Key Information

| Course Organiser          | Dr Delwar Hussain
|                           | Email: Dhussain@exseed.ed.ac.uk |
| Location                  | Semester 1
|                           | Thursdays 11.10 – 13.00
|                           | Room LG.07, David Hume Tower |
| Course Secretary          | Vanessa Feldberg
|                           | Email: vanessa.feldberg@ed.ac.uk
|                           | Social Anthropology |

Assessment Deadlines

- Short essay: 5.00pm Wednesday 23 September 2015
- Online Reader Response Questionnaire: 5.00pm Wednesday 4 November
- Online Journal Entry: 5.00pm Wednesday 25 November 2015

COURSE AIMS:
The goal of this course is to introduce you to the practicalities of studying anthropology at university. Practicalities, not only in the sense of “What will I be doing and how will I do it?” but also “What’s the point of studying anthropology?” Thus as well as providing you with the academic study skills necessary to succeed at university level, we’ll also be addressing the different motivations people have for anthropological enquiry.
Welcome to studying Social Anthropology at Edinburgh!

**Learning Outcomes**
By the end of the course you will have acquired necessary skills in literature searches and creating a bibliography; in how to read and understand the argument of anthropological articles; in how to structure and write an anthropological essay; and in basic revision techniques appropriate to university level examinations. The course will also assists you with the development of core presentation skills.

**Organisation**
The course sessions take place for two hours every other week and will be composed of a variety of presentations, discussions, and group exercises. Attendance of these sessions is compulsory. There will also be some preparation work that you'll need to complete before each session, perhaps reading an article or preparing a short written statement. The work you do for this course, both as an individual and part of a group, will form part of an electronic portfolio of work that you can add to and refer back to throughout your university career.

**Autonomous Learning Group**
During the weeks when there is not a scheduled Fundamentals session, there will be what's called an Autonomous Learning Group. Autonomous Learning Groups are one form of peer support and allow students to get together in small groups to work through a particular problem collectively. These sessions are scheduled for the same time and place as the Fundamentals sessions, but on alternate weeks to those sessions. Postgraduate tutors will be there to help guide the sessions initially, but hopefully they will quickly become “autonomous”!

**Assessment**
You will be expected to produce three short pieces of work for this course, which will contribute to the portfolio of work you develop across the ‘Fundamentals’ courses in your degree programme:

1. Read the short extract from the book by David Pocock as far as page 9. Stop! Write the short essay (200 -300 words) on “Myself and My Society” which Pocock describes and then upload it on to LEARN.

2. Watch the YouTube video and read the article by Thin and then answer the online reader response questionnaire:

Peak happiness?: Dr Neil Thin at TEDxUniversityofEdinburgh: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DBeuIR_DUik

3. Complete an online journal entry of 200-300 words to share with your fellow students that describes one aspect of studying anthropology this semester that has been challenging AND/OR required new study skills AND/OR has been particularly rewarding.

Completion of all three assignments is mandatory for attaining a “pass” in this course.

Communications
You are strongly encouraged to use the course convener’s office hours for any queries or concerns you might have. Dr. Hussain’s office is located on the 3rd floor of 18 Buccleuch Place (office door on the left). Office hours are Thursday 11am-12pm. Any routine queries can be sent by email dhussain@exseed.ed.ac.uk. However, students are encouraged to check course documentation thoroughly before emailing. The convener will use email to communicate with you, e.g., to assign groups, notify of any changes to the course, or notify of resources uploaded to learn.
**LECTURE PROGRAMME:**

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**Classes and Reading List**

This reading list sets out both key and further readings. Students **must** read all of the key readings before each session and **be prepared to comment on them** in class. The emphasis in this course is on practical learning and class participation.

**Session One: Becoming an Anthropologist (Thursday 24th September)**

The goal of this session is to provide you with an overview of the anthropology degree and to start thinking about what anthropology is and why we are studying it. The session will include a presentation by the course convener, followed by group work during which you’ll have the opportunity to introduce yourselves to one another, discussing your motivations for taking this degree and what you hope to get out of it. This will lead to the development of a series of short group presentations on ‘anthropology is about…’

**In advance:**

- Read the short extract from the book by David Pocock as far as page 9. Stop!
  

- Write the short essay (approx. 200 – 300 words) on “Myself and My Society” which Pocock describes and then upload it on to LEARN.

- Now read the rest of the Introduction and Chapter Eight.
Further Resources

Good general introductions to what anthropology is and why we should study it:

*Small Places, Large Issues: An Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology* by Thomas Hylland Eriksen.

*Anthropology: Theoretical Practice in Culture and Society* by Michael Herzfeld

*An Introduction to Social Anthropology: Sharing Our Worlds* by Joy Hendry
To start off the process of working with peers, before the session you have to read Ch.1 “Ritual Uncleaness” of Mary Douglas’s famous book *Purity and Danger*. In your groups, discuss the following:

- What is “dirt”?

- Identify practices in Edinburgh or elsewhere which are concerned with identifying and separating what is “clean” from what is “dirty”

- How might the issues raised by Douglas fit into your essay on “Myself and My Society”?

