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## ANTH 110: Introduction to Anthropology: A Peer Review of Teaching Benchmark Memo

Taylor A. Livingston

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ANTH 110: Introduction to Anthropology:  
A Peer Review of Teaching Benchmark Memo

Taylor A. Livingston, PhD, IBCLC  
Assistant Professor of the Practice, Anthropology  
School of Global Integrative Studies  
College of Arts and Sciences  
University of Nebraska—Lincoln  
Contact: [tlivingston3@unl.edu](mailto:tlivingston3@unl.edu)

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## **Abstract**

This portfolio examines the extent to which the learning outcomes for Introduction to Anthropology (ANTH 110) were met through course assessments. The primary goal of this course is for students to engage with anthropological content, by introducing students to an anthropological perspective, which requires looking at issues from multiple contexts (holism), and having students add this to their “tool kit” to help them make sense of what they believe, why they believe it, and how to make sense of the world around them and their place in it. The alignment of outcomes and assessment was analyzed through an examination of descriptive statistics for course exams and mini-assignments, as well as through student feedback on the course halfway through the semester and at the end of the semester. Results indicated that learning outcomes and the goal for the course were more readily met through mini-assignments than through exams. Though the COVID-19 pandemic may have affected exam scores, as a result of this analysis, in future iterations of the course, I plan to re-align the learning outcomes and assessments and replace the larger exams with unit quizzes.

**Key words:** Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, Pedagogy, Assessment of Student Learning, Reflections on Teaching Methods

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## **OBJECTIVES FOR THE PEER REVIEW COURSE PORTFOLIO**

The goal for the course portfolio is to document with data from student assessments and surveys if my learning outcomes for the course are being met through assessment. As a subscriber to backwards design, I attempt to align goals with assessment, but I don't necessarily create the time at the end of the semester to critically evaluate if students "got" what I planned and sincerely hoped they would from the course.

Another goal of the portfolio is to receive feedback on teaching methods and pedagogical strategies from peers across the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I am always interested in learning about new assessment strategies or other teaching suggestions, especially as we are in uncertain times in a pandemic, which requires "outside of the box" strategies for socially distanced engagement.

Finally, the portfolio will provide a broad overview of the course to aide in assessing my own teaching methods, as well as the larger department goals for the course.

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

ANTH 110: Introduction to Anthropology is the survey course for Anthropology, introducing students to the four-subfields of the discipline: cultural, biological, linguistic, and archaeological anthropology. The course is not required for majors, but attracts many first- and second-year undergraduate students as it satisfies two, social science and global diversity, of the ten ACE (Achievement Centered Education) requirements for degree-seeking students. As a survey of the field of anthropology, the course covers a variety of content all centering around the question, what does it mean to be human? Other questions and topics covered in the course include: How old is our species? What makes us different from other animals? Why do people in different parts of the world look different? How do children learn language so quickly? What was life like in the distant past? And what is “culture” and how does it shape how we view the world? As such, the course also serves a recruitment course for potential majors and minor in Anthropology by introducing them to the depth and breadth of the field.

### **Course Goals and Learning Outcomes**

Introduction to Anthropology may be the only exposure to the discipline of anthropology a student ever receives, and as such, the course goals are broad. Goals include not only having students engage with anthropological content, by introducing students to an anthropological perspective, which requires looking at issues from multiple contexts (holism), and having students add this to their “tool kit” to help them make sense of what they believe, why they believe it, and how to make sense of the world around them and their place in it. By the end of the course, students should meet the following learning objectives:

1. Examine human biocultural diversity, both past and present throughout the world.
2. Deconstruct and question assumptions, biases, concepts, and ideas about the world.
3. Appreciate the value of anthropology as a comprehensive and holistic science for investigating our species within an evolutionary framework and from a cross-cultural perspective.
4. Understand how anthropological concepts, methods, and theories can help us better understand the world around us.

I see all of these learning outcomes as interconnected and building off one another. By exploring diversity in the past and present, students begin to challenge their assumptions that their world view is “right” and American culture and its corresponding values are the only way society can be structured. This (I hope) leads to an appreciation for a new way of seeing—an anthropological perspective, which as my favorite anthropological pedagogist, Michael Wesch, calls “ways of seeing.” Anthropological ways of seeing require students to “see small, see big, and see it all.” It requires learning how to control your perspective, much like you would a zoom lens on a camera. “Seeing small” investigates the nuances and minutia of a cultural practice of belief, while “seeing big” requires zooming out to see how this phenomenon is reflective of larger social structures. “Seeing it all” necessitates viewing how small and big fit together in a patterned image that reflects and produces cultural systems (governments, economics, families, healthcare). It is similar to how our brain makes sense of ambiguous images—those images that



contain two images in one—first, we may “see big” and see the young woman wearing a hat with a feather. But then, we need to “see small,” examining her jaw line and its disconnected lines, and we see something we didn’t see before—a nose. Combining these perspectives, we “see it all”—the image of an older woman, her head down and chin tucked into her chest becomes illuminated as well as the image of the young woman.

For me as an instructor (and a human), this aspect (outcome four) is the most important of the course. Many students may never become anthropologists, but anthropology has a valuable skill to bestow on students—stepping outside of your own perspective, seeing something new, and understanding there is not a “right” way to see; instead, there are just different perspectives shaped by culture’s social, infra-, and super-structures. My hope would be for students to take this skill into other courses and deploy their “ways of seeing” throughout their lives to engender more empathy, greater understanding, and a willingness to challenge their assumptions.

### **Course History and Context**

This course was not my original selection for the Peer Review of Teaching Project. Initially, I selected a 400/800 level course to help my unit and newly formed School (School of Global Integrative Studies) begin to develop an evidence-based means if graduate students were receiving the necessary level of coursework and engagement for their degree, as well as standardize requirements for graduate students in 400/800 level courses as these make up most of our graduate curriculum. However, with retirements in the unit, I was not assigned to teach the course I proposed, but the large, introductory course.

While not my initial selection, this works out well for me and the anthropology unit. Spring semester, I was awarded an Open Resource Education Grant to create a textbook to be used by all sections of ANTH 110 (over 900 students an academic year). The piloting of this text will be in the Spring semester. This grant is part of a larger effort in the unit to increase majors and minors, and students taking other anthropology courses. Our (I am working with other faculty to create the text) goal in creating the text is to provide an engaging, informative, and easily updatable resource that can be used by faculty when teaching the course. The Peer Review of Teaching Project nicely fits into this goal, as the textbook not only contains readings, but suggested exercises and assessments instructors can use. ANTH 110 is often taught by lectures, but is a difficult course to teach as it requires a breadth of knowledge most only receive at the very beginning of their graduate education. By choosing this course for the Peer Review of Teaching Project, I can not only pilot the textbook, but also collect necessary feedback and data on teaching methods to better meet the goal of making ANTH 110 a seductive course, which provokes students to take more courses in Anthropology.

Further, while the introduction to the field of Anthropology, the course is not required of major or minors, and many students take the course as an ACE requirement, but then decided to pursue more anthropology courses. I hope my course is seductive and entices students to learn more

about the field by taking more depth courses. In addition to trying to gain majors or minors, the introductory course also provides a foundation for anthropology subdisciplines and topics that students will build upon if they enroll in other Anthropology courses. I would hope that my choices prepare students for taking not only other courses in the field, but at the university by helping them hone their critical thinking skills and by providing tangible examples of how universities are not “ivory towers” or that attending college is something one just has to do to get a good job. Rather, my hope is that students learn in the course anthropology is all around them, and that just like anthropological concepts and methods can be translated to their real-world experiences, the same can be said for other courses at UNL.

