**(REVISED OCTOBER 14)**

**Anthropology 241**

**Warfare and Polarization**

**Fall 2022**

**Tuesdays & Thursdays**

**9:30-10:45 AM**

**Munroe 311**

Professor David Stoll

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Office mailbox Munroe 206

Office hours in Munroe 104

Mon 1:45-2:45 pm

Tues 11 am – noon

Wed 1:45-2:45 pm

Or by appointment

**Course hub:** https://courses.middlebury.edu/hub/mcug/202290/anth/0241a

In this course we will use the anthropology of human evolution, religion and politics to identify the cognitive patterns that justify feuding, warfare, witchcraft, conspiracy theory, and ideological polarization. Beginning with animal behavior and hunting and gathering societies, we will study natural selection for accountability, moralism, and factionalism; how social groups define themselves through mimesis, othering and scapegoating; how scapegoating justifies aggression; how sacrifice and other forms of ritualizing victimhood generate sanctity, sacrilege, and outrage; and how religious and political loyalty tests enforce social boundaries (not open to students who have taken SOAN 0341 or SOAN 0344) 3 hrs. lect./disc. **SOC**

The central issue in anthropology is human evolution and variation. There are four subfields: biological, archaeological, linguistic and sociocultural. In sociocultural anthropology, the central issue is how our behavior is shaped by the company we keep (society) and the traditions from which we learn (culture). We study other cultures, social groups and contexts not just to learn about others but to gain perspective on ourselves. The most fruitful methodology in sociocultural anthropology is immersion-style research in local situations: this means talking to everyone we can, debating what we hear with our interlocutors and fellow anthropologists, then drawing on the rich history of anthropological theory to derive the broadest possible conclusions. Thus anthropology is a crossroads between the hypothesis-testing of the social sciences and the interpretive approaches of the humanities.

In Anthropology 241, we begin with human origins, which requires drawing on archaeological evidence, primate studies, and the evolution of human cognition. We look at patterns of conflict and cooperation in the human record, then analyze factionalism and violence in contemporary society. For lack of time, this course will not focus on state-level warfare. But we will look at arguments for why both cooperation and aggression are hardwired in human evolution, along with typical critiques of such arguments.

Our learning goals include:

• how anthropologists debate human propensities for violence;

• how human territorial behavior can parallel the territorial behavior of other mammals;

• how other societies can handle peace-making differently than our own society does;

• how studying sectarian social movements, reciprocal scapegoating, witchcraft and conspiracy theory can help us understand the kind of political polarization that we are experiencing in the United States.

**Course Modality**

For Fall 2022, this class will meet in-person but observe all the necessary protocols for protecting ourselves from covid. If you are experiencing significant issues that I should know about, it is up to you to tell me. To help me keep up with your emails, please use the following protocol on your subject header: e.g., Anth 241 Adding the Course or Anth 241 Class Question or Anth 241 Cannot Make Appointment. If everyone can be concise in your messaging, it will help me respond quickly. I prefer phone conversations to back-and-forth on the keyboard, so if you include your cellphone number, I will call you at the first opportunity. I will use email (not Canvas) to send out assigned-reading pdfs, assignments, etc. because this ensures that essential information lands in your inbox. During my office hours three days a week, you do not need an appointment. If those times are not compatible with your schedule, ask me for an appointment at another time.

**Course Requirements**

Do all the assigned readings, attend all scheduled sessions, watch all assigned movies, and participate in all discussions. The following books are available through the College Store website and its [MBS Direct](https://www.mbsdirect.net/) ordering system:

Lawrence Keeley, War Before Civilization: The Myth of the Peaceful Savage

Douglas Fry, ed., War, Peace, and Human Nature: The Convergence of Evolutionary and Cultural Views

Simon Wrangham, The Goodness Paradox

Jonathan Haidt, The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion

Other readings will be available on the web or from me as pdfs. Since our pace is not completely predictable, the readings and due dates below are subject to change. There may be a few additional assigned readings, but if so they will be short.