- Highlight what you like and what you don’t like about Douglas’s idea.
Session Two: Knowledge Foraging (Thursday 8th October)
The goal of this session is to give you a foundation in the kinds of resources and materials you'll require while studying anthropology. In particular, the session will cover literature searches, creating bibliographies, and citation techniques. There will be a presentation by our liaison librarian on the main online and library based search resources for anthropology, generic bibliographic and citation techniques in anthropology, and how to annotate an anthropology bibliography for undergraduate essay writing.

Further Resources

library guidance for students start page
http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/information-services/students

How to search the Classic catalogue video
http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/information-services/students/library-search

Help searching library databases & online resources
http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/information-services/services/library-museum-gallery/finding-resources/library-databases/databases-overview/databases-search

Using Google for research
http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/information-services/services/library-museum-gallery/finding-resources/library-databases/databases-overview/using-google

Guide to evaluating online sources
http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/information-services/services/library-museum-gallery/finding-resources/library-databases/databases-overview/evaluating-websites

How to find newspaper content
http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/information-services/services/library-museum-gallery/finding-resources/library-databases/databases-overview/find-newspaper-content

How to cite correctly
http://www.citethemrightonline.com
Autonomous Learning Groups – Meeting 2

**Autonomous Learning Groups – Meeting Two (Thursday 15th October)**

In this session, work in small groups and try putting together a short bibliography of ten books and ten articles relating to one of the following topics of your choice:

- Witchcraft
- Indonesia
- New reproductive technologies
- Elections
- Ritual
Session Three: Writing Anthropology (Thursday 22nd October)
Both the study of anthropology and the discipline of anthropology itself are fundamentally (but not exclusively) about writing. In this session, we'll be looking at some of the conventions of anthropological writing, and in particular, at what makes a good undergraduate anthropology essay. A presentation by the convener will cover what makes a good argument, structure, clarity of writing, research, and use of evidence. Group exercises will involve:

a) Reconstructing a short article AND
b) The marking of two undergraduate essays of varying quality using the School marking criteria.

In advance:
- Read Pages 21 – 38 in “A Student’s Guide to Reading and Writing in Social Anthropology” [PDF available on Learn]
- Read the two sample student essays [on Learn].

Further Resources
- [http://www.palgrave.com/skills4studycampus/](http://www.palgrave.com/skills4studycampus/)
- Parish, S.M. 1981. The Student’s Practical Guide: Writing Term Papers for Anthropology
Autonomous Learning Groups – Meeting 3

**Autonomous Learning Groups – Meeting Three (Thursday 29th October)**

In this session, students are encouraged to bring along either finished essays or drafts of essays which they’re going to be submitting. The essays will then be swapped with peers. Upon reading the essay you receive, ask yourself:

- What works and what doesn’t?
- Is there a clear argument and is that argument supported by evidence?
- What kind of feedback would you give?
Session Four: **Reading Anthropology** (*Thursday 5th November*)
This session will cover key issues in reading and understanding an anthropology journal article. The two hour session will be structured around a (pre-circulated) article, a pre-completed online response exercise and a short article that will be provided in class. Through class discussion and group work we will examine how to summarise an article’s key points, how to understand an argument, how to annotate an article while reading it, how to make notes, how to evaluate the contribution of an article to the field. The convener will also discuss how to present an article summary in an interesting and engaging way and group work will involve the development of short presentations for class. The session will end with a Q & A with the author, Dr Neil Thin.

**In advance:**
- Watch the YouTube video and read the article by Thin and answer the online questionnaire:
  Peak happiness?: Dr Neil Thin at TEDxUniversityofEdinburgh: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBulIR_DUl](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBulIR_DUl)
- Read Pages 1 – 21 in “A Student’s Guide to Reading and Writing in Social Anthropology” [PDF available on Learn]

**Further Resources**
- [http://www.palgrave.com/skills4studycampus/](http://www.palgrave.com/skills4studycampus/)
**Autonomous Learning Groups – Meeting 4**

**Autonomous Learning Groups – Meeting Four (Thursday 12th November)**

In this session you'll be asked to apply your newly acquired critical reading skills to:

Please come to the session having already read the article and discuss with your peers the following points:

- How would you summarize the argument that Kelly is making?
- What evidence does he use to support his argument?
- Which aspects of his argument do you find convincing and which do you not?
- Are there any other plausible analyses which could be applied to the same ethnographic data?

**Session Five: Revising as Learning (Thursday 19th November)**

This session is intended to help students prepare for exams by covering generic revision skills in anthropology, including revision plans, organizing time, key revision techniques such as mind mapping or fast essay planning.

**In advance:**
- Read pages 57-68 and 163-173 of Study! A Guide to Effective Learning, Revision and Examination Techniques by Robert Barrass [available through Learn]

**Further Resources**

- [http://www.palgrave.com/skills4studycampus/](http://www.palgrave.com/skills4studycampus/)
- [http://www.exampapers.lib.ed.ac.uk/](http://www.exampapers.lib.ed.ac.uk/)
In this session, you’ll be asked to bring along past exam papers from the courses for which you’ll soon be revising. These papers can be downloaded from the library website at: [http://www.exampapers.lib.ed.ac.uk/](http://www.exampapers.lib.ed.ac.uk/)

- Discuss with your peers about which questions you think you would answer
- Sketch out what your answer would contain and swap it with one of your peers
- Does the answer actually address the question? Is there a clear argument? Are the points supported by ethnography?
- Feedback to your peer what you think are the strengths and weaknesses of her or his answer plan