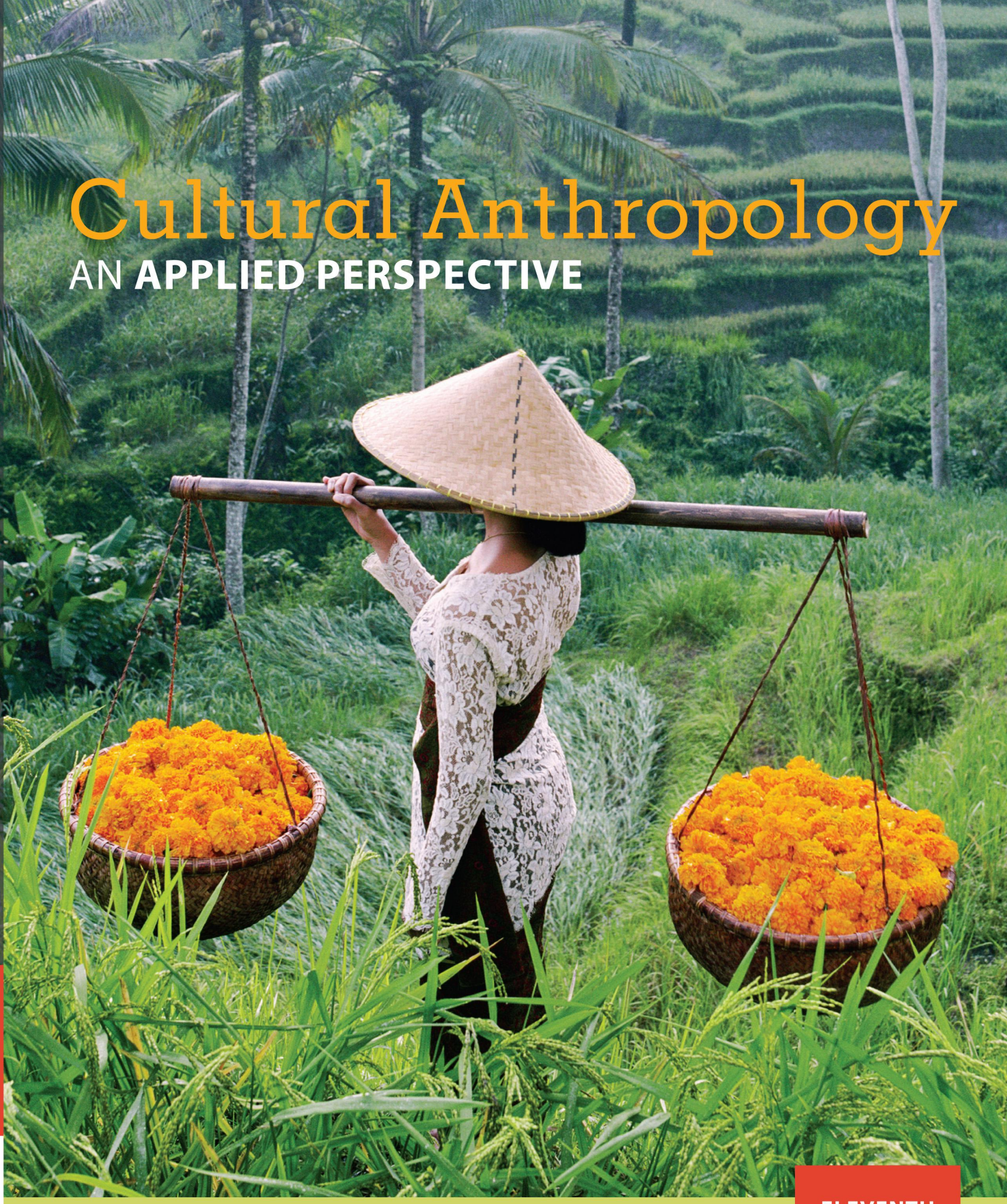
Cultural Anthropology

AN **APPLIED PERSPECTIVE**



GARY **FERRARO** | SUSAN **ANDREATTA**

ELEVENTH EDITION

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Cultural Anthropology

An Applied Perspective

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University of North Carolina—Greensboro

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***Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective*, Eleventh Edition**
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To Ayla, our bilingual beauty!

GPF

Tim—Thank you for your love and for understanding the value of applied anthropology.

SLA

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Preface

Applied cultural anthropology has become increasingly multifaceted, making it necessary to introduce material from new collaborators with diverse, yet complementary, backgrounds, experiences, and research interests. Both authors share a strong applied focus in their work as well as a similar, compatible vision of the importance of an applied perspective within the discipline and, particularly, the need for an applied focus in introductory-level anthropology courses.

The authors have complementary approaches to the field of applied anthropology. Gary Ferraro has concentrated for the past several decades on the applied areas of the anthropology of business, education, and organizational structures. Susan Andreatta has focused her professional attention on environmental and medical anthropology. Ferraro and Andreatta have co-conducted workshops at the annual meetings of the Society for Applied Anthropology and the American Anthropological Association to assist faculty who want to incorporate more of an applied perspective in their classes.

From the beginning, this text has had two major purposes. First, the book is designed to introduce university undergraduates to the field of cultural anthropology by drawing on the rich ethnographic examples found within the discipline. With its comparative approach to the study of cultural diversity, the text provides a comprehensive overview of the discipline. Second, the text goes beyond the basic outline of introductory materials by examining how the theory, insights, and methods of cultural anthropology have been applied to those contemporary situations that students, both majors and non-majors, are likely to encounter in their professional and personal lives.

The popularity of applied anthropology has grown steadily in past decades, largely as a result of the discipline's recognition of the need to become more relevant to our everyday lives. In the age of globalization few would deny the need for our students to become culturally competent, irrespective of what occupation(s) they might pursue. Enabling today's undergraduates to cope more effectively with cultural diversity is hardly an empty catchphrase. Because cultural anthropology, even in its traditional (nonapplied) form, has always been the academic discipline best positioned to educate for cultural competency, it only makes sense to make our introductory courses as relevant and applied as possible.

The theme of applied anthropology runs throughout this text. While providing a comprehensive introduction to the field, *Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective*, eleventh edition, goes beyond the presentation of academic anthropology and thoroughly integrates the application of anthropological theory, methods, and examples to contemporary situations that students are likely to encounter in the world around them. The applied perspective is further highlighted by the chapter opening cases and the features called *Applied Perspectives* and *Cross-Cultural Miscues*. In addition, *Contemporary Issues* boxes draw attention to issues in the field and events, as well as help students relate to the anthropological perspective in everyday life. The Applied Perspectives, which appear in boxed format in nearly all of the chapters, demonstrate how cultural anthropology actually has been used to solve specific societal problems in such areas as medicine, the environment, education, government, architecture, business, and economic development. For example, in Chapter 3 students learn about the use of cookstoves in Peru and the local health implications of food preparation, while in Chapter 8 students who question what can I do with a major in anthropology are provided opportunities found in the corporate world. Chapter 16 offers suggestions for those students who have an interest in working in international development.

Over the past decade a number of leading introductory textbooks in the field have, to one degree or another, included some applied case studies in boxed format. We consider this imitation to be the sincerest form of flattery. Nevertheless, the Applied Perspective case studies in this text differ in some important respects. For example, each case study is selected to illustrate how certain understandings from each chapter have been applied to the solution of significant societal problems; there are more in-depth applied case studies woven into each chapter of this text than in the others. Each of the Applied Perspective case studies is followed by *Questions for Discussion*, which is designed to encourage students to think critically about the broader implications of the applied case.

The second type of applied feature of this textbook is Cross-Cultural Miscues. These short scenarios, which also appear in all sixteen chapters, illustrate the negative consequences of failing to understand cultural differences. To illustrate, one new miscue box from

Chapter 5 shows how a nutritionist who worked on a food demonstration project in Ghana did not fully understand food sharing in the culture. Her behavior caused villagers to believe the food was cursed. Having a grasp of culture and food sharing can be particularly important in many cross-cultural settings. Another new miscue is found in Chapter 9, where a Peace Corp volunteer misunderstood the culturally appropriate way to give one's condolences in the time of familial death in her village. This cultural misstep nearly cost her a friendship with her next-door neighbor.

A third applied feature of this eleventh edition is short, chapter-opening case studies designed to catch the attention of students and remind them that the study of cultural anthropology really is relevant to our lives. These introductory case studies (like the Applied Perspectives and the Cross-Cultural Miscues) are designated with the "SWAP" feature icon. This acronym stands for "share with a parent" (or a friend) and directly illustrates to students the importance and necessity for understanding culture—what it is and how it changes—as an individual living in today's world. Students should use these SWAP features to counter the inevitable questions from their parents and friends: "You're taking what? What possible benefit can you get from studying cultural anthropology? How will anthropology get you a job?" Accompanying the Applied Perspectives, the Cross-Cultural Miscues, and the chapter-opening case studies, the SWAP icon appears throughout the text. Thus, there are numerous examples to demonstrate why tuition money is not being wasted when undergraduates take courses in, or even major in (heaven forbid!), cultural anthropology.

Please note that Chapters 1 and 16 start with letters (rather than opening scenarios) written to the students by us. The opening letter to students in Chapter 1 tells students essentially what we are telling you in this preface—namely, the nature of the book's applied perspective, what it is designed to accomplish, and how to get the most from the book. Because most professors do not require their students to read the preface, we decided to put this information in the beginning of the first chapter so that they would understand from day one what we are trying to do with the applied focus. And, we open Chapter 16 with a closing letter to the students designed to introduce them to the capstone chapter, remind them of the importance of the applied features of the text, and show them how anthropological understandings and sensitivities are absolutely essential for the resolution of those really big human challenges of the twenty-first century facing all people—namely, climate change, overurbanization in developing countries, environmental degradation, the spread of world health pandemics, the rise of militant religious fundamentalism, and the widening gap between the rich and the poor throughout the world.

There are also Contemporary Issue boxes in the book, dealing with such topics as "Water, Culture, and Power: When Is It Too Late to Act?" (Chapter 4), becoming a teacher of English as a second or other language (Chapter 6), and the conflict between secular values in the United States and religious values in the Islamic World (Chapter 14).

In addition to the smooth integration of applied illustrations into the overall text, an applied perspective (using both positive and negative case studies) is tied to a wide range of professional areas, including, but not limited to, the following:

- International business people
- International development workers
- Market researchers
- Medical caregivers
- Postwar nation builders
- Product designers
- Public health officials
- Public school educators
- Social workers
- University professors

Because our case studies are tied to a variety of occupational areas, students will be more likely to relate the concepts, findings, methods, and theories of cultural anthropology to their own future work lives in the twenty-first century. Tying anthropological insights to specific jobs is particularly important in the increasingly tight job market in the twenty-first century. And, in fact, hiring criteria in most free market economies have changed. By and large employers no longer hire on the basis of what a job candidate knows or whether one's degree is from a first-rate institution. Instead, they want to know: Can you add value to the organization? Do you have the skills and competencies needed to be creative and to solve future problems that do not even exist yet? Although it is true that many of the skills needed by today's employers are not being taught explicitly at institutions of higher learning, many are being taught.

So, if young people are to be successful in the school-to-work transition, they need to learn as much as possible about our rapidly changing workplace along with their chosen fields of study. Applying anthropology in the workplace, such as using their acquired cultural sensitivity to multiethnic differences, immigration, and globalization, is needed in today's workforce. Yet, some students may be interested in getting involved in nongovernmental organizations and working on applied projects that facilitate making a difference in local communities here and abroad; this text provides numerous examples inspiring such thinking and action. Students must "know themselves" well enough to identify what future professions or jobs would be most satisfying to them.

Given the present-day realities of transitioning from school to work, we feel that the applied focus of this textbook is particularly germane for today's students. Each of our applied case studies deals with using anthropological insights for solving problems and

challenges faced by people from a variety of professions and occupying a wide range of jobs. All features, including the Applied Perspectives, Cross-Cultural Miscues, Contemporary Issues, and chapter-opening scenarios encourage students to appreciate the types of skills and competencies needed by people who work in jobs that require interacting with culturally different people. In today's global marketplace it is difficult to imagine any job that would not require cross-cultural skills and sensitivities when dealing with customers, clients, patients, or students, either at home or abroad.

Over the past decade an increasing number of cultural anthropologists have agreed with our basic premise: that an introductory text with an applied focus was long overdue. Anthropology instructors at many different types of institutions—public and private, large and small, two-year and four-year—have adopted the first ten editions of this book. As well received as the previous editions have been, however, there is always room for improvement. Responding to many helpful suggestions of reviewers, we have made the following changes in the eleventh edition.

