**SUMMER 2017 ANT 100-4509: UNDERSTANDING OUR WORLDS**  
Dr. Ganesh Trichur  
CUNY CSI Building 5S-117  
Monday-Thursday 9am – 11.40am  
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Office Hours (4S-228): Mon 1-2.30pm; or by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** ANT 100 Understanding Our Worlds: 3 hours 3 credits  
“A survey of the development, contributions and contemporary social problems of selected groups and cultures. The course will examine how culture is affected by global processes; the social and historical context of cultural beliefs and performances through which those beliefs and performances become normalized; culture and power and how power works through culture”

**COURSE OUTLINE**  
ANT-100 aims to introduce concepts and perspectives that situate the individual in relation to larger cultural, historical, and social processes and institutions. The course highlights fieldwork and participant observation as a mode of anthropological research while emphasizing a historical and relational approach to questions of culture, community, reciprocity, redistribution, exchange and markets. It looks at cultures within pre-colonial and colonial contexts, as well as within more contemporary contexts of development and globalization projects.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**  
Students will be introduced to economic, cultural, and political anthropological perspectives that offer clues to understanding both the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial worlds of the past; and the worlds associated with contemporary globalizations. At the end of the semester students will have had exposure to fieldwork and participant observation method. Students will learn from films and from written texts, how to make sense of cultural worlds of the past and the transitional cultural forms of the present.

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<tr>
<th>LEARNING OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>ASSESSMENT PLAN</th>
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<td>To demonstrate an understanding of the subject matter of anthropology and its development as an academic discipline and practice.</td>
<td>Pre and post course questionnaires will assess students’ understanding of cultural, political, and economic anthropological perspectives.</td>
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<td>To demonstrate an understanding of various concepts such as: culture; community; centricity and the state; reciprocity and redistribution; kinship; embeddedness of markets; taboos; cultural relativity and Orientalism; ethnocentrism; modernity; development; globalization; inequality.</td>
<td>Pre and post course questionnaires will assess students’ ability to identify basic anthropological concepts.</td>
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<td>To identify methodological tools and different theories used by anthropologists to understand contemporary debates about social, political and economic issues.</td>
<td>Pre and post course questionnaires will assess students’ ability to identify two methodological tools used by anthropologists.</td>
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Class Norms: Attendance and Behavior
Attendance is required and will be taken every class. You will receive 1 point for each full class attended, with bonus points for perfect attendance. More than six hours of absence will negatively affect your attendance grade, regardless of the reason for the absence. Repeated instances of lateness and leaving class early will also have a negative impact on your attendance grade. Talking or other disruptive behavior in class will not be tolerated. Disruptive students will be asked to leave the class and visit the Dean of Students. Questions based on the readings for the class are always welcome. For productive class discussions it is important that we listen with respect to what others have to say in relation to the class material. Students may not eat in class (you can bring a drink). Cell phones must be switched off. Do not check your cell phones, or send text messages, during class. Please use the rest room before or after class, or during the break.

Evaluation and Grading Policy: 2 Quizzes (20%), 2 Writing Assignments (20%), Minutes (10%), Attendance (10%), Group Presentations (10%), and a Final Exam (30%). There will be NO MAKEUPS for missing Quizzes or Minutes or Presentations, or the Final Exam.

- Minutes (10%): Minutes are short reviews or reconstructions of content covered in class discussions based on the texts used. One useful way to review or reconstruct the content is to focus on the key questions raised in class; and your understanding of concepts and case studies discussed in class. You may draw on your notes; on the text; and on class discussions. Each group presents its Minutes at least once for the semester. This presentation should not take more than 10 minutes. The Minutes should not be over 1 typed page (single-spaced). Make a copy of the Minutes for me. And distribute typed copies for every student in the class. Write clear, short, and connected sentences and paragraphs. Use this format: (i) What were the main text-based arguments covered in class? (ii) What interesting or important ideas or concepts did you encounter? (iii) What case studies were covered and what do these cases illustrate? (iv) What was unclear in the text-material covered in the class?

- Group Presentations (10%): Students will be asked to present on some of the readings. They may do so as a Group to receive credit for the presentations. The presentations should address a few key questions like what are the main arguments in the reading; what concepts are introduced by the author; what is difficult to understand in the reading; and how does the reading relate to the present.

- Students with Special Needs should inform the Instructor about their special needs. All students should make use of the Writing Center before they turn in Writing Assignments!

Required Readings and Blackboard
All reading for the course is posted on Blackboard. You must bring a printed copy of the reading to class on the day on which it is discussed. Please check the course’s Blackboard during the week before class to receive any announcements/changes I might make. Please make sure the email that Blackboard has on file is the one you regularly use. Information on how to use Blackboard is available through the library’s CELT office; the office will also help you address any problem you might have accessing the Blackboard site, and/or if you are not receiving emails from me.

