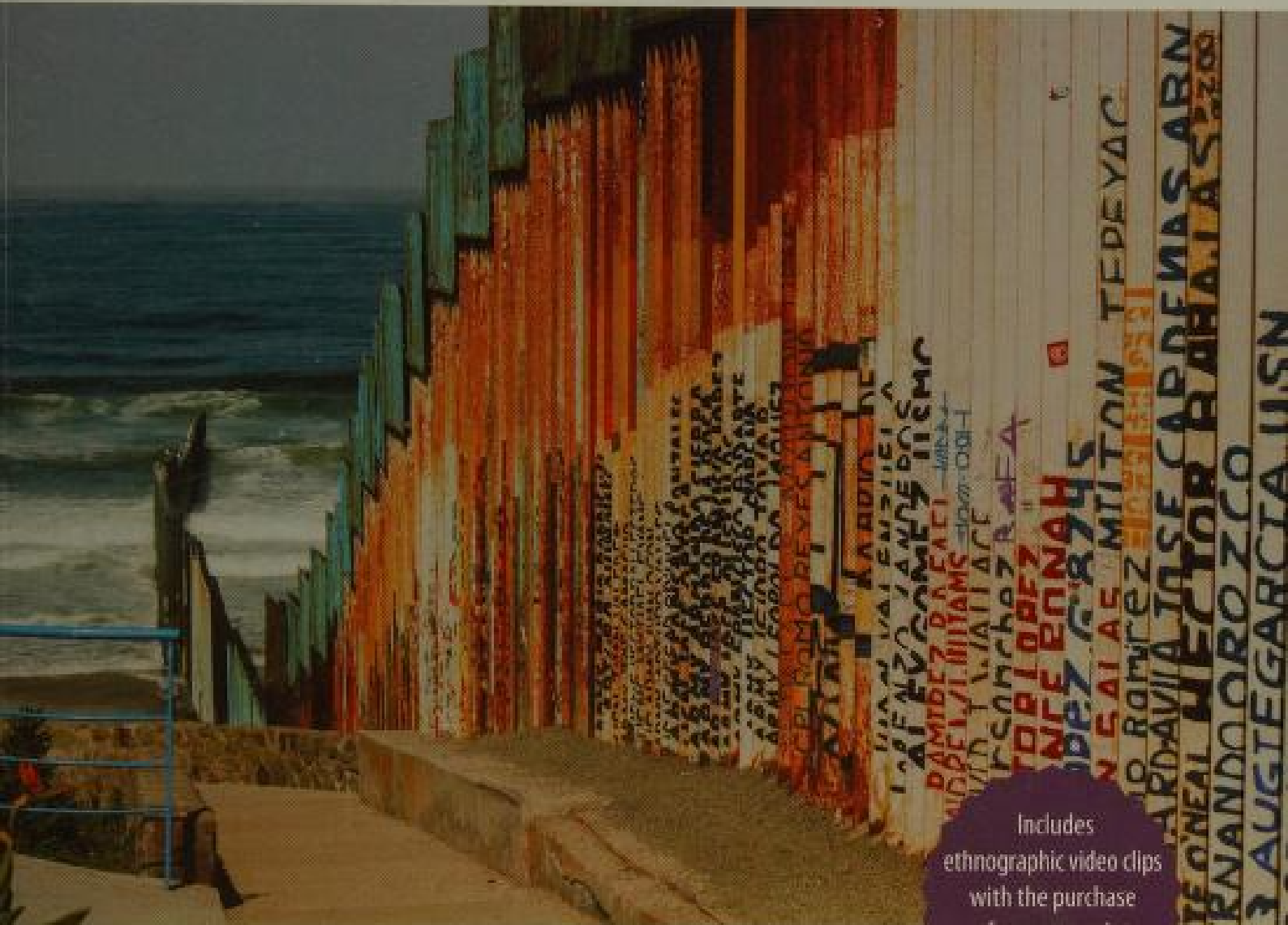


Asking Questions about Cultural Anthropology

A Concise Introduction | THIRD EDITION



Includes
ethnographic video clips
with the purchase
of any new print
or eBook

Robert L. Welsch | Luis A. Vivanco

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Not for Profit. All for Education.

Oxford University Press USA is a not-for-profit publisher dedicated to offering the highest quality textbooks at the best possible prices. We believe that it is important to provide everyone with access to superior textbooks at affordable prices. Oxford University Press textbooks are 30%-70% less expensive than comparable books from commercial publishers.

The press is a department of the University of Oxford, and our publishing proudly serves the university's mission: promoting excellence in research, scholarship, and education around the globe. We do not publish in order to generate revenue: we generate revenue in order to publish and also to fund scholarships, provide start-up grants to early-stage researchers, and refurbish libraries.

What does this mean to you?
It means that Oxford University Press USA published this book to best support your studies while also being mindful of your wallet.

Not for Profit. All for Education.

As a not-for-profit publisher, Oxford University Press USA is uniquely situated to offer the highest quality scholarship at the best possible prices.

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

*Asking Questions
about Cultural
Anthropology*
A Concise Introduction

THIRD EDITION

Robert L. Welsch; Luis A. Vivanco

Carefully scratch off the silver
coating to see your personal
redemption code.

VIA OXFORD
learning link

Visit [www.oup.com/he/
welsch-vivanco-concise-3e](http://www.oup.com/he/welsch-vivanco-concise-3e)

Select the edition you are using and
the student resources for that edition.

Click the link to upgrade your access
to the student resources.

Follow the on-screen instructions.

Enter your personal
redemption code when prompted.

**This code can be used only
once and cannot be shared!**

If the code has been scratched off
when you receive it, the code may
not be valid. Once the code has
been scratched off, this access
card cannot be returned to the
publisher. You may buy access at
[www.oup.com/he/
welsch-vivanco-concise-3e](http://www.oup.com/he/welsch-vivanco-concise-3e)

The code on this card is valid for
2 years from the date of first
purchase. Complete terms
and conditions are available at
learninglink.oup.com.

Access length: 6 months from
redemption of the code.

VIA YOUR SCHOOL'S LEARNING
MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Log in to your instructor's course.

When you click a link to a protected resource,
you will be prompted to register for access.

Follow the on-screen instructions.

Enter your personal
redemption code when prompted.

For assistance with code redemption or registration,
please contact customer support at
learninglink.support@oup.com.

Asking Questions About
Cultural Anthropology

A CONCISE INTRODUCTION
THIRD EDITION

Asking Questions About

Cultural Anthropology

A CONCISE INTRODUCTION
THIRD EDITION

Robert L. Welsch

DARTMOUTH COLLEGE

Luis A. Vivanco

UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

New York Oxford
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship,
and education by publishing worldwide. Oxford is a registered trade mark of
Oxford University Press in the UK and certain other countries.

Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, United States of America.

© 2023, 2019, 2016 by Oxford University Press

For titles covered by Section 112 of the US Higher Education
Opportunity Act, please visit www.oup.com/us/he for the latest
information about pricing and alternate formats.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in
a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the
prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press, or as expressly permitted
by law, by license, or under terms agreed with the appropriate reproduction
rights organization. Inquiries concerning reproduction outside the scope of the
above should be sent to the Rights Department, Oxford University Press,
at the address above.

You must not circulate this work in any other form
and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer.

CIP data is on file at the Library of Congress.
9780197618875

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed by Quad/Graphics, Inc., Mexico

Contents in Brief

Robert L. Welsch

To Sarah for her love and support, and to my students who have nudged me toward a broader and more complex view of the human condition and humanity's remarkable diversity.

Luis A. Vivanco

To Peggy, Isabel, Felipe, and Camila for their love and support, and to my students who have taught me much about the importance of inspired teaching and learning.

Contents in Brief

- 1 Anthropology**
Asking Questions About Humanity 1
- 2 Culture**
Giving Meaning to Human Lives 26
- 3 Ethnography**
Studying Culture 49
- 4 Linguistic Anthropology**
Relating Language and Culture 72
- 5 Globalization and Culture**
Understanding Global Interconnections 97
- 6 Sustainability**
Environment and Foodways 124
- 7 Economics**
Working, Sharing, and Buying 152
- 8 Politics**
Cooperation, Conflict, and Power Relations 178
- 9 Race, Ethnicity, and Class**
Understanding Identity and Social Inequality 203
- 10 Gender, Sex, and Sexuality**
The Fluidity of Maleness and Femaleness 227
- 11 Kinship, Marriage, and the Family**
Love, Sex, and Power 250
- 12 Religion**
Ritual and Belief 272
- 13 The Body**
Biocultural Perspectives on Health and Illness 296
- 14 Materiality**
Constructing Social Relationships and Meanings with Things 323

Contents

Letter From the Authors xix

About the Authors xxiii

Preface xxiv

Acknowledgments xxx

1 Anthropology

Asking Questions About Humanity • 1

How Did Anthropology Begin? 3

The Disruptions of Industrialization 3

The Theory of Evolution 5

Colonial Origins of Cultural Anthropology 5

Anthropology as a Global Discipline 6

What Do the Four Subfields of Anthropology Have in Common? 7

Culture 9

Cultural Relativism 9

Human Diversity 10

Change 11

Holism 12

How Do Anthropologists Know What They Know? 13

The Scientific Method in Anthropology 13

When Anthropology Is Not a Science: Interpreting Cultures 16

How Do Anthropologists Put Their Knowledge to Work in the World? 18

Applied and Practicing Anthropology 18

Mary Amuyunzu-Nyamongo: Bringing Cultural Knowledge to Health Programs in Kenya 18

Davina Two Bears: Applied Archaeology on the Navajo Reservation 19

James McKenna: The Naturalness of Co-sleeping 19

Marybeth Nevins: Supporting the Sustainability of Endangered Languages 20

What Ethical Obligations Do Anthropologists Have? 22

Do No Harm 22

Take Responsibility for Your Work 23

Share Your Findings 23

 **THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL LIFE** *Anthropologists Are Innovators* 17

 **THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL LIFE** *Key Characteristics of Anthropologists in the Workplace* 21

 **A WORLD IN MOTION** *George A. Dorsey and the Anthropology of Immigration in the Early Twentieth Century* 4

2 Culture

Giving Meaning to Human Lives • 26

What Is Culture? 28

Elements of Culture 28

Culture Is Learned 29

Culture Uses Symbols 30

Cultures Are Dynamic, Always Adapting and Changing 31

Culture Is Integrated with Daily Experience 32

Culture Shapes Everybody's Life 33

Culture Is Shared 33

Cultural Understanding Involves Overcoming Ethnocentrism 35

Defining Culture in This Book 36

If Culture Is Always Changing, Why Does It Feel So Stable? 37

Symbols 37

Values 38

Norms 38

Traditions 38

How Do Social Institutions Express Culture? 40

Culture and Social Institutions 40

American Culture Expressed Through Breakfast Cereals and Sexuality 41

Can Anybody Own Culture? 43

 **THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL LIFE:** *Cultural Anthropology and Human Possibilities* 34

 **ANTHROPOLOGIST AS PROBLEM SOLVER:** *Michael Ames and Collaborative Museum Exhibits* 45

3 Ethnography

Studying Culture • 49

What Distinguishes Ethnographic Fieldwork from Other Types of Social Research? 51

