methodological approach is called “ethnography.” As anthropologists we generally don’t run lab experiments. We don’t sit in our offices content to think. We talk to people. We write about the knowledge we gain from our interactions. We observe, of course, but most importantly we make an effort to participate in the lives of others. We are curious about how all of us, as human beings, interact with each other and with our environments. What makes us similar? What makes us the different? Now you should be thinking, how do I do this? Do we just plop ourselves down in the middle of some community somewhere and announce to them, “hi, I’m your anthropologist, tell me all about yourselves!” Can that work? We will explore such basic questions to the “doing” of cultural anthropology.

Thus, this course is designed to provide you with an introduction to ethnographic research. As I have suggested above, ethnographers carry out their research by becoming a participant, to varying degrees, in a particular social setting. Ethnographic research provides interpretive and descriptive analyses of the cultural meanings that are embedded in the routine practices of everyday life. In our attempt to create ethnographic accounts of the different ways in which people make sense of their experiences, we will look at the various means of social organization and realms of cultural meaning that structure and pattern social behavior.

*Race and Ethnic Relations [Advanced] - Fall 2007*

We have surely all heard references to recent genocide in Darfur; anti-Arab actions/reactions in the United States since 9-11; racial profiling; ethnic “cleansing” in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, as well as the ongoing debate and conflict over immigration and “aliens” here in the United States. These events and debates should make it clear that notions of ethnicity and race have a very real impact on the everyday lives of people all across the world. Our primary goal in this course is to explore the anthropological and sociological interpretation of ethnic and racial categories and how these manifest in different ways, and with different outcomes, in a variety of times and places. We will work together to re-examine our own beliefs and values about these categories. Given the imperative to find ways of co-existing in a world that is increasingly strained by real and perceived differences among groups, this course aims to provide you with

some practical means by which you may promote better inter-group relations.

## **College of the Atlantic**

*Introduction to Cultural Anthropology - Comparative Study of Cultures* [Introductory] - Winter 2003

Course Description: Culture may be seen not only as a source of conflict but also as one for solidarity within and between groups. Popular views of culture might lead us to think of it as something that exists independent of human action. This course explores how culture is continually in a process of change and reproduction by individuals as they respond to the conditions of everyday life. Why do some ways of doing things persist while others seem to fade away? How do new ideas become introduced and eventually established as status quo in social systems? Having an effective model to approach these questions is an essential part of the theoretical toolkit of any social scientist. While providing a brief overview of theoretical traditions in cultural anthropology, this course deals with many different ways that anthropologists have attempted to explain the mechanisms through which particular social orders are maintained or altered over time. We will give special emphasis to how colonization and globalization have shaped the experience of culture around the world. In this course, we will develop an anthropological perspective that enables us to appreciate the richness of human diversity, the historical and political conditions under which cultures develop, and the human potential for transformation. Evaluations will be based on class participation including periodic presentations in discussion sessions on particular topics/readings as well as through written assignments. These will include an ethnographic observation exercise; at least two position papers that will ask students to explore their own cultural experiences in light of readings, and a final paper.

*The American Dream: Anthropology of Capitalism and Working Families* [Intermediate] - Winter 2003

Course Description: This course will investigate the changing cultural values and social relations of capitalism over the course of the past century as the United States has moved from the Industrial Revolution and models of Fordist production to an increasingly post-industrial and global economy. We will examine changing values and practices of corporations, shifting meanings of work, and what constitutes a valued worker from the days of Taylorized routinization to more post-modern flexibilities. We will consider the social impact of downsizing, restructuring, and the rise of temporary or contingent work on American families. What has it meant for everyday life that the imperatives and practices of a new, flexible economy have realigned corporate values and priorities from the interests of workers and communities to those of banks and shareholders? How do people define the American Dream in a context of shifting social structures and cultural meanings? What defines the good life for today's middle-class Americans? We will read from ethnographies of the workplace, company towns, and the suburb as well as critical narratives of work and the self-help guides for the downsized and disillusioned. Our primary goal is to understand the importance of a critical cultural analysis at the intersection of everyday experience within categories of work, family, and community as a basis for considering a broad range of social and environmental issues.