### Enrollment and Demographics

For the Spring 2021 semester, 70 students were enrolled in the course. First-year students or Freshman, were the majority of students ( $n = 29$ ), followed by Sophomores ( $n = 20$ ), Juniors ( $n = 14$ ), and Seniors ( $n = 6$ ) (see Figure 1 below). Most were students in the College of Arts and Sciences or College of Business (see Figure 2), but none were Anthropology majors (or minors) (see Figure 3). Racial, ethnic, gender identification, and first-generation college student demographic information of enrolled students are not available via the university to professors.

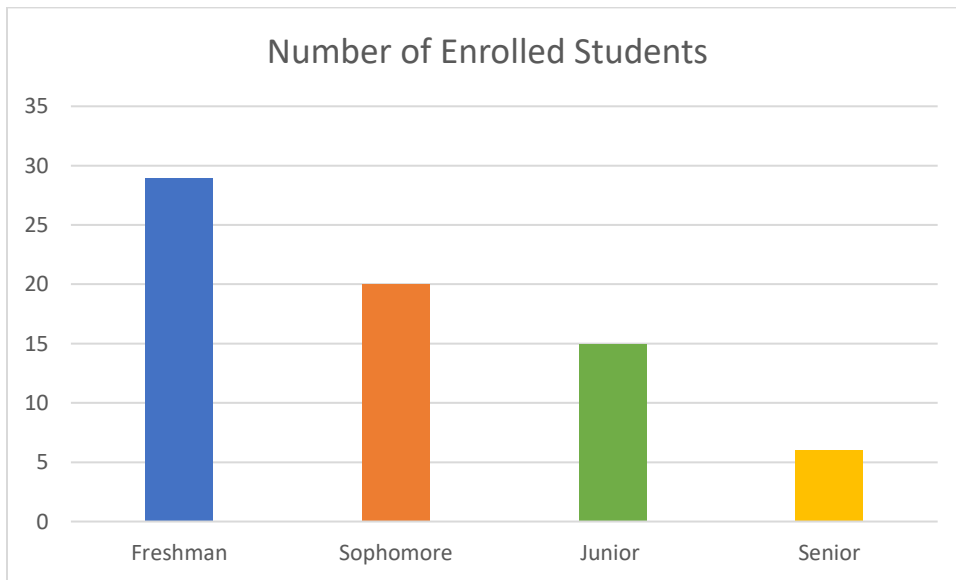


Figure 1: Number of Enrolled Students by Student Status.



