ANTH 1010-100 ▪ University of Virginia ▪ Spring 2017
Introduction to Anthropology

EXAM 3 – POSTMORTEM – MAY 12, 2017

OVERVIEW

This is your last exam memo! Exam 3 was the hardest so far, and there was a slight dip in average scores. Still, I was once again very pleased with the general outcome, as well as the overall level of engagement you showed, collectively, with the most recent material. Especially Bourgois and Schonberg's *Righteous Dopefiend*, which was an intellectually challenging and emotionally difficult book to digest. I trust that the exam also felt harder in part because it fell during finals, requiring you to manage your studying against other priorities, which is normal.

As usual, you'll find aggregate data at the end of this document, showing distributions for each essay question, each exam, and each student's final course grade. Overall, the class did a great job, and I'm happy with that. More important than grades, to me, is getting you to think deeply and in new ways, and I gather, from some of the feedback Erin and I have been receiving, that this happened for more than a few of you. Which makes me even happier.

This memo has additional info on how we graded each short-answer and essay question. (For results to the multiple choice questions, follow the link you received this week in your email, sent via Google Forms.)

SHORT ANSWERS – SAMPLE ANSWERS IN ITALICS

1. From about the mid-1970s through the 1990s anthropology experienced what has come to be known as a "postmodern crisis." Briefly describe the crisis and two significant ways in which it has influenced anthropological research.

   The postmodern crisis questioned the power dynamics involved in the production of academic knowledge, and cast doubt on the epistemic authority of Western science and logic. Thanks in part to anthropology's success (as the *discipline that had long made cultural relativism central to its project), postmodernist scholars questioned the bases of ethnographic inquiry as well as its tendency to "otherize" its subjects and to categorize those "others" all too neatly. Two significant influences on anthropologists were (1) a heightened awareness of one's position as researcher (reflexivity) and (2) efforts to experiment with alternative forms of narrative and representation in, say, ethnographic writing, audio, film and photography.*

   [Other closely related influences have included cultural critique and the critique of "culture"; the anthropology of anthropology ("deconstruction"); various forms of applied anthropology as antidotes to postmodern navel-gazing; political engagement; etc. Note that many of you conflated the postmodern crisis with anthropology's much earlier rejection of 19th century racialist social science and social evolutionism. Cultural relativity and Boasian approaches helped eventually *set the stage* for postmodern critique, but they aren't at all the same thing as the crisis itself.]

Q2 Rubric	Showed some effort, knowledge?	1 point
	Cogent DESCRIPTION of pomo?	+2 points (1 if close or muddled)
	Identified two clear INFLUENCES?	+1 for each well articulated example

2. Identify and briefly describe three research projects encountered in our studies that generally fall under the category of applied (including engaged/public/activist) anthropology.

    Some good options:

    ■ *Bourgois and Schonberg's ethnographic work among homeless heroin addicts in San Francisco; they became actively involved in their research participant's efforts to get off of drugs and better their lives, while also serving as policy critics and advisers.*
    ■ *Human Terrain System; while hugely controversial, it was designed by an anthropologist and attempted to use explicitly anthropological insights in the service of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.*
    ■ *Medical anthropologists working for the World Health Organization during the Ebola outbreak; helped organize treatment and prevention services with attention to the different cultural contexts of the affected areas.*
    ■ *Charles Hale's work (or Marcus Colchester's) in Latin America; they have supported indigenous land claims in the face of corporate and state power.*
    ■ *Paul Farmer's Partners In Health; a global nonprofit organization that helps the sick and marginalized while addressing the larger socioeconomic and systemic causes of poverty.*
    ■ *Ethnographically based market analyses; for example, the young researcher who studies how motor-vehicle consumers interact with each other, and with their cars, while driving.*
    ■ *Writing accessibly for public audiences about relevant research — for example, in* Sapiens.

    [Some of you mentioned "Providence Talks." While this did involve home-based sociolinguistic intervention, it was not designed by anthropologists or explicitly anthropological. As we discussed in class, indeed, its lack of sociocultural depth may be seen as one of its deficiencies.]

Q2 Rubric	Got ONE applied research project?	1 point
	Got TWO more?	+2 points for each
	DESCRIPTION lacked clarity?	-1 or -2 points if muddled or inaccurate

3. What are the three main tenets of ethical practice that anthropologists are expected to follow in their ethnographic research?

    ■ *Do no harm.* [Accepted: "mitigate risk, "reduce harm," etc.]

