

Lecture Tuesday, February 6

- I. The goal of anthropology is to describe, analyze, compare and explain different cultures.
 - A. The importance of understanding human cultures
 1. Human Beings need to solve everyday life problems, such as how to:
 - a. Interact with members within or outside their own communities
 - b. Lend meaning to one's life
 - c. Feed, clothe and house one's self within one's own environment.
 2. Through cross-cultural comparison, similarities and differences can be analyzed to understand the makeup of the human species, by comparing:
 - a. Different cultures in various geographical regions which are in frequent contact with each other and which rely on each other in a global economy.
 - B. Anthropologists study the evolution of our species over all time frames and all geographical regions. This leads to:
 1. Scientific and humanistic perspectives for explaining human behavior.
 2. Projections of future cultures that may result from space colonies.

C. Differences between Anthropology and other subjects:

1. Human behavior is studied from many perspectives instead of just a western (ethnocentric) view. This acknowledges that:
 - a. Different human groups have different goals and values
 - b. Views of reality may be directly affected by different environments and technologies.

2. Anthropologists employ a **holistic approach**—combining all elements of biology, history, cultures and the environment together. Define **holism** as an approach that considers culture, history, language and biology essential to a complete understanding of human society. Holism is necessary because:
 - a. Human behavior cannot be adequately examined by focusing on only one single feature
 - b. Every aspect of human behavior is meaningful and necessary for understanding the entire story of human community.

II. Areas of Specialization in Anthropology

A. Cultural Anthropologists study human cultures and societies.

1. Society—a group of people who depend on one another for survival and well being.
 - a. Traditionally, societies shared a common geographical location
 - b. With modern technologies (including transportation and electronic), societies can extend beyond a specific geographical location and are becoming increasingly global entities

2. Culture—major way in which human beings adapt to their environments and give meaning to their lives. Culture includes
 - a. ideas and behaviors learned not genetically inherited
 - b. Human made and modified products such as tools and dwelling.
3. Cultural anthropologists study the origins and development of human behavior by observing and analyzing
 - a. Universal rules that govern human behavior
 - b. The way societies adapt to differing environments
 - c. How people understand the world and their place in it.
 - d. Ways in which cultures change through new inventions and through other cultures' pressure and coercion.
 - e. Description of the cultural past or ethnohistory
4. Cultural anthropologist can contribute to public debate and help change public policy.

B. Anthropological Linguistics is concerned with understanding language and its relation to culture.

1. Human speech is more complex and used more extensively than communication systems of other animals.

2. Language studies can provide clues into culture by:
 - a. Connecting linguistic relationships of different languages with the histories of the speakers
 - b. Reflects those things considered important to people through their vocabulary.
 - c. Viewing individuals' use of performance to change and modify the meaning of their words.

3. Linguistic Anthropologists want to understand
 - a. How languages are structured
 - b. How languages are learned
 - c. How communication takes place

C. Archaeologists study past cultures through the reconstruction of material remains.

1. Artifact—any object that has been made, used, or altered by human beings. These include:
 - a) pottery, tools, garbage, ruins of buildings and burial and writings by ancient people
2. Features—artifacts that cannot be easily moved. These include
 - c. Ruins of buildings
 - d. Burials
 - e. Fire pits
3. Focus of archaeological research
 - a. Reconstruct the past life-ways of other cultures based on the pattern of artifacts left behind.
 - b. Understand the context in which things are found.
 - c. Interpret an artifact's function by its location and precise position in which it is found

b. Understand how cultures change through time

4. Subfields within Archaeology include

a. Historical Archaeology

b. Urban Archaeology

c. Cultural resource management—the protection and Management of archaeological, archival and Architectural resources

C. Physical or biological anthropology—involving both biological and cultural adaptation

1. Human adaptation is biocultural—involving both biology and culture in a feedback process

2. Paleonanthropologists study human origins through the fossil record (including early humans and relevant non-human forms).

a) They study the evolution of culture by understanding the development of the human brain

b) They can learn how cultural adaptation can replace the slow process of biological adaptation

3. Human variation researchers are concerned with the physiological differences among modern humans which include

a) Osteology—study of human skeletal system

b) Human nutrition

c) Population statistics

4. Contemporary hunting and gathering studies can fill in the gaps in our knowledge of early behavior among humans' foraging ancestors

5. Primatologists study the morphology (physical structure) chemistry, physiology and behavior in humans' closest animal relatives.
 - a) Non-human primates includes apes and, monkeys and chimps
 - b) Chimps share nearly 99 per cent of genes with humans.
 - c) Primate studies can take place in laboratories, zoos or out in the wild.