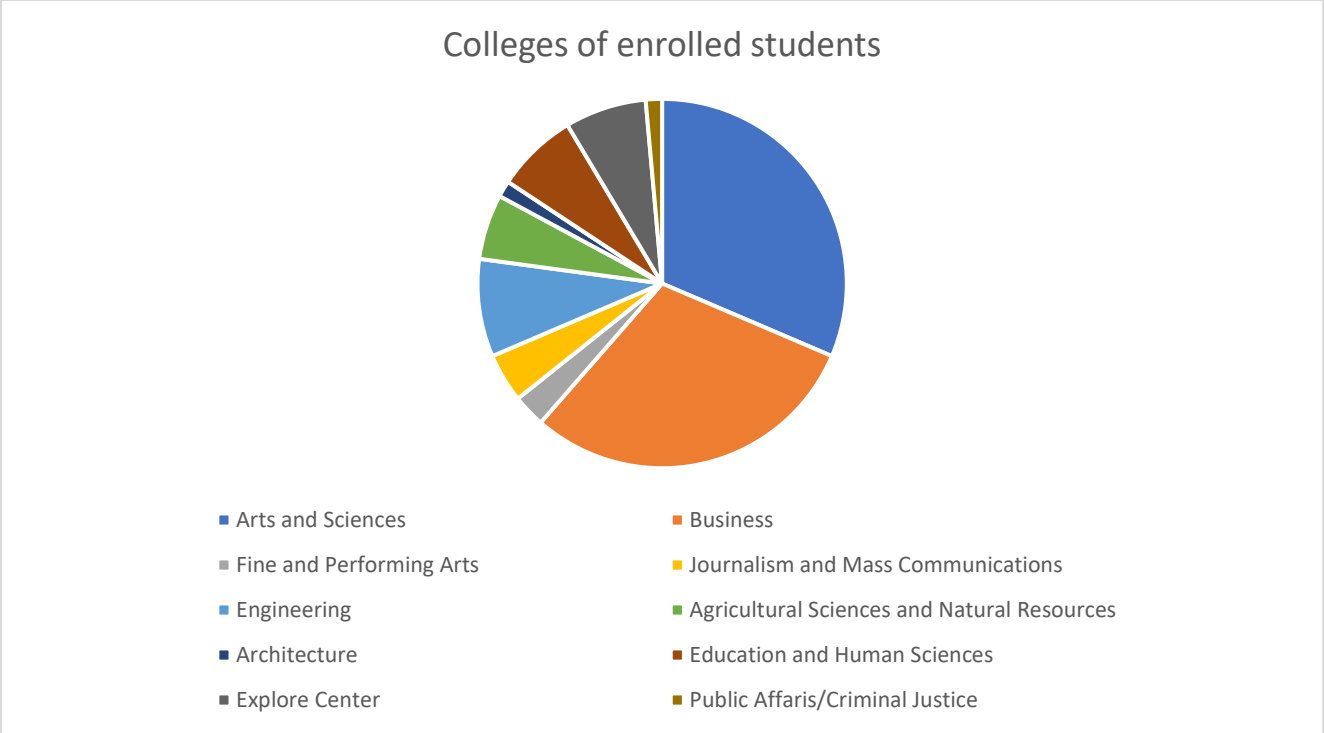


Figure 2: Colleges of enrolled students in ANTH 110

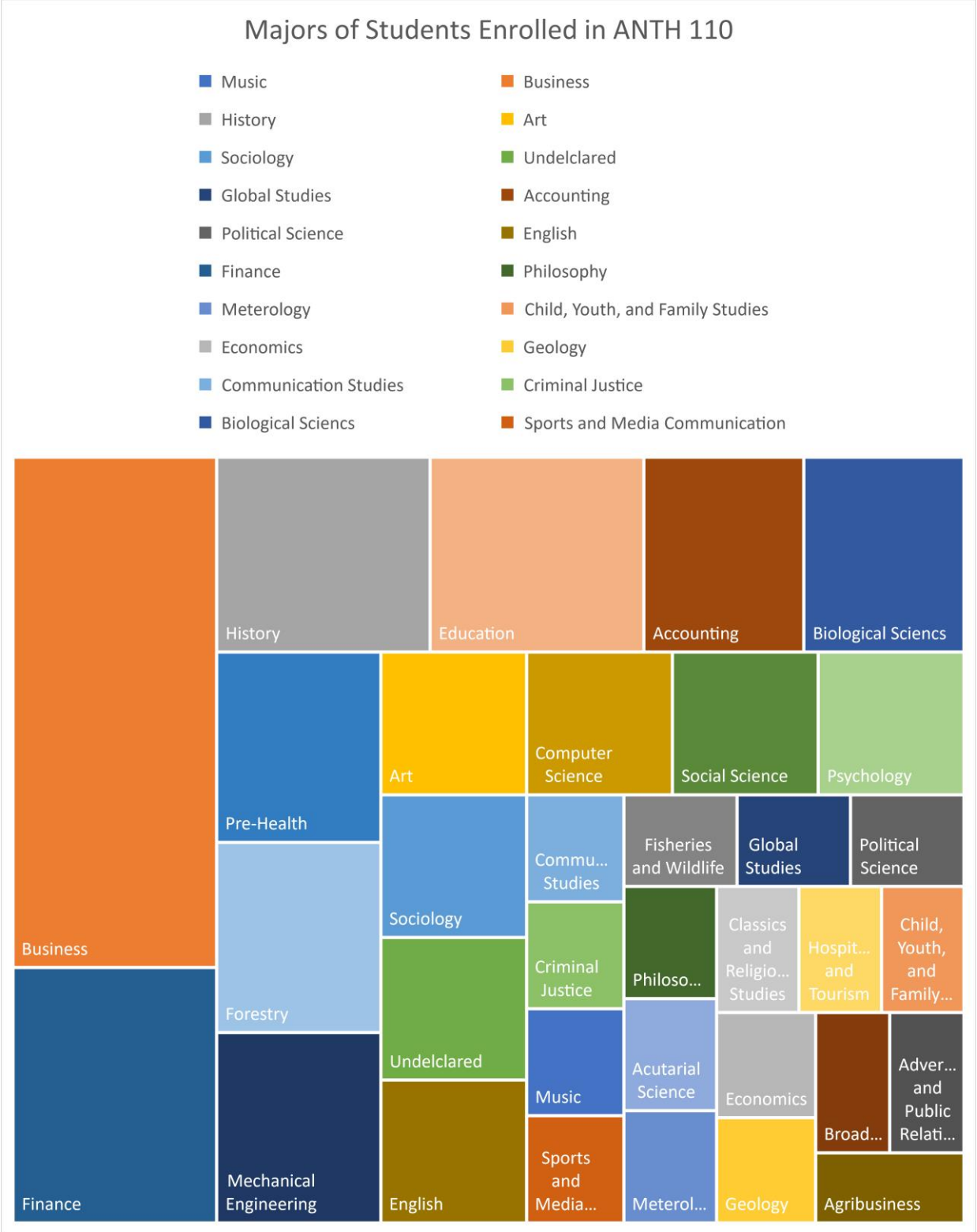


Figure 3: Majors of student enrolled in ANTH 110

## **TEACHING METHODS**

As the course is an introductory course that is on the larger side (70 students), lecture is the primary teaching method used. However, I planned for the lecture to be interactive using Slido to poll students and have quick responses to questions. Further, I incorporated think-pair-share (socially distanced—i.e., turn to the nearest person) in class, as well. These methods were chosen to ensure students are achieving the course goals by checking to make sure they are paying attention to the lecture through polls and quick multiple-choice check-in questions. It also attempts to ensure students understand the material being covered. For example, if many students answer a multiple-choice question incorrectly, then I will know I need to reinforce the point and explain the construct in a different way.

### **Course Activities**

For this introductory course, there are six assessments that students need to complete outside of class. These are discussion board posts and mini-projects. The discussion board posts allow students to engage with the material in a different format and also learn and interact with their peers, as the COVID-19 pandemic public health measures make classroom interaction almost impossible. In Spring 2020, I used discussion board posts and students commented in the course evaluations that they enjoyed interacting with and getting to know other students. The first discussion post allows student to introduce themselves to their group (I break the class into smaller groups of 6-8 students since the class is too large for students to see everyone's posts). The other two discussion board posts have students answer reflection questions after reading about Anthropology topics in the news/popular media.

The mini-projects allow the students to practice what they are learning in the classroom to their everyday lives and the world around them. For example, the first mini-project asks students to take five pictures of some aspect of American culture, but make it strange by examining it and explaining it from an outsider's perspective. Students write a short of artist statement, which has them explain why they chose this topic and how the topic connects to larger issues in American culture (e.g., a student may choose make-up and connect this to sexism in our culture).

### **Course Materials**

As this is an introductory course, I try to vary the course materials. The textbook for the course is an Open Educational Resource my colleagues in the department and I wrote this past summer and fall. In addition to standard text, the text also has imbedded videos and podcasts. I supplemented the text with video clips, podcasts, and articles from popular media (*The Atlantic*, *The New York Times*, *NPR*, and *Sapiens*).

I find that these materials are useful in meeting one of my course goals (Understand how anthropological concepts, methods, and theories can help us better understand the world around us.) Through the use of non-scholarly articles, podcasts, and video clips, students learn that the material covered in class is not esoteric. Further, by using these sources students hopefully understand how the skills they learn in the course are transferrable, and (for better or worse) help them critically examine the media they consume.

## **Rationale for Teaching Methods**

The selection of these teaching methods corresponds to how I aim to achieve the learning objectives for the course. For example, outcome one, examine human biocultural diversity, both past and present throughout the world; is achieved through lecture and course materials. To ensure students have learned and examined the material presented in lecture and course materials, there are three non-comprehensive exams for each unit of the course. To achieve outcome two, deconstruct and question assumptions, biases, concepts, and ideas about the world, mini-assignment three, “Get Uncomfortable” has students explore a culture or sub-culture with which they are unfamiliar and reflect on the assignment. Additionally, learning outcome three, appreciate the value of anthropology as a comprehensive and holistic science for investigating our species within an evolutionary framework and from a cross-cultural perspective, is achieved through mini-assignment two, which asks student to create a piece of art and then reflect on what art is and why it is one of the things that makes us human. Further, it is also achieved through the course project, “UnEssay.” This assignment allows students to tap into their creativity to explain and anthropological concept. Finally, learning objective four, understand how anthropological concepts, methods, and theories can help us better understand the world around us, is met through discussion board posts and mini-assignment one, “Fieldwork of the Familiar.” This assignment asks students to take photos of everyday objects and examine their culture from an outsider’s perspective. They must explain how these photos relate to the superstructure, infrastructure, of social structure of American culture.

This semester, my students were guinea pigs twice over, as they will not only be allowing for their work to be used this project, but will provide feedback on the textbook. I expect my teaching methods to meet my goals for the course and their associated learning outcomes because they are varied, showing the breadth of the field of anthropology, allow for student engagement with the material, and require students to think critically about how course topics intersect with their lives and the world around them. These are lofty goals, so I am anxious to evaluate student work to assess if my goals and outcome align with course materials and assessment methods.

## ANALYSIS OF STUDENT LEARNING

For the purposes of this benchmark portfolio, I have chosen to focus on an assessment of student assignments—exams and mini-assignments, as well as corresponding feedback from students about these assignments.