General Changes

As previously discussed, the eleventh edition of *Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective,* speaks more directly to students with more contemporary examples that deal with nonacademic career opportunities and the application of anthropological concepts in the workplace and in one's personal life. The revision further strengthens the themes of economics and environment as well as community and social responsibility that run throughout the text. In addition, global changes include:

1. Full integration of applied anthropology and applying anthropology examples into every chapter;
2. A 10 percent reduction in overall length, with most chapters trimmed;
3. Reframing Chapter 3, Applied Anthropology, to eliminate redundancies with Chapters 4 and 5 on theory and methods, and to refocus the chapter on practical applications, emphasizing the role of anthropology and applying anthropology, including nonacademic careers and ethics; and
4. The updating and improvement of the art program with new photos, tables, graphs, and maps.

Changes by Chapter

Chapter 1: What Is Anthropology?

1. Added a new section explains the difference between *applied* anthropology and *applying* anthropology.
2. A new section has been introduced on how archaeologists are now studying contemporary urban garbage dumps in the United States to determine consumption patterns and to provide data used by urban policy makers.
3. A new example of ethnocentrism has been added.
4. The discussion of cultural relativism has been reorganized to make it more understandable.
5. The section on anthropology's role in enhancing understanding has been streamlined.
6. New data have been added on the percentage of those accepted to college who choose to defer admission to college to take a gap year in some other culture.

Chapter 2: The Concept of Culture

1. The section dealing with the definition of "culture" now includes an additional early twentieth-century definition offered by independent scholar FitzRoy Richard Somerset (1885–1964).
2. The section on cultural universals has been reorganized to make it both more comprehensive and user-friendly.
3. The entire section dealing with altering one's physical appearance for aesthetic reasons has been updated.
4. A new final section has been added dealing with the development of twenty-first-century information technology that will revolutionize how we study the concept of culture, culture change, and the flow of ideas.
5. Sixty-four percent of the photos in Chapter 2 are new images.

Chapter 3: Applied Anthropology

1. A new chapter opening begins this chapter.
2. Ethics is introduced in this chapter.
3. The chapter introduces the Human Terrain System and its conflict with the professional code of ethics.
4. The chapter introduces recommendations from Shirley Fiske on how to obtain government employment with an interest in applied anthropology.
5. Mark Schuller's research in the Haitian camps after the earthquake of 2010 has been updated. Internally displaced people remain in camps without proper sanitation, drinkable water, access to health clinics, and regular employment.
6. Examples of applied anthropology found in the chapter have been modified.

Chapter 4: The Growth of Anthropological Theory

1. Note that not all theoretical perspectives are offered in this chapter because most departments offer a course or two in anthropological theory.

2. We tightened up some of the theoretical sections, and introduced the terms *political economy* and *political ecology*, which will be further defined and used in Chapter 7.
3. We added material on Praxis, which is appropriate for applied research and applying anthropology to the real world.
4. This chapter maintains the Contemporary Issue box on "Water, Culture and Power: When Is It Too Late to Act?"

Chapter 5: Methods in Cultural and Applied Cultural Anthropology

1. We tightened up the case study from Andreatta's research in Jamaica in the section on fieldwork.
2. The chapter introduces community-based participatory research.
3. The chapter introduces a final section on accountability.
4. We added a new Cross-Cultural Miscue feature.
5. We updated the Applied Perspective box on climate change.
6. We retained an Applied Perspective box on what to do with a degree in anthropology.

Chapter 6: Language and Communication

1. We added a new Cross-Cultural Miscue on the use of Facebook in the office as an appropriate means of group communication.
2. We added a new Applied Perspective on language preservation as a way to draw attention to saving endangered languages using digital technology and software apps from smartphones.
3. The chapter introduces an applied linguistics example with the work of Pam Innes and language preservation examples among the Apache.
4. We added cell phone text-messaging examples to illustrate culture change and new means of communicating.

Chapter 7: Subsistence Patterns

1. We added a discussion of food deserts in the United States.
2. We added examples of changing environments and the impact on subsistence strategies for groups such as the Sami, Inuit, and Ju/'hoansi, as well as fishing communities and small island states.
3. The chapter introduces the concepts of locavores and freegans as alternative means of sourcing food.
4. We added a discussion of using small livestock such as goats to manage grassland regions around airports in the United States.
5. We added a discussion of using pig waste to be used in a biogas digester to generate energy in North Carolina.
6. We added a discussion of resistance to industrial agriculture using small-scale food production with examples from Slow Food, use of farmers markets, community-supported agriculture, the back-to-the land movement, community gardens, Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF), and a number of other programs.

Chapter 8: Economics

1. The chapter beings with a new chapter opening.
2. The chapter introduces a new Cross-Cultural Miscue on learning how to change money in a foreign country.
3. It introduces a new Contemporary Issue box on alpacas in the Andes.
4. We added examples from Afghanistan in the section on division of labor that addresses women gaining employment.
5. We updated statistics for international labor and the use of children.
6. The chapter introduces a new Applied Perspective box on anthropologists being hired by corporations such as Adidas, Intel, and IBM.

Chapter 9: Marriage and the Family

1. We tightened up the chapter for clarity and to reduce overall length.
2. The chapter introduces a new Cross-Cultural Miscue on appropriate customs for paying one's respects for the death of a family member.
3. The chapter introduces a new Applied Perspective box on having smaller families in Italy.
4. We updated the example of Sumburu women in Kenya and the development of a village for abused women only, changing the traditional division of labor; here women do men's work as well.
5. We updated statistics of children with HIV and AIDS and the impact AIDS has on the children; we also added examples from orphaned children with AIDS.
6. We added a section on child marriages found globally.
7. We added contemporary examples of polygamy in the United States.

8. We added an example of how modern-day family structure and living arrangements are changing and how young adults are delaying marriage and having children.

Chapter 10: Kinship and Descent

1. We added a new Applied Perspective on medical anthropologists and their work with the Zika virus epidemic.
2. We added a new discussion of how kinship roles and obligations in Western countries are being "outsourced" on a "fee-for-service" basis.
3. There is a new expanded section on twenty-first-century information technology useful for tracking kinship relations.
4. An expanded discussion has been added on reproductive technologies (e.g., in vitro fertilization, surrogate motherhood), which are making our traditional notions of parenthood more difficult to define.

Chapter 11: Sex and Gender

1. This chapter is updated to include a discussion of gender, gender identity, and gender expression.
2. The more inclusive gender construction includes transgender, cisgender, bi-gender, genderqueer, and a number of other identities, while retaining the dichotomous female and male terms.
3. We added a section on women and gender studies to examine how gender is produced within a society's culture and how it affects individual lives with respect to identity, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, nationality, and religion.
4. We added a section on gender-based violence, domestic violence, sexual violence, and marital rape.
5. We expanded the section on sexual behaviors and the risks of contracting HIV/AIDs.
6. We added a section on sexual orientation as a continuum of preferences for attraction.
7. We added examples from Iran where homosexuality is illegal, and having sex reassignment operations are permitted.
8. We added examples of studies conducted on gender and age differences found in cell phone etiquette.

Chapter 12: Social Stratification

1. We updated the *Forbes* billionaire list for 2016.
2. By examining the subtitles of William Domhoff's book entitled *Who Rules America?* (editions 3, 6, and 7), we were able to document the relative speed with which wealth has been concentrated in the hands of the wealthiest one percent of Americans between 1998 and 2013.
3. We provided new data on global billionaires in 2016: Fifteen of the top twenty billionaires on the planet are from the United States, with wealth ranging from $79.2 billion to $29.2 billion.
4. New data have been presented showing that the number of single mothers in the United States living on less than $2.00 a day (1.5 million) has doubled between 1996 and 2011.
5. A new section has been added on the erosion of the middle class in United States, particularly since the great recession of 2008.
6. New data have been included on the rise of political power and influence of the capitalist class in the United States in recent decades.
7. New information has been added on the Roma population of central and western Europe.
8. New data have been presented on worldwide stratification. For example, in 2016 the 62 wealthiest people in the world own as much as the bottom half of the global population combined (3.5 billion people).

Chapter 13: Political Organization and Social Control

1. New statistics have been added on what percentage of women were presidents or prime ministers (10.3 percent) or members of parliament/national legislatures (19.5 percent).
2. A new section has been added on documenting and analyzing the decadelong reversal (2005–2015) of the growth of democracies throughout the world.
3. New data from 2015 from the Fund for Peace on the Fragile State Index are presented and analyzed.
4. A new discussion has been included on how the Internet, particularly in the United States, works for the benefit of political parties and interest groups, not for the democratic process itself. Because of the information overload caused by the Internet, political discourse has been louder, more shrill, distorted, overly simplistic, and polarized.
5. A new (historically oriented) Applied Perspective has been added that illustrates how the research of anthropologist Ruth Benedict greatly informed the U.S. occupation of Japan immediately following the Second World War.
6. Two new Cross-Cultural Miscue boxes have been added to this edition. One dealing with an American misunderstanding the relationship between the Peoples' Republic of China on the mainland and the

Republic of China located on the island of Taiwan; a second one dealing with a Russian hand gesture that was misunderstood when a Russian premier visited the United States.

7. A new Contemporary Issues box has been added dealing with the thorny question of whether or not cultural anthropologists should work with the United States military.

Chapter 14: Belief Systems

1. A new section on the 2016 presidential campaign discusses the paradox of Donald Trump gaining a large segment of Evangelical voters despite the fact the he proudly exemplified more anti-Christian behavior than any presidential nominee in U.S. history.
2. New information has been added on the rising popularity of the Wiccan movement in the United States.
3. A new section has been added on urban shamanism in New York City.
4. The section on the changing demographics of Christianity has been expanded to include the transformation of Christianity in South America from Catholic to increasingly Protestant.
5. This edition includes a new Applied Perspective box showing how an anthropologist served as an expert witness in a Supreme Court case involving the Amish religion.
6. A new Cross-Cultural Miscue has been added dealing with how an American company in Taiwan dealt with a local religious issue involving its workers in the plant.

Chapter 15: Art

1. A new box has been added entitled "Just Call It Art," which shows what was called "native art" is now working its way into Western museums, competing along with works of artists from more complex societies.
2. The chapter has a new section on how the arts contributes to the economic development of the society in which it is found, as well as enhancing the quality of one's aesthetic life.
3. New examples are introduced to illustrate how governments use art to control people's behavior.
4. A new section has been added on how art, and the making of art, fits into the total culture of which it is a part.
5. Also new to this edition is an expanded discussion of how studio craft/arts in the United States and beyond has changed over the past half century in terms of monetary value, audience, purpose, and narrative.
6. New to this chapter is a discussion on the role of how modern communication technology is changing the face of arts education.

Chapter 16: Global Challenges and the Role of Applied Anthropology

1. The chapter also contains a new Applied Perspective box on a major U.S. company that develops and administers economic development programs in developing countries, and recruits its expatriate program officers with an eye toward cross-cultural experience, sensitivities, and coping skills rather than technical expertise alone.
2. The economic data on former African colonies have been updated.
3. A number of new examples of globalization have been added to this edition.
4. The human rights efforts on behalf of the Ngobe of Panama by Cultural Survival, Inc. have been brought up to date.

Chapter Features

As discussed, this edition contains a number of pedagogical features designed to enhance student learning. These include What We Will Learn introductory questions alerting students to key concepts of the chapter, chapter-opening scenarios that illustrate just how important culture is for understanding the world around us, concise chapter summaries, a list of key terms, a running glossary as well as a cumulative glossary, Applied Perspective boxes, Contemporary Issues boxes, and Cross-Cultural Miscues, all designed to illustrate the relevance of cultural anthropology to our everyday lives. Questions for Discussion also appear at the end of the Applied Perspective boxes and are designed to stimulate critical thinking about the applied cases.

Supplements for Instructors

Online Instructor's Manual with Test Bank for Ferraro/Andreatta's *Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective*, Eleventh Edition An online Instructor's Manual accompanies this book. It contains information to assist instructors in designing the course, including learning objectives, chapter outlines, key terms, critical thinking questions, class activities, Internet exercises, and suggested films. For assessment support, the updated test bank includes true/false, multiple-choice, short-answer, and essay questions for each chapter.

Cengage Learning Testing Powered by Cognero for *Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective*, by Ferraro/Andreatta, Eleventh Edition This assessment tool is a flexible, online system that allows you to author, edit, and manage test bank content from multiple Cengage Learning solutions. You can create multiple test versions in an instant and deliver tests from your LMS, your classroom, or wherever you want.