D. Applied Anthropologists develop solutions to present day social, political and economic problems in a wide variety of cultural contexts.

1. Cultural anthropologists contribute to applied anthropology by:
 - a) Solving problems of restoration, water management and agricultural productivity
 - b) Addressing problems of legal and criminal justice system and suggesting alternative forms of conflict resolution.
 - c) Implementing more efficient mental health and educational policies
 - d) Improving healthcare, diet and disease control.
 - e) Promoting the welfare of tribal and indigenous people throughout the world.

III. Understanding Human Differences

A. Ethnocentrism—the belief that one's own culture is superior to any other and that other cultures should comply with one's own standard.

1. Ethnocentrism in western cultures has greater consequences than in smaller less technologically advanced or geographically isolated peoples. This is because
 - a) Advances in technology lead people to believe that industrialized societies are superior to others, especially if there is a strong military force.
 - b) People learn to want an abundant amount of consumer goods
2. Positive affect of Ethnocentrism: Ethnocentrism helps hold societies together by:
 - a) Perpetuating cultural values
 - b) Motivates people to survive
 - c) Instilling the social idea that one's own society's way is the best way.
3. Ethnocentrism can be maladaptive if it prevents building bridges between cultures
4. Ethnocentrism:
 - a) Leads to racism—the belief that some human populations are superior to others because of inherited, genetically transmitted characteristics.
 - b) Underlies much of the institutional inequality that characterizes modern history.

B. Anthropology contributes to our understanding of human biological diversity.

1. The human species shows extremely low level of skeletal and blood type diversity.
2. Peoples from nearer geographical regions tend to share more similarities than people further away.
3. There is wide diversity in human shapes and skin color.

C. There is no agreed-upon consistent system of racial classification.

1. Different cultures construct racial categories differently than Americans
2. Race is a social concept not a biological concept
3. Racial classification is based on random and arbitrary characteristics.
4. More variation within alleged races than between races.
5. Franz Boas, founder of American Anthropology, argued for biopsychological equality—the idea that although individuals differ, all humans have the equal capacity for culture.

D. Scientific arguments against “race” as a biological concept

1. No groups of humans have ever been isolated long enough from another to make it biologically different from other groups
2. Humans’ equal capacity for culture makes all human beings members of a single race
3. The selection of characteristics used in the past to define race is arbitrary and is based solely on visual characteristics and personal preference of the researcher

4. There is an inability to describe variation within human species since all people have equal amount of genetic variation from each other.
5. There has been repeated independent emergence of so-called racial characteristics in different populations with no direct genetic relationship (Europeans are more closely related to both Africans and New Guineans than either is to each other).

IV. Anthropological Approaches to Culture

A. Cultural Relativism—the idea that people's values and customs must be understood in terms of the culture of which they are apart.

1. Bias and personal judgment need to cease for they may distort a correct view of that culture
2. Stress Understanding not Judgment
 - a) Moral Relativism—the idea that because no universal standard of behavior exists people should not judge between good and evil. This is different from cultural relativism.
 - b) All cultures make absolute sense to their own members
 - c) Anthropologists must understand members' logic, even if they do approve of the cultural practice.
 - d) Cultural relativism makes us see that there are many ways to solve similar problems.
3. No Superior/Inferior culture
4. No primitive culture

B. Anthropological Perspectives:

1. Emic—provides an insider's view of perspective (native or member of culture point of view). It
 - a) Attempts thinking and acting as a member of culture
 - b) Helps develop our ability to look at our own culture from the outsider or etic point of view.
2. Etic—provides an outsider perspective (an analysis that is not part of the native's cultural awareness).
 - a) It helps outsiders to obtain sense of what it means to be a member of that culture
 - b) Since it lies outside a native's awareness, research can be tested and may be meaningful for the natives and the basis for constructive change
 - c) It aims to generate scientific theory.
3. Emic and Etic are complimentary perspectives.