### Analysis of Assignments

As shown in Appendix 1, exams account for 35 percent of students' grade in the course, while mini-assignments account for 30 percent. Exams are non-cumulative and occur in each unit of the course (foundations, the past, and variations on a theme). Exams were composed of 35 multiple choice questions and two short answer questions. Mini-assignments are also assigned for each unit. Mini-assignments ask the student to complete an activity and then write up the activity with a reflection on what they learned. For example, for mini-assignment three, "Get Uncomfortable," students must explore a culture or sub-culture for which they are unfamiliar. Some students listen to music they do not like, attend a religious service of a different faith, or eat an ethnic cuisine they have not tried before. They then reflect on what they learned (see Appendix 2 for examples). The goal, and luckily what happens much of the time, is that students appreciate and come to appreciate and even like what was unfamiliar. Though fear keeps us from learning about and exploring "the other," we actually benefit and grow from the experience of "getting out of our bubble."

Throughout the course, I noticed students performed much better on the mini-assignments than on the exams. This can be seen in Table 1 and Figure 4. Grades for exams were so low, I added extra credit questions to the second and third exams, as well as decided to drop the lowest exam grade of each student. Average and median grades were much higher for mini-assignments, with the exception of exam 3. This is likely due to some students not taking the exam as they knew the lowest grade would be dropped. The averages for all assignments were much lower than my averages for assessments I have assigned in the past this semester. I had many students, usually at least five, who did not submit assignments or take the exam. Their resulting zeros bring down the class average. For this reason, the median grade was chosen to represent the overall trend of this analysis (Figure 4).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Exams and Mini-Assignments

Statistic	Exam 1	Exam 2	Exam 3	Mini-Assignment 1	Mini-Assignment 2	Mini-Assignment 3
Average	67.7	72.5	69.7	77.3	75.84	79.1
Min*	34	50	33	65	79	72
Max	100	100	104	100	100	100
Median	73.5	80	81.3	85.3	94	96.3
Mode*	86	88	86	97	95	95
Standard Deviation	22.8	27.3	31.2	27.4	36.8	36.7

\*Other than zero

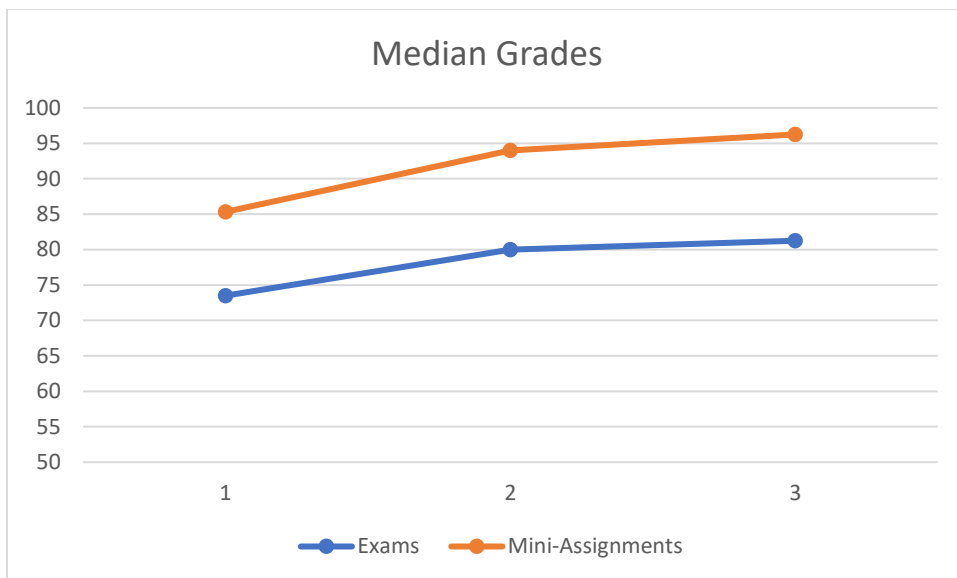


Figure 4: Median grades for Exams 1-3 and Mini-Assignments 1-3

### Student Feedback

Students also expressed their preference for mini-assignments over exams in the mid-semester survey and the final evaluation for the course (Table 2). They noted the exams were “extremely difficult” and “pack filled.” Interestingly, in the mid-semester evaluation, students also noted that they were not devoting enough time to studying for the exams. As noted in the comment below, I provided review sheets for each of the exams and incorporated a review session after exam one. I also posted practice quizzes with sample questions for each topic covered that week as a means to boost exam grades. These were unsuccessful, and students noted that they would have liked the study guides to be more exhaustive of the content.

Table 2. Student Feedback on Assignments

	<b>Exams</b>	<b>Mini-Assignments</b>
<b>Mid-Term Survey</b>	<p><i>“I think that the tests are the hardest part, because there is a lot of information that you need to know for the tests and it accounts for a lot of your grade.”</i></p> <p><i>“I am not the best at studying and I have found the tests to be pretty challenging.”</i></p> <p><i>“The exams are extremely difficult.”</i></p>	<p><i>“I like the projects and learning how to use the information in our lives today.”</i></p> <p><i>“The mini assignments and discussion posts are not just busy work and actually pertain to the course material to give us a better, deeper understanding.”</i></p> <p><i>“I like how creative the mini assignments are.”</i></p>
<b>Final Evaluation</b>	<p><i>“Though the class lectures are interesting and informational, it</i></p>	<p><i>“The assignments and projects in this class are fun and enlightening experiences rather than traditional</i></p>

	<p><i>seemed that the tests were a little bit difficult for myself.”</i></p> <p><i>“This course covers a lot of material and very fast. The tests are packed filled and I have a hard time knowing what will be on them.”</i></p> <p><i>“I believe that the exams could be a little more easy to study for. The review sheet for the exams seemed to only help a little, and I was left confused on each test at a certain point.”</i></p>	<p><i>busywork which would feel inappropriate and out of place for a class such as this class. They challenge you to think outside of your regular window of thought and encourage you to think more critically about your anthropological ties in to society and our daily lives.”</i></p> <p><i>“I enjoyed the assignments to use the knowledge taught in the classroom in real world applications. Using what is learned is much better than just book learning.”</i></p> <p><i>“The mini-assignments Dr. Livingston assigned really help take course content to the next level. We didn't just learn the course content, we were expected to put it into practice in creative ways which I appreciated.”</i></p>
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## **SUMMARY AND REFLECTION ON THE COURSE**

Participating in the Peer Review of Teaching Program for Introduction to Anthropology (ANTH 110) equipped me with a greater appreciation for and commitment to aligning course objectives, teaching methods, and assessments using backward design. From analyzing student performance on exams and mini-assignments, as well as student feedback, I now know that while my mini-assignments meet my course goals and learning outcomes, the exams do not. I am glad that students found the mini-assignments so enjoyable and their comments are similar to the wording for learning outcome four. I invested a good deal of time into crafting these mini-assignments and making them interesting for students (and for myself to grade). In the future iterations of the course, I plan to keep these many assignments, as well as adapt Dr. Tyler White's rubric for applied assignments. Though I use rubrics to evaluate student papers, his rubric is better at assessing and accounting for the experiential nature of the assessment.

Participating in the Peer Review of Teaching project encourages me to rethink the exams as a means of meeting learning outcome one. Students found these difficult, even with study guides, review sessions, and practice quizzes. Scores continued to be low even though I added extra credit questions and I review "quiz statistics" and "quiz breakdown" in Canvas for each exam. This means that I review questions where fewer than 50 percent of students answered the questions correctly. If the "discrimination index," which calculates the difference between how students who performed well on the exam answered the question versus those who did not, is below .25, I give credit to all for the question, as this indicates it was not a "good" multiple choice question. It is important to note that few students took advantage of the practice quiz questions and during review sessions, only a couple students asked questions. Additionally, at least five students failed to take each exam. I reached out to the students via email, as well as through their advisors, but never received a response. Mini-assignments were not exempt from this phenomenon. Further, when checking Canvas Analytics, few students read the assigned reading, which may account for the low test grades. The next time I teach the course, I think I will employ reading quizzes and/or smaller quizzes after each unit instead of three exams to see if grades improve.

