

**Why call it biocultural?**

- It is the study of interaction of human **biology**, culture, and ecology.
- Culture is shaped by biology.
- Culture shapes human biology.
- Both culture and human biology must adapt to the biophysical environment.
- Culture helps us to live where we are limited to.

Ex. People who live in the mountains: can't grow corn so instead they grow quinoa. This is integrated into their culture.

Ex. Here at home: The way we treat the environment (farming, pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers on lawns, etc.) must change. The algae bloom in Lake Erie will force us to change.

**Why are humans a biocultural species?**

- Biological evolution has determined our basic biopsychosocial needs. Culture determines how we meet those needs.

Ex. How we get food or how we protect ourselves, these things differ between every culture.

- Biological changes in our bodies affect our biopsychosocial needs.

Ex. As we got from childhood to adulthood we need new things (cars, different clothes, etc.)

Ex. If someone got diabetes they then would need to develop new habits.

- Culture manipulates, disrupts, and changes our surrounding ecology and its impact on us.

**Biocultural Approach to the Study of the Human Species**Major Characteristics

- It considers both biological and sociocultural aspects of the human condition.
- It's *diachronic* (deals with old things), dealing with humans from the past and the present.
- It stresses the comparative/cross cultural aspects of the human condition, not just one's own culture.
  - Ex. In some cultures polygamy is accepted and is the way that marriage works, but in other cultures it is seen as taboo.
- It places a heavy emphasis on the "participant observation" method of gathering information. To study people for this, you must go out and talk to them, experience their culture from the inside.
  - Ex. Without living within American culture, you may not know that it is considered awkward to discuss religion or politics, and that isn't something you can just ask about.
- It emphasizes groups rather than individuals. Listening to personal stories but focusing on gathering the overall picture of the group.
- It stresses *multidisciplinary* (using stuff from other fields) information and insights. Anthropologists must accept information from biologists, psychologists, etc.
- It stresses a holistic approach. This approach suggests that if you change one part of the system, it may trigger unforeseen changes in another part of the system. AKA cultural backlash, anti-reductionist

### Benefits of Anthropology Course

- to develop an appreciation for the place of humans in nature as an animal, an integrated part of the biosphere. Learn that we need to take care of the planet
- to explain *biological variation* within the human species and the misconceptions associated with it  
Ex. Why people from Africa are darker skinned? Their pigment adjusted to their environment.
- to help understand historical background of contemporary human problems. Understanding more than dates/places.
- to develop understanding of the limits and dangers of the human adaptive capacity (with its potential to destroy our life support system). We have the ability to create things that could destroy Earth.

### Major Subdivisions of Anthropology

#### Biological Anthropology

**Human evolution:** application of principles of evolution and genetics to human populations

**Human paleontology:** the study and interpretation of fossils

**Primatology:** the study of non-human primates

**Human variation:** the study of human biological diversity

#### Archaeology

The study of passed cultural patterns through the excavation and analysis of material remains

**Prehistoric archaeology:** before history (before things were written down)

**Historic archaeology:** after written records existed

These are the scientists who study the pyramids.

#### Cultural Anthropology

**Ethnography:** the descriptions of a people and their culture based on field work

**Ethnology:** the comparative study of culture that attempts to explain differences and similarities among cultures.

An **ethnologist** compares ethnographers' works.

#### Anthropological Linguistics

**Historic linguistics:** traces languages through time (and space)

**Structural linguistics:** how languages are organized/spoken

**Ethno linguistics:** how culture affects language and (vice versa) how language expresses group culture

Ex. The Inuit have 20-40 words for "snow". This shows how snow is very involved in their culture; they need to be able to describe it.

The Bible was one of the first things in the world to be translated into different languages.

\*Test questions are at the end of each unit of the red book. \*