

**ANTH 1020**  
**Anthropology: The Study of Global Humanity**  
**Fall 2025**

Lecture: Thursday 9:30 AM – 11:15 PM, NAH 115

Tutorials: Thursday 11:30 AM – 12:15 PM, NAH 401

Thursday 2:30 PM – 3:15 PM, NAH 401

Thursday 3:30 PM – 4:15 PM, NAH 401

Thursday 5:30 PM – 6:15 PM, NAH 401

Instructor: Teresa KUAN, NAH 325, [tkuan@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:tkuan@cuhk.edu.hk), 3-7728

Tutors: TBA

Office hours: By appointment



(Artist: Tetsuya Ishida)

This course introduces students to the basics of anthropology, its relevance to modern-day society, and its role within the humanities. It asks “why people do what they do” by situating human beings in their cultural and social contexts. The course focuses on the similarities and differences between human societies and cultures, to promote a fuller and deeper understanding of what it means to be human in today’s world. For the Fall 2025 semester, ANTH 1020 is organized around the theme “Modernity and Its Discontents.” We will explore the diversity of culture by looking at the impact of modernity in different parts of the world.

**Learning Outcomes**

1. Students will acquire a holistic understanding of different regions, cultures and societies across the globe;
2. Students will develop their own judgment and sense of values through the comparison of different regions, cultures, and societies;
3. Students will acquire skills in analyzing contemporary social problems;
4. Students will come to understand how anthropology is linked to the humanities in its emphasis on the culturally sensitive understanding of common human concerns.

### GRADE DESCRIPTORS

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Criteria for 1) the course and 2) for coursework</i>
A	<p>1) Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.</p> <p>2) The work has creatively synthesized course materials and key ideas in an original way. Observations are nuanced, the argument is logical and cohesive, the discussion is well-organized, and the writing is clear. Concrete evidence corresponds to statements and claims. The work responds directly to the assignment prompt.</p>
A-	<p>1) Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.</p> <p>2) The work synthesizes course materials and key ideas in an original way, but there are areas for improvement.</p>
B-range	<p>1) Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.</p> <p>2) The work demonstrates a solid grasp of course materials and key ideas. There are areas for improvement with respect to handling complexity, building a cohesive argument, organizing the discussion, communicating clearly, and/or identifying relevant evidence. Response to the assignment prompt may not be sufficient.</p>
C-range	<p>1) Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.</p> <p>2) The work shows some effort, but course materials have not been sufficiently engaged. The argument and the writing is not clear, and/or there is no evidence for statements and claims made. Understanding of course materials and key ideas has not been demonstrated.</p>
D-range	<p>1) Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes.</p> <p>2) The work shows little effort to engage course materials. There are major problems with clarity of argument and writing.</p>
F	<p>1) Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.</p> <p>2) The work has failed respond to the assignment prompt.</p>

## Required Texts

All readings will be posted on Blackboard.




## Evaluation

<i>Grade Item</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
Midterm Paper	35%	
Final Paper	45%	
Participation in lecture and tutorial meetings	20%	--


All assignments must be submitted to VeriGuide. Assignments without a signed declaration from VeriGuide will not be graded. Please visit:

[https://academic.veriguide.org/academic/login\\_CUHK.aspx](https://academic.veriguide.org/academic/login_CUHK.aspx)


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NOTE: “” indicates reading assignment. Please read before class. All  and  clips will be viewed/listened to in class.

### Week 1 (September 4): Course Introduction

 No reading.


### Week 2 (September 11): What is anthropology?

 Thomas Hylland ERIKSEN, “Preface” and “*Le monde est trop plein*,” in *Overheating: An Anthropology of Accelerated Change*.

 clip from *The Godfather, Part I* (Francis Ford COPPOLA, dir.)

### Week 3 (September 18): What is modernity?

 George RITZER, “An Introduction to McDonaldization,” in *The McDonaldization of Society*.

 (OPTIONAL) Lee CRONK, “Reciprocity and the Power of Giving,” in *Conformity and Conflict: Readings in Cultural Anthropology*.

 clips from *Modern Times* (Charlie CHAPLIN, dir.)

### Week 4 (September 25): The Rationalization of Childhood in the United States

 Tamar KREMER-SADLIK and Kris GUTIÉRREZ, “Homework and Recreation,” in *Fast-Forward Family: Home, Work, and Relationships in Middle-Class America*.

- 📖 Annette LAREAU, a short excerpt from “The Power and Limits of Social Class,” in *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*.