It must also be noted that this semester was far from "normal." The COVID-19 pandemic forced everyone to employ teaching methods that could be accomplished six feet apart and while wearing a mask. My course was no exception as my enrolled students numbered 70, but I was assigned a room for my in-person class that could only seat 37 socially distanced. As a result, half of the class came on Tuesdays, while the other came on Thursdays in-person. When not their assigned in-person day, students joined the class via Zoom. Lectures were also recorded and posted to Canvas. Exams had to be taken in the Digital Learning Center with students registering for a time to take the exam. The additional stress of this may have also affected exam grades.

After the third week of class, there was a precipitous drop in attendance with around 12 students attending in-person, and many of these on Tuesdays and Thursdays as they soon gathered their peers were not attending on their assigned days. Approximately 35 students joined each day via Zoom. Whether the other 23 watched the lecture is unknown. This may also account for the low exam grades. Exam grades were also likely influenced by students' mental health and the toll



that being a pandemic, which dramatically alters the college experience entails. Some students noted in the mid-semester survey that they lacked motivation. Overall, I think students were burnt out and suffering from the effects of trauma as a result from the pandemic. For this reason, I was exceptionally accommodating when students asked for an extension, and offered multiple extra credit assignments.

Though far from a “normal” semester, I look forward to whatever “new normal” awaits us in the future, and to applying the skills I have acquired through the Peer Review of Teaching project as a revise and create future courses.

## APPENDENIX 1: COURSE SYLLABUS

### ANTH 110: Introduction to Anthropology

**Instructor:** Taylor Livingston, PhD, IBCLC  
**Office:** Oldfather 816 and Zoom  
**Email:** [tlivingston3@unl.edu](mailto:tlivingston3@unl.edu)  
**Office Hours:** Tuesdays 2-4pm

**Teaching Assistant:** Erik Schulz  
**Office:** [Zoom](#)  
**Email:** [eschulz3@huskers.unl.edu](mailto:eschulz3@huskers.unl.edu)  
**Office Hours:** Thursdays 10-12pm

#### Course Description

In this course, we'll ask: what does it mean to be human? You will learn the about the field of anthropology, the study of humankind, and its four sub-fields: sociocultural anthropology, biological anthropology, archaeology, and linguistics. We will ask questions such as: How old is our species? What makes us different from other animals? Why do people in different parts of the world look different? How do children learn language so quickly? What was life like in the distant past? And what is "culture"?

By doing this, I hope to help you hone tools that I hope you will find useful as you navigate our challenging, ever-changing world.

#### Objectives

The overall goal of this course is to understand how anthropological concepts, methods, and theories can help us better understand the world around us.

The following outcomes are necessary to achieve this goal:

- 1.Examine human biocultural diversity, both past and present throughout the world.
- 2.Deconstruct and question assumptions, biases, concepts, and ideas about the world.
- 3.Appreciate the value of anthropology as a comprehensive and holistic science for investigating our species within an evolutionary framework and from a cross-cultural perspective.
- 4.Understand how anthropological concepts, methods, and theories can help us better understand the world around us.

By the end of this course, we'll sort through uncomfortable issues and figure out where we stand on them and why. And, figure out ways of affecting our world as agents of change.

#### ACE course statement

This course satisfies:

- SLO6: Use knowledge, theories, methods, and historical perspectives appropriate to the social science to understand and evaluate human behavior and
  - SLO9: Exhibit global awareness or knowledge of human diversity through analysis of an issues.
- 

The UnEssay serves as the signature assignment to be used to assess the degree to which the student has mastered SLO 6/9. The instructor will assess the performance of each student on this signature assignment using the approved ACE 6/9 rubrics.

### **Informed Consent Statements:**

#### Peer Review of Teaching:

Your teacher is conducting an inquiry into his/her teaching. She is examining the effectiveness of her instructional strategies, comparing, and/or evaluating the effectiveness of instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods. This form requests your consent to allow your classroom performance data (e.g., examination scores, project grades, attendance records) and coursework (e.g., examinations, quizzes, papers, drawings) to be included as part of your teacher's classroom inquiry. Examples of actual student work are often very useful to demonstrate how much and how deeply students are learning. The form also asks you to allow your teacher to use these data for possible publication or presentation.

Your participation in this inquiry is voluntary, and there is no compensation should you choose to participate. The inquiry will be conducted as part of the class practice and activities as defined in your course syllabus. Your participation is not expected to require any added out-of-class time. Your name will be removed from all course work examples and you will not be referred to by name in any published materials or in any presentations. Once the classroom inquiry is complete, all copies of your course work and/or examples that were retained by your teacher will be treated in the same manner as he/she maintains student work and records from other courses.

#### Closing the Equity Gap:

Your instructor is conducting an inquiry into his/her/their teaching. He/she/they is/are examining the effectiveness of his/her/their instructional strategies, comparing, and/or evaluating the effectiveness of instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods. You are encouraged to participate in anonymous surveys administrated at three time points during the semester (One Month, Mid-Term and End of Semester). Your responses are very useful to demonstrate the success of various teaching methods and strategies. Your participation in this inquiry is voluntary, and there is no compensation should you choose to participate. Your participation should total no more than 30 minutes of outside class time over the course of the semester. A consent form will be distributed in class.

### **Required course materials:**

- The textbook for this course is free! Links to the pertinent chapters are available through Canvas
- Other materials will be available via the course Canvas site

### **Course Policies and Procedures:**

#### **Expectations**

1. Every student will come to class having read the assigned material thoroughly
2. Every student will participate during the appropriate times in class
3. Students will arrive on time for each class period
4. **Students will approach each other with respect, thoughtfulness, and with an academic mind set**

## Attendance and Participation

Students are expected to be active participants in their own learning through contribution to class discussions and by completing assigned materials (*prior to class meetings*) and other requirements according to the schedule outlined in the course syllabus. If you must be absent, the student should make every effort to get notes from colleagues and ask the instructor for missed material (if not already posted; check Canvas first). Students will also choose dates on which to lead discussion.

Students who are sick or who are engaging in self-quarantine in accordance with guidance from the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department or their health care professional should not physically attend in-person classes. Please notify me of your absence and let me know if you are well enough to continue to engage with the course. Your first priority should be getting well, we'll figure how to make up class assignments once you are feeling better.

## Classroom Etiquette

The experiences, opinions, and knowledge each of us brings to the classroom are unique and deserving of respect from your peers and from the instructor. This course is designed to encourage open discussions regarding often contentious and conflicting viewpoints as well as the underlying assumptions on which they are based. While you may not agree with everything said or presented, we owe it to each other to listen carefully and respectfully to other peoples' views. Remember, you are never graded on your views or your politics, only the degree to which you have engaged with the readings and discussions. All faculty, staff and students are responsible for understanding and complying with harassment policies. For more information, visit <http://www.unl.edu/equity> [Links to an external site.](#) (Links to an external site.)