*Anthropology of Human Ecological Problems: The Politics of Culture* [Intermediate/Advanced] - Spring 2003

Course Description: What is culture? What role does culture play in a rapidly globalizing world? Culture is sometimes an unexamined category even within the disciplines that rely on some concept of culture for understanding and explaining human behavior and relations. In the past few decades, “culture” as an idea and source of identity has become thoroughly politicized as not only national level governments but also indigenous and other minority groups throughout the world promote and defend their own self-representations by invoking images and narratives of tradition, ethnicity, heritage, and nation presented as culture. This trend has contributed to rethinking anthropological theory and practice leading to major shifts within the discipline - what some have called a “reflexive turn.” The course will thus have an aspect of critical social theory by virtue of our attempts to deconstruct not only taken for granted histories and explanations but also the ways that we approach social problems both theoretically and practically. We will explore how both culture and identity are continually constructed and negotiated as well as how ideas of tradition and heritage can become politically charged items over which different groups with varying degrees of political power may make claims of property. Our discussion will explore issues surrounding cultural property, cultural “deprivation,” cultural “conservation,” and cultural tourism. Particular attention will be given to the role of culture in conflicts with broader environmental dimensions. The course will investigate these issues in greater depth through three case studies including the Exxon Valdez oil spill. Students are expected to participate regularly in and sometimes lead discussion, write several short reaction papers to readings, and apply their understanding of key concepts and course themes to a specific case study of their choice which illustrates how culture may play a critical role in social and environmental problems. Some social theory, history, and/or previous study of anthropological concepts assumed or permission of instructor.

*Environmental Justice and Social Welfare* [Introductory/Intermediate] - Spring 2003

This course examines how local environmental problems are frequently the complex results of globally articulated processes and that the impact of these problems are experienced differently by people of different regions, cultures, racial and ethnic backgrounds, classes, gender, and age groups. We will look at specific case studies from both the analytical and activist angles with sensitivity for the lived experience of those involved. We consider how environmental risk is borne disproportionately by those who are the most socially, politically, and economically vulnerable or disempowered. While recognizing a global scope to these issues, our attention will remain largely here in the United States. Although this is clearly a course of potential appeal to students focusing in environmental studies, it is intended as a course for appreciating the potential for an applied anthropology and the role of advocacy in social science research. Students interested in social work would also find this a useful class. Students are expected to participate regularly in and sometimes lead discussion and write short reaction papers to readings. A final project case study requiring some outside research will ask students to apply their knowledge of course materials, concepts, and other cases.

## **University of Michigan**

### *Introduction to Anthropology* [Four-field, Introductory] - Winter 1999

Course Description: This course provides a general overview of the field of anthropology as the study of human biological and cultural similarity, diversity, and evolution through both space and time. As an introductory course, it is designed to introduce you to many topical interests of the four major subfields of anthropology, i.e., biological or physical anthropology; archaeology; sociocultural anthropology; and linguistic anthropology. Together we will explore and learn -- through our readings and discussion -- the many themes and issues relating to human social lives and cultures from a variety of different geographical regions as well as time periods -- both historical and pre-historical. Today, the first step toward becoming a good anthropologist involves acknowledging and appreciating the meaningful cultural differences among peoples -- including those within your own society. Most significantly and crucial to this appreciation is the effort to defamiliarize yourself with your own society in part by seeing your own self and group differently through a deeper understanding of the varied ways of interpreting experience and making the world meaningful and by also avoiding the assumption that your own society or self is the "norm." In this course, one of our main challenges will be the effort to set aside our own culturally defined notions of what constitutes "human nature" and such basic categories as the individual. It is in this spirit of tolerance -- requisite to the practice of anthropology -- that we must cultivate an atmosphere where all of us can share our heritage, unique life experiences, and the perspectives or opinions we hold as a consequence of our varied backgrounds. Express your ideas and aspirations and, above all, be open-minded and enjoy yourself.

## **B. Teaching Interests**

### **1. General Statement of Interests in Teaching**

I am prepared to teach a variety of courses including introductory (cultural and four-field) anthropology, introductory and advanced anthropological and social theory, ethnographic methods and data analysis, and contemporary culture in the context of globalization. In addition to regional ethnography focusing on North America, I can also teach classes or incorporate perspectives from my fieldwork in Indonesia which addresses the role of development programs in the politics of culture and ethnic identity. Courses offering cross-cultural perspectives on important social, cultural, and environmental issues are a natural expression of my fieldwork experience and intellectual interests.

### **2. Course Development**

I have developed a number of course syllabi that I am readily prepared to teach in the future. This list is intended to represent a range of interest and preparation. There are many other courses which could be developed to meet specific curricular needs in a variety of programs. I have included course descriptions for those for which syllabi have been prepared.