Online PowerPoints for *Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective*, Eleventh Edition Vibrant Microsoft PowerPoint lecture slides for each chapter assist you with your lecture by providing concept coverage using images, figures, and tables directly from the textbook.

Online Resources for Instructors and Students

Anthropology CourseReader. Anthropology Course Reader allows you to create a fully customized online reader in minutes. Access a rich collection of thousands of primary and secondary sources, readings, and audio and video selections from multiple disciplines. See the Author's Choice for selections of applied anthropology articles edited by Gary Ferraro, editor.

To access these resources and additional course materials and companion resources, please visit www.cengagebrain.com. At the CengageBrain.com home page, search for the ISBN of your title (from the back cover of your book) using the search box at the top of the page. This will take you to the product page where free companion resources can be found.

Supplements for Students

For a complete listing of our case studies and readers go to www.cengage.com/community/fromthefield

***Classic Readings in Cultural Anthropology*, Fourth Edition** (978-1-285-73850-5) Practical and insightful, this concise and accessible reader by Gary Ferraro presents a core selection of historical and contemporary works that have been instrumental in shaping anthropological thought and research over the past decades. Readings are organized around eight topics that closely mirror most introductory textbooks and are selected from scholarly works on the basis of their enduring themes and contributions to the discipline.

***Globalization and Change in Fifteen Cultures: Born in One World, Living in Another*, edited by George Spindler and Janice E. Stockard.** (978-0-534-63648-7) In this volume, fifteen case study authors write about culture change in today's diverse settings around the world. Each original article provides insight into the dynamics and meanings of change, as well as the effects of globalization at the local level.

***Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology*, edited by George Spindler and Janice E. Stockard.** Select from more than sixty classic and contemporary ethnographies representing geographic and topical diversity. Newer case studies focus on culture change and culture continuity, reflecting the globalization of the world and include a legacy edition of Napoleon Chagnon's *Yanomamö*, and a fourth edition of Richard Lee's *The Dobe Ju/'hoansi*. Recent publications include *Shadowed Lives*, by Leo Chavez.

***Case Studies on Contemporary Social Issues*, edited by John A. Young.** Framed around social issues, these new contemporary case studies are globally comparative and represent the cutting-edge work of anthropologists today. Recent publications include *Slaughterhouse Blues* by Donald Stull and Michael Broadway and *Seeking Food Rights: Nation, Inequality and Repression in Uzbekistan* by Nancy Rosenberger.

Acknowledgments

To one degree or another, many people have contributed to this textbook. Some have made explicit suggestions for revisions, many of which have been incorporated into various editions over the past eighteen years. Others have contributed less directly, yet their fingerprints are found throughout the text. We are particularly grateful to the many professors with whom we have studied at Syracuse University (Ferraro) and Michigan State University (Andreatta). We owe a similar debt to the many colleagues over the years who have shared with us their thinking on anthropological research and teaching. Although there are far too many names to fit into a small preface, they have had an important impact on our thinking and our careers as anthropologists and, thus, on the content of this book. They have always responded graciously to our requests for information in their various areas of expertise and have taught us a great deal about teaching introductory anthropology. We are confident that they know who they are and will accept our most sincere gratitude.

Since its first appearance in 1992, this textbook has benefited enormously from excellent editorial guidance and the comments of many reviewers. We want to thank our original editor, Peter Marshall, for his encouragement to write an introductory textbook with an applied focus before it was fashionable. We also want to thank our Senior Content Developer, Lin Marshall Gaylord, for her vision, counsel, and many excellent suggestions. Thanks are also extended to the entire

Cengage Learning editorial, marketing, and production team; MPS Limited, Production Services; and Cheryl Dubois, Photo Researcher.

As with the previous editions of this book, many reviewers have made valuable and insightful suggestions for strengthening the text. For this eleventh edition we would like to express our gratitude to the many colleagues who wish to remain anonymous.

We also want to thank the many unsolicited reviewers—both professors and students—who have commented on various aspects of the text over the years. We trust that these reviewers will see that many of their helpful suggestions have been incorporated into the eleventh edition. We encourage any readers, professors, or students to send us comments, corrections, and suggestions for future improvements via e-mail at the following addresses:

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After nearly a half century (cumulative) of full-time university teaching, we want to express our deepest gratitude to our many students who have helped us define and refine our anthropological perspectives and, consequently, the concepts and interpretations in this book.

Gary Ferraro
Susan Andreatta

About the Authors

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A young girl from Guatemala peers from behind a tree to see what is going on in the world around her, an activity in which students of cultural anthropology also engage.

CHAPTER

1 What Is Anthropology?

A LETTER TO STUDENTS

Greetings! We would like to welcome you to the eleventh edition of *Cultural Anthropology: An Applied Perspective*.

We are proud of this textbook and the difference we bet it will make in your lives after reading and learning from the text. To be certain, all introductory textbooks in cultural anthropology are designed to introduce readers to the content of cultural anthropology. But this textbook, with its "Applied Perspective," goes beyond the content of the discipline by showing you how the research findings, theories, methods, and insights of cultural anthropology can be useful in your *everyday* personal and professional lives.

The study of cultural anthropology, in other words, is far more than the study of the similarities and differences among the thousands of distinct and discrete cultures of the world and, in today's interconnected world, it is far more relevant. The *applied* orientation of this book illustrates (through distinct examples and scenarios) how understanding the ideas and behavior patterns of culturally different people, both at home and abroad, enables us to better meet our personal and professional objectives. Conversely, when we fail to take our cultural environments seriously, we are likely to commit some serious cultural faux pas.

The book's applied orientation is woven into each chapter through three unique features: chapter opening real-world scenarios, Applied Perspective features, and Cross-Cultural Miscues. First, an introductory mini-case study that is actual, and not hypothetical, begins each chapter and illustrates why it is important to understand the basic concepts in the chapter. The second feature that highlights applied anthropology is the Applied Perspective boxes. These are longer case studies based on actual anthropological research that demonstrate how cultural anthropology has been used to solve specific societal problems in such work-related areas as medicine, government, architecture, education, economic development, and business. Finally, the Cross-Cultural Miscues, which appear in each chapter, illustrate the negative consequences of failing to appreciate cultural differences in one's everyday interactions. All three of these features are highlighted with the SWAP (an acronym for "Share with a Parent" or a friend) icon to direct your attention to key examples in the text that illustrate the importance of applied anthropology.

We are writing to you in Chapter 1 so that you know from the outset that this book has a twofold purpose: (1) It introduces you to the basic field of

WHAT WE WILL LEARN

- How does anthropology differ from other social and behavioral sciences?
- What is the four-field approach to the discipline of anthropology?
- What do anthropologists mean by *holism?*
- What is meant by *cultural relativism*, and why is it important?
- What skills will students develop from the study of anthropology?
- How can anthropology help solve social problems?

Danita Delimont/Gallo Images/Getty Images

cultural anthropology, and (2) it demonstrates how cross-cultural awareness is extraordinarily relevant in the highly interconnected world of the twenty-first century. We also want to alert you that there are several important features of each chapter that should be taken seriously because they remind us of the relevance of cultural knowledge to our everyday lives. In fact, you should cite these highly relevant scenarios and examples to your parents and friends who never fail to ask the question: Why are you taking (or worse yet, majoring in) cultural anthropology? Because we all play out our lives in a cultural context—and, to an increasing degree, in a multicultural or cross-cultural context—an understanding of cultural anthropology is extremely important for maximizing our personal and professional success in the twenty-first century, irrespective of what line of work you might pursue.

We trust that you will find reading about living and working in other cultures (for example, see the Cross-Cultural Miscue) or about anthropology and new product research in the developing world interesting and thought provoking as you learn about the real impact culture has on your everyday life. Be sure to pay close attention to the SWAP icons that appear beside all mini-case studies throughout the book. These case studies will help you to answer the questions from parents and friends about what you can possibly learn from cultural anthropology. ■

When most North Americans hear the word *anthropologist*, a number of images come to mind. They picture, for example:

- Jane Goodall devoting years of her life to making systematic observations of chimpanzees in their natural environment in Gombe Stream National Park, Tanzania
- A field anthropologist interviewing an exotic tribesman about his kinship system
- The excavation of a jawbone that will be used to demonstrate the evolutionary link between early und modern humans
- A linguist meticulously recording the words and sounds of a native informant speaking a language that has never been written down
- A cultural anthropologist studying the culture of a fishing communities off the Texas Gulf Coast
- A team of archaeologists using ground-penetrating radar to locate an ancient temple from a rain forest in Guatemala

Each of these impressions—to one degree or another—accurately represents the concerns of scientists who call themselves anthropologists. Anthropologists do, in fact, travel to different parts of the world to study cultures (cultural anthropologists) and languages (anthropological linguists), but they also study culturally distinct groups within their own cultures. Anthropologists also unearth fossil remains (biological anthropologists) and various artifacts (archaeologists) of individuals who lived thousands and, in some cases, millions of years ago. Even though anthropologists in these subspecialties engage in substantially different types of activities and generate different types of data, they are all directed toward a single purpose: the scientific study of humans, both biologically and culturally, in whatever form, time period, or region of the world they might be found.

Anthropology—derived from the Greek words *anthropos* for "human" and *logos* for "study"—is, if we take it literally, the study of humans. In one sense this is an accurate description to the extent that anthropology raises a wide variety of questions about the human condition. And yet this literal definition is not particularly illuminating because a number of other academic disciplines—including sociology, biology, psychology, political science, economics, and history—also study human beings. What is it that distinguishes anthropology from all of these other disciplines?

Anthropology is the study of people—their origins, their development, and contemporary variations wherever and whenever they have been found. Of all the disciplines that study humans, anthropology is

by far the broadest in scope. The subject matter of anthropology includes fossilized skeletal remains of early humans, artifacts, and other material remains from prehistoric and historic archaeological sites, and all of the contemporary and historical cultures of the world. The task that anthropology has set for itself is an enormous one. Anthropologists strive for an understanding of the biological and cultural origins and evolutionary development of the species. They are concerned with all humans, both past and present, as well as their behavior patterns, thought systems, and material possessions. In short, anthropology aims to describe, in the broadest sense, what it means to be human (Peacock 1986).

In their search to understand the human condition, anthropologists—drawing on a wide variety of data and methods—have created a diverse field of study. Many specialists in the field of anthropology often engage in research that is directly relevant to other fields. It has been suggested (Wolf 1964) that anthropology spans the gap between the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences. To illustrate, anthropological investigations of native art, folklore, values, and supernatural belief systems are primarily humanistic in nature; studies of social stratification, comparative political systems, and means of distribution are common themes in sociology, political science, and economics, respectively; and studies of comparative anatomy and radiocarbon dating are central to the natural sciences of biology and chemistry.

The global scope of anthropological studies has actually increased over the past century. In the early 1900s, anthropologists concentrated on the non-Western, preliterate, and technologically simple societies of the world and were content to leave the study of industrial societies to other disciplines such as sociology and economics. In recent decades, however, anthropologists have devoted increasing attention to cultural and subcultural groups in industrialized areas while continuing their studies of ethnic peoples of the world at home as well as abroad. It is not uncommon today for anthropologists to apply their field methods to the study of the Amish of Pennsylvania, migrant workers in North Carolina, or fishermen in the coastal United States. Only when the whole range of human cultural variation is examined will anthropologists be in a position to test the accuracy of theories about human behavior.

Traditionally, the discipline of anthropology is divided into four distinct branches or subfields: *biological anthropology*, which deals with humans as biological organisms; *archaeology*, which attempts to reconstruct the cultures of the past, most of which have left no written records; *anthropological linguistics*, which focuses on the study of language in historical, structural, and social contexts; and *cultural anthropology*, which examines similarities and differences among contemporary cultures of the world (see Table 1.1). All four subfields of the discipline of anthropology engage in both (1) theoretical research (describing and comparing cultural features among and between cultures) and (2) more practical forms of research designed to solve specific societal problems. This more problem-oriented endeavor is itself comprised of two broad streams: first, "applied anthropology" involves conducting applied research projects designed to facilitate change or generate policy recommendations for addressing societal problems; and the second, which is known in the field as "applying anthropology," involves using already existing anthropological data, methods, theories, and insights to inform government programs and nongovernment organizations (NGOs) that promote, manage, and assess social programs and social policies.

Although cultural anthropology is the central focus of this textbook, a brief discussion of all four branches will provide an adequate description of the discipline as a whole.