## Logistics

- *Email:* Students are expected to check their email and Canvas often for class updates. This gives the me the capability of giving you last minute reminders and tips.
- *Make-up and Late Written Assignments:* Make up exams and late written assignments will NOT be approved except under university approved excuses and extraordinary circumstances.
- *Behavior and Technology:* Please arrive to class on-time, do not leave class early, or “pack –up” while someone is speaking. Please turn your cell phone to silent and put them away for the duration of class. I will not limit the use of computers in the classroom for note taking but will ask you to put them away if people abuse the use of the internet during class time. This includes answering emails, going on social media, playing games, or shopping. This is an issue of respect for your classmates and your instructor. Sitting in class is not like sitting in a movie: everyone in the classroom can see you and expects to have some interaction with you, whether it is asking and answering questions or simply making eye contact.
- Feel free to meet with me to discuss the course and your work!

**Assignments** \*\*Detailed Guidelines and Rubrics of all Assignments are on Canvas\*\*

### Exams:

Three (3) exams will be given over the course of the semester (one for each section of the course). The last section's exam will be your final and will NOT be cumulative. However, the may need to re-familiarize yourself with key concepts and methods.

### Discussion Posts:

Over the course of the semester, you will respond to a prompt related to that week's module. You will also respond and comment on another student's response. These will be evaluated based on whether you answered all parts of the question or completed task correctly, and demonstrated mastery of relevant concepts, and responded substantially to at least one other student.

### Mini-Assignments:

These assignments are 1-2 page double-spaced interactive assignments/papers related to a concept covered that week.

### Final Paper or "UnEssay":

Your final project in this course requires you to work on a project which allows you to engage with the material in any way you see fit. You will choose a topic of relevance to the course that you think is interesting, important, and relevant to you. In other words, you can choose your own topic as long as it can be associated with the course material. Then you figure out how you want to present it. It can be a standard research paper if you wish or something very different. Some possible examples:

- Write a play/musical/opera/movie/zine/cartoon
- Watercolor/painting/charcoal artwork
- Make a series of Buzzfeed style listicles (with a clickbaity headline!)
- Embroidery, knitting project
- Do a book review of a nonfiction or fiction book related to the class
- An interview and discussion with someone.
- Regular essay/research paper (5-6 pages)

### Assignment Percentages of Final Grade:

Discussion Posts:	15% (5% each)
Mini-Assignments	30% (10% each)
Exam I	10%
Exam II	10%
Exam III	15%
UnEssay/Paper	20%

### **Grades and Grading**

Grades will be based on the following scale:

A: Superior, original, thoughtful work in completion of all course requirements

B: Very good work in completion of course requirements

C: Satisfactory work in completion of course requirements

D: Unsatisfactory or incomplete work in course requirements and/or a failure to meet minimum attendance requirements.

F: Failure to meet minimum course standards for assignments, participation, attendance

Letter grades will be assigned following the distribution: A+ (100-98) A (93-97), A- (92-90), B+ (89-87), B (86-83), B- (82-80), C+ (79-77), C (76-73), C- (72-70), D+ (69-67), D (66-63), D- (62-60), F (59 and below)

**Course Schedule**

PB = Pressbooks, the course textbook \*Check Canvas for other readings!\*

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>
<i>Week 1</i>	Jan 26	Introduction, class policies	
	Jan 27	What is Anthropology? <b>Discussion Post 1:</b> Introduce Yourself	Chap 1 PB
<b>Part I: Foundations</b>			
<i>Week 2</i>	Feb 2	What is Culture?	Chap 2 PB
	Feb 4	Fieldwork: How do you “do” Anthropology <b>Assignment 1:</b> Fieldwork of the Familiar	“Doing Anthropology,” Kottack AAA Statement on Ethics
<i>Week 3</i>	Feb 9	Language and Communication	• Chap 8 PB
	Feb 11	Language and Status	Radiolab podcast: Words that Change the World
<i>Week 4</i>	Feb 16	Primates	Chap 6 PB

	Feb 18	<b>EXAM I</b>	
<b>Part II: The Past</b>			
Week 5	Feb 23	Evolutionary Theory	· Chap 5 PB
	Feb 25	Early Homins: Big Brains and Bipedalism	· Chap 7 first half PB
Week 6	March 2	The Genus <i>Homo</i> : This is Us	· Chap 7 last half PB
	March 4	Archaeology and Materiality <b>Discussion Post 2:</b> Entanglements	· Chap 4 PB · Chap 5 Wesch
Week 7	March 9	Settling Down: Sedentism and Domestication	· Chap 17 PB
	March 11	<b>EXAM II</b>	
<b>Part III: Variations on a Theme</b>			
Week 8	March 16	Money and Politics	PB Chapter on Political Systems
	March 18	<b>READING DAY!</b>	Work on UNEssay/take midterm survey!
Week 9	March 23	Art and Symbols	· Readings posted on Canvas

	March 25	Magic, Ritual, Belief <b>Assignment 2:</b> Ethnography of Art	Chap 14 PB
<i>Week 10</i>	March 30	Making a Family	Chap 13 PB
	April 1	Gender and Sexuality	Chap 12 (until section on Race) PB
<i>Week 11</i>	April 6	Race and Ethnicity	Chap 12 PB
	April 8	Inequalities and Difference <b>Assignment 3:</b> Get UncomforFigure!	Readings posted on Canvas
<i>Week 12</i>	April 13	Colonialism	Readings posted on Canvas
	April 15	Globalization <b>Discussion Board 3:</b> Global Entanglements of Objects	Chap 8 Wesch
<i>Week 13</i>	April 20	<b>Applied Anthropology</b>	
	April 22	<b>UnEssay Due</b>	<b>READING DAY/WORK on UnESSAY</b>
<i>Week 14</i>	April 27	Where do we go from here? and Exam review	Chap 11 Wesch
	April 29	Reading DAY! STUDY	



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## **FINAL EXAM MAY 7<sup>th</sup> 10am-12pm**

### **University Policies and Helpful Information:**

#### **Indigenous Land Acknowledgment**

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln is a land-grant institution established under the 1862 Morrill Act. As such, part of the story of UNL is one of settler-colonialism; the institution rests on the dispossession of Indigenous peoples and nations from their land. Nebraska is the current home of six federally recognized tribes, including the Iowa tribe of Kansas and Nebraska, the Omaha Tribe of Nebraska, the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska, the Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska, the Santee Sioux Tribe of the Santee Reservation of Nebraska, and the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska. In addition to these extant, sovereign groups, other unnamed Indigenous peoples, many ancestral to these aforementioned groups, also resided here. All were subjected to land disposition, which allowed for the growth of UNL since its founding in 1869.

#### **Academic Honesty**

Academic honesty is essential to the existence and integrity of an academic institution. The responsibility for maintaining that integrity is shared by all members of the academic community. The [Student Code of Conduct](#) (Links to external site) addresses academic dishonesty. Students who commit acts of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary action and are granted due process and the right to appeal any decision.

