

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY
Anthropology 1786 (CRN:13068)
121 David Lawrence Hall
Dr. Richard Scaglion

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
Cultures of the Pacific
Tues/Thurs 11:00-11:50
Spring Term 2006 (06-2)

SYLLABUS

I. Texts:

- A. *Unity of Heart: Culture and Change in a Polynesian Atoll Society*. Keith Chambers and Anne Chambers. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 2001.
- B. *Road Through the Rain Forest: Living Anthropology in Highland Papua New Guinea*. David Hayano. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1990.
- C. *Nest in the Wind: Adventures in Anthropology on a Tropical Island*. Second Edition. Martha C. Ward. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1989, 2005.

II. Course Description:

The South Pacific has a certain romantic appeal in popular imagination: swaying palm trees, mild tropical breezes, unspoiled, uninhibited people. Is this true? What are the people of this region really like? How do they feel about these popular images of themselves? What can we learn about human nature by studying the cultures of the South Pacific?

This class uses information about the peoples and cultures of the South Pacific as a vehicle for exploring basic anthropological ideas and concepts. In examining the customs of traditional Pacific peoples, we will probe the ranges of human diversity. By learning about Pacific patterns of courtship and marriage, family organization, political and economic systems, warfare, rituals, etc., and by comparing these with very different American social patterns, we will increase our understanding of what it means to be human. Students in this class will also gain a greater appreciation of anthropology as a profession as they read firsthand the "field experiences" of several anthropologists.

The course examines the traditional and contemporary cultures of the three major areas of the Pacific: Polynesia, Melanesia and Micronesia. It includes a geographical and historical introduction to the Pacific as well as an examination of the current social and political status of the region. Anthropological films and visual presentations will supplement lectures. A class website contains more information: go to <http://courseweb.pitt.edu>. Anthropology 0780 (Introduction to Cultural Anthropology) or consent of the instructor is a prerequisite for the course.

III. Course Requirements:

Grading is based upon two hour exams (each worth 25%), a final exam (worth 25%) and a recitation grade (worth 25%).

A. First Exam: February 14. The first part of the course is designed to introduce the student to the overall geography and contemporary political organization of the Pacific basin, as well as to survey briefly the prehistory, history, and peoples and cultures of the region. In addition, we will be focusing on the seafaring Polynesian cultures in this section of the course. The exam covers the Chambers=*Unity of Heart*, and all class materials to date.

B. Second Exam: March 28. The second part of the course concentrates on the cultures of Melanesia. We will be comparing the non-Austronesian speaking peoples of the interior with the coastal dwelling Austronesian speakers. The Abelam, a New Guinea tribal culture studied by Dr. Scaglione, will also be described. The exam covers all of Hayano's *Road Through the Rain Forest*, and includes class materials since the first exam.

C. FINAL EXAM: April 27. The final part of the course describes the peoples of Australia and Micronesia. We will be comparing these culture areas to those examined in earlier sections of the course. We will also be examining contemporary social and political issues in the Pacific. The exam will cover all of Ward's *Nest in the Wind*, and all class materials since the second exam. Some of the questions will integrate these materials with major topics and issues discussed throughout the course. For example, you might be asked to consider the implications of the different cultural heritages of Polynesians, Melanesians and Micronesians for their participation in the contemporary global world.

D. Recitation Grade: Evaluation in recitation sessions will be determined by the recitation instructors and will be explained by them. Attendance, announced quizzes and take-home assignments are usually the bases for recitation grades. Recitation instructors may also assign additional readings. Recitation is an important component of the course, and students are expected to attend.

IV. Office Hours

All instructors will have formal office hours which we will announce. If you wish to see us outside our office hours, we can usually arrange a mutually satisfactory time. Dr. Scaglione has two offices. One is located in the main office complex of Anthropology (3302 Posvar Hall): just ask for him there. The other office is 3116 Posvar Hall. His e-mail address (the best way to contact him) is scaglione@pitt.edu; his phone number is 412-648-7512 (8-7512 if you are calling from most campus phones). Recitation instructors have offices at 3115-3125 Posvar Hall. Phone numbers and e-mail addresses will be announced.

V. Tentative Schedule

January 5	Introduction to the Course
January 10	Representations of Pacific Islanders in popular culture
January 12	Political geography and culture areas
January 17	Political geography and culture areas
January 19	Introduction to traditional Polynesian culture Film: <i>Fa'a Samoa</i> (The Samoans, a Polynesian society) (F707)
January 24	Geology and environment
January 26	Prehistory and peopling of the Pacific
January 31	The Seafaring era Video: <i>The Navigators</i> (V1980)

- February 2 The Polynesian culture area
- February 7 The Mead-Freeman Debate
- February 9 Derek Freeman's critique of Mead's Samoan research
Video: *Margaret Mead and Samoa* (V1352)
- February 14 FIRST HOUR EXAM
- February 16 New Guinea: Island of Cultural Diversity
- February 21 European intrusion in Melanesia
Video: *First Contact* (New Guinea Highlands Society) (not in Pitt's collection)
- February 23 The New Guinea Highlands
- February 28 Exchange and Achieved Status
Video: *Ongka's Big Moka* (The Melpa, a Melanesian Highlands Society) (V165)
- March 2 The New Guinea Lowlands
- March 5-12 SPRING RECESS - NO CLASS
- March 14 A non-Austronesian Lowlands tribe: The Abelam
- March 16 An Austronesian Coastal Society: Marshall Lagoon
- March 21 Economics, Ritual Process and Functionalism in Melanesian Society
- March 23 The Melanesian Culture Area
Film: *Land Divers of Melanesia* (Pentecost, Island Melanesia) (F288)
- March 28 SECOND HOUR EXAM
- March 30 Australia
- April 4 Return to Paradise? Contemporary Images of the Pacific
Video: *Lamotrek: Heritage of an Island* (a Micronesian Atoll society) (V214)
- April 6 The Micronesian Culture Area in comparative perspective
- April 11 Dependency or Cooperation? Cultures of Micronesia
- April 13 Contemporary issues
Video: *Lieweila* (Carolinians in the Northern Marianas today) (V236)
- April 18 Contemporary Social and Political Problems

April 20 Course Summary

April 27 (THURSDAY) FINAL EXAM (8:00-9:30 A.M.)