Week 5 (October 2): The Promise of Science in Britain

- 📖 Sarah FRANKLIN, “The ‘obstacle course’: the reproductive work of IVF,” in *Embodied Progress: A Cultural Account of Assisted Conception*.
- 🎥 clip from *Frankenstein* (James WHALE, dir.)

Week 6 (October 9): Call Centers in India and the Promise of “New Opportunities”

- 📖 Reena PATEL, “Off-Shoring Customer Service: A New Global Order,” in *Working the Night Shift: Women in India’s Call Centers Industry*.
- 📖 Meher VARMA, “India wiring out: ethnographic reflections from two transnational call centres in India,” in *Anthropology Matters*.
- 🎥 clips from *Outsourced* (John JEFFCOAT, dir.)

- 🎥 *24 Hours: The call centre story* (New Delhi Television)

Week 7 (October 16): Reconstructing the Body in Brazil

- 📖 Alvaro JARRÍN, “The Politics of Beauty,” in *ReVista*.
- 📖 Cesar SABINO, “Building Muscles in Rio’s Fitness Clubs: The Ritual Use of Anabolic Steroids,” in *ReVista*.
- 🎥 *Brazil’s Plastic Surgery Obsession* (Unreported World)

Week 8 (October 23): Migrant Laborers and the Culture of Inequality in China

- 📖 Wanning SUN, “The Poetry of Spiritual Homelessness,” in *Chinese Modernity and the Individual Psyche*.
- 📖 Evan OSNOS, “A Billion Stories,” in *The New Yorker*.
- 🎥 clips from *Beijing Bicycle* (WANG Xiaoshuai, dir.)

Week 9 (October 30): Getting Connected in Mexico

- 📖 Roberto J. GONZÁLEZ, “Networks,” in *Connected: How a Mexican Village Built Its Own Cell Phone Network*.
- 🎥 clips from *Losing Knowledge: 50 Years of Change* (Laura NADER and Roberto J. GONZÁLEZ, dirs.)

Week 10 (November 6): No class

☞ Classes suspended for 95th Congregation.

Week 11 (November 13): Conspicuous Consumption in Central Africa

📖 Ch. Didier GONDOLA, “Dream and Drama: The Search for Elegance among Congolese Youth,” in *African Studies Review*.

🎧 clips from *The Importance of Being Elegant* (George AMPONSAH and Cosmina SPENDER, dirs.)

Week 12 (November 18): No class

☞ I will be attending the American Anthropological Association conference.

Week 13 (November 27): Disaster Recovery in Japan

📖 Issac GAGNÉ, “Dislocation, Social Isolation, and the Politics of Recovery in Post-Disaster Japan,” in *Transcultural Psychiatry*.

📺 One Last Thing Before I Go (This American Life)

Make-up class (December 2): What does it mean to be human?

📖 Arthur KLEINMAN, “The Search for Wisdom: Why William James Still Matters,” in *The Ground Between: Anthropologists Engage Philosophy*.

## TIPS & POLICIES

### Participation

Try your best to participate in lectures and tutorials. The point of participation is not to give the perfect, right answer but to try ideas and ask questions. If you feel too shy to speak up, you may observe and take notes on the discussion instead. You may use your notes as materials for writing course papers. Listening is also a kind of participation.

### Opinions vs. Arguments

There is a difference between opinion and argument. Your personal viewpoints are welcome during class discussion, but your papers will be evaluated based upon your ability to formulate an argument rather than your ability to express an opinion. An argument is analytical. Arguments propose relationships between variables, and they support assertions with empirical evidence.

There is also a difference between opinion and perspective. An opinion usually contains some kind of judgment about how the world should or should not operate. A perspective, on the other hand, is a way of looking at the world. In other words, having perspective involves the ability to see patterns and themes, or differences and divergences, which may not be obvious at first glance. Having an opinion is easy. Having the insight that comes with perspective is much harder.

### Late Submissions

Papers submitted after the due date will suffer a fraction of a grade deduction for every day it is late. For example, an A- will become a B+, a B will become a B-, et cetera.

### Academic Honesty

The Chinese University of Hong Kong places very high importance on academic honesty, and adopts a policy of *zero tolerance* on academic dishonesty. Any such offence will lead to disciplinary action including possibly termination of studies at the University. Students should know how to properly use source material and how to avoid plagiarism. Detailed guidelines and examples for the acknowledgement of sources can be found on the University's website at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>. All papers must be submitted through VeriGuide.

### Use of AI Tools

Use of generative AI tools for course papers is strictly prohibited. You are expected to work independently, and to cite sources for any and all information you did not collect yourself.