#### **What counts as plagiarism?**

- Copying and pasting information from a web site or another source, and then revising it so that it sounds like your original idea.
- Doing an assignment/essay/take home test with a friend and then handing in separate assignments that contain the same ideas, language, phrases, etc.
- Quoting a passage without quotation marks or citations, so that it looks like your own.
- Paraphrasing a passage without citing it
- Hiring another person to do your work for you, or purchasing a paper through any of the on- or off-line sources.
- There are many resources for learning how to correctly note the source of a quotation or idea, including the Writing Center on campus, "[Understanding Plagiarism](#)" ([Links to an external site.](#)) from UNL Graduate Studies, and the [library](#) ([Links to an external site.](#)). If you have questions or are unsure about how to properly manage ideas and work that are not your own, please ask!

#### **Services for Students with Disabilities**

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options privately. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). If you are eligible for services and register with their office, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so they can be

implemented in a timely manner. SSD contact information: 117 Louise Pound Hall; 402-472-3787.

### **Writing Center**

The Writing Center, located in 102 Andrews Hall and satellite locations from 5-7 pm in Adele Hall, is a free service for all UNL students, faculty, and staff. You can work with an individual writing consultant on any type of writing at any stage in your writing process. For an appointment, call 472-8803 or [schedule online](#) (links to an external site).

### **Academic Support Services**

You can schedule free appointments for individual academic coaching with Center for Academic Success and Transition (CAST) staff through MyPLAN. You can also take advantage of study stops--which provide individual and group study with learning consultants in a variety of disciplines--and free group workshops on topics such as time management, goal setting, test preparation, and reading strategies. See [success.unl.edu](http://success.unl.edu) (links to an external site) for schedules and more information.

### **Counseling and Psychological Services**

UNL offers a variety of options to students to aid them in dealing with stress and adversity. [Counseling and Psychological & Services \(Links to an external site\)](#). (CAPS) is a multidisciplinary team of psychologists and counselors that works collaboratively with Nebraska students to help them explore their feelings and thoughts and learn helpful ways to improve their mental, psychological and emotional well-being when issues arise. CAPS can be reached by calling 402-472-7450. [Big Red Resilience & Well-Being \(Links to an external site\)](#). (BRRWB) provides one-on-one well-being coaching to any student who wants to enhance their well-being. Trained well-being coaches help students create and be grateful for positive experiences, practice resilience and self-compassion, and find support as they need it. BRRWB can be reached by calling 402-472-8770.

### **Basic Needs Security**

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and sFigure place to live, and believes this may affect your academic progress, is urged to contact Jake Johnson, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, for support. Furthermore, please notify the instructor if you are comforFigure in doing so. This will enable me to provide any additional information that I might have. An online guide of resources here at UNL can be found at <https://pantry.unl.edu/welcome#visit> (Links to an external site). Students (and others) not in need of such support should also visit this webpage to learn opportunities for donating goods, materials, or time.

### **Title IX and Victim Advocacy**

Acts of discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, stalking, and related retaliation are prohibited at UNL by the federal government under Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Most faculty at UNL including myself are NOT mandatory reporters. [Mandatory reporters or “responsible employees” \(Links to an external site\)](#). are employees who must inform the Title IX Coordinator of allegations of discrimination, harassment, or sexual misconduct. If you have experienced these types of conduct, you are

encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. You will be listened to, supported and respected. Resources and information on reporting options are available at [care.unl.edu](https://care.unl.edu) ([Links to an external site](#)).

### **Video or Audiotaping Class Sessions**

Due to the sensitive and controversial nature of some of the topics that will be discussed over the duration of the semester, all classes are closed to the Press/Media. No video or audio taping of class sessions is allowed unless you obtain my permission to do so.

### **Diversity & Inclusion**

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, national origin, sex (including pregnancy), religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, veteran status, marital status, and/or political affiliation.

### **Trespass Policy (Regents' Policy 6.4.7)**

The areas of University academic, research, public service, and administrative buildings of the University used for classrooms, laboratories, faculty and staff offices, and the areas of University student residence buildings used for student living quarters are not open to the general public. Any person not authorized to be or remain in any such building area will be deemed to be trespassing on University property and may be cited and subject to prosecution for criminal trespass in violation of Neb. Rev. Stat., § 28-520 or § 28-521.

### **Gender-Neutral Bathrooms**

The following webpage provide a list of gender-neutral bathrooms on campus: <https://involved.unl.edu/TransGuide%20w%20PT%20comments-1.pdf> ([Links to an external site](#)). ([Links to an external site](#)).

### **Lactation Rooms**

There is a private lactation space in 727A Oldfather, and a family room on the ground floor (North side, room 105). Additional information about lactation spaces is available at <http://www.unl.edu/chancellor/policymemoranda/20090901-Lactation-Policy> ([Links to an external site](#)).

### **Face Covering Syllabus Statement**

Approved by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee July 14, 2020

Required Use of Face Coverings for On-Campus Shared Learning Environments\*

As of July 17, 2020 and until further notice, all University of Nebraska–Lincoln (UNL) faculty, staff, students, and visitors (including contractors, service providers, and others) are required to use a facial covering at all times when indoors except under specific conditions outlined in the COVID 19 face covering policy found at: <https://covid19.unl.edu/face-covering-policy> ([Links to an external site](#)).

This statement is meant to clarify classroom policies for face coverings:

To protect the health and well-being of the University and wider community, UNL has implemented a policy requiring all people, including students, faculty, and staff, to wear a face covering that covers the mouth and nose while on campus. The classroom is a community, and as a community, we seek to maintain the health and safety of all members by wearing face

coverings when in the classroom. Failure to comply with this policy is interpreted as a disruption of the classroom and may be a violation of UNL's Student Code of Conduct. Individuals who have health or medical reasons for not wearing face coverings should work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (for students) or the Office of Faculty/Staff Disability Services (for faculty and staff) to establish accommodations to address the health concern. Students who prefer not to wear a face covering should work with their advisor to arrange a fully online course schedule that does not require their presence on campus.

**Students in the classroom:**

- 1.If a student is not properly wearing a face covering, the instructor will remind the student of the policy and ask them to comply with it.
- 2.If the student will not comply with the face covering policy, the instructor will ask the student to leave the classroom, and the student may only return when they are properly wearing a face covering.
- 3.If the student refuses to properly wear a face covering or leave the classroom, the instructor will dismiss the class and will report the student to the Student Conduct & Community Standards for misconduct, where the student will be subject to disciplinary action.

**Instructors in the classroom:**

- 1.If an instructor is not properly wearing a face covering, students will remind the instructor of the policy and ask them to comply with it.
- 2.If an instructor will not properly wear a face covering, students may leave the classroom and should report the misconduct to the department chair or via the TIPS system for disciplinary action through faculty governance processes.

\*Courses that have been granted an exception to the Face Covering Policy for pedagogical reasons are excluded. Exceptions to the Face Covering Policy are only granted after an approved health safety plan is developed.

## APPENDIX 2: PROMPT AND SAMPLE STUDENT WORK FOR MINI-ASSIGNMENT

### Mini-Assignment 3—Get Uncomfortable Assignment Prompt:

#### *Here's what I want you to do:*

This week we talked about making identity and how most intolerance comes from being scared of "not like us." Your challenge is to do at least one hour of fieldwork, immersing yourself in a cross-cultural or sub-cultural experience – a place, event, or activity that makes you uncomfortable (or is at least something new and different from something you would usually do). Do “fieldwork” and write up a “thick description” of your experience. What exactly does that mean?