**Your grade will be calculated on the basis of**

1) **Participation in class discussions (25%).**

2) **Four responses to assigned readings over the first ten weeks of the course, each 500 to 750 words (25% of your final grade)**. For each response, you choose one of several possible due dates. Thus in the course calendar below, the entries for Mon Sept 20 (**RR #1**), Wed Sept 22 (**RR #1**), Mon Sept 27 (**RR #1**) tell you that these are the three possible due dates for the first reading response.

For each response, email it to me as an MS Word attachment by **10 pm of the night before the due date**. Thus RR #1 for Mon Sept 20 must land in my inbox no later than Sun Sept 19 at 10 pm.

The subject headerand file name for each of your four responses over the semester must have the following format: for example, Anth 241 Smith (your last name) RR#1.

Your response should respond to the reading due the following day but can also include previous reading assignments. You can refer to class movies but should focus on the reading, not the movies. You also need to do more than summarize the reading. Your response should include **at least two of the following**—what do you find persuasive, what do you find unpersuasive, what do you not understand, how does this compare with other course readings or knowledge that you happen to have? Since social science always includes understanding competing perspectives and interpretive frameworks, the best responses will show that you understand the plausibility of perspectives other than your own. Finally, your response should include a question that you think needs further discussion in class.

Within two days of the due date, I will try to return each of your responses with a brief comment and grade as follows:

A outstanding

A- very good

B+ good

B satisfactory

C unsatisfactory

D very unsatisfactory

3) **a blue-book midterm exam on the evening of Thursday October 14 (25% of your final grade).** You will be asked to respond to three or four essay questions on what you have learned in the first five weeks of the course.

4) **a 2100 to 2700-word research paper in which you apply course concepts to a topic of your choice (25% of your final grade).** This will include a brief presentation of your preliminary findings and obstacles you face to the rest of the class, as well as a project summary and annotated bibliography that you will submit two weeks before the final due date, for 25% of your final paper grade (which is to say, 6% of your course grade, about the same as each of your reading responses).

To develop a good topic, pick out an arena of violence or polarization that interests you, e.g., indigenous warfare in pre-colonial North America, contemporary religious strife in South Asia, contemporary militia-organizing in the U.S., or another U.S. political issue such as abortion. Then try to access scholarly or media debates and seek to understand competing perspectives. Within your chosen arena or area, then develop a specific issue that you can address within our limited time frame. The topic can include polarization or violence as you have experienced it in your own life but, if so, you will need to place it in the context of social research. If you cannot come to firm conclusions, laying the groundwork for future investigation is just as acceptable. Students who are interested in similar issues should work together in finding information and figuring out the best approaches.

Our library liaison is Ryan Clement. Should you need help with any research assignment for this or another class, set up an appointment with Ryan at [rclement@middlebury.edu](mailto:rclement@middlebury.edu).

A and A- grades will be awarded only to students who contribute to class discussions and whose writing is competent in all respects. Spotty attendance or participation will reduce your grade. All written work that you submit for this course must be signed with the Honor Code pledge. To refresh yourself on details, the Honor Code can be found here:

<http://www.middlebury.edu/about/handbook/ug-college-policies/ug-policies/academics/acad-honesty>.

If you have a letter of accommodation, contact me early in the semester to make arrangements.  If you do not have a letter of accommodation but believe that you are eligible for help, contact disability coordinators Jodi Litchfield and Peter Ploegman at [ada@middlebury.edu](mailto:ada@middlebury.edu) for more information.

