

**American University of Beirut  
Faculty of Arts and Sciences  
Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences**

**SBHS 212, Social Anthropology**

**1. Course Learning Outcomes:**

Anthropologists study humans in all of their spatial and temporal diversity. This course serves as a general introduction to the theories and methods of the subdiscipline of social anthropology (which, for the purposes of this course, is synonymous with “cultural anthropology” and “sociocultural anthropology”). We will explore what it means to be human through the study of “culture” using the cross-cultural and holistic approaches that are the hallmark of anthropology. Our topics will include kinship, economics, religion, political organization, and other aspects of human life. Anthropologists have historically studied “traditional” societies; in this course we will examine these as well as those that are more complex, urban, and global. We will take the past into account, as well as consider what our subject matter might mean for the future of the world’s diverse peoples including those in our own communities. In addition to our general textbook, we will read two ethnographies: one on Ladinos and Cakchiquel Mayans in highland Guatemala, and the other on Basseri pastoral nomads in Iran. Lectures and class discussion will be supplemented by a field assignment, in-class role-play exercises, films, and other components.

By the end of this course, students can expect to have acquired an understanding of the following:

- \* “culture” as it is used and understood by sociocultural anthropologists
- \* socio-cultural anthropological research methodology and theory
- \* applied anthropological practices
- \* gender, marriage, and kinship
- \* enculturation, adaptation, and the human life cycle
- \* political organization, social inequality, and economics
- \* expressive culture
- \* ethnography, as exemplified by the reading of two ethnographic accounts of life in Guatemala and Iran
- \* service learning

**Skills and Competencies:**

By the end of the course, students can expect to have acquired skills and competencies leading to the ability to:

- \* understand sociocultural anthropologists’ view of the human experience, ranging from the particularistic to the universal
- \* locate (in the library and/or through online databases) and summarize academic writing by anthropologists
- \* draw a kinship chart following anthropological format
- \* design and carry out a small ethnographic research project with a service learning emphasis
- \* work collaboratively with others on small in-class exercises

## 2. Resources Available to Students

### Required texts available in the Campus Bookstore:

Barth, Fredrik

1986 [1961] *Nomads of South Persia*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.

Glittenberg, Jody

1994 *To the Mountain and Back: The Mysteries of Guatemalan Family Life*.

Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.

Peoples, James and Garrick Bailey

2003 *Humanity: An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

## 3. Grading Criteria

<u>Course Requirement</u>	<u>Percentage Points Possible</u>
Library Assignment	10
Midterm Exam	20
Kinship Chart Assignment	10
In-Class Assignments	10
Intercultural / Service-Learning Assignment	15
Attendance and Class Participation	10
Final Exam	<u>25</u>
TOTAL	100

## 4. Schedule

### Week Theme(s)

1	Introduction / The Study of Humanity; What is Culture?
2	Anthropological Methods; Practical Anthropology
3	An Anthropologist in Guatemala; Exchange; LIBRARY ASSIGNMENT due
4	Marriage, Family, and Residence Patterns; Ladino and Cakchiquel Mayan Life
5	The Study of Kinship; Guatemalan Households and Families
6	Gender in Cross-Cultural Perspective; Guatemalan Challenges; Household Fertility; KINSHIP CHART due
7	Personality, Culture, and the Life Cycle; Exam review
8	MID-TERM EXAM; Introduction to the Basseri
9	Adaptation; Basseri Places and People
10	Political Organization; Basseri Tribal Life
11	Social Inequality and Stratification; Ethnicity
12	Basseri Identity; The Economics of Nomadism
13	Art and the Aesthetic
14	The Economics of Nomadism cont.; Humans and the Supernatural
15	Anthropological Theory; Globalization
16	Final Exam review; INTERCULTURAL / SERVICE-LEARNING ASSIGNMENT due
17	FINAL EXAM