TABLE 1.1

Branches of Anthropology

Biological Anthropology	Archaeology	Anthropological Linguistics	Cultural Anthropology
Paleoanthropology	Historical archaeology	Historical linguistics	Development anthropology
Primatology	Prehistoric archaeology	Descriptive linguistics	Psychological anthropology
Human variation	Contract archaeology	Ethnolinguistics	Ecological anthropology
Forensic anthropology	Applied archaeology	Sociolinguistics	Medical anthropology
Applied biological anthropology	Cultural resource management	Applied linguistics	Urban anthropology
			Political anthropology
			Applied anthropology

Biological Anthropology

The study of humans from a biological perspective is called **biological anthropology**. Essentially, biological anthropologists are concerned with three broad areas of investigation. First, they are interested in reconstructing the evolutionary record of the human species; that is, they ask questions about the emergence of humans and how humans have evolved up to the present time. This area of biological anthropology is known as **paleoanthropology**. The second area of concern to biological anthropologists, known as **primatology**, focuses on our nearest living relatives, namely apes, monkeys, and prosimians. And the third area, known as human variation, studies how and why the physical traits of contemporary human populations vary throughout the world. Unlike comparative biologists, biological anthropologists study how culture and environment have influenced these two areas of biological evolution and contemporary variations.

Evolutionary Record of Humans

In their attempts to reconstruct human evolution, paleoanthropologists have drawn heavily on fossil remains (hardened organic matter such as bones and teeth) of humans, protohumans, and other primates. Once these fossil remains have been unearthed, the difficult job of comparison, analysis, and interpretation begins. To which species do the remains belong? Are the remains human or those of our prehuman ancestors? If not human, what do the remains tell us about our own species? When did these primates live? How did they adapt to their environment? To answer these questions, paleoanthropologists use the techniques of comparative anatomy. They compare such physical features as cranial capacity, teeth, hands, position of the pelvis, and shape of the head of the fossil remains with those of humans or other nonhuman primates. In addition to comparing physical features, paleoanthropologists look for signs of culture (such as tools or tool use) to help determine the humanity of the fossil remains. For example, if fossil remains are found in association with tools, and if it can be determined that those individuals made the tools, then it is likely that the remains will be considered humanlike.

biological anthropology The subfield of anthropology that studies biological evolution of human beings and the contemporary physical variations among peoples of the world.

paleoanthropology The study of human and nonhuman primate evolution through fossil remains.

primatology The study of nonhuman primates in their natural environments for the purpose of gaining insights into the human evolutionary process.

The work of paleoanthropologists is often painstaking and must be conducted with meticulous attention to detail. Even though the quantity of fossilized materials is growing each year, paleoanthropologists have little data to analyze. Much of the evolutionary record remains underground. Of the fossils that have been found, many are partial or fragmentary, and more often than not, they are not found in association with cultural artifacts. Consequently, to fill in the human evolutionary record, biological anthropologists need to draw on the work of a number of other specialists: paleontologists (who specialize in prehistoric plant and animal life), archaeologists (who study prehistoric material culture), and geologists (who provide data on local physical and climatic conditions).

In addition to reconstructing the human evolutionary record, paleoanthropology has led to various applications of biological anthropology. For example, forensic anthropology for years has used traditional methods and theories from biological anthropology to help identify the remains of crime and disaster victims for legal purposes. Forensic anthropologists can determine from skeletal remains the age, sex, and stature of the deceased as well as other traits such as physical abnormalities, traumas (such as broken bones), and nutritional history. In recent years, forensic anthropologists have been called on to testify in murder trials. On a larger scale, some applied forensic anthropologists have headed international teams to study the physical remains of victims of mass human rights abuses. For example, in 1984, forensic anthropologist Clyde Snow helped identify some of the 9,000 people murdered by the government of Argentina between 1976 and 1983. Snow's forensic research and subsequent testimony in an Argentinean court were crucial in convicting some of the perpetrators of these mass murders. Similarly, forensic anthropologists have been working in Bosnia and Kosovo to identify the victims of Slobodan Milosevic's programs of ethnic cleansing during the 1990s. More recently, the life and work of Kathy Reichs, a forensic anthropologist and best-selling crime novelist, have inspired the primetime TV series *Bones* (see Figure 1.1).

Primatology

Since the 1950s, biological anthropologists have developed an area of specialization of their own that helps shed light on human evolution and adaptation over time and space. This field of study is known as *primatology*—the study of our nearest living relatives (apes, monkeys, and prosimians) in their natural habitats (see Figure 1.2). Primatologists study the anatomy and social behavior of such nonhuman primate species as gorillas, baboons, and chimpanzees in an effort to gain clues about our own evolution as a species.

Christopher Morris/Getty Images

FIGURE 1.1 Dr. Kathy Reichs, a forensic anthropologist, works with police, the courts, medical examiners, and international organizations to help identify victims of crimes, disasters, and genocide. She also served on the forensic recovery team for victims of the World Trade Center disaster of September 11, 2001.

Michel Gunther/Science Source

FIGURE 1.2 Primatologist, Jane Goodall, seen here with a chimpanzee in Gombe Stream National Park in Tanzania. Goodall has spent more than fifty-five years studying and advocating for chimpanzees and for the protection of their habitat.

Because biological anthropologists do not have the luxury of observing the behavior of human ancestors several million years ago, they can learn how early humans could have responded to certain environmental conditions and changes in their developmental past by studying contemporary nonhuman primates (such as baboons and chimps) in similar environments. For example, the simple yet real division of labor among baboon troops can shed light on role specialization and social stratification in early human societies, or the rudimentary tool-making skills found among chimpanzees in Tanzania may help explain early human strategies for adapting to the environment.

Sometimes the study of primatology leads to findings that are both startling and eminently practical. While studying chimps in their natural habitat in Tanzania, primatologist Richard Wrangham noticed that young chimps occasionally ate the leaves of plants that were not part of their normal diet. Because the chimps swallowed the leaves whole, Wrangham concluded that they were not ingesting these leaves primarily for nutritional purposes. Chemical analysis of the leaves by pharmacologist Eloy Rodriguez indicated that the plant contains substantial amounts of the chemical compound thiarubrine A, which has strong antibiotic properties. Wrangham concluded that the chimps were medicating themselves, perhaps to control internal parasites. Seeing the potential for treating human illnesses, Rodriguez and Wrangham applied for a patent. Interestingly, they use part of the proceeds from their new drug to help preserve the chimpanzee habitat in Tanzania. In Wrangham's words, "I like the idea of chimps showing us the medicine and then helping them to pay for their own conservation" (quoted in Howard 1991).

Physical Variations among Primates

Although all humans are members of the same species and therefore are capable of interbreeding, considerable physical variation exists among human populations. Some of these differences are based on visible physical traits, such as the shape of the nose, body stature, and color of the skin. Other variations are based on less visible biochemical factors, such as blood type or susceptibility to diseases.

For the first half of the twentieth century, biological anthropologists attempted to document human physical variations throughout the world by dividing the world's populations into various racial categories. A **race** was defined as a group of people who share a greater statistical frequency of genes and physical traits with one another than they do with people outside the group. Today, however, no anthropologists subscribe to the notion that races are fixed biological entities whose members all share the same physical features. Despite an enormous amount of effort devoted to classifying people into discrete racial categories during much of the twentieth century, most anthropologists do not consider these categories to be particularly useful. Today we know that the amount of genetic variation is much greater within racial groups than between racial groups. Thus, most anthropologists view these early-twentieth-century racial typologies as largely an oversimplification of our present state of genetic knowledge. (For more on race and racism, see Chapter 12.)

race A subgroup of the human population whose members share a greater number of genes and physical traits with one another than they do with members of other subgroups.

Although contemporary anthropologists continue to be interested in human physical variation, they have turned their attention to examining how human physical variations help people adapt to their environment. Biological anthropologists have found that populations with the greatest amount of melanin in their skin are found in tropical regions, whereas lighter-skinned populations generally reside in more northern latitudes. This suggests that natural selection has favored darker skin in tropical areas because it protects people from dangerous ultraviolet light. In colder climates people tend to have considerable body mass (less body surface), which is a natural protection from the deadly cold. And sickle cells, found widely in the blood of people living in sub-Saharan Africa, protect people against the ravages of malaria. These three examples illustrate how physical variations can help people adapt to their natural environments. In their investigations of how human biological variations influence adaptation, biological anthropologists draw on the work of three allied disciplines: **genetics** (the study of inherited physical traits), **population biology** (the study of the interrelationships between population characteristics and environments), and **epidemiology** (the study of the occurrence, distribution, and control of disease in populations over time).

Archaeology

Experts in the field of **archaeology** study the lifeways of people from the past by excavating and analyzing the material culture they have left behind. The purpose of archaeology is not to fill up museums by collecting exotic relics from prehistoric societies. Rather, it is to understand cultural adaptations of ancient peoples by at least partially reconstructing their cultures. Because archaeologists concentrate on societies of the past, they are limited to working with material culture including, in some cases, written records. From these material remains, however, archaeologists are able to infer many nonmaterial cultural aspects (ideas and behavior patterns) held by people thousands, and in some cases millions, of years ago.

Archaeologists work with three types of material remains: artifacts, features, and ecofacts. **Artifacts** are objects that have been made or modified by humans and that can be removed from the site and taken to the laboratory for further analysis. Tools, arrowheads, and fragments of pottery are examples of artifacts. **Features**, like artifacts, are made or modified by people, but they cannot be readily carried away from the dig site. Archaeological features include such things as house foundations, fireplaces, and postholes (see Figure 1.3). **Ecofacts** are objects found in the natural environment (such as bones, seeds, and wood) that were not made or altered by humans but were used by them. Ecofacts provide archaeologists with important data concerning the environment and how people used natural resources.

The data that archaeologists have at their disposal are selective. Not only are archaeologists limited to material remains, but also the overwhelming majority of material possessions that may have been part of a culture do not survive thousands of years under the ground. As a result, archaeologists search for fragments of material evidence (such items as projectile points, hearths, beads, and postholes) that will enable them to

genetics The study of inherited physical traits.

population biology The study of the interrelationships between population characteristics and environments.

epidemiology The study of the occurrence, distribution, and control of disease in populations.

archaeology The subfield of anthropology that focuses on the study of prehistoric and historic cultures through the excavation of material remains.

artifacts A type of material remain (found by archaeologists) that has been made or modified by humans, such as tools and arrowheads.

features Archaeological remains that have been made or modified by people and cannot easily be carried away, such as house foundations, fireplaces, and postholes.

ecofacts Physical remains—found by archaeologists—that were used by humans but not made or reworked by them (for example, seeds and bones).

Natursports/Shutterstock.com

FIGURE 1.3 Archaeologists and students excavate at Atapuerca, the site where fossils and stone tools of the earliest known humans in Western Europe have been found.

piece together a culture. A prehistoric garbage dump is particularly revealing because archaeologists can learn a great deal about how people lived from what they threw away. These material remains are then used to make inferences about the nonmaterial aspects of the culture (that is, values, ideas, and behaviors) being studied.

Once archaeologists have collected the physical evidence, the difficult work of analysis and interpretation begins. By studying the bits and pieces of material culture left behind (within the context of both environmental data and anatomical remains), archaeologists seek to determine how the people supported themselves, whether they had a notion of an afterlife, how roles were allocated between men and women, whether some people were more powerful than others, whether the people engaged in trade with neighboring peoples, and how lifestyles have changed over time.

Present-day archaeologists work with both historic and prehistoric cultures. Historic archaeologists help to reconstruct the cultures of people who used writing and about whom historical documents have been written. For example, historical archaeologists have contributed significantly to our understanding of colonial American cultures by analyzing material remains that can supplement such historical documents as books, letters, graffiti, and government reports.

Prehistoric archaeology, on the other hand, deals with the vast segment of the human record (several million years) that predates the advent of writing about 5,500 years ago. Archaeology remains the one scientific enterprise that systematically focuses on prehistoric cultures. Consequently, it has provided us with a much longer time frame than written history for understanding the record of human development and impact on the environment.

The relevance of studying ancient artifacts often goes beyond helping us better understand our prehistoric past. In some cases, the study of stone tools can lead to improvements in our own modern technology. To illustrate, while experimentally replicating the manufacture of stone tools, archaeologist Don Crabtree found that obsidian from the western part of the United States can be chipped to a sharp edge. When examined under an electron microscope, the cutting edge of obsidian was found to be 200 times sharper than modern surgical scalpels. Some surgeons now use these obsidian scalpels because the healing is faster and the scarring is reduced (Sheets 1993).