*Contemporary American Culture: Popular Rituals of Everyday Life*  
[Introductory/Intermediate]

What is contemporary American culture? How do we explain what being an “American” is? What are the meanings implicit in using the term American culture? In what ways are those meanings transmitted? This course will explore the rites, rituals, and identities that individuals use in everyday life in the contemporary United States. We will examine how American identity is constructed, explained, maintained through the use of certain symbols, social practice, and life stage events and how this identity is variously replicated or altered in meaningful ways within different social groups. Although anthropologists have favored mostly distant, presumably more “exotic” others as their subjects, important fieldwork has been conducted here at home and this course will both build on and challenge some of these observations, assumptions, and understandings. We will explore how anthropological methods can help elucidate often subtle symbols and meanings which have particular valence in this society. We will examine several areas of contemporary social life including the cultural construction of the body and ideas of health, the meaning of gender and life stages, and understandings of race and ethnic identity. Throughout the course we will critically explore the role of anthropology and the anthropologist in studying the contemporary United States.

*Ethnographic Research: Life History and the Self*  
[Intermediate]

This course is designed to incorporate ongoing individual research projects in oral history as a way of learning about the practice of ethnographic research. Beginning early in the term, students will design and propose a project that each will conduct. Students will be asked to contact an informant and, over a period of time, gather a life-history that they will then attempt to interpret through operationalizing what is learned through course materials representing a range of anthropological understandings of the meaning and place of narrative constructions in identity formation. This methods/project component will also introduce students to the practical realities of research design and ethical considerations of research involving human subjects. Cultural anthropologists understand that differences in cultural meanings across and within societies include subtle ways that people think of themselves in relation to their world. Even our most basic, private ways of thinking about our selves are shaped by tacit ideas, for example, about what makes a person and how individuals should relate to the broader social world. Students will be asked to reflect on the ways course readings show how these differences can effect the construction of personal narratives, such as in the oral history project they are conducting, and the purposes to which they are put. We explore different ethnographic methods of analysis to look at what motivates people to construct their identities through these stories in particular ways.

**NOTE:** More advanced courses or tutorials available in fieldwork training, general research design, social survey and in-depth interviewing methods, mixed-method approaches, as well as qualitative data analysis techniques.

*The Colonial Encounter: An Anthropological Perspective*  
[Intermediate]

This course offers a critical overview of the experience of colonialism through accounts of different groups and the role anthropology has played both in shaping the contours of this experience and in representing it. We will explore the historically changing point between colonial power and anthropological knowledge. Our focus will be on the cultural representations and political economy of European rule in Asia with special consideration for the more than three-century presence of Europeans in the archipelago of what is now the Republic of Indonesia as a particular case. We will also consider what meaning the geopolitics of post-colonial nationalism and cultural imperialism has had for the everyday lives of people in the holdings of former colonial powers.

*Environmental Anthropology*  
[Intermediate]

This course is an introduction to the theory, method, and analysis of relationships among cultural, social, and ecological systems. It is designed to familiarize students with past approaches to these relationships as well as to explore more current approaches which give explicit attention to: historical and political processes; the articulation of cultural images of the environment and environmental behavior; and, world systems and its impact on local adaptive systems. Students will critically evaluate differing approaches to the issues and make connections between new developments in social theory and their potential for furthering our understanding global human/environmental problems. Rather than a chronological introduction to theoretical development, the course is organized as a thematic survey of issues. Using a number of specific ethnographic examples, we will pay particular attention to the effects of globalization and economic development on the relationship between human communities and their environments.

*The Anthropology of Travel*  
[Intermediate]

This course would explore the experience of cross-cultural encounters through travel beginning during the colonial period and expressed in the accounts of missionaries and later the reports of anthropologists. In what is a continually globalizing world, we would consider the meaning and place of tourism, particularly so-called eco- or cultural-tourism in cultural and ecological change.

*Area Studies/Regional Ethnography of Southeast Asia (or Indonesia)*  
[Introductory/Intermediate/Advanced]

Introduction to peoples, cultures, and history of Southeast Asia or Indonesia.

