SOAN 215 Anthropology of America
Dr. Kirsten Scheid
Class Meeting Time: Tuesday-Thursday, 2-3:15
Office Hours: Wednesday 2-4, or by appointment
Office: 102 Jesup Hall, ext. 4368, ks28@aub.edu.lb

Course Description:
A critical examination of conceptions of "mainstream" or "dominant" American culture, and how thinking this way can naturalize American actions and interactions with it. Using ethnographic case material, the course will explore cultural systems and social structures in the contemporary United States, offering an introduction to anthropological approaches to the study of complex societies.
Textbooks:
• Course Packet at the AUB Bookstore

Units:
1) Applying Anthropology to America: What is “American Culture”?
2) America as a Ritualist Culture: Birth and the Hospital
3) America as a Primitive Mind, as Myth: Football, Rockstars, and Disney
4) America as a Society of Tribes and Castes: Class Struggle
5) America as a Nature or Performance: Races and Faces
6) American as a Past Present: Historical and Contemporary Ethnic Cleansing

Student Learning Outcomes
At the end of this course students will be able to:
• demonstrate proficiency in basic anthropological concepts and terminology
• understand “culture” as it is used and understood by sociocultural anthropologists
• recognize areas in which anthropological knowledge can be applied, especially in the region
• distinguish standard anthropological theories and associated methodologies
• undertake a review of literature on a specific topic
• analyze contrasting arguments and articulate their strengths and weaknesses
• understand multiple approaches to the study of complex societies
• write a concise, articulate, eloquent critique of an academic argument
Course Format and Requirements:
The course is an interactive, reading-based course with a strong essay component. You will be given repeated feed-back for your essay. In general, the class requires active participation, meaning you will benefit from your classmates, too. You should have a notebook with you for every session and take notes because some of the main theoretical and conceptual material will be available only from my lectures. (I do not circulate my lecture notes; so don’t even ask!) We will watch several movies during the course which we will discuss together. Students are responsible for work assignments, readings, lecture content, and classroom participation.

Students will be evaluated on the basis of

• Midterm exam, objective: 20%
• Final exam, objective and subjective (open book): 25%
• 2 pop quizzes, objective on readings: 5% each = 10%
• One essay done in 4 stages: 20% altogether
• 5 Reaction Papers, 4 Discussion Preparation Guides, and 4 Key Issues → Count toward class participation (see below)
• Class Participation: 25%

What’s Expected of Students for Class:

• Reaction papers are to be completed for their assigned discussion dates, which appear in the syllabus. They should be typed, ranging from 1.5-2 pages, double-spaced, 12 point Arial or Times font (c. 400 words). A sample is included in this syllabus. Bring your paper with you to class. I will NOT accept late papers or hand-written ones. See attached samples.

• 3 Key Issues Each student is expected to generate 3 Key Issues found in the readings to be turned in (hand-written on a single sheet of paper with your name, id #, and date at top) at the beginning of each class as a part of classroom participation.

• Discussion Preparation Guides are sheets with questions you fill out as you read that help you develop an analytical, reflexive mode of reading. You will discuss your prepared guides in groups of 3, and your participation in the discussion will be graded. Blank sheets can be downloaded from Moodle.

• Pop Quizzes will focus on the content and argument of the readings, definitions of the main concepts covered in that section, and your ability to apply them.

• Classroom participation is an important part of your grade; therefore, regular attendance is necessary.
Important to Know:

• There are no makeups for pop quizzes. If you have an excuse from the AUBMC, you will be exempted from the quiz.

• Reaction statements will NOT be accepted LATE. Period.

• It is your duty to ensure that your assignment uploads before the deadline. Please note that sometimes AUB’s internet is sometimes slow; if you postpone submitting to the last minute you take a great risk that may affect your grade.

• Those students who have questions not addressed in class, who are experiencing difficulties of any kind, or who wish to pursue a class discussion further, should see me during office hours or schedule an appointment.

• Class members are expected to have their Moodle ID and AUB address activated. Important information regarding the course will be posted to the class’s Moodle site.

• Always keep a copy of your assignments!

• I do take attendance regularly. Late-arrivals (> 10 minutes late) will be counted absent. More than 7 absences in the first 10 weeks of class (by Nov. 18, 2014) will lead to your dismissal.

Class Participation and Attendance Policy:

By attending class and participating in discussion you contribute to the learning atmosphere. Your absence diminishes from the intensity of classroom thinking, just as your silence contributes to a sense of passivity. Raise a ruckus – but an informed one!

Your active participation will be evaluated as part of your final grade in terms of:

• arriving on time and with your reading
• preparing the in-class material
• sharing your ideas based on assigned texts and course concepts
• listening attentively and respectfully to others in class
• taking notes on lectures, discussions, and presentations (on paper)
• not even APPEARING to own a phone (see “Electronic Etiquette Policy”)
• not eating
• not leaving the room frequently or unnecessarily

Contacting Me:
You are strongly encouraged to visit me during my office hours, in Jesup 102, where you can find me one Wednesdays 2-4. You don’t need an appointment to do that. If it is impossible for you to come during that time, you can make an appointment with me for an alternative time.

I can be reached by email, ks28@aub.edu.lb. Allow up to 24 hours for me to respond.

It is imperative that you check your AUB email account daily. I will use that to update you on assignments and readings. You are responsible for any information sent to you there by me or by the University.

**Academic Integrity:**

Formulating your own response to ideas presented in texts or class is a fundamental component of the learning process. It also provides the main medium by which your instructor can evaluate your skills acquisition and intervene where necessary to ensure your success. Therefore, your resorting to copying others’ words or thoughts demonstrates a breakdown in the learning process. Moreover, any use of another’s work as your own obstructs the teaching process and will not be tolerated.

AUB offers an on-line tutorial that explains exactly what plagiarism involves and how to avoid committing it. You are required to take this tutorial and pass its test by the end of your first year on campus. Once you have taken it you will be held responsible for your commitment to academic integrity. Turn-It-In may be used to verify the integrity of your work. I deal with plagiarism severely. The first time I find evidence of plagiarism, I will give you a “0” for the assignment and submit a report of the event and copy of the work to the FAS Student Disciplinary Affairs Committee. The second time I will pursue your dismissal from the class.