**ARE HUMAN BEINGS INHERENTLY VIOLENT?**

Week 1

Tues Sept 13

Thurs Sept 15

Keeley, War Before Civilization, pp.vii-x, 3-39, 59-69

Week 2

Tues Sept 20 (**RR #1**)

Keeley, War Before Civilization, pp. 83-161

Thurs Sept 22 (**RR #1**)

Haas and Piscitelli, “The Prehistory of Warfare” (in Fry)

Dye “Trends in Cooperation and Conflict in Native Eastern North America” (in Fry)

7:30 pm John Paul Lederach, “Conflict Transformation: The Challenge and Promise of This Century” (keynote speaker, Clifford Symposium, Dana Auditorium)

Week 3

Tues Sept 27 (**RR #1**)

Barash, “Evolution and Peace” (in Fry)

Sussman, “Why the Legend of the Killer Ape Never Dies” (in Fry, pp.105-09 only)

Sapolsky, “Rousseau with a Tail: Maintaining a Tradition of Peace among Baboons” (in Fry)

**HOW DO HUMAN BEINGS RITUALIZE THE CONSTRUCTION OF PEACE?**

Thurs Sept 29 (**RR #1**)

Douglas P. Fry and Anna Szala, “The Evolution of Agonism: The Triumph of Restraint in Nonhuman and Human Primates” (in Fry).

Pim, “Man the Singer: Song Duels as an Aggression Restraint Mechanism for Nonkilling Conflict Management” (in Fry).

Week 4

Tues Oct 4 (**RR #2**)

Wrangham, The Goodness Paradox, pp. 3-111 (Intro thru Chpt 4)

Thurs Oct 6 (**RR #2**)

Wrangham, The Goodness Paradox, pp. 1182-167 (Chpts 6, 7 and 8)

Week 5

Mon Oct 10

Movie “Tanna” (100 minutes)

(online via Midcat, [Kanopy 200](https://mbury.iii.com/search~S2?/hKanopy+70/hkanopy+++++++70/47%2C-1%2C0%2CB/frameset&FF=hkanopy++++++200&1%2C1%2C))

Tues Oct 11 (**RR #2**)

Roscoe, “Social Signaling, Conflict Management and the Construction of Peace” (in Fry)

Tonkinson, “Social Control and Conflict Management among Australian Aboriginal Desert People Before and after the Advent of Alcohol” (in Fry)

Thurs Oct 13 (**RR #2**)

Rappaport, “Ritual, Sanctity, and Cybernetics” (instructor pdf)

**7:00 pm Blue-book midterm exam**

**HUMAN COGNITIVE EVOLUTION:**

**MORAL FOUNDATIONS THEORY**

Week 6

Tues Oct 18 (**RR #3**)

Haidt, The Righteous Mind, pp.xvii-xxiv, pp.3-108 (Intro thru Chpt 4)

Thurs Oct 20 (**RR #3**)

Haidt, The Righteous Mind, pp. 111-216 (Chpts 5 thru 8)

Week 7

Tues Oct 25 (**RR #3**)

Haidt, The Righteous Mind, pp. 219-318 (Chpts 9 thru 11)

Thurs Oct 27 **(RR #3)**

Haidt, The Righteous Mind, pp. 319-371 (Chpt 12)

Tierney, The Highest Altar (book excerpt, pp. 10-23, instructor pdf)

**HOW VIOLENCE BECOMES SACRED:**

**RENE GIRARD’S THEORY OF**

**MIMETIC RIVALRY, SCAPEGOATING AND HUMAN SACRIFICE**

Week 8

Tues Nov 1 **(RR #4)**

Movie “Vice News - The Islamic State” (43 minutes) <https://video.vice.com/en_us/video/the-islamic-> state/559ea2a9884e6b677d5e2b25

Movie, Scott Atran,“Devoted Actors and the Spiritual Dimensions of Conflict” (44 minutes) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjI1JJznVS4)

René Girard and Mimetic Theory” (<http://www.imitatio.org/brief-intro>) + René Girard’s Legacy (<http://www.imitatio.org/ren-girards-legacy>)

Robert Harrison, “The Prophet of Envy” (instructor pdf)