Fieldwork 52

Seeing the World from "the Native's Point of View" 52

Avoiding Cultural "Tunnel Vision" 53

How Do Anthropologists Actually Do Ethnographic Fieldwork? 54

- Participant Observation: Disciplined “Hanging Out” 54
- Interviews: Asking and Listening 56
- Taking Fieldnotes 56

What Other Methods Do Cultural Anthropologists Use? 60

- Comparative Method 60
- Genealogical Method 62
- Life Histories 63
- Ethnohistory 64
- Rapid Appraisals 64
- Action Research 64
- Anthropology at a Distance 65
- Analyzing Secondary Materials 65
- Special Issues Facing Anthropologists Studying Their Own Societies 66

What Unique Ethical Dilemmas Do Ethnographers Face? 67

- Protecting Informant Identity 67
- Anthropology, Spying, and War 68

A WORLD IN MOTION: *Transnational Migration, Ethnographic Mobility, and Digital Fieldwork* 61

4

Linguistic Anthropology

Relating Language and Culture • 72

How Do Anthropologists Study Language? 74

Where Does Language Come From? 74

- Evolutionary Perspectives on Language 75
- Call Systems and Gestures 75
- Teaching Apes to Use Sign Language 75
- Historical Linguistics: Studying Language Origins and Change 76
- Genetic Models of Language Change 76
- Non-genetic Models of Linguistic Change: Languages in Contact 77

How Does Language Actually Work? 77

- Descriptive Linguistics 78
- Sociolinguistics 80

Does Language Shape How We Experience the World? 83

- The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis 83
- Hopi Notions of Time 84
- Ethnoscience and Color Terms 85
- Is The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis Correct? 85

If Language Is Always Changing, Why Does It Seem So Stable? 86

Linguistic Change, Stability, and National Policy 87

Language Stability Parallels Cultural Stability 89

How Does Language Relate to Social Power and Inequality? 90

Language Ideology 90

Gendered Language Styles 91

Language and the Legacy of Colonialism 91

Language Ideology and New Media Technologies 92

 **A WORLD IN MOTION:** *The Emergence of a New Language in the Northern Territory of Australia* 88

 **ANTHROPOLOGIST AS PROBLEM SOLVER** *Helping Communities Preserve Endangered Languages* 93

5 Globalization and Culture

Understanding Global Interconnections • 97

Is the World Really Getting Smaller? 99

Defining Globalization 99

The World We Live In 101

What Are the Outcomes of Global Integration? 104

Colonialism and World Systems Theory 105

Cultures of Migration 106

Resistance at the Periphery 107

Globalization and Localizing Identities 107

Doesn't Everyone Want to Be Developed? 113

What Is Development? 114

Development Anthropology 114

Anthropology of Development 115

Change on Their Own Terms 117

If the World Is Not Becoming Homogenized, What Is Actually Happening? 117

Cultural Convergence Theories 118

Hybridization 119

How Can Anthropologists Study Global Interconnections? 120

Defining an Object of Study 120

Multi-Sited Ethnography 121

 **THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL LIFE:** *Coldplay and the Global Citizen Festival* 109

 **A WORLD IN MOTION:** *Instant Ramen Noodles Take Over the Globe* 112

6 Sustainability

Environment and Foodways • 124

Do All People See Nature in the Same Way? 126

The Human–Nature Divide? 126

The Cultural Landscape 126

How Do People Secure an Adequate, Meaningful, and Environmentally Sustainable Food Supply? 128

Modes of Subsistence 129

Food, Culture, and Meaning 132

How Does Non-Western Knowledge of Nature and Agriculture Relate to Science? 135

Ethnoscience 136

Traditional Ecological Knowledge 136

How Are Industrial Agriculture and Economic Globalization Linked to Increasing Environmental and Health Problems? 138

Population and Environment 138

Ecological Footprint 139

Industrial Foods, Sedentary Lives, and the Nutrition Transition 142

Anthropology Confronts Climate Change 144

Are Industrialized Western Societies the Only Ones to Conserve Nature? 146

Anthropogenic Landscapes 147

The Culture of Modern Nature Conservation 147

Environmentalism's Alternative Paradigms 148

 **ANTHROPOLOGIST AS PROBLEM SOLVER:** *Urban Black Food Justice with Ashanté Reese* 141

 **A WORLD IN MOTION:** *Migrant Caravans, Global Warming, and Ecological Refugees* 145

7 Economics

Working, Sharing, and Buying • 152

Is Money Really the Measure of All Things? 154

Culture, Economics, and Value 154

The Neoclassical Perspective 156

The Substantivist–Formalist Debate 156

The Marxist Perspective 158

The Cultural Economics Perspective 158

So, How is Value Established? 160

How Does Culture Shape the Value and Meaning of Money? 161

The Types and Cultural Dimensions of Money 161

Money and the Distribution of Power 163

Why Is Gift Exchange Such an Important Part of All Societies? 164

Gift Exchange and Economy: Two Classic Approaches 165

What Is the Point of Owning Things? 168

Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Property 168

Appropriation and Consumption 169

Does Capitalism Have Distinct Cultures? 171

Culture and Social Relations on Wall Street 171

Entrepreneurial Capitalism Among Malays 172

 THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL LIFE: *The Economics of Anthropology* 162 **ANTHROPOLOGIST AS PROBLEM SOLVER *Jim Yong Kim's Holistic, On-the-Ground Approach to Fighting Poverty* 173****8 Politics***Cooperation, Conflict, and Power Relations* • 178**Does Every Society Have a Government? 180**

The Idea of "Politics" and the Problem of Order 180

Structural-Functionalist Models of Political Stability 181

Neo-Evolutionary Models of Political Organization: Bands, Tribes, Chiefdoms, and States 182

Challenges to Traditional Political Anthropology 182

What Is Political Power? 184

Defining Political Power 184

Political Power Is Action-Oriented 184

Political Power Is Structural 186

Political Power Is Gendered 187

Political Power in Non-State Societies 187

The Political Power of the Contemporary Nation-State 189

Why Do Some Societies Seem More Violent Than Others? 192

What Is Violence? 193

Violence and Culture 193

Explaining the Rise of Violence in Our Contemporary World 195

How Do People Avoid Aggression, Brutality, and War? 197

What Disputes Are "About" 197

How People Manage Disputes 198

Is Restoring Harmony Always the Best Way? 199

 THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL LIFE: *An Anthropological Politician?* 186 **ANTHROPOLOGIST AS PROBLEM SOLVER *Maxwell Owusu and Democracy in Ghana* 191**

9 Race, Ethnicity, and Class

Understanding Identity and Social Inequality • 203

Is Race Biological? 205

The Biological Meanings (and Meaningless) of “Human Races” 206

Race Does Have Biological Consequences 207

How Is Race Culturally Constructed? 208

The Construction of Blackness and Whiteness in Colonial Virginia and Beyond 209

Racialization in Latin America 210

Saying “Race Is Culturally Constructed” Is Not Enough 211

How Are Other Social Classifications Naturalized? 212

Ethnicity: Common Descent 212

Class: Economic Hierarchy in Capitalist Societies 214

Caste: Moral Purity and Pollution 216

Are Prejudice and Discrimination Inevitable? 217

Understanding Prejudice 219

Discrimination, Explicit and Disguised 219

The Other Side of Discrimination: Unearned Privilege 222

THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL LIFE: *Talking About Race and Racism* 223

10 Gender, Sex, and Sexuality

The Fluidity of Maleness and Femaleness • 227

How and Why Do Males and Females Differ? 229

Shifting Views on Male and Female Differences 230

Beyond the Male–Female Dichotomy 231

Do Hormones Really Cause Gendered Differences in Behavior? 233

Why Is There Inequality Between Men and Women? 234

Debating “the Second Sex” 235

Taking Stock of the Debate 236

Reproducing Male–Female Inequalities 237

Transformations in Feminist Anthropology 238

What Does It Mean to Be Neither Male nor Female? 239

Navajo *Nádleehé* 239

Indian *Hijras* 241

Trans in the United States 242

Is Human Sexuality Just a Matter of Being Straight or Queer? 244

Cultural Perspectives on Same-Sex Sexuality 245

Controlling Sexuality 247

11 Kinship, Marriage, and the Family

Love, Sex, and Power 250

What Are Families, and How Are They Structured in Different Societies? 252

Families, Ideal and Real 252

Nuclear and Extended Families 253

Clans and Lineages 255

Kinship Terminologies 257

Cultural Patterns in Childrearing 258

How Do Families Control Power and Wealth? 260

Claiming a Bride 260

Recruiting the Kids 262

Dowry in India 262

Controlling Family Wealth Through Inheritance 262

Inheritance Rules in Non-Industrial Societies 263

Why Do People Get Married? 263

Why People Get Married 264

Forms of Marriage 264

Sex, Love, and the Power of Families Over Young Couples 265

How Are Social and Technological Changes Reshaping How People Think About Family? 267

International Adoptions and the Problem of Cultural Identity 267

In Vitro Fertilization 268

Surrogate Mothers and Sperm Donors 268

 **THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL LIFE:** *Family-Centered Social Work and Anthropology* 259

12 Religion

Ritual and Belief • 272

How Should We Understand Religion and Religious Beliefs? 274

Understanding Religion, Version 1.0: Edward B. Tylor and Belief in Spirits 274

Understanding Religion, Version 2.0: Anthony F. C. Wallace on Supernatural Beings, Powers, and Forces 275

Understanding Religion, Version 3.0: Religion as a System of Symbols 276

Understanding Religion, Version 4.0: Religion as a System of Social Action 277

Making Sense of the 2015 Terrorist Attacks in France: *Charlie Hebdo* 278

What Forms Does Religion Take? 280

Clan Spirits and Clan Identities in New Guinea 280

Totemism in North America 281

Shamanism and Ecstatic Religious Experiences 282

- Ritual Symbols That Reinforce a Hierarchical Social Order 282
- Polytheism and Monotheism in Ancient Societies 283
- World Religions and Universal Understandings of the World 284
- The Localization of World Religions 285
- How Does Atheism Fit in the Discussion? 285

How Do Rituals Work? 287

- Magical Thought in Non-Western Cultures 287
- Sympathetic Magic: The Law of Similarity and the Law of Contagion 288
- Magic in Western Societies 289
- Rites of Passage and the Ritual Process 289

How Is Religion Linked to Political and Social Action? 292

- The Rise of Fundamentalism 292
- Understanding Fundamentalism 292

 **THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL LIFE:** *Is Anthropology Compatible with Religious Faith?* 286

 **A WORLD IN MOTION:** *Contemporary Pilgrimage and the Camino de Santiago* 290

13 The Body

Biocultural Perspectives on Health and Illness • 296

How Do Biological and Cultural Factors Shape Our Bodily Experiences? 299

- Uniting Mind and Matter: A Biocultural Perspective 299
- Culture and Mental Illness 300