Plagiarism and Cheating Are Violations of Formal University Norms
Plagiarism happens when you use someone else’s ideas, research or writing and you pass them off as your own. Anyone found to be plagiarizing will receive an “F” on the assignment plagiarized. Other possible consequences include: an “F” in the course, or suspension or dismissal from the college. Please be informed that any papers you turn in for this class may be checked against the turnitin.com database for originality. Please review CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity at: http://web.cuny.edu/academics/info-central/policies/academic-integrity.pdf

Other Resources at CSI
- Learning Assistance Resource Center (LARC). Bldg 1A, Room 108. LARC assists with writing papers and reading comprehension. (www.csi.cuny.edu/iss).
- CSI Library. www.library.csi.cuny.edu. There are subject tutors available at the Library.
DETAILED SYLLABUS

Understanding Others through Fieldwork/Participant Observation Approach

Monday 05 June:
- **Film:** *Them and Me*, by Stephane Breton
- Basic Concepts: Fieldwork; Participant Observation; Comparative Approach

Tuesday 6 June:
- **Minutes**
- William Foote Whyte (1993) ‘Introduction: Cornerville And Its People’ (pp.xv-xx); and ‘Appendix A: On The Evolution of Street Corner Society’ (pp.279-373)
- Basic Concepts: Fieldwork; Participant Observation; Comparative Approach

Social Organization of Pre-Colonial Cultural Worlds

Wednesday 7 June:
- **Minutes**
- **Film:** *Ten Canoes*, by Rolf de Heer and the people of Ramingining, Australia
- Karl Polanyi (1944/2001) ‘Societies and Economic Systems’ (pp.45-58)
- Basic Concepts: Holistic Approaches; Economy as embedded in Society; Governance; Kinship; Worldview

Thursday 8 June:
- QUIZ #1 (10%)
- Karl Polanyi (1944/2001) ‘Evolution of the Market Pattern’ (pp.59-70)
- Basic Concepts: Economy and Markets as embedded in Networks of Centrism, Reciprocity and Redistribution
- WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1 (10%) is on Blackboard; it is due on Monday 12 June (hard copies only)

State and Power in Pre-Colonial Cultural Worlds

Monday 12 June:
- **Minutes**
- **Film:** *Two Laws*, by the Borroloola Aboriginal Community, with Carolyn Strachan and Alessandro Cavadini (Basic Concepts: Colonial authority; domination and subordination; acculturation)
- Pierre Clastres (1989: Ch.1-2) ‘Copernicus and the Savages’; and ‘Exchange and Power: The Philosophy of the Indian Chieftainship’ (Basic Concepts: Community power; Decentered power; Tribal Society and the State)

Tuesday 13 June:
- **Minutes**
- Student Group Presentations on Clastres (1989)

Wednesday 14 June:
- **Minutes**
- **Film:** *Vanishing Cultures: Bushmen of the Kalahari*, by Jeffrey Hayes Kazmark and Barbara Savage (Basic Concepts: Worldview; Economic Development, Reciprocity)
- Student Group Presentations on Clastres (1989)

Thursday 15 June:
- **Minutes**
- **Film:** *Without the King*, by Michael Skolnik (Basic Concepts: Culture and the State; Maintaining Order; Decision-making; Economic Inequality)
- Student Group Presentations on Clastres (1989)
- WRITING ASSIGNMENT #2 (10%) is on Blackboard; it is due on Monday 19 June (hard copies only)

Capitalist Modernity and Its Impact on Pre-Colonial and Cultural Worlds

Monday 19 June:
- **Minutes**
- **Film:** *Ancient Futures: Learning from Ladakh*, by Helena Norberg-Hodge
- Basic Concepts: Colonialism; Internalizing Colonialism; Modernization as Violence; The discovery of Poverty; Cultural degradation
Tuesday 20 June:
- Minutes
- Basic Concepts: Modernity; Cultures; Power and Hierarchy

Wednesday 21 June:
- Minutes
- Film: Orientalism, by Edward Said
- Basic Concepts: Culture; Territorialism and Colonization; History

**Globalization and the Understanding of Our Worlds**

Thursday 22 June:
- Quiz #2 (10%)
- James Ferguson (2006) ‘Paradoxes of Sovereignty and Independence: “Real” and “Pseudo” Nation States and the Depoliticization of Poverty’ (pp.50-68)
- Basic Concepts: Limits of Cultural Studies paradigms in a capitalist world-system

Monday 26 June:
- Minutes
- Basic Concepts: Transnational networks of power; Undermining of Civil Societies; Informal Networks; Extraction Economies in Africa

**Kinship Possibilities in a Globalized World**

Tuesday 27 June:
- Minutes
- Film: Whale Rider, by Niki Caro
- Basic Concepts: Kinship; Lineage; Gender; Taboos; Acculturation; Tradition
- Review for Final Exam

Wednesday 28 June: **FINAL EXAMS (30%)**