Another area of applied archaeology is called **cultural resource management**. During the 1960s and 1970s, a number of preservation and environmental protection laws were passed to identify and protect cultural and historic resources (for example, landmarks, historic buildings, and archaeological sites) from being bulldozed. The laws require environmental impact studies to be conducted before the start of federally funded projects such as dams, highways, airports, or office buildings. If the building project would destroy the cultural resource, then the law requires that archaeological research be conducted to preserve the information from the site. In response to these laws, archaeologists developed the specialty of cultural resource management (also known as *public archaeology* or *contract archaeology*).

The goal of this work of applied archaeology is to ensure that the laws are properly followed, that high-quality research is conducted, and that the data from archaeological sites are not destroyed by federally funded building projects. Cultural resource management has grown so rapidly in recent years that by the turn of the millennium about half of all professionally trained archaeologists were working in this field.

Although, typically, archaeology focuses on prehistorical and historical peoples, some archaeologists are using their techniques to study contemporary societies. For example, archaeologist William Rathje of the University of Arizona, one of the world's best known "garbologists," seeks to better understand prehistoric, historic, and *contemporary* peoples by studying what they throw away (see Figure 1.4). For example, in his study of garbage in Tucson, Arizona, Rathje

Jim Sugar/Getty Images

FIGURE 1.4 **Archaeologist William Rathje, shoveling debris in a landfill in San Francisco, seeks to understand cultures (both prehistoric and contemporary) by studying their waste.**

cultural resource management A form of applied archaeology that involves identifying, evaluating, and sometimes excavating sites before roads, dams, and buildings are constructed.

APPLIED PERSPECTIVE

Applying Archaeology in Post-Katrina New Orleans

Although we usually think of archaeology as focusing exclusively on history and prehistory, some archaeologists are finding ways to help people living in the twenty-first century. In the immediate aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Shannon Lee Dawdy, an archaeologist from the University of Chicago, served as the liaison between the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Louisiana's Historic Preservation Office. Her mission was to prevent the rebuilding of New Orleans from further destroying what remained of its past and current cultural heritage. One such urban treasure damaged during the hurricanes was Holt Cemetery, the final resting place for many poor residents of a city that has had strong ties with its dead. For generations Holt Cemetery has been the gathering spot, particularly on All Souls' Day, for the living to pay their respects to the dead by decorating and adorning their grave sites with votive objects (everything from children's teddy bears to flowers to plastic jack-o'-lanterns). Dawdy tried (unsuccessfully) to convince FEMA and other officials that these votive objects, many of which were scattered throughout the cemetery by the floodwater, should not be considered debris. Rather, she argued, every effort should be made to restore the damaged site by replacing as many of these votive objects as possible. If this important place (which connects people to their dead ancestors and friends) was not restored, residents driven from New Orleans by the hurricanes would be much less likely to return to rebuild their homes and their lives. Jean Comaroff, chairperson of the University of Chicago's Department of Anthropology, summed up the value of Dawdy's work: "The threat is great that much that was unique about New Orleans as a social and cultural world—qualities that are at once creative, poignant, and fragile—will be lost in its reconstruction" (J. Schwartz 2006: D-l). The importance of Dawdy's work can be better appreciated by viewing the critically acclaimed HBO series titled *Treme*, which portrays New Orleans' culture and social structure in the immediate aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Professor Shannon Lee Dawdy

Questions for Further Thought

1. In a single sentence, how would you describe the *significance* of Dawdy's research in post-Katrina New Orleans?
2. What areas—other than cemeteries—might contemporary archaeologists, like Dawdy, investigate in the aftermath of a natural disaster such as a hurricane or an earthquake?
3. How could archaeological research in your home community possibly lead to information that could help formulate public policy?

found some interesting consumption patterns that had important implications for urban planners in charge of solid waste facilities. Moreover, this research supported the notion that there is always some discrepancy between what people say they do and what they actually do. When surveyed by questionnaire, 15 percent of his interviewees claimed to be beer drinkers. Yet analysis of the garbage of these same people revealed that approximately 80 percent of the households consumed beer. This sizeable discrepancy (533 percent) between real and reported behavior is useful to sociologists, medical anthropologists, and public health officials who need to address issues of health and dietary patterns.

anthropological linguistics The scientific study of human communication within its sociocultural context.

historical linguistics The branch of anthropological linguistics that studies how languages emerge and change over time.

Anthropological Linguistics

The branch of the discipline that studies human speech and language is called **anthropological linguistics**. Although humans are not the only species that has systems of symbolic communication, ours is by far the most complex form. In fact, some would argue that language is the most distinctive feature of being human because without language we could not acquire and transmit our culture from one generation to the next.

Linguistic anthropology, which studies contemporary human languages as well as those of the past, is divided into four distinct branches: historical linguistics, descriptive linguistics, ethnolinguistics, and sociolinguistics.

Historical linguistics deals with the emergence of language in general and how specific languages have diverged over time. Some of the earliest anthropological interest in language focused on the historical connections between languages. For example, nineteenth-century linguists working with European languages

demonstrated similarities in the sound systems between a particular language and a previous parent language from which the language was derived. By comparing contemporary languages, linguists have been able to identify certain language families and can approximate when two related languages began to diverge from each other. Today these historical linguistic techniques are used in conjunction with archaeological and biological evidence (for example, DNA). As an example, Cecil Brown (2006) established the prehistoric linguistic chronology of the common bean in the New World, which both complemented and supplemented archaeological dating techniques.

Descriptive linguistics is the study of sound systems, grammatical systems, and the meanings attached to words in specific languages. Every culture has a distinctive language with its own logical structure and set of rules for putting words and sounds together for the purpose of communicating. In its simplest form, the task of descriptive linguists is to compile dictionaries and grammar books for previously unwritten languages.

Cultural linguistics (also known as **ethnolinguistics**) is the branch of anthropological linguistics that examines the relationship between language and culture. In any language, certain cultural aspects that are emphasized (such as types of snow among the Inuit, cows among the pastoral Maasai, or automobiles in U.S. culture) are reflected in the vocabulary. Moreover, cultural linguists explore how different linguistic categories can affect how people categorize their experiences, how they think, and how they perceive the world around them.

The fourth branch of anthropological linguistics, known as **sociolinguistics**, examines the relationship between language and social relations. For example, sociolinguists are interested in investigating how social class influences the particular dialect a person speaks. They also study the situational use of language—that is, how people use different forms of a language depending on the social situation they find themselves in at any given time. To illustrate, the words and grammatical structures a U.S. college student would choose when conversing with a roommate are significantly different from the linguistic style used when talking to a grandparent, a rabbi, or a potential employer during a job interview.

Anthropological linguists also engage in applied activities. After describing the structure of a language, descriptive linguists frequently take the next logical step and work with educators to plan effective strategies for teaching English as a second language. Some anthropological linguists serve as consultants to government and educational leaders responsible for setting language policy in a state or country. Anthropological linguists sometimes work with local (small-scale) minority groups whose languages are spoken by so few people that they are in danger of becoming extinct. Still other applied linguists help design foreign language and culture programs for people who are preparing to live and work abroad. Moreover, linguists like Deborah Tannen apply their knowledge of gender differences in language to help men and women better understand one another.

For most of the twentieth century, anthropological linguists documented the vocabularies, grammars, and phonetic systems of the many unwritten languages of the world. At this point, most of the hitherto unwritten languages have been recorded or have died out (that is, lost all of their native speakers). This has led some anthropologists to suggest that the field of anthropological linguistics has essentially completed its work and should no longer be regarded as one of the major branches of anthropology. Such a view, however, is shortsighted. Because languages are constantly changing, anthropological linguists will be needed to document these changes and to show how they reflect changes in the culture as a whole. Moreover, anthropological linguists in recent years have expanded their research interests to include television advertising, linguistic aspects of popular culture, and computer jargon.

Cultural Anthropology

The branch of anthropology that deals with the study of specific contemporary cultures (**ethnography**) and the more general underlying patterns of human culture derived through cultural comparisons (**ethnology**) is called **cultural anthropology** (see Table 1.2). Before cultural anthropologists can examine cultural differences and similarities throughout the world, they must first describe the features of specific cultures in as much detail as possible. These detailed descriptions (ethnographies) are the result of extensive field studies (usually a year or two in duration) in which anthropologists observe, talk to, and live with the people they are studying. The writing of large numbers of ethnographies over the course of the twentieth century has provided

descriptive linguistics The branch of anthropological linguistics that studies how languages are structured, specifically the grammar of languages.

ethnolinguistics The branch of anthropological linguistics that studies the relationship between language and culture.

sociolinguistics The branch of anthropological linguistics that studies how language is used in different social contexts.

ethnography The anthropological description of a particular contemporary culture by means of direct fieldwork.

ethnology The comparative study of cultural differences and similarities.

cultural anthropology The scientific study of cultural similarities and differences wherever and in whatever form they may be found.

TABLE 1.2

Two Facets of Cultural Anthropology

Ethnography	Ethnology
Descriptive	Comparative
Based on direct fieldwork	Uses data collected by other ethnographers
Focuses on a single culture or subculture	Generalizes across cultures or subcultures

an empirical basis for the comparative study of cultures. In the process of developing these descriptive accounts, cultural anthropologists may provide insights into questions such as: How are the marriage customs of a group of people related to the group's economy? What effect does urban migration have on the kinship system? In what ways have supernatural beliefs helped a group of people adapt more effectively to their environment? Thus, while describing the essential features of a culture, cultural anthropologists may also explain why certain cultural patterns exist and how they may be related to one another.

Ethnology is the comparative study of contemporary cultures, wherever they may be found. Ethnologists seek to understand both why people today and in the recent past differ in terms of ideas and behavior patterns, and what all cultures in the world have in common with one another. The primary objective of ethnology is to uncover general cultural principles, that is, the "rules" that govern human behavior. Because all humans have culture and live in groups called societies, there are no populations in the world today that are not viable subjects for the ethnologist. Cultural anthropologists have studied the lifeways of Inuit living in the Arctic tundra, Guatemalan peasants, Maasai herdsmen in Tanzania, and the residents of a retirement home in southern California.

Ethnographers and ethnologists face a daunting task because they describe and compare the many peoples of the world today. A small number of cultural anthropologists must deal with enormous cultural diversity (thousands of distinct cultures where people speak mutually unintelligible languages), numerous features of culture that can be compared, and a wide range of theoretical frameworks for comparing them. To describe even the least complex cultures requires many months of interviewing people and observing their behavior. Even with this large expenditure of time, rarely do contemporary ethnographers describe total cultures. Instead, they usually describe only the more outstanding features of a culture and then investigate a particular aspect or problem in greater depth.

paleopathology The study of disease in prehistoric populations.

Areas of Specialization

Because the description of a total culture is usually beyond the scope of a single ethnographer, cultural anthropologists in recent decades have tended to specialize, often identifying themselves with one or more of these five areas of specialization:

1. *Urban anthropology.* Cultural anthropologists during the first half of the twentieth century tended to concentrate their research on rural societies in non-Western areas. In the immediate post-World War II era, however, anthropologists in greater numbers turned their attention to the study of more complex urban social systems. With increases in rural-to-urban migration in many parts of the world, it was becoming more difficult to think of rural populations as isolated, insulated entities. With this increase in rural-urban interaction during the 1950s and 1960s, cultural anthropologists began to assess the impacts that cities were having on traditional rural societies. From that point it was a natural development to follow rural people into the cities to see how the two systems interacted. Thus was born the subdiscipline of urban anthropology.

   By focusing on how factors such as size, density, and heterogeneity affect customary ways of behaving, urban anthropologists in recent decades have examined such important topics as descriptive accounts of ethnic neighborhoods, rural-urban linkages, labor migration, urban kinship patterns, social network analysis, emerging systems of urban stratification, squatter settlements, and informal economies. Urban anthropology has also focused on social problems such as homelessness, food deserts, affordable housing, race relations, poverty, social justice, unemployment, crime, and public health. Some recent studies have described the modern urban subcultures of urban gardeners, people with drug addiction, factory workers, organ donors, and sex traffickers. Interestingly, fewer studies have been conducted in the middle-class suburbs, where various forms of social problems are also found.
2. *Medical anthropology.* Another recent area of specialization is medical anthropology, which studies the relationship of biological and sociocultural factors to health, disease, and illness—now and in the past. Medical anthropology (which is over fifty years old) includes a variety of perspectives and concerns, ranging from a biological pole at one end of the spectrum to a sociocultural pole at the other. Medical anthropologists with a more biological focus tend to concentrate on interests such as the role of disease in human evolution, nutrition, growth and development, and **paleopathology** (the analysis of disease in ancient populations). Medical anthropologists with more social or cultural interests focus their studies on ethnomedicine (belief

systems that affect sickness and health), medical practitioners, and the relationship between traditional and Western medical systems. Contemporary medical anthropology represents both the biological and the sociocultural approaches, but we should not think of them as separate and autonomous. In actual practice, theory and data from one approach are often used in the other.