What Do We Mean by Health and Illness? 302

- The Individual Subjectivity of Illness 303
- The "Sick Role": The Social Expectations of Illness 305

How and Why Do Doctors and Other Health Practitioners Gain Social Authority? 307

- The Disease-Illness Distinction: Professional and Popular Views of Sickness 308
- The Medicalization of the Non-Medical 310

How Does Healing Happen? 311

- Clinical Therapeutic Processes 311
- Symbolic Therapeutic Processes 312
- Social Support 312
- Persuasion: The Placebo Effect 312

How Can Anthropology Help Us Address Global Health Problems? 314

- Understanding Global Health Problems 316
- Anthropological Contributions to Tackling the International HIV/AIDS Crisis 319

 **A WORLD IN MOTION:** *Medical Tourism in Yemen* 315

 **ANTHROPOLOGIST AS PROBLEM SOLVER** *Nancy Scheper-Hughes on an Engaged Anthropology of Health* 318

14 Materiality

Constructing Social Relationships and Meanings With Things • 323

Why Is the Ownership of Artifacts From Other Cultures a Contentious Issue? 325

Questions of Ownership, Rights, and Protection 326

Cultural Resource Management: Not Just for Archaeologists Any More 330

How Should We Look at Objects Anthropologically? 331

The Many Dimensions of Objects 332

A Shiny New Bicycle, in Multiple Dimensions 333

The Power of Symbols 334

The Symbols of Power 334

How and Why Do the Meanings of Things Change Over Time? 336

The Social Life of Things 337

Three Ways Objects Change Over Time 337

How Do Objects Help Us Shape and Express Our Goals and Aspirations? 340

The Cultural Biography of Things 341

The Culture of Mass Consumption 341

How Advertisers Manipulate Our Goals and Aspirations 342

 **ANTHROPOLOGIST AS PROBLEM SOLVER** *John Terrell, Repatriation, and the Maori Meeting House at The Field Museum* 329

Epilogue

Cultural Anthropology and the Future of Human Diversity • 346

Glossary 351

References 360

Credits 376

Index 380

Letter From the Authors

Dear Reader,

Imagine how people would react to you if the next time you went to the university bookstore you tried to haggle at the cash register for your textbooks. Or if the next time you caught a cold you explained to your friends that you were sick because a jealous person had hired a witch to cast a spell on you. In both cases, a lot of people would think you are crazy. But in many societies throughout the world, a lot of ordinary people would consider you crazy for *not* haggling or for *not* explaining your misfortunes as the workings of a witch.

Issues such as these raise some interesting questions. How do people come to believe such things? How are such beliefs reflected in and bolstered by individual behavior and social institutions in a society? Why do we believe and act in the ways we do? Such questions are at the core of the study of culture. The idea of culture is one of anthropology's most important contributions to knowledge.

The goal of our textbook is to help students develop the ability to pose good anthropological questions and begin answering them, our inspiration coming from the expression "99% of a good answer is a good question." In a deliberately concise way, we guide students through contemporary and provocative issues and then use theories, ethnographic case studies, and applied perspectives as ways of explaining how anthropologists have looked at these topics over time. Our approach emphasizes what is currently known within the study of cultural anthropology and issues that continue to challenge anthropologists.

Central to the plan of this book are three underlying principles that guide our approach to cultural anthropology:

- An emphasis on learning how to ask important and interesting anthropological questions.
- Applying anthropology to understand and solve human problems.
- Respecting tradition, with a contemporary perspective.

Every chapter, every feature of the book has been written with these principles in mind. We have written a book about anthropology that draws on insights anthropologists have learned during the twentieth century. At the same time,

with its cutting-edge content and pedagogy, this is a textbook that provides what students need for the twenty-first century.

For most students, an introductory course in cultural anthropology is the only educational exposure they will have to anthropological thinking. Most readers are unlikely to see anthropological thinking as relevant to their own lives unless we find a way to make it so. This book represents our endeavor to do just that.

Here's wishing you greater appreciation of cultural anthropology and a lifetime of cultural revelations to come.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Welsch
Luis A. Vivanco

A note about the turbulent times of the COVID-19 pandemic:

We completed the first draft of this manuscript for the third edition during February 2021, a period between the initial upheaval in our lives during Spring 2020 caused by the outbreak of COVID-19 and before widespread vaccination campaigns promise to "restore normalcy." As we go to press, in the United States, more than 35 million people have become infected with the virus and more than 700,000 have died.

The senior author of this textbook was an undergraduate in 1970 when student protests across the nation erupted following the National Guard's shooting of 13 students on the Kent State University campus, killing four students and injuring nine others. Students were sent home at many of these universities and it seemed to many of us that life was so profoundly disrupted that things would never return to anything approaching normal. Both authors were profoundly affected by the events of 9/11, which disrupted international travel for many weeks and likewise deeply affected our students. And nearly all of us were affected in diverse ways by the financial crisis of September 2008, which brought so much economic disruption that is reflected in the economic problems affecting so many families today.

The COVID-19 pandemic has combined all three of these periods of upheaval, along with a health crisis, a socioeconomic crisis due to the shutdowns, and nationwide civil unrest following the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis at the hands of police and an attack on the U.S. Capitol after months of false claims of a stolen presidential election. For many students, it will seem that the basic form and character of the world they grew up knowing has suddenly disappeared. There will be many changes that emerge from this turbulent period, and we

understand students' worries and anxieties as all of us try to find our way through this uncertain time. From experience, we can attest that life will eventually return to something closer to the patterns we all were used to, even if some aspects of life have likely changed forever.

In response to these health, economic, and social disruptions, we have added a few thoughts into the text that reflect the turbulent times we have all experienced, largely by including new insights from these various crises to show how an anthropological approach can help faculty and students have a better understanding of the world in which we live.

RLW & LAV

About the Authors

Robert L. Welsch retired from Franklin Pierce University, where he taught from 2008–2019. Previously, he taught at Dartmouth College from 1994–2008. He was an adjunct curator of Melanesian Ethnology at the Field Museum in Chicago for more than two decades. He was trained in the 1970s at Northwestern University and the University of Washington, at a time when anthropologists still focused mainly on non-Western village-level societies, and when cultural materialist, Marxist, structuralist, and interpretive theories dominated the discipline. Welsch has conducted long-term field research in Papua New Guinea and Indonesia, and shorter periods in Alaska, Seattle, and California, on themes related to medical anthropology, religion, exchange, art, and museum studies. Most recently he was a guest curator at the Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth College, where he curated an exhibition of New Guinea art, and he currently gives guest lectures in courses about museum studies, art, and anthropology at Dartmouth.

Luis A. Vivanco teaches cultural anthropology and global studies at the University of Vermont, where he has won several of the university's top teaching awards. He was trained at Princeton University in the 1990s, when post-structuralist perspectives and "studying up" (studying powerful institutions and bureaucracies, often in Western contexts) was becoming commonplace. Vivanco has worked in Costa Rica, Mexico, Colombia, and the United States, studying the culture and politics of environmentalist social movements, the media, science, ecotourism, and urban mobility with bicycles. He is Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Humanities Center at the University of Vermont.

Preface

What is cultural anthropology, and how is it relevant in today's world? Answering these core questions in a concise way is the underlying goal of this book.

Cultural anthropology is the study of the social lives of communities, their belief systems, languages, and social institutions, both past and present. It provides a framework to organize the complexity of human experience and comprehend global cultural processes and practices. The practice of cultural anthropology also provides knowledge that helps solve human problems today.

Unlike textbooks that emphasize the memorization of facts, *Asking Questions About Cultural Anthropology: A Concise Introduction* teaches students how to think anthropologically. This approach helps students view cultural issues as an anthropologist might. In this way, anthropological thinking is regarded as a tool for deciphering everyday experience.

● Organized Around Key Questions

Each chapter is built around key questions that can be answered by cultural anthropology. Through these unique chapter-opening and follow-up questions, students will see how classic anthropological concerns relate to contemporary situations.

● Solving Human Problems

At the heart of *Asking Questions About Cultural Anthropology: A Concise Introduction* is the belief that anthropology can make a difference in the world. We explain how anthropologists have looked at a wide range of human issues over time—mediating conflict, alleviating social problems, and contributing to new social policies—exploring examples but also explaining challenges that still remain.

● The Past Through a Contemporary Perspective

Asking Questions About Cultural Anthropology: A Concise Introduction represents our effort to close the gap between the realities of the discipline today and traditional views that are also taught at the introductory level. We believe that there is much to be gained, for ourselves and our students, by strengthening the dialogue

between generations and subfields of anthropologists. We endeavor to bring classic anthropological examples, cases, and analyses to bear on contemporary questions.

● **An Active, Concise Approach**

We recognize the appeal of a shorter introductory text that covers the essential concepts, terms, and history of cultural anthropology. Many instructors prefer such an efficient approach because it introduces students to the widely-accepted fundamentals while permitting the complementary use of monographs, a reader, articles, lectures, field-based activities, and other kinds of supplements. In constructing this text, we have aimed to balance concise coverage of fundamental content with a continued commitment to an active, learner-centered pedagogy that will also help students develop their anthropological IQ. For those instructors who prefer greater breadth and depth along with that active approach, we recommend our full-featured textbook *Cultural Anthropology: Asking Questions About Humanity*.

● **Why We Wrote This Book**

In view of how most academic work and life is organized and practiced today, our co-authorship is a somewhat unlikely collaboration. We come from different generations of anthropological training, teach at different kinds of institutions, do our research in opposite corners of the world, and work on different topics. Given the pressures and realities of regional and topical specialization within the discipline, we might not even run into each other at conferences, much less have reason to work together.

But as teachers concerned with sharing the excitement of anthropological findings and thinking with our undergraduate students, we share a lot in common. For one, we believe that there is strength in diversity, and we think our differing backgrounds are more representative of the breadth of the discipline and who actually teaches introductory courses in cultural anthropology. Because both of us feel that anthropological thinking is for everyone, we wrote this textbook to appeal to instructors who blend traditional and contemporary views of anthropology and teach students of many cultural backgrounds. We do this by treating the learning experience as a process of actively asking questions about real-world problems and applying theoretical insights to understand them, as nearly all anthropologists actually do.

● **Guiding You Through the Book**

Each chapter opens with a contemporary, real-life story introducing the theme of the chapter. The chapter-opening narrative concludes with the core questions at the heart of the chapter. Core questions posed at the beginning of the chapter are

reflected in the titles of each major section in the chapter. Furthermore, the end of each section in a chapter is capped with a thought-provoking question in *Thinking Like An Anthropologist*, encouraging assimilation and application of key concepts.

