

Final reflection paper on the anthropology course

Sociology, Identity



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

When I signed up for Anthropology 102, I intended to take the course merely to satisfy a requirement for my degree at UNLV. Science has historically been one of the more difficult subjects for me to grasp and retain, so I enrolled begrudgingly, hoping to get it over with in as little time as possible. What I didn't anticipate was that the summer course was accelerated and that more would happen faster than I was initially prepared for. It took me a couple exams to establish my stride but once settled into the course, I realized that with focus and dedication, I was equipped to for the challenge ahead of me. To my surprise, I thoroughly enjoyed the course so much that I am considering taking the Lab in the Fall, and I have learned so much about the history of my existence, and even the mechanisms of world today, throughout. The most interesting concept that I've learned in this course is adaptation which is, in short, the survival of the fittest in biology and anthropology.

The most prominent example was the instance of the giraffe who was, originally, very different from the ones we observe today. Giraffes initially had short necks and beside the print of their coat, were nearly identical zebras. There was, however, so much competition for food on the ground that longer-necked giraffes found food supplies in more vertical places that were unavailable to other animals, eliminating the competition for food. The giraffes with this physical build could access this food supply and were the ones to survive and mate. Shorter-necked giraffes were phased out, leaving us with the tall giraffe we have grown to know as standard. Another covered concept that I found interesting is the explanation of symbols and how we learn to define them as a means of common communication.

A symbol is a figurative representation of something specific that holds only the meaning it is commonly understood as. Symbols have no predetermined denotation aside from the meanings we apply to them. It is therefore, not uncommon for the same symbol to hold different meanings across different cultures. Symbols are different from signs in that they are not products of specified activities but rather than the invention of our understanding. Anthropologists have found evidence of Neanderthal abstract thought, and the ability to communicate through symbols in cave paintings, which in addition to the creation of “sophisticated tools” according to the required article Neanderthal Culture: Old Masters suggested that Neanderthals were “mental equals of modern humans”. (Appenzeller) The bell curve was another interesting concept used in the course that I will take with me beyond the semester because it applies to so many situations in everyday life, especially academic and corporate. Based on what I have retained, a bell curve is representative of patterns and signifies the standard distribution of a given trait within a species.

The common attributes (or modes) are represented at the peak of the bell while the less common of the variables are represented at the edges. The variation of left edge, the center, and the right edge are an example of diversity as it is a holistic view of the wide range of differing outcomes. Perhaps the most controversial topic, another primary takeaway for me comes from the conversations of evolution. Evolution is defined as the process by which different kinds of living organisms are thought to have developed and diversified from earlier forms during the history of the earth. As Anthropology writes history, we are granted facts about how we – and the

world we know – came to be. Anthropology suggests that the Earth is 4.5 billion years old (despite Darwin's biblical timeline which suggested that the Earth was merely 6000) and mainly through the discovery and comparison of generations of fossils, tools, and records can document the changes in species over time.

I believe it is through racing to get his studies released before his counterpart Wallace, Darwin didn't take the time to refine his facts and made claims about evolution that were later invalidated including the ways in which dominant and recessive genes of both parents transferred to offspring. The formula for knowledge is by far the concept I understand best but have the most complications in explaining, but I'll attempt. The formula is ideas or objects + relationships = knowledge. It's like the structure of the sentence in a way that having a subject without a predicate and vice versa only results in an incomplete thought. It is only when both are present that the sentence is complete – or in this case, "knowledge" is available.

For instance, if a person says, "the study of human societies and cultures and their development", the receiver of the information may say "what's that?" while if a person simply declares "anthropology" one may respond "what about it?". It is only when saying that "Anthropology is the study of human societies and cultures and their development." (Placeholder2) that a person would be considered to have knowledge about Anthropology and knowing the types of anthropology (biological, cultural, linguistic, etc.) would be considered mastery. While the following are the five most distinct takeaways, the knowledge I attained through this course far exceeds what is

stated here. I am quite fascinated by the methods in which our history is discovered. It's like time travel! The study of anthropology offers explanation to the fact that science is constantly evolving and with advances in technological resources, we are granted more and more truth about the circumstances from which we came. More than course content, I discovered my capabilities and that I should never shy away from challenges and opportunities simply because they are perceived as challenging. For that, I thank you.