Medical anthropology, like many other specialty areas, deals with both theoretical and applied questions of research. Because beliefs and practices about medicine and healing are part of any culture, they deserve the same type of study as other features of culture, such as economics or family patterns. Many medical anthropologists are motivated by the desire to (1) apply theories, methods, and insights to programs designed to improve health services at home and abroad, and (2) serve as cultural brokers between health care professionals and their culturally diverse patients (see Figure 1.5).

3. *Development anthropology.* Dating back to the nineteenth century, colonial powers were interested in the economic development of their colonies—which in the early days meant building infrastructure such as power plants, roads, railroads, and communication systems to support new, viable industries. Later, other development projects were initiated in such areas as agriculture, education, medicine, and job training. Although anthropologists were sometimes consulted on these multimillion-dollar projects, it was not until the 1960s (when development anthropology became a recognized subdiscipline) that they played a more active and comprehensive role in the development process. In the early1960s development anthropologists focused their efforts on pointing out why and how development programs were unsuccessful because they failed to account for local cultural factors. By the 1970s and 1980s, however, development anthropologists were becoming more involved in the entire development cycle, which included project identification, design, budgetary considerations, implementation, and evaluation.

St Petersburg Times/ZUMA Press/Cange/Florida/USA/Newscom

FIGURE 1.5 Physician and medical anthropologist, Dr. Paul Farmer, examines an AIDS patient at the Partners in Health Hospital in Cange, located in the central plateau of Haiti. For more than two decades, Dr. Farmer has been working with the Haitian people on a successful treatment program for infectious diseases such as tuberculosis and AIDS.

The development anthropology that has emerged in the twenty-first century is more critical and people-focused (rather than economy-focused). Many development anthropologists no longer start by asking, "How can I make this large development project successful?" Rather, they are asking, "Will this project benefit the target population?" If the answer is yes, then the new breed of twenty-first-century development anthropologists will likely become involved in various aspects of the project by providing the vital local cultural information needed to make it successful. The focus is no longer on the international development agencies, governments, or multinational corporations financing the development project. Rather, the criteria for success depend on the benefits for the local populations, such as less poverty, equitable economic growth, environmental protection, and respect for human rights.

4. *Ecological anthropology.* Tracing its roots to such early ecological anthropologists as Julian Steward and Roy Rappaport, ecological anthropology examines how human populations interact with the environment and, by so doing, develop solutions to current and future environmental problems. Ecological anthropologists are concerned with two fundamental questions that date back to the founding of anthropology in the nineteenth century: What role does the physical environment play in the formation and evolution of specific cultures? And how do specific sociocultural groups perceive, manage, and modify their environments? Most of the leading ecological anthropologists have demonstrated repeatedly that culture and environment cannot be treated in isolation because they are so intimately interconnected.

For much of its history, ecological/environmental anthropology focused primarily on how non-Western societies (composed of foragers, pastoralists, and small-scale farmers) conceptualized, adapted to, and transformed their natural environments. Although anthropologists in the twenty-first century are still interested in the relationships between culture and the natural environment per se, they have expanded their research interests to include theories and approaches useful for addressing contemporary problems of environmental degradation. These concerns include

(but are not limited to) conflicts over land use, biodiversity conservation, climate change, air and water pollution, deforestation, soil erosion, human rights issues, sustainable development, mineral extraction, and the effects of biochemicals on the health of local populations. Often working collaboratively with scholars from many other disciplines, environmental anthropologists assist policy makers and planners by providing valuable insights into the local cultures of the people who are negatively affected by environmental changes.

5. *Psychological anthropology.* Psychological anthropology, one of the oldest subspecialty areas of cultural anthropology, looks at the relationship between culture and the psychological makeup of individuals and groups. Concerned with the relationships between psychological processes and cultural factors, psychological anthropologists examine how culture may affect personality, cognition, attitudes, and emotions.

   The early practitioners of psychological anthropology between the 1920s and 1950s—namely, Ruth Benedict, Franz Boas, and Edward Sapir—were interested in the relationship between culture and personality. Many of these early theorists studied the effects of cultural features (such as feeding, weaning, and toilet training) on personality, but some, led by Abram Kardiner, were interested in how *group* personality traits could be reflected in entire cultures. Stimulated by the need to know more about America's allies and enemies during World War II, some psychological anthropologists turned their attention to "national character studies" of Russia (Geoffrey Gorer and John Rickman in 1949), whereas Benedict wrote her classic study of the Japanese national character in 1946. Today these studies are not taken seriously because of the methodological difficulties involved in generalizing about large and diverse societies. Since the 1960s, psychological anthropology has moved away from these broad national character studies and has focused on a more narrowly drawn set of problems, such as symbolism, cognition, and consciousness in specific societies. Methodologies have become more varied, statistics have been more widely used, and psychological anthropologists have collaborated with those from other disciplines, such as psychology and linguistics.

These five areas are only a partial list of the specializations within cultural anthropology. Other specialties include agricultural anthropology, legal anthropology, educational anthropology (see Figure 1.6), the anthropology of religion, business anthropology, economic anthropology, political anthropology, the anthropology of tourism, the anthropology of work, and nutritional anthropology.

Bonnie jacobs/iStockphoto.com

FIGURE 1.6 Some applied anthropologists conduct research in multicultural and multiracial classrooms such as this one in the United States. Their findings enable teachers to better understand the cultural backgrounds of their students.

Despite this four-field division, the discipline of anthropology has a long-standing tradition of emphasizing the interrelations among these four subfields. One of the major sections of the American Anthropological Association is the General Anthropology Division (GAD), founded in 1984 to foster scholarly exchange on the central questions unifying the four subfields of the discipline. Moreover, in recent years there has been considerable blurring of the boundaries among the four branches. For example, the specialized area known as medical anthropology draws heavily from both biological and cultural anthropology; educational anthropology addresses issues that bridge the gap between cultural anthropology and linguistics; and ecological anthropology looks at the interaction between culture and biology.

A four-field approach to anthropology has prevailed in academic departments for the past century, yet a growing number of anthropologists are turning to applied anthropology or applying anthropological concepts to real-world issues and becoming specialists in topical areas. To illustrate, a cultural anthropologist may combine her interests in culture, biology, and language, and specialize in nutritional anthropology. Such a topical specialization may provide employment not only in a university, but also in the community and overseas working with nonprofit organizations. To aid in this process, the Society for Applied Anthropology website now lists a number of educational institutions that have shown a commitment in applied anthropology whereby they teach classes, conduct field schools, or offer undergraduate and graduate degrees in the field.

CROSS-CULTURAL MISCUE

While on a trip to Taipei, Matt Erskine made plans to have dinner with his former college roommate John, who is Taiwanese. After they caught up on each other's lives, Matt learned that John was about to leave his present job to start his own consulting business. However, before launching the new business, John told Matt that he must wait until the telephone company granted him the proper telephone number. Given all of the work John had done to get his new business started, Matt thought that having the proper telephone number was a minor obstacle that need not delay the opening of the business. But John insisted that he could not start his new enterprise until he had the right telephone number. Matt got the impression that John, perhaps fearful of taking risks, was using the telephone number as a lame excuse for not launching the business. But Matt misinterpreted this situation because he failed to understand some basic features of contemporary culture in Taiwan.

Despite their great economic leap into the global economy, many Taiwanese still retain beliefs in supernatural forces. This is particularly true about certain numbers. Some primary numbers, associated with negative things such as death or excrement, are to be avoided at all costs. Other numbers, associated with positive things such as money, growth, and wealth, should be used in house addresses, license plates, and telephone numbers. In Taiwan the telephone company receives many requests for numbers that include the lucky numbers, leaving those with unlucky numbers unused. Thus, John believed strongly that unless he got a telephone number with lucky numbers in it, his business would be doomed from the start.

Guiding Principles

For the past century, cultural anthropology has distinguished itself from other disciplines in the humanities and social sciences by following several guiding principles. Although other disciplines have adopted some of these major themes over the decades, they remain central to the discipline of cultural anthropology.

Holism

A distinguishing feature of the discipline of anthropology is its holistic approach to the study of human groups. Anthropological **holism** is evidenced in a number of important ways. First, the anthropological approach involves both biological and sociocultural aspects of humanity—that is, people's genetic endowment as well as what they acquire from their environment after birth. Second, anthropology has the longest possible time frame, from the earliest beginnings of humans several million years ago right up to the present. Third, anthropology is holistic to the extent that it studies all varieties of people wherever they may be found, from East African pastoralists to Korean factory workers. And, finally, anthropologists study many different aspects of human experience, including family structure, marital regulations, house construction, methods of conflict resolution, means of livelihood, religious beliefs, language, space usage, and art.

In the past, cultural anthropologists have made every effort to be holistic by covering as many aspects of a culture as possible in the total cultural context. More recently, however, the accumulated information from all over the world has become so vast that most anthropologists have needed to become more specialized or focused. This is called a *problem-oriented research approach.* To illustrate, one anthropologist may concentrate on marital patterns, whereas another may focus on farming and land use patterns. Despite the recent trend toward specialization, anthropologists continue to analyze their findings within a wider cultural context. Moreover, when all of the various specialties within the discipline are viewed together, they represent a comprehensive or holistic view of the human condition.

Ethnocentrism

While waiting to cross the street in Mumbai, India, a U.S. tourist stood next to a local resident, who proceeded to blow his nose, without handkerchief or tissue, into the street. The tourist's reaction was instantaneous and unequivocal: *How disgusting!* he thought. He responded to this cross-cultural incident by evaluating the Indian's behavior on the basis of standards of etiquette established by his own culture. According to those standards, it is considered proper to use a handkerchief in such a situation. But if the man from Mumbai were to see the U.S. tourist blowing his nose into a handkerchief, he would be equally repulsed, thinking it strange indeed for the man to blow his nose into a handkerchief and then put the handkerchief back into his pocket and carry it around for the rest of the day.

Both the American and the Indian are evaluating each other's behavior based on the standards of their own cultural assumptions and practices. This way of responding to culturally different behavior is known as **ethnocentrism**: the belief that one's own culture is superior to all others. In other words, it means viewing the rest of the world through the narrow lens of one's own cultural perspective.

holism A perspective in anthropology that attempts to study a culture by looking at all parts of the system and how those parts are interrelated.

ethnocentrism The practice of viewing the cultural features of other societies in terms of one's own.

Incidents of ethnocentrism are extensive. For example, we can see ethnocentrism operating in the historical accounts of the American Revolutionary War by both British and American historians. According to U.S. historians, George Washington was a folk hero of epic proportions. He led his underdog Continental Army successfully against the larger, better-equipped redcoats; he threw a coin across the Potomac River; and he was so incredibly honest that he turned himself in for chopping down a cherry tree. What a guy! But according to many British historians, Washington was a thug and a hooligan. Many of Washington's troops were the descendants of debtors and prisoners who could not make it in England. Moreover, Washington did not fight fairly. Whereas the British were gentlemanly about warfare (for example, standing out in open fields in their bright red coats, shooting at the enemy), Washington's troops went sneaking around ambushing the British. Even though the U.S. and British historians are describing the same set of historical events, their own biased cultural perspectives produce two different interpretations.

And, ethnocentrism is still very much in evidence in the twenty-first century. Sometimes our own ethnocentrism can startle us when we find ourselves in a different cultural setting. A particularly revealing episode occurred when a U.S. educator visited a Japanese classroom for the first time. On the wall of the classroom was a brightly colored map of the world. But something was wrong: Directly in the center of the map (where he had expected to see the United States) was Japan. To his surprise, the Japanese did not view the United States as the center of the world. Because this was a map produced by Japanese rather than U.S. cartographers, the Japanese placed Japan in the center of the map with North America in the outlying fringes.

It should be quite obvious why ethnocentrism is so pervasive throughout the world. Because most people are raised in a single culture and never learn about other cultures during their lifetime, it is only logical that their own way of life—their values, attitudes, ideas, and ways of behaving—seems to be the most natural. Our ethnocentrism should not be a source of embarrassment because it is a natural by-product of growing up in any society. In fact, from a functionalist perspective, ethnocentrism may serve the positive societal function of enhancing group solidarity. Even though ethnocentrism is present in all cultures, it nevertheless serves as a major obstacle to understanding other cultures, which is, after all, the major objective of cultural anthropology. Although we cannot eliminate ethnocentrism totally, we can reduce it. By becoming aware of our own ethnocentrism, we can temporarily set aside our own value judgments long enough to learn how other cultures operate.