Chapters include at least one of three types of boxed features. *Anthropologist as Problem Solver* boxes describe cases in which anthropologists have applied disciplinary insights and methods to help alleviate social problems, mediate conflicts, and (re)define policy debates. *The Anthropological Life* boxes provide students with applied illustrations that demonstrate how studying anthropology can provide them with an array of useful insights and tools for living in the world, whatever one's interests, values, or career. Finally, *A World in Motion* boxes focus on the border-crossing dynamics and global flows of people and objects that characterize and shape the contemporary world.

At the end of each chapter is a table that summarizes key points about each section and highlights issues yet to be resolved. The goal here is to help students understand settled knowledge and the findings of anthropology, as well as issues that continue to attract anthropological attention. These tables demonstrate that anthropology is a living and dynamic discipline.

New in This Edition

Building on the successful approach established in the first and second editions, the third edition of *Asking Questions About Cultural Anthropology* features a number of changes designed to keep the material up to date, relevant, and engaging for students. The following are the most visible changes:

- **Two brand new features.** Seven “A World in Motion” boxes interspersed throughout the book focus on dynamics of border-crossing through case studies of international migration, communications, medical tourism, and pilgrimage. Along with Chapter 5 (“Globalization and Culture”) and numerous chapter-opening stories, this feature reinforces the relevance and power of anthropological thinking for understanding globalization processes in the contemporary world. The “Anthropological Life” feature provides students with concrete, applied examples of anthropology’s relevance to careers, highlighting the skills, perspectives, and qualities that anthropology graduates bring to their jobs and everyday lives.
- **Refreshed Approach to “Thinking Like an Anthropologist.”** In this edition, based on reviewer feedback, we are taking a hiatus on the Thinking Like an Anthropologist boxes from the previous two editions. But in keeping with the spirit of those boxes—which were focused on the centrality of asking good questions to thinking anthropologically—we have renamed our end-of-section questions in each chapter with this title.
- **New chapter-opening stories drawn from real life.** New case studies exploring ethnographic research on the hacktivist collective Anonymous (Chapter 3), the role of young women and online communications in

driving changes in the English language (Chapter 4), the global travels of a traditional Hawai'ian voyaging canoe (Chapter 5), the politics of water access in Mumbai, India (Chapter 8), the racialization of Italians as White in the United States (Chapter 9), the contentious debates over sex-testing in international sports (Chapter 10), the funerals of two important American figures in 2018 (Chapter 12), the 2019 measles outbreak in Samoa (Chapter 13), and the efforts to memorialize the deaths of migrants in the Arizona desert (Chapter 14) help students relate major themes in each chapter to people's real-world experiences.

In addition to these changes, we have added new coverage of key topics in various chapters to ensure students receive a well-rounded introduction to cultural anthropology. These additions include the following:

- Chapter 1 features an expanded discussion of early anthropological interest in understanding mass immigration to the United States at the turn of the century, as well as discussion of anthropology's strengths in the workplace.
- Chapter 2 includes a new discussion on how cultural anthropologists understand human possibility and flexibility.
- Chapter 3 features new material on how ethnographic methods are being used in online research as well as research with migrant communities.
- Chapter 4 contains an expanded discussion of how anthropologists study gendered language and the effects of new media technologies on language use.
- Chapter 5 provides new perspectives on the historical depth of globalization processes as well as the concept of the "global citizen."
- Chapter 6 has new material on the relationship between ecological refugees and climate change.
- Chapter 7 features an expanded discussion of how value is established through cultural processes, and the economics of anthropology itself.
- Chapter 8 contains new material on the role of anthropologists as politicians.
- Chapter 9 features new material on the construction of Whiteness and how to engage in difficult conversations about race and racism.
- Chapter 10 contains a new section on recent research and activism in feminist anthropology.
- Chapter 11 features new material on anthropology's relationship with family-based social work.
- Chapter 12 provides a new section on how world religions are localized, the relationship between anthropology and personal religious faith, and contemporary pilgrimage.
- Chapter 13 contains new perspectives on anthropology's role in understanding and ameliorating epidemics, as well as the relationship between tourism and healing.
- Chapter 14 features new material on the relationship between anthropology and museums and public art installations.

Teaching and Learning Support

Oxford University Press offers students and instructors a comprehensive teaching and learning package of support materials for adopters of *Asking Questions About Cultural Anthropology*, 3e.

Oxford Learning Link

Oxford Learning Link at www.oup.com/he/welsch-vivanco-concise-3e is a convenient destination for all teaching and learning resources that accompany this book. Accessed online through individual user accounts, Oxford Learning Link provides instructors with access to up-to-date ancillaries while guaranteeing the security of grade-significant resources. In addition, it allows OUP to keep users informed when new content becomes available.

Oxford Learning Link for *Asking Questions About Cultural Anthropology* includes a variety of materials to aid in teaching:

- Digital copy of the **Instructor's Manual**, which includes:
 - A statement from the authors describing their pedagogical vision, clarifying the question-centered pedagogy, and offering advice on how to promote active learning in the classroom
 - Chapter outlines
 - Discussions of key controversies, which expand on the issues highlighted in the "What We Know" and "To Be Resolved" columns of the chapter-review tables
 - Key terms and definitions and summaries
 - Lecture outlines
 - PowerPoint slides
 - Web links and blogroll
 - In-class activities and project assignments
 - Suggestions for class discussion
 - Additional readings
 - Supplements to each box figure
 - Image bank
- A **Test Bank** organized around principles from Bloom's Taxonomy for cognitive learning, including:
 - Multiple-choice questions
 - True/false questions
 - Fill-in-the-blank questions
 - Essay prompts
- **Ethnographic film clips** with supporting background and discussion questions for each clip, written by the authors, to explore and reinforce themes in the book.
- **Learning Management System Integration:** OUP offers the ability to integrate OUP content into currently supported versions of Canvas, D2L, or Blackboard. Contact your local rep or visit <https://learninglink.oup.com/integration> for more information.

Digital Learning Tools

Asking Questions About Cultural Anthropology, 3e comes with an extensive array of digital learning tools to ensure your students get the most out of your course

Enhanced eBook: The enhanced eBook provides students with a versatile, accessible, online version of the textbook, with learning resources integrated on the appropriate pages via clickable icons that connect to each study tool. The eBook reader also provides functionality that will help students be more effective in their study time—for instance, bookmarking, highlighting, note taking, and search tools. Every new copy of the print text includes access to the eBook. The eBook is also available for separate purchase, either online or through campus bookstores.

Online Study Tools: Many additional online study tools are available at www.oup.com/he/welsch-vivanco-concise-3e for the student's self-paced learning and assessment. For each chapter, these include:

- **Learning objectives**
- **Interactive exercises** to engage students in fieldwork experience
- **Flashcards** to assist students in studying and reviewing key terms
- **Additional links** to websites providing supplemental information on the topics and ideas covered in the chapter
- **Additional recommended readings** that delve more deeply into the topics discussed in the chapter and that broaden student conceptions of what one can do with an anthropology degree
- **Self-grading review questions** to help students review the material and assess their own comprehension

Format Choices

Oxford University Press offers cost-saving alternatives to meet the needs of all students. This text is offered in a loose-leaf format at a 30 percent discount off the list price of the text; and in an eBook format, through Redshelf or VitalSource for a 50 percent discount. You also can customize our textbooks to create the course material you want for your class. For more information, please contact your Oxford University Press representative, call 800.280.0280, or visit us online at www.oup.com/he/welsch-vivanco-concise-3e.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank the many individuals who have supported this project from its inception to the final stages of production. The impetus for this book lies with Kevin Witt, who had an inspired vision for a new kind of anthropology textbook and the foresight to identify and support the team to write it. In its early stages, while this project was with McGraw-Hill, development editors Pam Gordon, Nanette Giles, Susan Messer, and Phil Herbst each played an important role in shaping the manuscript.

At Oxford University Press, Sherith Pankratz, our acquisitions editor, and our three development editors, Thom Holmes (first edition), Janice Evans (second edition), and Meg Botteon (third edition) have managed this project and helped us further refine our vision with exceptional care and expertise. In addition, we would like to thank assistant editor Maeve O'Brien. We would also like to thank permissions coordinator TK. In production, we would like to thank designer Michele Laseau, production editor Ashli MacKenzie, and copy editor Emmeline Parker. And last, but by no means least, we would like to acknowledge and thank our marketing team, including Tony Mathias, and the other hardworking men and women who are marketing this book and getting it into the hands of the students for whom we wrote it.

It is important to acknowledge and thank Agustín Fuentes of Princeton University, co-author of our general anthropology textbook, *Anthropology: Asking Questions About Human Origins, Diversity, and Culture* (published by OUP), who has helped shape our thinking on numerous dimensions of cultural anthropology.

We are grateful to Franklin Pierce University, the University of Vermont, Dartmouth College, the Hood Museum of Art, the Field Museum, the U.S. National Museum of Natural History (a branch of the Smithsonian Institution), the American Museum of Natural History in New York, the University of Costa Rica, and the National University of Colombia, all of whom have provided support in diverse ways. In particular, we appreciate the support and encouragement of Kim Mooney, President of Franklin Pierce University; James Dumond, former Provost of Franklin Pierce; Kerry McKeever and Paul Kotila, who served as Academic Deans at Franklin Pierce; and Jean Dawson and John Villemare, who served as Division Chairs of the Social and Behavioral Sciences at Franklin Pierce.

At the University of Vermont, the Provost's Office and the Office of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences have provided important institutional support for this project.

Numerous librarians aided the development of this project at various stages, including Paul Campbell, Amy Horton, Leslie Inglis, Paul Jenkins, Gladys Nielson, Wendy O'Brien, Eric Shannon, Melissa Stearns, Lisa Wiley, and Jill Wixom at Frank S. DiPietro Library at Franklin Pierce University in Rindge, New Hampshire; Laurie Kutner at Bailey-Howe Library at the University of Vermont; Amy Witzel, Fran Oscadal, and John Cocklin, at Baker Library at Dartmouth College; and the staff of Alden Library at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio.

We want to especially thank our colleagues Kirk M. and Karen Endicott, Robert G. Goodby, Debra S. Picchi, Douglas Challenger, John Villemaire, John E. Terrell, Robert J. Gordon, and Richard Robbins, all of whom have offered support, encouragement, and insights throughout the various phases of writing this book. Many other colleagues have contributed to this project in direct and indirect ways, including shaping our thinking about various anthropological topics, sparking ideas and being a sounding board about matters of content and pedagogy, and reading and responding to draft chapters. These colleagues include, at Dartmouth College, Hoyt Alverson, Sienna R. Craig, Brian Didier, Nathaniel Dominy, Seth Dobson, Dale F. Eickelman, Kathy Hart, Sergei Kan, Brian Kennedy, Kenneth Korey, Joel Levine, Deborah Nichols, and John Watanabe; and at the University of Vermont, Ben Eastman, Scott Van Keuren, Cameron Wesson, Brian Gilley, Jennifer Dickinson, Teresa Mares, Amy Trubek, Scott Matter, Deborah Blom, and the late Jim Petersen.