- Try something different! If you are an atheist, [watch a streaming link of a church services \(Links to an external site.\)](#) (you can find these on Facebook). Listen to a different genre of music or a podcast you never would ordinarily! Eat a meal from a different culture! Watch a foreign language film! Learn something about other identities :If you identify as a cisgender male, watch a documentary of the fight for equality ([PBS just did a documentary \(Links to an external site.\)](#) on the 100 year anniversary of (some) women gaining the right to vote). Consider yourself to be white? [Watch a documentary \(Links to an external site.\)](#) on Black history. Learn about the Latinx or Native American or LGBTQIA experience. [You can search for films that the UNL library has access on any topic [here. \(Links to an external site.\)](#) You need to log in with your canvas/email id and password. [PBS \(Links to an external site.\)](#) is also a great option.] The options are endless!

After the event, write up a “thick description” of your experience. A thick description is an exquisitely detailed description of the setting, participants, activities, interactions, and social dramas playing out that allow the reader to feel as if they are really there. Post the description and report back here!

***Here's why I want you to do it:*** Anthropology is all about making the familiar strange and the strange familiar. These past couple of weeks we talked about making identity and how most intolerance comes from being scared of "not like us." Here is your chance to fight intolerance by learning about a group/interest/belief that is different from your own!

#### ***Here's how I want you to do it:***

- Do an activity that you have not done before or do not ordinarily do (see above).
- Reflect on the experience: what did you learn?
- After the event, write up a “thick description” of your experience. A thick description is an exquisitely detailed description of the setting, participants, activities, interactions, and social dramas playing out that allow the reader to feel as if they are really there. This should be well-crafted, double-spaced, 2-3 page essay, font size 12.

**“Student A” Submission:**

Mini-Assignment 3: Get Uncomfortable

In my hour of fieldwork, I stumbled upon a podcast episode from *Code Switch* titled “Screams and Silence” which focused on the systemic racism and violence against Asian Americans. This podcast enlightened me in ways that made me want to listen to every episode they have made. The hosts of *Code Switch*, Shereen Marisol Meraji and Gene Demby, courageously take on and broadcast the intense issues of racism that our society is currently faced with. In the episode, they included soundbites of Asian-Americans telling their stories which made me feel like a direct participant in the conversation. Conversations about racism, politics, and violence tend to make me uncomfortable especially if I am not educated on that specific topic, but the only way to get educated is to listen to the voices of these victims and survivors. There were multiple stories, viewpoints, and complex thoughts about institutional racism that were backed up with facts about Asian-American history and reputable interviews.

I don’t know much about anti-Asian racism in our society and I decided that needed to change. Like I suspected, listening to detailed information about the brutal violence and theme of hatred for Asian Americans made me very uncomfortable. I was disturbed because I have never experienced this type of discrimination and listening to real people tell their stories brings up guilt that I have within myself. As a society, if you are not the person being affected by violence and racism you don’t know much about it unless it is included in mainstream media. There was just a mass shooting in Atlanta that killed eight people, 6 of them being women of Asian descent, and since then there have been countless other stories about anti-Asian racism released in the media. I learned that the increase in hate crimes against Asian Americans is not unprecedented, and it is almost impossible to prevent these kinds of hate crimes because they stem from

systemic disregard for Asian American life. This whole situation makes me realize just how toxic our social hierarchy of race is, and it allows me to bring in the course concept of race as a social construct. We are all humans and skin pigmentation, ancestry, and ethnicity do not increase or decrease any human's value. There is no such thing as biological race and no race is inherently superior, so I think it is time for that mindset to expire.

From an anthropological perspective, this experience really helped me see it all. There are big things I can see like shootings and violence, but there are also very small things like learning experiences and interviews with victims. Sally, a woman who identifies as Chinese American, asserted in her interview that "if you're someone that's not interested in learning it, you're never going to understand our history. You're never going to understand what happened. And you're just going to continue to be ignorant." The tone of her voice is what made me think introspectively about this statement. She sounded somewhat detached and disappointed because this is an issue she has experienced time and time again. The undeniable ignorance of our society proves that we have a lot of work to do. Since I was somewhat ignorant before, I learned that Asian-Americans still feel that they are not able to fully participate in our society without fear of hate and violence and when we choose to see it all instead of hiding from things that don't affect us or make us uncomfortable we have a chance at challenging the racist stigmas in our culture.

Asian Americans don't even get full recognition for what they go through which is proven by the countless untold stories of anti-Asian racism and violence. Shereen Meraji painfully illustrated a 1989 school shooting in Stockton California that is never talked about. The elementary school's student body was made up of children that were predominantly Southeast Asian. An AK-47 was used to fire 105 rounds into the school by a 24-year-old white man. Her despondent tone while relaying this information almost made me feel responsible. Connie Wun,

a women's activist and founder of a group that focuses on survivors of Asian violence, was also interviewed about this school shooting. She stated that "This man, in particular, was able to do what he did because of white supremacy, misogyny, anti-sex work culture, and poverty. He was able to do all of these things because of a culture and a system that enabled all of this to happen. Labeling it a hate crime individualizes the problem when it is a systemic and cultural issue." This is an ongoing problem and if we don't transform our thoughts and actions, strengthen our ties to each other, or prioritize minorities we will just keep breeding resentment and white privilege.

Podcast mentioned: *Code Switch* from NPR; episode titled "Screams and Silence"



## **“Student B” Submission:**

### Mini assignment 3: Get Uncomfortable

For this assignment, I wanted to try going to a restaurant and eating food from a different culture. I wanted to try food I had never thought about trying before. I happened to be driving down O Street, and I saw a Vietnamese deli/ yogurt shop. It was called Tini Café. There was a Vietnamese grocery store next door, and many people were coming in and out. I quickly saw that I was the only person from my culture in the café. As soon as I stepped inside, I noticed multiple things that were different from many of the restaurants that I am used to.

The music playing softly in the background was different than anything that I had listened to before. The place was small but cozy, with flowers and pink accents all through the building. There were succulents or orchids on each round table which colorful chairs surrounded. The decorations were clearly from another culture as one was a smiling black and white cat with foreign symbols on it. When I went to order, I noticed the menu was in Vietnamese with a description of the food in both Vietnamese and English writing. The sandwiches' description was unlike the typical sandwiches you would see at a Subway or Jimmy Johns (which is where I'd usually go to buy a sandwich). I pointed to what I would like to try on the sandwich menu, and the girl went to make it.

As soon as I unwrapped the sandwich, I noticed many of the toppings were different than what I would typically think to put on a sandwich. There were fresh cucumber slices, carrots, onion, sweet pepper, and a lot of fresh parsley leaves on top of thickly sliced pork with a mayonnaise and pâté spread. The bread was thick and chewy. I found that I immensely enjoyed

the sandwich and all of the things that were on it. It was a different combination of flavors that I would've never thought of putting together before.

I had never considered that I might be narrow minded and unwilling to try things from other cultures that I am not used to, however, I learned that I unintentionally was. After trying something I would not have otherwise tried, I learned that I should keep more of an open mind. Without this anthropology assignment, I would've never stopped at a restaurant that wasn't the type of food I was used to eating. I shouldn't just assume that I wouldn't like it because I haven't had any food from this culture. I found that I should go outside of my comfort zone more and try new stuff, such as music, food, and entertainment. I need to give things from other cultures a chance and not just think that I know the best.



Pictured above is the sandwich from Tini Café