Cultural Relativism

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the discipline of anthropology has led a vigorous campaign against the perils of ethnocentrism. As cultural anthropologists began to conduct empirical fieldwork among the different cultures of the world, they recognized a need for dispassionate and objective descriptions of the people they were studying. Following the lead of Franz Boas in the United States and Bronislaw Malinowski in Britain, twentieth-century anthropologists have participated in a tradition that calls on researchers to strive to prevent their own cultural values from coloring the descriptive accounts of the people under study.

According to Boas, the father of modern anthropology in the United States, anthropologists can achieve that level of detachment by practicing **cultural relativism**. This is the notion that any part of a culture (such as an idea, a thing, or a behavior pattern) must be viewed in its proper cultural context rather than from the viewpoint of the observer's culture. Rather than asking, "How does this fit into *my* culture?," cultural relativists ask, "How does a cultural item fit into the rest of the cultural system of which it is a part?" First formulated by Boas and later developed by one of his students, Melville Herskovits (1972), cultural relativism rejects the notion that any culture, including our own, possesses a set of absolute standards by which all other cultures can be judged. Cultural relativity is a cognitive tool that helps us understand why people think and act the way they do.

Perhaps a specific example of cultural relativity will help to clarify the concept. Anthropologists over the years have described a number of cultural practices from around the world that appear to be morally reprehensible to most Westerners. For example, the Dani of western New Guinea customarily cut off a finger from the hand of any close female relative of a man who dies; the Kikuyu of Kenya routinely remove part of the genitalia of teenage girls to suppress their maleness; and the Dodoth of Uganda extract the lower front teeth of young girls in an attempt to make them more attractive. If we view such a practice by the standards of our Western culture (that is, ethnocentrically), we would have to conclude that these practices are cruel and heartless, serving no point at all. But cultural relativists would look at these practices and seek cultural meaning in honoring the dead or body beautification.

There is a problem with taking the notion of cultural relativism too literally. If cultural relativism is taken to its logical extreme, we would have to conclude that absolutely no behavior found in the world would be immoral provided that the people who practice it

cultural relativism The idea that cultural traits are best understood when viewed within the cultural context of which they are a part.

concur that it is morally acceptable or that it performs a function for the well-being of the society. Practicing cultural relativism, however, does not require that we view all cultural practices as morally equivalent; that is, not all cultural practices are equally worthy of tolerance and respect. To be certain, some cultural practices (such as genocide) are morally indefensible within any cultural context. Also, keep in mind that to practice cultural relativism does not require that you give up your own culture and practice another. In fact, it does not even require that you like, or approve of, the other culture. Yet, if our goal is to *understand* human behavior in its myriad forms, then cultural relativism can help us identify the inherent logic behind certain ideas and customs.

Emic versus Etic Approaches

Another feature of cultural anthropology that distinguishes it from other social science disciplines is its emphasis on viewing another culture from the perspective of an insider. For decades anthropologists have made the distinction between the **emic approach** and the **etic approach**, which are terms borrowed from linguistics. The emic approach (derived from the word *phonemic)* refers to the insider view, which seeks to describe another culture in terms of the categories, concepts, and perceptions of the people being studied. By contrast, the etic approach (derived from the word *phonetic)* refers to the outsider view, in which anthropologists use their own categories and concepts to describe the culture under analysis. For the last half century, there has been an ongoing debate among anthropologists as to which approach is more valuable for the scientific study of comparative cultures.

A radically emic approach was taken by a group of U.S. anthropologists (known as ethnoscientists) during the 1950s and 1960s. In an attempt to obtain a more realistic understanding of another culture, the ethnoscientists insisted on the insider approach. More recently the interpretive school of cultural anthropology has strongly supported the emic approach to research. This school, represented by the late Clifford Geertz and others, holds that because human behavior stems from the way people perceive and classify the world around them, the only legitimate strategy is the emic, or insider, approach to cultural description. At the opposite end of the debate are the cultural materialists, best represented by the late Marvin Harris. Starting from the assumption that material conditions determine thoughts and behaviors (not the other way around), cultural materialists emphasize the viewpoint of ethnographers, not native informants. There is no consensus on this issue, and each cultural anthropologist must make a decision about which approach to take when doing research. (More in-depth discussions of these three schools of anthropology are found in Chapter 4.)

Contributions of Anthropology

One of the major contributions of anthropology to the understanding of the human condition stems from the broad task it has set for itself. Whereas disciplines such as economics, political science, and psychology are considerably narrower in scope, anthropology has carved out for itself the task of examining all aspects of humanity for all periods of time and for all parts of the globe. Because of the magnitude of this task, anthropologists must draw on theories and data from a number of other disciplines in the humanities, the social sciences, and the physical sciences. As a result, anthropology is in a good position to integrate the various disciplines dealing with human physiology and culture.

Enhancing Understanding

In comparison with people in other countries, people from the United States generally have less knowledge about other countries and other cultures. The level of knowledge about other parts of the world has been dismal for decades and is not improving to any significant degree. Knowledge about the rest of the world is particularly important today because the world has become increasingly interconnected. Forty years ago it made relatively little difference whether North Americans spoke a second language, knew the name of the British prime minister, or held a passport. But now, in the twenty-first century, we live in a world in which decisions made in Geneva or Tokyo send ripples throughout the rest of the world.

For the past several decades, the world has experienced globalization, which involves rapidly growing free-market economies, the lowering of tariff barriers, and the worldwide use of high-speed information technology. This recent intensification of the flow of money, goods, services, and information to all parts of the globe has greatly accelerated culture change and has made the study of different cultures more complex.

Increasing numbers of people today are moving, both geographically and through cyberspace, outside their own familiar cultural borders, causing dramatic increases in cross-cultural contact and the potential for culture change. Through its distinctive methodology of long-term, intensive, participant-observation research, cultural anthropology offers a more in-depth look at

emic approach A perspective in ethnography that uses the concepts and categories that are relevant and meaningful to the culture under analysis.

etic approach A perspective in ethnography that uses the concepts and categories of the anthropologist's culture to describe another culture.

APPLIED PERSPECTIVE

Applying Anthropology to the Field of Economic Development

Ann Dunham Soetoro, a cultural anthropologist who spent many years studying local craftsmen and economically depressed peoples in rural Indonesia, provides a shining example of the type of understanding derived from anthropological fieldwork and how that understanding can be applied to the solution of societal problems. After fourteen years of living with and studying the inhabitants of an isolated rural village, she wrote a doctoral dissertation of more than a thousand pages in 1992 titled "Peasant Blacksmithing in Indonesia: Surviving Against All Odds."

Owing to her long-term, in-depth, participant-observation research, Soetoro was able to challenge many popular misperceptions about politically and economically marginalized people. For example, she demonstrated that the people she studied were not substantially different from more affluent Western capitalists in their economic needs, beliefs, and aspirations. Village craftsmen, she argued, were highly entrepreneurial and interested in profits and, in fact, had been this way for generations. Based on these findings, she concluded that the poverty of people in Central Java was not the result of a "culture of impoverishment" (passed on from generation to generation) but rather stemmed from a lack of capital to invest in their business enterprises. In other words, she did not blame the poor for their economic marginalization.

With such understandings, Soetoro's work had important implications for economic development programs in Indonesia and elsewhere throughout the world. The best approach for ameliorating poverty, according to Soetoro, was through micro-credit programs, whereby artisans and other small-scale entrepreneurs were given small loans to finance their business operations. In fact, before her death in 1995, Soetoro was one of the pioneers of micro-financing programs for the poor, which have become widespread and successful in many parts of the developing world.

Soetoro's work illustrates an important lesson from cultural anthropology. According to anthropologist Michael Dove (2009), a long-time friend and colleague of Soetoro:

> No nation—even if it is our bitterest enemy—is incomprehensible. Anthropology shows that people who seem very different from us behave according to systems of logic, and that these systems can be grasped if we approach them with the sort of patience and respect that Dr. Soetoro practiced in her work.

National Anthropological Archives

Oh, incidentally, did we mention that Soetoro was the mother of President Barack Obama? Do you think her anthropological perspective and cross-cultural sensitivities have had an influence on the thinking of her son?

how local cultural groups are reacting to the process of globalization. Although many pundits discuss the consequences of globalization by talking to only government and business leaders, cultural anthropologists are more likely to see what is actually occurring on the ground and how the local people themselves talk about their life experiences in a time of rapid globalization.

Still another contribution of anthropology is that it helps us better understand ourselves. The early Greeks claimed that an educated person was a person with self-knowledge ("know thyself"). One of the best ways to gain self-knowledge is to know as much as possible about one's own culture—that is, to understand the forces that shape our thinking, values, and behaviors. And the best way of learning about our culture is to examine the similarities and differences between ourselves and others. The anthropological perspective, with its emphasis on the comparative study of cultures, should lead us to the conclusion that our culture is just one way of life among many found in the world and that it represents one way (among many possible ways) to adapt to a particular set of environmental conditions. Through the process of contrasting and comparing, we gain a fuller understanding of other cultures as well as our own, which then allows us to operate more effectively (both personally and professionally) in our increasingly interconnected world.

Applying Anthropological Concepts to Social Problems

As we stated at the start of this chapter, cultural anthropology has relevance for all of us, in both our personal and professional lives. Cultural anthropology, like other social science disciplines, engages in both basic and applied research. Basic research is dedicated to gaining scientific knowledge for its own sake. Applied research, on the other hand, seeks to gain scientifically obtained knowledge for the sake of informing public policy and solving particular societal problems. In other words, the fields of applied (or practicing) anthropology are

aimed at putting to use the knowledge anthropology has produced over the years. Interest in applying anthropology has increased over the past several decades. The number of graduate and undergraduate courses in applied anthropology has increased, as has the number of people with masters and doctorate degrees finding employment outside of academic settings. Applied and practicing anthropologists usually work in nonacademic settings such as hospitals, government agencies, international development agencies, public health organizations, law firms specializing in immigration law, and for-profit businesses. For a list of the types of nonacademic careers anthropology students qualify for, see Table 1.3.

Among the many practical (nonacademic) careers opening up to cultural anthropologists today is *new product developer* hired by design firms. Research and design firms, which develop new products, are actively recruiting anthropologists to help them gain deeper insights into their customers through ethnographic research.

TABLE 1.3

Nonacademic Career Opportunities in Anthropology

Subfield	Examples
Biological anthropology	Forensic specialist with law enforcement
	Epidemiologist
	Genetic counselor
	Human rights investigator
	Zoologist or primatologist
	Public health official
Archaeology	Cultural resource manager
	Museum curator
	Environmental impact specialist
	Historical archaeologist
	Contract (salvage) archaeologist
Anthropological linguistics	English as a second language teacher
	International business trainer
	Foreign language teacher
	Cross-cultural advertising or marketing specialist
	Translator or interpreter
Cultural anthropology	International business consultant
	Cross-cultural consultant in hospitals
	Museum curator
	International economic development worker
	Cross-cultural trainer
	International human resources manager
	School educator
	Immigration or refugee counselor

One such cultural anthropologist, Susan Squires, who has worked in product development for more than a decade, conducted participant-observation research on U.S. families during breakfast time (National Association for the Practice of Anthropology [NAPA] 2010, practicinganthropology.org). Her research not only has shed light on new ways of thinking about food consumption in the mornings, but it has also led to the development of a successful new breakfast food product. By actually sitting at the breakfast table with parents and their children, Squires learned a number of interesting features about the morning meal for the modern U.S. family in the twenty-first century:

- With both parents working, children have to be dropped off at school or day care relatively early, and consequently breakfast time is hectic. Children often eat "on the run" rather than sitting down to a large traditional breakfast.
- Because children are not hungry when they wake up at 6:30 in the morning, they often leave the house at 7:00 without eating much of anything.
- Both children and adults eat bananas because they are nutritious, portable, disposable, and fun to eat.
- Parents, children, and even grandparents, although agreeing that breakfast is an important meal, have different ideas about what constitutes a good breakfast. Mothers believe that breakfast food should be nutritious and free of preservatives; fathers prefer less nutritional "comfort food"; grandparents think that the best breakfast is warm and high in cholesterol (bacon, eggs, and buttered toast); and children prefer sweet foods such as cereals, doughnuts, or pancakes with plenty of maple syrup.

If a new breakfast food product were developed, it would have to meet the needs of a number of family members. For example, it would need to be nutritious, portable, disposable, versatile, and fun to eat—like a banana. Based on her ethnographic research—which determined *actual* eating patterns rather than asking people what they had for breakfast—Squires developed a new breakfast food product designed for the two-parent, working family on the go called "Go-Gurt." The first yogurt served in a tube, Go-Gurt is a healthy, high-protein food; it is smooth and creamy and comes in a number of fun and tasty flavors such as Strawberry Splash and Cool Cotton Candy (see Figure 1.7). This alternative breakfast supplement, developed by an anthropologist and based on ethnographic research, had sales of more than $37 million during its first year on the market.