Several students at Franklin Pierce, the University of Vermont, and Dartmouth College have helped with research during the various stages of writing and rewriting. These include Kristin Amato, Cory Atkinson, D. Wes Beattie, Chris Boyce, Kyle Brooks, Justyn Christophers, Michael Crossman, Matthew Dee, Brian Dunleavy, Catherine Durickas, Nathan Hedges, Elizabeth Jurgilewicz, Kelsey Keegan, Saige Kemelis, Brian Kirn, Cooper Leatherwood, Adam Levine, Kevin Mooiman, Taber Morrell, Rebecca Nystrom, Shannon Perry, Keenan Phillips, Adam Slutsky, Scott Spolidoro, and Michael Surret.

We want to thank our students at Franklin Pierce University and the University of Vermont who have test-driven various early drafts of this book as well as the first edition. Their feedback and insights have been invaluable. But, in particular, we want to thank Courtney Cummings, Kimberly Dupuis, John M. Gass, Kendra Lajoie, Holly Martz, Scott M. McDonald, Lindsay Mullen, and Nick Rodriguez, all of whom were students in AN400 at Franklin Pierce during the fall semester of 2012. Having used drafts of the text in their "Introduction to Cultural Anthropology" class, they reviewed all of the chapters in the book in focus-group fashion and offered useful insights about examples and writing in each chapter.

Last but certainly not least, we would like to thank our families for all the critical emotional and logistical support they have provided over the years to ensure the success of this project. Luis's children Isabel, Felipe, and Camila have aided us in various ways, from prodding questions about the book and anthropology to, at times, comic relief when we needed it. Our wives, Sarah L. Welsch and Peggy O'Neill-Vivanco, deserve our deepest gratitude for all their wise counsel over the many years this book was in development, and their ongoing support as we continue to improve it.

Manuscript Reviewers

In creating this third edition, we have greatly benefited from the perceptive comments and suggestions of many talented scholars and instructors. Their insight and suggestions were immensely helpful. Bretton Alvare, Widener University; Keri Brondo, University of Memphis; Cynthia Clark, Rutgers University (Camden); Dr. Robert M. Clark, Pennsylvania Highlands Community College; Brett Hoffman, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh; Julie Kleinman, Fordham University; and Thomas M. Wilson, Binghamton University, State University of New York.

In addition, we would like to thank the reviewers whose thoughtful comments helped to shape the first and second editions: Augustine Agwuele, Texas State University; Chris Baker, Walters State Community College; Alice Baldwin-Jones, LaGuardia Community College; Data D. Barata, California State University, Sacramento; O. Hugo Benavides, Fordham University; Beverly Bennett, Wright College; Noor Borbieva, Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne; Keri Brondo, University of Memphis; Keri A. Canada, Colorado State University; Kimberly Cavanagh, University of South Carolina Beaufort; Leslie G. Cecil, Stephen F. Austin State University; Carolyn Coulter, Atlantic Cape Community College; Matthew Dalstrom, Rockford University; Joanna Davidson, Boston University; Henri Gooren, Oakland University; Liza Grandia, Clark University; Ulrike M. Green, Orange Coast College; Shawn Dead Haley, Columbia College; Elizabeth Higgs, University of Houston; Douglas Hume, Northern Kentucky University; Akbar Keshodkar, Moravian College; Su Il Kim, Metropolitan State College of Denver/Pikes Peak Community College; Diane E. King, University of Kentucky; Alice Kingsnorth, American River College; Deborah Knisely, Northern Kentucky University; Frances Kostarelos, Governors State University; J. Christopher Kovats-Bernat, Muhlenberg College; Kuinera de Kramer-Lynch, University of Delaware; Scott M. Lacy, Fairfield University; Louis Herns Marcelin, University of Miami; Pamela A. Maack, San Jacinto College; Sarah Martin, Spokane Falls Community College; Linda Matthei, Texas A&M University, Commerce; Amy Nichols-Belo, Mercer University; Faidra Papavasiliou, Georgia State University; Mark Allen Peterson, Miami University; Harry Sanabria, University of Pittsburgh;

Elizabeth A. Scharf, University of North Dakota; Scott Sernau, Indiana University South Bend; Rocky L. Sexton, Ball State University; Carolyn Smith-Morris, Southern Methodist University; Philips Stevens, Jr. University at Buffalo, SUNY; Brian Stokes, Allan Hancock College; Victor D. Thompson, University of Georgia; James E. Todd, Modesto Junior College/California State University, Stanislaus; Susan R. Trencher, George Mason University; Neeraj Vedwan, Montclair State University; Jennifer R. Wies, Eastern Kentucky University; and Cherra Wyllie, University of Hartford.

Ancillary Co-Authors

Our sincere thanks to William Jefferson West and Jennifer Wies, who updated and revised the ancillary materials for this edition of the text.



1

Anthropology

Asking Questions About Humanity

Human beings are one of the world's most adaptable animals. Evolutionary history has endowed our species with certain common physical characteristics, instincts, and practices that have helped us to survive, even thrive, in every conceivable terrestrial environment. Yet no group of people is exactly like another, and as a species we exhibit tremendous variations across groups—variations in our adaptations to the environment, physical appearance, language, beliefs, and social organization.

Humans have always encountered groups of people who look different, speak unfamiliar languages, and behave in unexpected or unpredictable ways. Although sometimes hostility and wars break out between groups because of such

Intercultural Interactions. In 1767 Captain Samuel Wallis and his crew were the first Westerners to reach Tahiti. Their first interactions were peaceful and included an exchange of gifts between Wallis and Queen Oberea. The cultural differences between the Tahitians and the English raised many important questions about human differences and similarities, for both parties—the kinds of dynamics that interest anthropologists today.

differences, usually people have found ways to get along, often through trade and alliances. To be effective at establishing strong social and political bonds in spite of human differences has always required that people have a practical understanding of human variation.

Some of history's great travelers and explorers developed that practical understanding, among them the Venetian merchant Marco Polo (1254–1324), the Norman cleric Gerald of Wales (1146–1223), the Flemish Franciscan missionary William of Rubruck (1220–1293), the Moroccan traveler Ibn Battuta (1304–1368), and the Chinese admiral Zheng He (1371–1433). These individuals were all deeply interested in other peoples, and their writings express sophisticated understandings of how and why the groups they encountered looked, acted, worshiped, and spoke as they did (Bartlett 1982; Larner 1999; Menzies 2002; Dreyer 2007; Harvey 2007; Khanmohamadi 2008; Fazioli 2014). Similarly, there is a rich historical legacy of intellectual thought about human variation. The great Chinese philosopher Confucius (551–479 BCE) communicated, in two of his *Analects*, some principles for establishing relationships with *yi* (yee), meaning cultural and ethnic outsiders. A generation later, the Greek historian Herodotus (484–425 BCE), in his multi-volume *Histories*, described the diverse peoples and societies he encountered during his travels in Africa, Southwestern Asia, and India, offering a number of possible explanations for the variations he observed across groups.

While all of these individuals were curious about other peoples and, at times, were quite rigorous in their ways of thinking about human variation, they were not anthropologists as we think of them today. Still, their various studies show that getting along with peoples from different cultures has always been important.

These points lead us to our first question, the question at the heart of this chapter: *What is anthropology, and how is it relevant in today's world?* Embedded in this broader question are the following issues, around which this chapter is organized:

- 
- How did anthropology begin?
 - What do the four subfields of anthropology have in common?
 - How do anthropologists know what they know?
 - How do anthropologists put their knowledge to work in the world?
 - What ethical obligations do anthropologists have?

Anthropology is the study of human beings, their biology, their prehistory and histories, and their dynamic languages, cultures, and social institutions. Anthropology provides a framework for asking questions about and grasping the complexity of human experience, both past and present. Anthropology is about where humans have been, but it also provides knowledge that helps solve human problems today.

● How Did Anthropology Begin?

During the nineteenth century, **anthropology** emerged in Europe and North America as an academic discipline devoted to the systematic observation and analysis of human variation. Three key concerns began to emerge by the 1850s that would shape professional anthropology. These were (1) the disruptions of industrialization in Europe and America, (2) the rise of evolutionary theories, and (3) the growing importance of Europe's far-flung colonies and the vast American West with their large indigenous populations whose land, mineral wealth, and labor Europeans and Americans wanted to control.

The Disruptions of Industrialization

Industrialization refers to the economic process of shifting from an agricultural economy to a factory-based one. Industrialization disrupted American and European societies by bringing large numbers of rural people into towns and cities to work in factories. These disruptions raised questions that motivated great social thinkers who later influenced the rise of anthropology as a social scientific discipline, in particular German political economists Karl Marx (1818–1883) and Max Weber (1864–1920) and French anthropologist-sociologist Émile Durkheim (1858–1917).

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, most people in Western countries were rural farmers. The rise of factory economies changed such basic aspects of life as the range of people individuals encountered and sometimes married, the activities they spent their days doing, and the role of religion in their lives. In the midst of these upheavals, anthropology developed as a discipline that sought to understand and explain how people organize their communities and how those communities change. It also led scholars to consider how industrialization affected peoples in European colonies in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific Islands. Important new questions were posed: Why did these diverse societies organize their lives in the ways they did? Why had the civilizations of China, India, and the Arab world develop social, political, and economic patterns so different from those of Europeans? Asking about how European villages and cities were structured and how they perpetuated their cultures ultimately led to questions about how all sorts of non-Western societies worked, as well.

Early scholars also took note of the new patterns of human migration that accompanied these changes. In the United States, millions of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe arrived in the United States between the 1890s and 1914. Many White Americans viewed them as racially inferior and threatening to the social order. In response to the waves of anti-immigrant sentiments that followed, some early American anthropologists sought to promote greater understanding of who these people were through systematic research, as we explain in “A World in Motion: George A. Dorsey and the Anthropology of Immigration in the Early Twentieth Century.”

A World In Motion

George A. Dorsey and the Anthropology of Immigration in the Early Twentieth Century



George Dorsey.

George A. Dorsey was awarded the second Ph.D. in the discipline of anthropology from Harvard University in 1894. After archaeology and bioanthropology research in Peru and ethnographic research among American Indian societies in Oklahoma and the Southwest, he took a job at Chicago's Field Museum. In 1909, he took a leave of absence to collect objects and conduct research overseas. Concerns about emigration from Eastern Europe, Italy, and the Balkans had been rising, so Dorsey proposed to travel to Hungary (then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire) to study immigrants and their home communities. As he explained in the *Chicago Tribune* in 1909: "I shall write of what I see and attempt to give an historical background to the scene, only of sufficient depth, however, to make intelligible the scene itself" (Dorsey 1909: Nov 14:5).

A century after their publication, it is striking how closely Dorsey's findings parallel those of anthropologists studying contemporary migratory flows to the United States. For example, Dorsey found that migrants from Hungary were not necessarily planning on settling permanently in the U.S. but sought to create social mobility back home. As he wrote, "No one ever goes to America the first time with the intention of remaining there. . . . Their object is to acquire a certain amount of money with which to pay a debt, to buy a house, or to buy land."