*Anthropological Understandings of Social Reproduction and Change*  
[Intermediate/Advanced or Advanced]

Why do some ways of doing things persist while others seem to fade away? How do new ideas become introduced and eventually established in social systems? This course deals with the many different ways that anthropologists have attempted to explain the mechanisms through

which particular social orders have been either variously maintained or altered over time. In some respects this course will be an intellectual history of the discipline as it has engaged with other discourses and approaches in this attempt. Arguably, cultural anthropology has made its most important contributions to further our understanding of these processes. Having an effective model to understand and explain social reproduction and change is an essential part of the theoretical toolkit of any social scientist. Particular attention will be paid to the development of a practice approach to understanding the complex relationships between human action and the social system. Readings and discussions of varied ethnographic examples will supplement more theoretical course content.

*Anthropological Approaches to Personhood and Place*  
[Intermediate/Advanced or Advanced]

Ideas about social personhood have become central to cultural anthropology. At the same time, an appreciation for the spatiality of being has also grown in importance as anthropologists engage with fields such as cultural or human geography. In this course we will explore the person as relational and material. Our aim is to understand how people come into being socially through relations with others and as material beings in relationship with a physical world. These are taken as a whole. Through selected readings of ethnographic research in a variety of cultures, we will examine the different ways personhood and place are understood. We will begin with understanding how basic categories such as "person" and "place" are cultural constructions. We will then examine studies of how social persons are constructed through exchange and memory and move on to phenomenological approaches while exploring how these intersect with the discourse on production of subjects and theories of agency and power. We will focus on the cultural analysis of self, mind, person, and identity as categories central to the way human social behavior is motivated and rendered meaningful. An important aspect of this course will be consideration of recent contributions of feminist theory to understanding corporeality and producing alternative configurations of the subject.

### **C. Instructional Style**

I use an array of approaches in my classes to teaching designed enrich the classroom learning experience beyond the bare essentials. These are some of the practical approaches I take:

#### **1. Fieldwork Assignments**

Students practice applying anthropological techniques to events they observe in their daily lives. Assignments involve reporting and analyzing the rich textures of cultural phenomenon in everyday life. These hands-on exercises give the students practice at being ethnographers and doing fieldwork themselves, transforming an otherwise passive learning experience into an active one. In the process of completing the assignments, students learn the relevance of anthropological perspectives to their own lives. While courses with a "methods" orientation will require students to engage in fieldwork to a much greater degree, all of my classes involve a practical application of knowledge.

## **2. Careful Paper Planning and Revision Reveals the Power of Writing**

As established scholars in our fields, we know the unique power of writing to pull together and make sense of ideas with which we may be wrestling. Term papers can have this power for students. All too often, however, these end up being the product of last minute, end-of-term pushes to produce something meeting the page requirement. That is unfortunate. Thankfully, it is generally avoidable through more careful planning on both the part of the instructor and the student. Students must master the ability to write clearly and concisely while developing a coherent and intellectually compelling argument. Certainly academic work demands it, but the ability is an asset much more widely across a range of professions.

Major writing assignments in the form of term papers in my classes are truly term papers in that students are encouraged to begin planning their paper very early in the term. Students are asked to write "position" papers on reading assignments/topics that they feel strongly about over the course of the term. For many students early position papers will become the kernel for further exploration and elaboration leading to the developed argument of a full term paper. Within the first half of the term, students submit a paper "proposal." The proposal allows students to bring their ideas to me early on. They begin outlining their position and considering strategies for the full paper. Feedback from me as well as classmates helps shape the early process. I allow for presentations of "working papers" for just this purpose. We learn from each other.

After further reading, discussion, and consideration, students then prepare a more elaborate "prospectus." The prospectus is more detailed than the proposal, providing a clearer picture of what the essay is shaping up to be. By this point students present an idea of: (1) the scope of the paper; and (2) library or other research the topic might require. The prospectus describes: (1) potential problems and pitfalls; and (2) the limits of what they plan to do. Finally, it includes a tentative outline of the essay. By writing them, students get an idea of what they want to say and what they know and don't know. They should guide students toward the resources they need and suggest where they might need help early on, when they most need it. Rather than the end of term, "throw-away" paper, students learn the value of careful planning and ongoing feedback during which time they become increasingly invested in the topic they have chosen. Writing well requires a constant process of critiquing, revising, and improving one's work. Through engaging students in this lengthier process, I encourage them to find the power in writing and their own strength for communicating ideas in a compelling way while they learn the skills necessary for future academic and professional work.

This approach to writing the term paper develops important skills not only in writing but also in project development. Students learn to develop long-term projects by starting with small-scale papers such as the term paper. For students taking a more applied approach by incorporating ethnography, they learn to recruit and coordinate subjects. For all students, they learn to design a project and to maintain records as they conduct research, gathering and organizing data, whether in the field or in the library.

