Anthropology 130: Anthropology of the Cultural: From Children’s Perspectives  
Winter Quarter 2008

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Tu/R 9:30 a.m.– 10:45 a.m.  
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Course outline:

The aim of this course is to rethink the concept of "culture (or the cultural)" that has captured the attention of anthropologists since the birth of the discipline. We will do so by looking at the everyday life of "children" who are in the midst of being socialized and socializing others in various corners of the world. "The immaturity of children is a biological fact of life but the ways in which this immaturity is understood and made meaningful is a fact of culture" (Prout & James 1990:7). But how are we to locate distinct cultures in the contemporary world where people and goods constantly (but not necessarily freely) move? In addition to exploring the history of the study of "culture" in anthropology, we will also investigate the global processes that are transforming the notions of not only "culture" but also "childhood."

Requirements:

There are four requirements:
1) Read assigned articles and be prepared for each week’s lectures, class discussion and section discussion. This is the most important requirement. Please understand that it is not my job or my TA’s job to go over the lecture you missed.
2) One in-class mid-term exam. I allow only those students with medical reasons to retake the mid-term exam. Since you are required to attend every class and session, I will not accept “travel” as the reason for retaking the exam. **There is no exception to this rule.**
3) One final take-home exam.
4) One “project” due on Thursday of the 9th week. Beginning in the third week, choose one article every week (newspaper article, magazine article, articles available on internet, or video/movie) concerning the lives of children in any part of the world (the total of 7 articles). Write your thought on each of them (one page, single spaced, free essay), relating to the course themes of culture, children, and globalization. Submit your packet, together with the (copies of) articles you have chosen (no need to add videos, of course).

TA Sections:

Your teaching assistants are:

Your participation in the TA section is required. Your performance in the discussion section will constitute part of your overall grade.

GRADING POLICY

This course teaches you HOW TO THINK, instead of offering you “facts” or “information” for you to remember. There is no one “truth” in the subjects we deal with in this course, but perhaps many “truths” or no truth at all (but what is the “truth” after all?). You are expected to be critical of your own reading, not to simply accept and remember the given information. Consequently, higher grades go to those students who have demonstrated the ability of critical thinking. Express your opinions clearly in writing (we do not accept such statement as “that’s what I meant.” “What you meant” has to be clearly expressed).

Because of the nature of this course, I cannot give you the precise percentage distribution of the importance of all the requirements. Only roughly speaking, I use the following to consider your overall grades.
Class attendance and participating in class discussion: Extremely important  
Mid-term: about 30%  
Final: about 40%  
Project: about 15%  
TA section attendance and participation: about 15%  

**REGRADING POLICY**  
If you would like to ask your TA or me to re-grade your mid-term exam, please observe the following rules.  
1) Read your answer(s) carefully and compare it (or them) to the model answers.  
2) Write the points of your argument.  
3) Submit your written memo together with the original exam to your TA or me.

**Textbooks:**

Renato Rosaldo. *Culture and Truth*.  
Reading Packet available at COPYMAT (some time in mid September) (925 Westwood Blvd. Tel. 310-824-5276).  
*Culture and Truth* is also on reserve at the College Library.

**Reading/Discussion Schedule (tentative, “p” means “in a packet”):**

#There is one “key article” that I use throughout this course.  
Sharon Stephens, "Children and the Politics of Culture in 'Late Capitalism'" (p).  

**Find time to read this article as early as possible.**  

Week 1-2:  
Business.  

**Theoretical theme #1: Universalism (and Cultural Relativism)**  
Read:  
The Declaration of the Rights of the Child (p).  

Week 2-3:  
**Theoretical theme #2: (Universalism and) Cultural Relativism**  
Read:  
Rosaldo, Part I (text).  
Alan Prout and Allison James, "A New Paradigm for the Sociology of Childhood? Provenance, Promise and Problems" (p).  

**INTERLUDE: Ethnography**  
Read:  
B. Malinowski, Introduction to *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*.  

Week 3-4:  
**Theoretical theme #3: Culture vs. Nature (Mead/Freeman Controversy)**  
Video: Margaret Mead in Samoa (made by Derek Freeman)  

Read:  
Excerpts from Margaret Mead, *Growing Up in Samoa*.  
Excerpts from Derek Freeman, *Margaret Mead and Samoa*.  

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--- Midterm Exam (The date of the exam will be announced in class.) ---

Week 5-6:
**Theoretical Theme #4: Globalization (and Cultural Relativism)**
Video: Life and Debt (on the street children in Brazil). (I will also place “Pixote” on reserve at the Powell media library.)
[Video: Child Labor in Bangladesh (This video is not on reserve. YOU MUST SEE IT IN CLASS- THERE IS NO OTHER SHOWING OF THIS VIDEO AS I MUST RETURN IT IMMEDIATELY AFTER.)]

Read:
Maria Mies, “Housewifization International” (a chapter from her book, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*).

Week 6-7:
**Theoretical theme #5: From cultural relativism to border crossing: How are we to locate distinct culturals in the contemporary world?**

Read: Rosaldo, Parts II, III (text).

Week 7-8
**Theoretical theme # 6: How to integrate history/change (macro and micro) into our conceptualization of the cultural?**

Read:
Philip Aries, excerpts from *Centuries of Childhood* (p).
Viviana A. Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child* (excerpts), and a magazine article on “Ritalin,”
I will also refer to the topic of “rites of passages” here.

Week 8-9:
**Theoretical theme #7: Invoking Culture or the Politics of Culture.**

Read:
Virginia R. Dominguez, “Invoking Culture: The Messy Side of ‘Cultural Politics.’”
Kathleen Hall, “There’s a Time to Act English and a Time to Act Indian: The Politics of Identity among British-Sikh Teenagers.”

Week 10:
Conclusion: “Our” Children: Is this also “Child Labor”?  
Read:
Hae-Joang Cho, “Children in the Examination War in South Korea: A Cultural Analysis.”

Remember that your project is due on Thursday of the 9th week.

The due date for the Final Take-home Exam will be announced in class.

A final note: This class is NOT a class on internet. Everything will happen in class, in the lecture and session classrooms. In principle, necessary information is given in class, not on internet.