    ■ *Do not deceive.* [Accepted "transparency" and some versions of "represent yourself truthfully to informants." Did not accept "report true facts," as this lies beyond the specific question of *ethnographic* ethics; it is quite simply the very basis of all research.]

    ■ *Obtain consent.* [Accepted: "Do not coerce" and "voluntary participation." Also, as "informed consent" (another good answer) contains within it an element of "Do not deceive," this counted for two points, if it was the *only* correct answer or one of *only two* correct answers.]

    [Note that "objectivity" (lack of "bias," etc.) isn't an ethical practice per se but an intellectual disposition — and, indeed, one that many anthropologists are deeply skeptical about. Most of us firmly claim to be *empirical*, but posit the impossibility of pure objectivity as a *finding of the discipline itself*. As for "cultural relativity," which some of you fell back on: Certainly this ideas is hugely important, but — as with "truth-telling" — this has become a central premise of doing anthropology in the first place. It's not one of the primary ethical rules as such. And consider this. You can be culturally relative in your perspective, but totally unethical in your methodology. You can also, by the same token, employ ethical methods, but fail to be culturally relativistic in your analysis.]

Q3 Rubric	Got ONE main ethical practice?	1 point
	Got the other TWO?	+2 points each
	Lacked CLARITY in any of them?	-1 or -2 points if muddled or inaccurate

ESSAYS – SAMPLE ANSWERS IN APPENDIX, PHOTOCOPIED

The response rates show that, on Part II, you gravitated toward addressing "the cultural force of emotions" by more than a 2-1 margin. While I think prompts 2 and 3 were equally difficult, clearly most of you felt more comfortable discussing Rosaldo over Hale, and your performance here falls on a roughly normal continuum. Those who answered question No. 2, by contrast, split rather unevenly between higher and lower grades, suggesting that respondents either knew this material well or didn't but fell back on it because they weren't comfortable with Rosaldo. All in all, this pattern makes sense to me and is consistent with our exam design.

As with exams 1 and 2, I've posted A-range responses as sample essays on Collab in the usual place. There is one sample for each question. For more on the standards we apply in evaluating your essays, see the letter-grade rubric in the course policies document.

I'll let the samples stand for themselves as excellent essays. But a few consistent problems and errors in many responses merit highlighting.

The most significant is that each prompt had, essentially, three parts. Many of you privileged the first part, which chiefly asked for descriptive and/or summative information, and did an outstanding job there, but as a result left little room for the context, analysis and/or argument expected of you in the second and third parts. While the quality and detail of your description certainly may have helped mitigate that problem, there was no way to earn more than a high C or (at best) a low-to-mid B on the essay overall if the rest of the prompt was only minimally addressed or ignored.

There were two other common problems, both pertaining to *Righteous Dopefiends* and stemming from the book's conclusions: "Good enough" public policy refers to interventions that Bourgois and Schonberg *support* — mainly because they meet addicts where they are, socially, reduce harm, and resist rationalistic or market-oriented ideologies that drive the logic of most drug-abuse treatment and welfare and housing programs. In other words, the authors mean "good enough" in the *good* sense, not the bad — though of course, they *do* have a lot to say about *actually bad* policies, as many of you rightly noted.

Finally, many of you failed to point out that Bourgois and Schonberg feel especially responsible for helping their research participants as a matter of intellectual honesty as well as humanism: They contend that after revealing so many systemic hardships faced by homeless addicts, doing nothing about it or using the data simply to indulge in social theorizing would constitute a self-serving and ethically untenable *intellectual voyeurism*. Some of you connected this impulse with their specialized knowledge, without actually stating it explicitly, and we took that into account. But others addressed this question with tautological propositions saying little more than: "It's good to help people. So their work demands that they help people." However, this would make Bourgois and Schonberg *no more responsible* than the rest of us, and does not on its own explain why the authors believe "their work in particular demands public engagement."

Hope that helps clarify things a bit. For more, see the concluding chapter of the book!

Have a great summer, everyone! –RIA

Exam 3 Grade Distribution, by Question

Legend:
- Essay 1 (Righteous Dopefiend)
- Essay 2 (activist anthropology)
- Essay 3 (cultural force of emotions)

Exam 3 Grade Distribution, by Average Scores

Legend:
- plus
- mid
- minus

Final Aggregate Grade Reports, by Student

Legend:
- plus
- mid
- minus