## **3. Student Presentations**

Through preparing and delivering short presentations in class, students learn to apply the course material in innovative ways. They also learn the value of learning from others and collaboration. While seminar courses consist primarily of classroom discussion, all of my courses involve

students actively working with ideas through sharing their positions on the material at hand. Presentations allow students to give careful consideration to topics of interest and importance to them. Students more likely to hold back in discussions now have the opportunity to share their prepared ideas and get constructive feedback as they engage in discussion with their peers. Students draw connections between the classroom and the “real world” setting. They also have the opportunity to practice speaking in public and to polish their rhetorical skills. Students are encouraged to include an audiovisual component in more show-and-tell style presentations, thereby challenging them to think multi-dimensionally about the subject. For some students, this modality may be far more helpful to them in learning the material. There are many ways to approach the material and we value the unique contributions of all students.

#### **4. Small Group Discussions & Activities**

College classes sometimes overwhelm students, particularly as freshman. Even in the more intimate settings possible in smaller colleges where the size of the class may not be so daunting, the ideas can seem to swallow them up. In order to provide all students with a forum in which to discuss class material, I schedule regular small group discussions and problem solving activities consisting of as few as three to four students per group. Each group chooses a secretary who records the group’s discussion findings. The discussion results are counted as a part of the students’ attendance and participation grade. Students who put obvious effort into the discussion and produce exceptionally insightful comments can receive extra credit. This format is especially useful for compensating for the situation of only a few students consistently contributing to class discussion.

#### **5. Short Reaction Papers**

I include short reaction papers as a way to allow students to summarize what they have learned during a class discussion/lecture. I might use it during the last few minutes of class to check for comprehension and to assess which areas I need to clarify. Students might also be asked to summarize the results of a small (or large) discussion group and react to them thereby learning to synthesize and accurately represent diverse viewpoints while also taking a stand on the primary issue or topic at hand. The spontaneous nature of these reaction pieces also frees many students to explore ideas without inhibitions. These are not graded but may become the basis for lively classroom discussion.

#### **D. Formal Teacher Training**

As an undergraduate, I majored in educational theory, curriculum design, and instructional practice with coursework in areas of personality and social development, philosophy of education, environmental education, curriculum and instructional development, and learning theory. My senior project (a thesis developed and defended with a committee of senior faculty) entailed developing a conceptual framework based on a human ecological approach for use in science education. In addition, I had many opportunities for student teaching not only through outreach education and interpretation but also regular classroom presentation for many age levels. I was also responsible for advising at-risk students in science.

As noted in my position piece in section I, sub-section C above, I take undergraduate education very seriously. This is why I have continued to take further development of my teaching skills very seriously. While at Cornell University, I attended the Graduate Teaching Development

Workshop Series. Then again while at University of Michigan, I attended many sessions on teaching including an entire semester of scheduled workshops designed to improve undergraduate teaching. These were provided for by the acclaimed University of Michigan's Center for Research on Learning and Teaching. I continue to concentrate on keeping apprised of current trends in undergraduate education from both the instructional and institutional perspectives. I believe that this is one of my basic responsibilities as an engaged scholar and dedicated educator.

### **III. EVALUATION OF TEACHING**

#### **A. Evaluations**

Student evaluations are extremely important tools. As noted in my statement of teaching philosophy, I feel that an effective teacher is much like a skilled ethnographer in that both must be ready to rethink and continuously adjust their approach in response to what is constant, if informal, feedback. I use both formal and unformed comments in order to modify and improve my syllabi, text and film selections, written assignments, class discussions and teaching style.

#### **B. Student Assessments\***

Evaluations consistently reflect that I am very effective at regularly clarifying course objectives and providing students with feedback on their work. Students also appreciated my willingness to meet with them outside of class to provide individualized attention and guidance. Students found the course syllabi and class websites extremely helpful in giving them resources to guide them and help them prepare effectively for class.

Students in my classes have felt strongly that they learn not only to identify main points and central issues of the field but, more importantly, that they could apply principles from class to new situations.

My approach to regular writing assignments was very helpful to students who felt that these helped them to further clarify and synthesize course themes while they gained greater confidence in their ability to express their ideas.

Students overwhelmingly agree that through taking my classes they develop greater awareness of societal problems and learn to value new viewpoints while at the same time gaining better understanding of themselves in the process.