Dorsey also observed that social and familial patterns shaped the migratory experience. He described what scholars now call "chain migration," in which individuals travel to destinations where they already knew people. Once an individual's social networks in the United States had grown, they might send for other family members to settle with them. Some villages in Hungary experienced a shortage of labor because so many young people had gone to the United States. But even still, at least one-third of migrants returned to Hungary.

Even in this early period, immigration was not as simple a pattern as public discourses—then or now—may suggest. While there are historical particularities to all migration stories, the patterns Dorsey identified show important commonalities over time and place. His insights further reveal the ways in which anthropology has been useful in applying systematic research to clarify the dynamics of immigration for over a century.

The Theory of Evolution

Evolution refers to the adaptive biological changes organisms make across generations. English naturalist Charles Darwin (1809–1882) developed a theory of how different species of plants and animals had evolved from earlier forms. The key mechanism of his evolutionary theory was what he called “natural selection,” a process through which certain inheritable traits are passed along to offspring because they are better suited to the environment.

For Darwin, the question of the origin of species was not a religious one (as many people in his time believed) but an **empirical** one, best answered by observing whether species had changed and whether new species had emerged over time. Thanks to contemporary geologists, Darwin knew that many early species, such as the dinosaurs, had suddenly arisen in the geological record, flourished, and then died out. For him, such changes were evidence that the natural environment had selected some species for survival and that extinction was the outcome for those not well suited to changing environments. When Darwin published his groundbreaking work, *On the Origin of Species* in 1859, he experienced a backlash, and rather few scientists accepted Darwin’s ideas immediately. But as the century progressed, more and more scholars came to accept the idea of evolution. Today, scientists no longer view biological evolution as controversial, and nearly all anthropologists and biologists accept evolution as the only way to explain the relationship among animal and plant species or why humans have certain physical abilities and characteristics.

Colonial Origins of Cultural Anthropology

Colonialism is the historical practice of more powerful countries claiming possession of less powerful ones. American seizure and domination of Indian lands is a form of colonialism. Although the colonial period began in the late fifteenth century, it flourished from the 1870s until the 1960s, which coincided with the formation and institutionalization of anthropology as an academic discipline. In these colonial situations, Whites established mines, fisheries, plantations, and other enterprises using local peoples as inexpensive labor. Colonies enriched the mother countries, often impoverishing the indigenous inhabitants.

Colonized peoples everywhere had different cultures and customs, and their actions often seemed baffling to White administrators, a fact that these officials chalked up to their primitive or “savage” nature. Advocates of colonialism justified their actions—both politically and morally—through the **othering** of non-Western peoples, that is, defining colonized peoples as different from, and subordinate to, Europeans in terms of their social, moral, and physical norms (Said 1978). At the same time, early anthropologists were developing new social scientific methods of studying non-Western societies, primarily to inform colonial officials how to govern and control such different peoples.



Figure 1.1 The Salvage Paradigm. Efforts to document indigenous cultures “before they disappeared” motivated anthropologists and others—including well-known American photographer Edward S. Curtis, who took this picture of an Apsaroke mother and child in 1908—to record the ways of traditional people.

Most Europeans and Americans expected their colonial subjects to die out, leading to the urgent collection of information about tribal societies before it was too late. Well into the 1920s, anthropologists pursued an approach known as the **salvage paradigm**, which held that it was important to observe indigenous ways of life, interview elders, and assemble collections of objects made and used by indigenous peoples because their traditions would soon disappear (Figure 1.1). Of course, today we know that while some Indian tribes, especially along the East Coast of North America, largely died out, many other groups have survived and grown in population. But these Native American cultures have had to adjust and adapt to the changing American landscape.

Anthropology as a Global Discipline

By the end of the nineteenth century, anthropology was an international discipline whose practitioners were mainly based in Western Europe and the United States. Although they had some shared concerns, anthropologists in particular countries developed specific national traditions, studying distinct problems and developing their own styles of thought. Throughout the twentieth century, anthropology began to emerge in many non-European countries, as well. Many students in colonial territories had attended European and American universities, where they learned anthropology, and in many cases, these students brought anthropology back home. In these countries, anthropology often focuses on practical problems of national development and on documenting the minority societies found within the country’s borders. Today, anthropology is a global discipline with practitioners in dozens of countries asking many different kinds of questions about humanity.

THINKING LIKE AN ANTHROPOLOGIST

Can you think of something you do at your college or university that feels “natural” but is probably done somewhat differently at another college? Consider, for example, how your experiences in high school classes may have led you to expect something different from your college classes.

What Do the Four Subfields of Anthropology Have in Common?

Anthropology has traditionally been divided into four subfields: cultural anthropology, archaeology, biological anthropology, and linguistic anthropology (Figure 1.2).

Cultural anthropology focuses on the social lives of living communities. Until the 1970s, most cultural anthropologists conducted research in non-Western

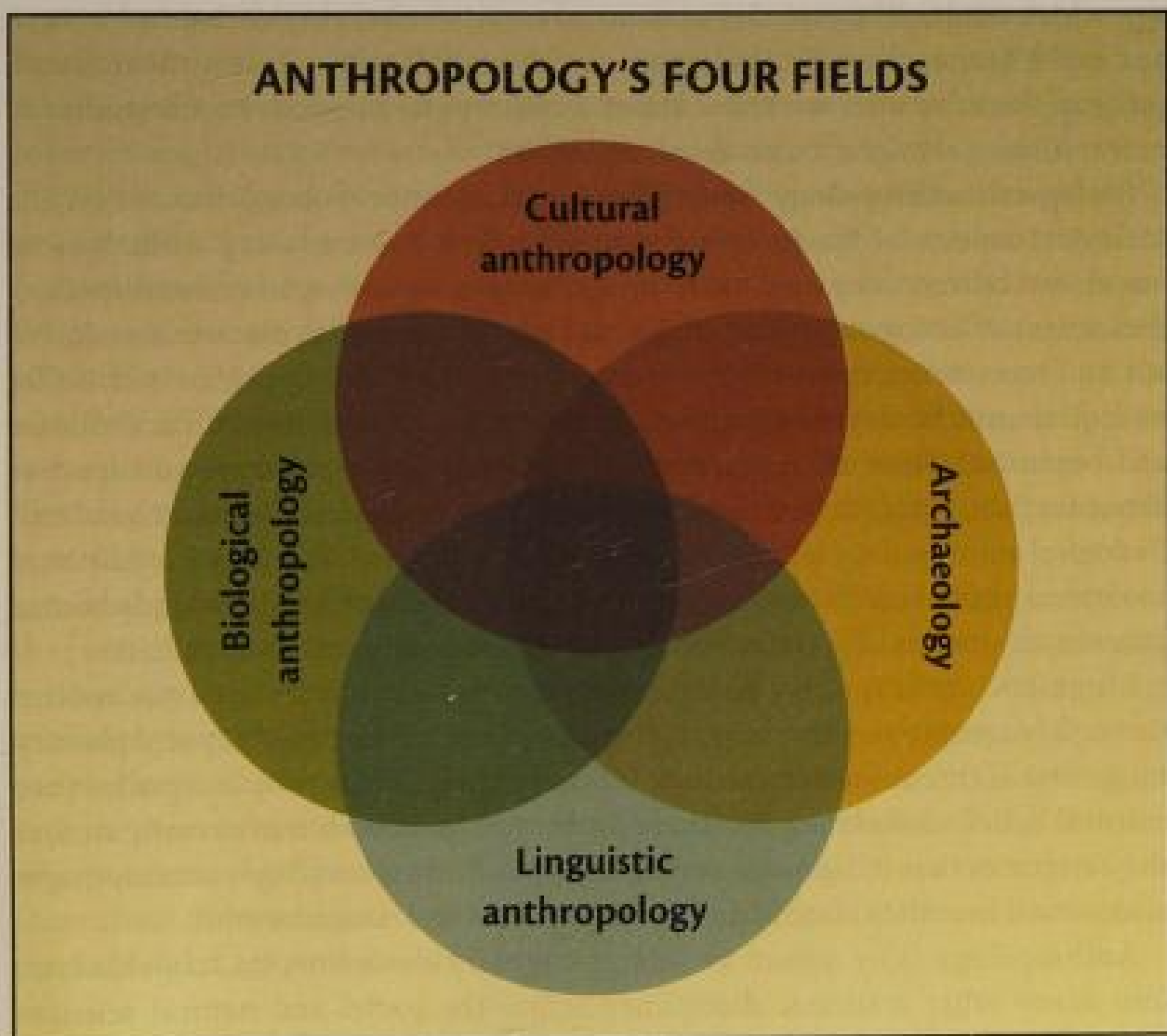


Figure 1.2 Anthropology's Four Fields.

communities, spending a year or two of ethnographic fieldwork observing social life (see Chapter 3). They learned the local language and studied broad aspects of the community, such as people's economic transactions, religious rituals, political organization, and families, seeking to understand how these distinct domains influenced each other. In recent decades, they have come to focus on more specific issues in the communities they study, such as how and why religious conflicts occur, how environmental changes affect agricultural production, and how economic interactions create or maintain social inequalities. Today, anthropologists are as likely to study modern institutions, occupational groups, ethnic minorities, and social media in their own cultures as they are to study cultures outside their own.

Archaeology studies past cultures by excavating sites where people lived, worked, farmed, or engaged in some other activities. Prehistoric archaeologists study prehistory (life before written records), trying to understand how people lived before they had domesticated plants and animals, as well as patterns of trade and warfare between ancient settlements. Prehistoric archaeologists are especially interested in the transition from hunting and gathering to agriculture and the rise of cities and states. Another branch of archaeology is *historical archaeology*, which studies the material remains of societies that also left behind written and oral histories. Focusing primarily on the past 500 years, historical archaeology supplements what we know about a community or society with studies of recent historical migrations and cultural shifts.

Biological anthropology (also called physical anthropology) focuses on the biological aspects of the human species, past and present, along with those of our closest relatives, the nonhuman primates (apes, monkeys, and related species). A mainstay of biological anthropology has been the attempt to uncover human fossils and reconstruct the pathways of human evolution. By the 1950s and 1960s, biological anthropologists expanded into the study of human health and disease and began to look at the nonhuman primates (especially monkeys and apes) to determine what is part of our basic primate biology and what comes with culture. Biological anthropology is currently a field with many specializations; in addition to evolution, health and disease, and primate behavior, researchers also study human genetics, the impact of social stress on the body, and human diet and nutrition.

Linguistic anthropology studies how people communicate with one another through language, and how language use shapes group membership and identity. Linguistic anthropologists also look at how language helps people organize their cultural beliefs and ideologies. These anthropologists have traditionally studied the categories that indigenous people use in their own languages, attempting to understand how they classify parts of their social and natural worlds.

Anthropology is by nature an interdisciplinary discipline. Its subfields cross into many other academic disciplines across the social and natural sciences. Cultural anthropologists, for example, often draw on sociological and psychological approaches, as well as historical and economic data. Most archaeologists need to understand the principles of geology, including how rock layers form over

time and techniques used to date artifacts. Biological anthropology draws heavily on morphology (which deals with the form and structure of organisms), cellular biology, and genetics.