Thurs Nov 3 **(RR #4)**

McCartney, “The making of a modern martyr” (<https://unherd.com/2020/11/the-making-of-a-modern-martyr>)

Samet, “The photographer’s body: Populism, polarization, and the uses of victimhood in Venezuela” (instructor pdf)

**HOW SECTS, WITCHCRAFT & CONSPIRACY THEORY PRODUCE**

**COMPETING DEFINITIONS OF VICTIMHOOD**

Week 9

Mon Nov 7

Movie “Jonestown: Life and Death of the People’s Temple” (96 minutes) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=traRRAQQfbg

Tues Nov 8 (**RR #4**)

Maaga, Hearing the Voices of Jonestown (excerpt, instructor pdf, 74-141)

(Election night)

Thurs Nov 10

Movie “Witches in Exile” (77 minutes, https://middlebury.kanopy.com/video/witches-exile)

**Roundtable for your final research projects**

Week 10

Tues Nov 15 (**RR #4**)

Smith and Mwadime, Email from Ngeti (excerpt, instructor pdf, pp. 1-24)

Fels, “The Return of the ‘Witch Hunt’ Analogy” (instructor pdf)

<https://quillette.com/2019/10/27/the-return-of-the-witch-hunt-analogy/>

Wed Nov 16

Video footage of the January 6, 2021 assault on the US Capitol

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jWJVMoe7OY0

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=270F8s5TEKY>

Thurs Nov 17 (**RR #4**)

Pipes, Conspiracy (excerpt, instructor pdf, pp.37-51)

LaFrance, “The Prophecies of Q”

https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2020/06/qanon-nothing-can-stop-what-is-coming/610567/

(Thanksgiving break)

WEEK 11

Tues Nov 29

Best, “The Victim Industry” (instructor pdf)

Lehmann, “Understanding Victimhood Culture: An Interview with Bradley Campbell and Jason Manning”

https://quillette.com/2018/05/17/understanding-victimhood-culture-interview-bradley-campbell-jason-manning

Wed Nov 30

Movie “The Social Dilemma” (94 minutes, Netflix)

Natalie Wynn, “Cancelling/Contrapoints” (first 15 minutes, Youtube)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OjMPJVmXxV8>

Thurs Dec 1

Shullenberger, “Human Sacrifice and the Digital Business Model”

<https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/science/articles/sacrificial-games-cancel-culture>

Eberstadt, “The Great Scattering:’ How Identity Panic Took Root in the Void Once Occupied by Family Life”

<https://quillette.com/2019/08/27/the-great-scattering-how-identity-panic-took-root-in-the-void-once-occupied-by-family-life/>

Fri Dec 2

**Project summary and annotated bibliography for your final paper due**

WEEK 12

Tues Dec 6

**Student research presentations**

Thurs Dec 8

**Student research presentations**

EXAM WEEK

Mon Dec 19

**10 pm Research papers due**

**My zoom room for when we need it**

Hi there,

David Stoll is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: David Stoll's Personal Meeting Room

Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android: https://middlebury.zoom.us/j/2676333941?pwd=MTJFWGZxaFlpSWxUbmFoY2dVTEp6QT09

Password: 009748

Or iPhone one-tap :

US: +16469313860,,2676333941# or +13017158592,,2676333941#

Or Telephone:

Dial(for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

US: +1 646 931 3860 or +1 301 715 8592 or +1 309 205 3325 or +1 312 626 6799 or +1 646 876 9923 or +1 719 359 4580 or +1 253 215 8782 or +1 346 248 7799 or +1 386 347 5053 or +1 564 217 2000 or +1 669 444 9171 or +1 669 900 6833

Meeting ID: 267 633 3941

Password: 009748

International numbers available: https://middlebury.zoom.us/u/abDWRrnqQG

Or an H.323/SIP room system:

See here for info: http://go.middlebury.edu/zoomconnect

If meeting is password protected, use the numeric password in the telephone join section of the invitation for H.323 & SIP connections