I am very pleased to consistently receive very high evaluations for my effectiveness in handling multicultural issues, students' questions, and the use of examples and illustrations. Students also felt that I was receptive to student ideas and needs and was willing to change direction when necessary to meet these effectively.

Students agree very strongly that I maintain an atmosphere of good feeling in the classroom where students feel that they are treated with respect and that cultural and personal differences are assets.

Students enjoyed my own excitement with the material and recognized that although I had thorough knowledge of the topics, I was also learning new things with them. At the same time, students acknowledged that I was continually learning to improve my teaching. While class discussion was widely appreciated and often seen as critically important to the course's success, there were times when some students felt that I gave too much freedom to student discussion leaders who were given responsibility for that class. I have learned to better balance my desire to allow students this lack of restriction to explore their own understanding through open and respectful debate with their peers with the need that other students have for consistent guidance and structure in order to make the information more meaningful to them. The opportunity to improve is one reason I value these evaluations and continually work to be a more effective educator.

\*For the most current institutional evaluations of my teaching, please see contacts on my CV.

### **C. One-Minute Summaries and Mid-Term Student Evaluations**

In addition to traditional evaluations written at the end of the semester, I allow for feedback throughout from students throughout the term. At the end of every class, I have students spend a minute quickly summarizing their assessment of the class along two points: (1) What came into focus for them today? (2) What still seems blurry? These quick assessments give me a way to check progress and make course corrections as needed in order to address student needs. I also use more in-depth mid-term student evaluations. Approximately halfway through the term, I give students time to write anonymous comments about their impressions of the course thus far, as well as any suggestions on how we could improve the second half of the course. As opposed to end of term evaluations, which affect only future classes, mid-term evaluations benefit students directly and immediately. Thus, these evaluations contribute to a two-way dialogue between instructor and students, and allow students to play an active role in shaping the direction of the course.

## **IV. TEACHING/LEARNING GOALS & RESULTS**

### **A. Critical Thinking**

In my comments on papers, I challenge students to improve the clarity and persuasiveness of their writing. Most are able to formulate their ideas much more effectively by the time they turn in final papers at the end of the semester. By drawing connections between course material and contemporary, real world events, I emphasize the relevance of anthropology to critical thinking and to enhancing our understanding of everyday life. Some students have commented that having the benefit of an anthropological understanding of culture has changed them in that they can no longer watch television or movies in the same way that they used to. They have become much more aware of the role of the media, for example, in constructing meaning. Many feel that they are no longer willing to assume the role of passive consumers of media products. Anthropological knowledge can empower students to challenge the status quo through their everyday choices and through informed and educated arguments.

## **B. Increased Mastery in Writing**

The chance to work on a sustained research and writing project is a major advantage for students in my classes. Ongoing feedback and rethinking leads students to rewrite papers which then gives them a way to improve their writing and their argumentation. Grammar, spelling, word choice, and punctuation are important in the presentation of ideas. Writing that is hindered by carelessness can obscure the intent and meaning of the writer. Students learn that style is important in the assignment and that it is because their ideas are paramount that style must be taken seriously. Having almost the entire term to work on their term paper gives students the chance to learn what they can do and have confidence in their ability to conduct true scholarship.

## **C. Diversity, Multiculturalism, and Tolerance**

Anthropology is uniquely positioned as a course of study to prepare students for an increasingly diverse society. For many students, a class in cultural anthropology affords them their first real glimpse of other ways of understanding such basic, taken for granted categories as person, gender, family, and community. Anthropology taught in a classroom environment that fosters real engagement with respect and tolerance can have a tremendous impact on students at a time in their life when so many of them are really beginning to connect with a larger world. The cultural sensitivity that students learn in a course in anthropology provides valuable interpersonal skills allowing students greater understanding of group dynamics and a basis for the ability to work effectively in a cross-cultural or multi-cultural setting. The classroom experience inspires many students to continue their exploration of other cultures when the semester is over through further coursework in anthropology, foreign language classes, as well as study abroad programs. Learning about the world's social and cultural diversity through an anthropological perspective, and by engaging with that diversity through application of anthropological methods in fieldwork exercises, students learn the most valuable trait of the cultural anthropologist: personal and intellectual flexibility.

## **V. SAMPLE SYLLABI**

Please see attached. If sample syllabi are desired and have not been included with this portfolio, please contact me.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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