One thing that keeps such diverse subfields together is a shared history. In the early twentieth century, anthropology became organized into the four subfields we know today, from a shared evolutionary perspective. Archaeologists and cultural anthropologists, especially in North America, generally see themselves as asking similar kinds of questions about human cultures. Another reason for the persistence of the four-field approach is that anthropologists share certain fundamental approaches and concepts, which they agree are important for making sense of humanity's complexity. These include culture, cultural relativism, diversity, change, and holism.

Culture

Imagine how people would react to you if the next time you went to the university bookstore to buy your textbooks you tried to haggle at the cash register. Or if the next time you had a cold you explained to your friends that your sickness was caused by a witch's spell. In both cases, most people would think you are crazy. But in many societies throughout Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Pacific, and other regions, a lot of ordinary people would think you are crazy for *not* haggling or for *not* explaining your misfortunes as the workings of a witch.

Every human group has particular rules of behavior and a common set of explanations about how the world works. Within the community, these behaviors and explanations feel totally natural, which is to say, self-evident and necessary. People who behave differently are strange, wrong, maybe even evil. Yet what feels natural to one group may seem totally arbitrary to another. In anthropology, the term **culture** refers to the taken-for-granted notions, rules, moralities, and behaviors within a social group that feel natural and suggest the way things should be. The idea of culture is one of anthropology's most important contributions to knowledge.

Anthropologists believe that people have culture in two senses: the general and the particular. Culture in the general sense refers to humans' possession of a generalized capacity, even necessity, to create, share, and pass on their understandings of things through culture. Culture in the particular sense refers to the fact that people live their lives within particular cultures, or ways of life. In Chapter 2, we explore the concept of culture more deeply, but here it is important to know that when anthropologists use the term *culture* they are nearly always referring to ideas about the world and ways of interacting in society or in the environment in predictable and expected ways.

Cultural Relativism

Anthropologists carry with them basic assumptions about how the world works and what is right or wrong, and these assumptions typically become apparent

when one is studying a culture that makes completely different assumptions. One possible response to the gap in understanding that comes with being in another culture is **ethnocentrism**, assuming one's own way of doing things is correct, while simply dismissing other people's assumptions as wrong or ignorant. Such a position would render the attempt to understand other cultures meaningless and can lead to bigotry and intolerance. To avoid such negative outcomes, anthropologists have traditionally emphasized **cultural relativism**, the moral and intellectual principle that one should seek to understand cultures on their own terms and withhold judgment about seemingly strange or exotic beliefs and practices.

Human Diversity

Another of anthropology's major contributions to knowledge has been to describe and explain human diversity, the sheer variety of ways of being human around the world. When anthropologists talk about diversity, they mean something different from the popular usage of the term in the United States, which typically refers to different kinds of art, cuisine, dress, or dance, as well as differences among various racial and ethnic groups.

Defined anthropologically, *diversity* refers to multiplicity and variety, encompassing both similarity and difference. This idea of diversity-as-multiplicity can shed light on the cultural effects of globalization. For example, people now drink Coca-Cola, wear Levi's jeans, and watch CNN all over the world, leading many observers to believe that the diversity of human cultures is in decline because more people are participating in a global economy. Yet cultural differences do not just disappear. In fact, globalization creates many new opportunities for cultural diversity—differences *and* similarities—to thrive.

An example drawn from the southern Mexican state of Chiapas illustrates this point (Figure 1.3). In Chiapas, some indigenous people have adapted Coca-Cola for use in their religious and community ceremonies. For many generations, Tzotzil Mayas (tso-tseel my-ahs)] in the community of San Juan Chamula used alco-



Figure 1.3 A Coca-Cola Distributor in San Juan Chamula, Chiapas, Mexico.

holic drinks—particularly fermented corn drinks and distilled sugarcane liquor—in their public and religious rites (Nash 2007). To create these rites, traditional Mayan religious leaders blended Catholic and indigenous traditions, combining Catholicism's celebration of saints' days with the Mayan belief that consuming intoxicating spirits helps individuals access sacred

powers. Alcoholism, however, became a severe problem, and beginning in the 1940s many Mayas began converting to Protestant sects that ban alcohol, eroding the power of traditional religious leaders. In the 1980s, these leaders began substituting Coca-Cola for alcoholic drinks in ceremonies. Some leaders gained great personal wealth as distributors of Coca-Cola, deepening socioeconomic class divisions in the community (Nash 2007). But community members incorporated Coca-Cola into their ritual lives easily, accepting the notion that the soft drink's bubbles have powers once associated with alcohol, for example, the ability to help individuals belch out bad spirits residing in their bodies (M. Thomas 2008).

Here is a powerful example of diversity-as-multiplicity: globalization has brought changes to San Juan Chamula that resemble conditions in many other places around the globe, but Mayas have imposed their own meanings on the soft drink, using it in ways that reinforce some of their own distinctive cultural traditions.

Change

As the previous example about globalization and Coca-Cola demonstrates, our world is dynamic and constantly changing. Anthropologists in each subfield are specialists in studying human change. For example:

- *Cultural anthropologists* study topics as diverse as how and why religious change happens; the effects of migration on communities that send and receive migrants; and how and why political violence can erupt in societies experiencing rapid social change.
- *Archaeologists* study the effects of environmental change on past societies; how changes in material culture reflect ongoing social, economic, and political changes; and how complex state societies were formed and disintegrated.
- *Biological anthropologists* study the processes of human evolution and how our bodies and genetic make-up change in relation to environmental changes, culture, migration, diseases, and other dynamics.
- *Linguistic anthropologists* study how new languages are formed when different languages come together, and how social changes, such as changes in gender relations, are reflected in and emerge from how people communicate with each other.

Some of these changes, particularly changes in cultural practices can emerge over a few years or a generation or two. Others, like changes in human biology, can take many generations and are imperceptible to most living observers. Americans, for example, have gotten considerably taller than we were in colonial times, probably because of changes in diet. But this fact is largely unnoticed by modern Americans unless we tour colonial houses from the 1700s, where the doors are not nearly as tall as those of today.

Anthropology also mirrors the changing world in which it is practiced. As new topics, issues, and problems emerge, anthropologists study things they would not

have studied several decades before. Today, for example, archaeologists may study municipal garbage dumps to understand what people actually consume and throw away. Cultural and linguistic anthropologists may explore how people create new forms of communication and community in cyberspace. Biological anthropologists specializing in primate behaviors may design studies to aid wildlife conservation officials.

Moreover, the face of anthropology has changed in recent decades. Once a discipline dominated by White European and American men, anthropology is increasingly practiced by women and members of many ethnic and racial minority groups. In the United States today, in fact, women constitute the majority of professional anthropologists. Around the world, decolonization has brought once excluded indigenous peoples and minorities into universities, where many have studied anthropology, further expanding the kinds of backgrounds and perspectives represented in the global discipline.

Holism

In bringing together the study of human biology, prehistory, language, and social life under one disciplinary roof, anthropology offers powerful conceptual tools for understanding the entire context of human experience. The effort to synthesize these distinct approaches and findings into a single comprehensive explanation is called **holism**. American anthropology has strived to be the most holistic, a legacy of German-born Franz Boas (1848-1942), long considered the founder of American anthropology.

In the discipline's early years, it was possible for individuals like Boas and his students to work in all four subfields because the body of anthropological knowledge was so small. But within several decades, the expansion of the discipline and increasing specialization within its branches forced anthropologists to concentrate on a single subfield and topics within subfields, a continuing pattern today. In the face of specialization, anthropology has struggled to retain its holistic focus.

And yet many anthropologists are deeply dedicated to holism, citing its ability to explain complex issues that no single subfield, much less any other social science, could explain as effectively (Parkin and Ulijaszek 2007). But how do anthropologists actually come to know what they know? We turn to this issue in the next section.

THINKING LIKE AN ANTHROPOLOGIST

Can you suggest ways that you may learn how people in your town or city view college students from your campus?

How Do Anthropologists Know What They Know?

Anthropology employs a wide variety of methodologies, or systematic strategies for collecting and analyzing data. Some of these methodologies are similar to those found in other natural and social sciences, including methods that involve the creation of statistics and even the use of mathematical models to explain things. Other methods aimed at describing different cultures are more closely allied with the humanities.

The Scientific Method in Anthropology

Anthropology often uses the **scientific method**, the most basic pattern of scientific research. The scientific method starts with the observation of a fact, a verifiable truth. Next follows the construction of a hypothesis, which is a testable explanation for the fact. Then that hypothesis is tested with experiments, further observations, or measurements. If the data (the information the tests produce) show that the hypothesis is wrong, the scientist develops a new hypothesis and then tests it. If the new tests and the data they produce seem to support the hypothesis, the scientist writes up a description of what he or she did and found and shares it with other scientists. Other scientists then attempt to reproduce those tests or devise new ones, with a goal of disproving the hypothesis (Figure 1.4).

Note that this way of doing things is a method, not the pursuit of ultimate truths. Its goal is to devise, test, and disprove hypotheses. Answering life's big questions—"Why are we here?"—is *not* the goal of science. At best, science can provide a reasonable degree of certainty only about more limited questions, such as—"How did our species develop the traits we now have?" Scientists regularly disagree among themselves. Researchers with differing backgrounds and orientations ask different types of questions and look at data in different ways. Scientists tend to see such debates as beneficial to the practice of science because the more questions asked, the more observations made, and the more tests conducted, the more knowledge is produced.

THEORIES GUIDE RESEARCH

Theories, which are tested and repeatedly supported hypotheses, are key elements of the scientific method. A **theory** not only explains things, it also helps guide research by focusing the researcher's questions and making the findings meaningful. While many Americans assume that a theory is some wild hunch or guess, when scientists use the term *theory*, they mean a carefully constructed hypothesis that has repeatedly been tested and retested. There is rarely any guessing involved.

QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

Building and testing hypotheses and theories require data. Anthropology's subfields employ a number of techniques for gathering and processing data. Some of

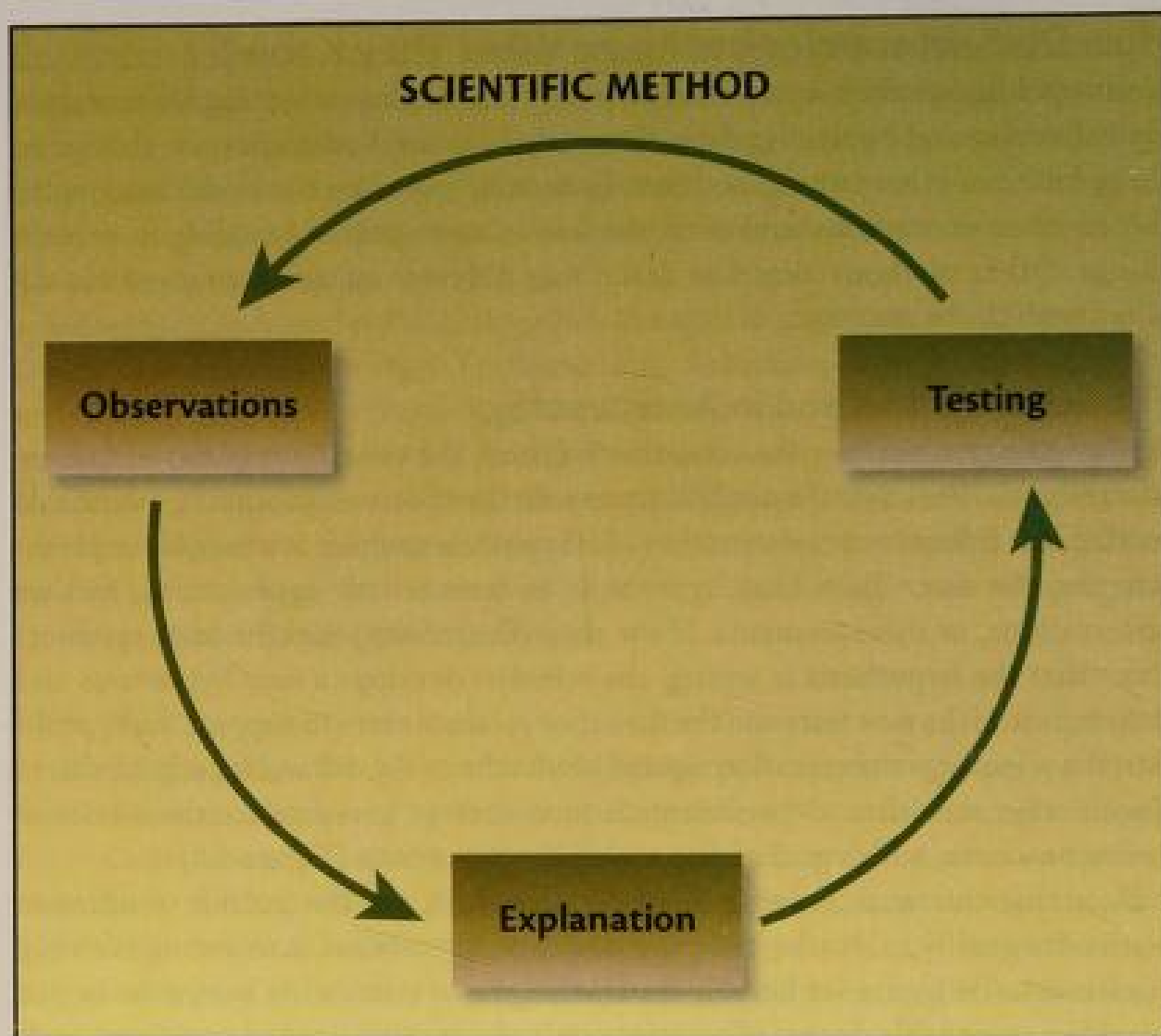


Figure 1.4 The Scientific Method. The process is circular, not linear.

these techniques use **quantitative methods**, which classify features of a phenomenon, count or measure them, and construct mathematical and statistical models to explain what is observed. Most quantitative research takes place in the subfields of biological anthropology and archaeology, although some cultural and linguistic anthropologists use quantitative techniques as well.

As an illustration of quantitative research, consider the work of Agustín Fuentes, a biological anthropologist at the University of Notre Dame with whom we have coauthored another book (Welsch, Vivanco, and Fuentes 2020). His research examines the nature of human–monkey interactions and how, when, and why diseases get passed between these species. Fuentes and his team have observed monkeys and humans interacting in Bali, Singapore, and Gibraltar. In each location, they recorded quantitative details about the interactions and people’s rates of contact with monkeys. They took blood or fecal samples from both the monkeys and the humans, analyzing them for pathogens and parasites. All of these variables were considered independently and then compared statistically to see what patterns emerged. Fuentes discovered that human–monkey interactions

vary depending on the species of monkey, human cultural patterns, gender differences in humans, and sex differences in the monkeys (Fuentes 2007).

QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

Anthropologists also employ **qualitative methods**, in which the aim is to produce an in-depth and detailed description of social behaviors and beliefs. Qualitative research involves interviews with and observations of people.

Research data come in the form of words, images, or objects. In contrast with quantitative methods, qualitative research does not typically use research instruments like surveys or questionnaires. The research instrument is the researcher himself or herself, whose subjective perceptions and impressions of the subject matter also become the basis for knowledge. The **ethnographic method**, which involves prolonged and intensive observation of and participation in the life of a community, is a qualitative methodology, and it is a hallmark of cultural anthropology.

Luis Vivanco, one of this book's authors, is a cultural anthropologist who uses qualitative methods to ask how global environmentalism changes people's relationships with nature in Latin America. In one of his projects, he conducted more than twenty months of research in Monteverde, Costa Rica, a rural community bordering a tropical cloud forest and renowned worldwide as a site of conservation and ecotourism. He interviewed and observed local farmers, environmental activists, ecotourists, and scientists, usually on multiple occasions and in public settings (Figure 1.5). He collected newspaper clippings and reports from local environmental groups and took pictures of people going about their daily lives. His field notes, recordings, images, documents, and personal experiences with environmentalists and farmers have helped him understand environmentalism to be a complex arena of social conflict where people struggle not just over how to protect nature, but also over how to deal with rapid social changes related to globalization (Vivanco 2006).

THE COMPARATIVE METHOD

Unlike other scientists, anthropologists do not conduct experiments or make predictions. Instead, anthropologists use the **comparative method** (Kaplan and Manners 1972:42–43). The comparative method allows anthropologists to derive insights from careful comparisons of two or more cultures or societies.

The research of this book's other author, cultural anthropologist Robert Welsch, illustrates how anthropologists can use the comparative method. Welsch has conducted extended ethnographic research both in Papua New Guinea and in Indonesia (Welsch 2006). One of his projects made use of comparative research strategies to understand the social and religious meanings of masks and carved objects in three societies along the Papuan Gulf of New Guinea. To conduct his comparative study, Welsch studied museum collections, pored over published and unpublished accounts of the people who collected the masks, and interviewed older villagers about their traditional practices. He learned that although these three societies used the same kinds of objects, their distinct decorative



Figure 1.5 Monteverde Bus. In his research on environmentalism in Costa Rica, Luis Vivanco explored the social dynamics of ecotourism. This focus led him to spend a lot of time among ecotourists, such as the ones shown here arriving in Monteverde by bus.

styles expressed differences in the social purposes for which each society used these same objects.

When Anthropology Is Not a Science: Interpreting Cultures

Not all anthropologists characterize what they do as science. Describing other people and interpreting their actions requires an understanding of their inner lives and beliefs that no scientific methodology can grasp.

These days, most cultural anthropologists disregard the scientific ideal of the researcher's detachment from his or her subject of study: the belief that researchers should not talk about what they feel and experience or how their emotions and experiences influence what they learn (Fabian 2001). The work of American anthropologist Renato Rosaldo (b. 1941), who studied headhunting in a Filipino society called the Ilongot [Ill-lahn-goht], illustrates this point of view. When Rosaldo (1989) asked the Ilongots to explain why they take heads, they said that when a loved one dies, their grief turns to rage, and the only way to vent that rage and get on with life is to take the head of a traditional enemy. Rosaldo initially dismissed this explanation, assuming there had to be a "deeper" purpose, such as creating group cohesion or allowing young men to prove their worthiness for marriage by showing they could kill an enemy.

Then Rosaldo's wife, Shelly, also an anthropologist, died in an accident during fieldwork in the Philippines, and his own devastating loss generated a similar

The Anthropological Life

Anthropologists Are Innovators

In his book, *The Ten Faces of Innovation* (2016), renowned industrial designer Tom Kelley describes the qualities of innovative people. At the top of his list is the anthropologist. As he writes:

The Anthropologist is rarely stationary. Rather, this is the person who ventures into the field to observe how people interact with products, services, and experiences in order to come up with new innovations. The Anthropologist is extremely good at

reframing a problem in a new way, humanizing the scientific method to apply it to daily life. Anthropologists share such distinguishing characteristics as the wisdom to observe with a truly open mind; empathy; intuition; the ability to "see" things that have gone unnoticed; a tendency to keep lists of innovative concepts worth emulating and problems that need solving; and a way of seeking inspiration in unusual places. (The Ten Faces of Innovation).

combination of grief and rage. While he was adjusting to Shelly's death, Rosaldo could grasp emotionally what the Ilongot were getting at. Dealing with the death opened his eyes to the force of emotions in social life, something he and most other anthropologists had never really considered. Rosaldo (1989) realized that his training as an anthropologist, which emphasized scientific detachment, accounted for his initial dismissal of Ilongot notions of headhunting. He concluded that his other interpretations of head-hunting were not wrong; they just gave him an incomplete picture of why the Ilongot did it. He also concluded that ethnographic knowledge is an open-ended process; as the ethnographer's own life experiences and knowledge change, so do his or her insights into other cultures.

But anthropologists do not just try to understand the world of culture and other human concerns, they also intervene in it in practical ways, which is an issue we explore next.

THINKING LIKE AN ANTHROPOLOGIST

How might you use a comparative perspective when visiting another country while on vacation? Consider the cultural contexts you have experienced and how these might provide a comparative framework for experiencing a novel society and culture.

How Do Anthropologists Put Their Knowledge to Work in the World?

Anthropological research is relevant and useful for addressing many social problems. At some point in their careers, most anthropologists get involved in work with practical, real-world concerns, applying their research skills and knowledge to the creation or implementation of policies, the management of social programs, the conduct of legal proceedings, or even the design of consumer products.

Applied and Practicing Anthropology

Practical applications are such an important component of anthropology that some anthropologists consider them the “fifth subfield.” These practical applications include those of **applied anthropology**, anthropological research commissioned to serve an organization’s needs, and those of **practicing anthropology**, the broadest category of anthropological work, in which the anthropologist not only performs research but also gets involved in the design, implementation, and management of some organization, process, or product. Under both labels, anthropologists have effectively put their discipline to work addressing difficult social, health, and educational problems, as the following snapshots demonstrate.

Mary Amuyunzu-Nyamongo: Bringing Cultural Knowledge to Health Programs in Kenya

Like many other anthropologists, Kenyan anthropologist Mary Amuyunzu-Nyamongo (Figure 1.6) works on pressing social and health problems confronting her country. One of the many problems she has studied is the lack of detailed knowledge of local communities that is necessary to make health programs work. Amuyunzu-Nyamongo collected local knowledge from insights about people’s health beliefs and practices through qualitative research.



Figure 1.6 Cultural Anthropologist Mary Amuyunzu-Nyamongo.

For example, during a campaign to control mosquito-borne illness in a coastal village, government officials wanted to conduct blood screenings to identify levels of infection. They told school children to tell their parents to get screened, which failed. Amuyunzu-Nyamongo knew that in this culture, male heads of households control decision-making. She organized