Is cultural anthropology practical for our everyday lives? Stay tuned for many other examples of how anthropological data, insights, research, methods, and theories inform a wide range of professions, some of which *you* might be practicing in the not-too-distant future.

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FIGURE 1.7 By conducting participant-observation research on eating patterns of U.S. families at breakfast time, applied anthropologist Susan Squires contributed to the development of a new breakfast food product called "Go-Gurt."

Building Skills for the Twenty-First Century

As discussed in the preceding section, the study of cultural anthropology has relevance to our everyday lives. The data, concepts, and insights derived from the study of other cultures can help us better meet our professional goals and lead more satisfying lives in a multicultural society. But the process of studying cultural anthropology is also valuable because of the skills and competencies that it helps develop. Activities such as taking courses about different cultures, participating in local internships with international organizations, living in the university's international dormitory, and participating in study-abroad programs all combine to provide students with valuable carryover skills that go beyond the mere mastery of subject content.

Educators have written volumes concerning the behavioral traits, skills, and competencies needed for success in the twenty-first century. Although many of these writers have put a unique spin on their own list of competencies, there remains a basic core on which most can agree. These skills involve developing a broad perspective, appreciating other points of view, operating comfortably in ambiguous situations, working effectively as part of cross-cultural teams, and becoming emotionally resilient, open-minded, and perceptually aware. These traits have been identified as essential for coping with a world that has become increasingly interdependent. And because the study of cultural anthropology involves immersing oneself in other cultures, it is perhaps the best training ground for developing those competencies. How does the study of cultural anthropology help us develop the skills and competencies needed for the twenty-first century?

Develop a Broad Perspective

This skill involves seeing the big picture and the interrelatedness of the parts. A basic anthropological strategy for understanding other cultures is to look at a cultural feature from within its original cultural context rather than looking at it from the perspective of one's own culture. In other words, students of anthropology are continually being asked to analyze a part of a culture in relationship to the whole. What better way to develop this type of systems thinking?

Appreciate Other Perspectives

Being inquisitive, nonjudgmental, and open to new ways of thinking is vital if we are to adapt to ever-changing environments. This involves, essentially, a willingness to learn and postpone making evaluations until more facts are known. Such a capacity also requires suppressing one's ego and letting go of old paradigms. It does not mean giving up one's cultural values in favor of others. But it does entail (at least temporarily) letting go of cultural certainty, learning how other cultures view us, and being willing to see the internal logic of another culture. This is exactly what students of cultural anthropology are encouraged to do in order to learn about other cultures.

Balance Contradictions

A major requirement for working and living effectively in a global society is to be able to balance contradictory needs and demands rather than trying to eliminate them. Contradictions and conflicts should be seen as opportunities, not as liabilities. Conflicting values, behaviors, and ideas are a fact of life in today's world. The study of cultural anthropology provides insights into the nature of the world's diversity and how each culture is a logical and coherent entity. When anthropology students are exposed to logical alternatives to their own ways of thinking and behaving, they learn to cope with differences and contradictions and actually use these differences for the sake of achieving synergy.

Emphasize Global Teamwork

Success in the twenty-first century requires an emphasis on cultural awareness and cross-cultural teamwork, not just personal awareness and individual mastery (see Figure 1.8). Both private and public institutions are becoming increasingly more global in focus. For example, foreign subsidiaries, joint ventures with foreign firms, and overseas facilities are commonplace in the world of business. If young adults are to be successful at working within and leading these culturally complex organizations, they will need to know the underlying cultural assumptions of the diverse people on those multicultural teams. There is no academic discipline in higher education today that addresses this competency better than cultural anthropology.

Belinda Images/Superstock

FIGURE 1.8 The study of cultural anthropology prepares people for working in the global economy of the twenty-first century.

Develop Cognitive Complexity

Citizens of the new millennium need what is referred to as *cognitive complexity*, which is made up of the twin abilities of differentiating and integrating. Differentiation involves being able to see how a single entity is composed of a number of different parts; integration, on the other hand, involves the capacity to identify how the various parts are interconnected. Cognitively complex people are able to engage in both types of thinking and can move comfortably between the two. One must be able to focus on the unique needs of the local situation while at the same time understanding how it fits into the operations of the total organization. The study of cultural anthropology encourages one to examine another culture as well as one's own, compare the two, and understand the relationship of both cultures to the generalized concept of culture. Thus, students of anthropology get practice at becoming cognitively complex by moving from the specific parts to the whole and back again.

Develop Perceptual Acuity

Living and working in the twenty-first century require people to be perceptually acute. We need to accurately derive meaning from interactions with others from a wide variety of cultures and subcultures. This involves being attentive to both verbal and nonverbal communication by being an active listener, deriving meaning from social context, and being sensitive to the feelings of others and to one's effect on others. Studying other cultures—and particularly living in other cultures—forces anthropology students to derive meaning not only from the words exchanged in cross-cultural encounters but also from the nonverbal cues, the social context, and the assumptions embedded in the other culture.

Thus, a number of skills and capacities that are considered essential for effective living and working in the twenty-first century can be mastered while studying cultural anthropology. Although a mere exposure to cultural anthropology does not guarantee that these skills will be developed, the comparative study of the world's cultural diversity and shared heritage is the single best classroom for acquiring these competencies. Even if you do not major in anthropology, however, you can develop skills for the twenty-first century by doing what anthropologists do—that is, throwing yourselves into other cultures by traveling and living abroad, either before, during, or after college. For example, an increasing number of recent high school graduates are opting to take a "gap year," a time to travel and intern with organizations abroad before attending college. According to the Higher Education Research Institute, 1.2 percent of all students accepted to colleges and universities deferred admission to take a gap year (Strauss 2012). In addition, it has become increasingly important for university students to have some type of experiential international learning opportunity during their undergraduate careers. Over the past decade, the number of students in U.S. colleges and universities who study abroad has doubled, with approximately 6,000 programs sending students to more than a hundred countries. Moreover an appreciable number of college graduates (both anthropology and non-anthropology majors) are beginning to figure out the value of immersing oneself in a different culture. A recent study has estimated approximately 304,500 students enrolled at institutions of higher education have studied abroad for credit as part of their academic careers (NAFSA [Association of International Educators] 2015). In most cases this is not frivolous "bumming around" but rather a way of developing vital global skills for the twenty-first century. For many it has been a way to leverage their position in the job market when they return home.

The Bottom Line: Understanding Other Cultures

This book, and indeed cultural anthropology as a discipline, focuses on understanding other cultures, wherever they may be found. Although a large part of gaining this understanding involves acquiring accurate information on the world's cultures, it also involves learning about one's own culture. However, what we

know, or think we know, about our own culture is not necessarily perceived in the same way by culturally different people. In other words, we may see ourselves as holding a particular value or cultural trait, but then we describe that trait in only the most positive ways. Those looking at us from the outside, however, are more likely to see some of the negative implications as well.

These different interpretations of our values by people from other cultures can be illustrated in a number of ways. For example, whereas people in North America place a high value on individualism and independence, people from other cultures often place a higher value on collectivism, cooperation, and interdependence, and therefore, tend to see us as selfish, unloyal, superficial in our relations, and unwilling to meet our social obligations to others and to our society in general. North Americans also tend to be youth-oriented to the extent that young people are held in higher esteem than old people. It is believed that the young are energetic, resourceful, enthusiastic, resilient, forward-thinking, and more tech-savvy than their elders—all traits that are associated with high levels of productivity. This high value on youth, however, is not universally held by many cultures in Asia, Africa, or South America, where older people are afforded the highest status because they are thought to be the wisest, most thoughtful, and most trustworthy segment of society. People from societies that hold elders in the highest esteem cannot understand why we North Americans have younger people supervising older people in the workplace, make jokes about older people and the aging process, and generally treat our elders with such disrespect, or perhaps even worse, neglect. In short, they view our emphasis on youth as both immoral and counterproductive because we are not using the wisdom, experience, and competencies of older citizens for the betterment of society.

Thus, if cultural anthropology is to help us function more effectively in an increasingly interconnected world, we will have to focus on accomplishing three tasks: understanding culture-specific information about other cultures, understanding our own culture, and understanding how culturally different people view us and our cultural patterns.

Summary

1. The academic discipline of anthropology involves the study of the biological and cultural origins of humans. The subject matter of anthropology is wide-ranging, including fossil remains, nonhuman primate anatomy and behavior, artifacts from past cultures, past and present languages, and all of the prehistoric, historic, and contemporary cultures of the world.
2. As practiced in the United States, the discipline of anthropology follows an integrated four-field approach comprising biological anthropology, archaeology, anthropological linguistics, and cultural anthropology. All four subdisciplines have both theoretical and applied components.
3. The subdiscipline of biological anthropology focuses on three primary concerns: paleoanthropology (deciphering the biological record of human evolution through the study of fossil remains), primatology (the study of nonhuman primate anatomy and behavior for the purpose of gaining insights into human adaptation to the environment), and studies in human physical variations (race) and how biological variations contribute to adaptation to one's environment.
4. The subfield of archaeology has as its primary objective the reconstruction of past cultures, both historic and prehistoric, from the material objects the cultures leave behind.
5. Anthropological linguistics, which studies both present and past languages, is divided into four major subdivisions: historical linguistics (studying the emergence and divergence of languages over time), descriptive linguistics (analyzing the structure of phonetic and grammar systems in contemporary languages), ethnolinguistics (exploring the relationship between language and culture), and sociolinguistics (understanding how social relations affect language).
6. Cultural anthropology focuses on the study of contemporary cultures, wherever they are found in the world. One part of the task of cultural anthropology involves describing particular cultures (ethnography), and the other part involves comparing two or more cultures (ethnology). Cultural anthropologists tend to specialize in areas such as urban anthropology, medical anthropology, development anthropology, ecological anthropology, and psychological anthropology, among others.
7. A long-standing tradition in anthropology is the holistic approach. The discipline is holistic (or comprehensive) in four important respects: It looks at both the biological and the cultural aspects of human behavior; it encompasses the longest possible time frame by looking at contemporary, historic, and prehistoric societies; it examines human cultures in every part of the

world; and it studies many different aspects of human cultures.

8. There are essentially two ways to respond to unfamiliar cultures. One way is ethnocentrically—that is, through the lens of one's own cultural perspective. The other way is from the perspective of a cultural relativist—that is, within the context of the other culture. Cultural anthropologists strongly recommend the second mode, although they are aware of certain limitations.
9. Cultural anthropologists distinguish between the emic (insider) approach, which uses native categories, and the etic (outsider) approach, which describes a culture in terms of the categories, concepts, and perceptions of the anthropologist.
10. The study of anthropology is valuable for a number of different viewpoints. From the perspective of the social and behavioral sciences, cultural anthropology is particularly valuable for testing theories about human behavior within the widest possible cross-cultural context. For individuals, the study of different cultures provides a much better understanding of one's own culture and develops valuable leadership skills. From a societal point of view, the understanding of different cultures can contribute to the solution of pressing societal problems.
11. This textbook takes an *applied* perspective. This means that, in addition to surveying the content material of cultural anthropology, this book takes a number of opportunities to emphasize how the theories, methods, and insights of cultural anthropology can be used to help solve societal problems, both at home and abroad.
12. The discipline of cultural anthropology helps students develop the skills and competencies needed to live in the twenty-first century, including developing a broad perspective, appreciating other perspectives, balancing contradictions, emphasizing global teamwork, developing cognitive complexity, and developing perceptual acuity.

Key Terms

anthropological linguistics
archaeology
artifact
biological anthropology
cultural anthropology
cultural relativism
cultural resource management
descriptive linguistics
ecofacts
emic approach
epidemiology
ethnolinguistics
ethnocentrism
ethnography
ethnology
etic approach
features
genetics
historical linguistics
holism
paleoanthropology
paleopathology
population biology
primatology
race
sociolinguistics

Critical Thinking Questions

1. In a single unambiguous sentence, how are the concepts of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism polar opposites of one another?
2. One of the new topical areas of cultural anthropology is the anthropology of food. What type of research do you think this new type of anthropologist typically conducts, and how can the findings from this research be applied to contribute to the solution of societal problems?
3. The discipline of anthropology studies the human condition from a cultural *and* a biological perspective. Can you think of some examples of the interrelatedness of culture and biology from your own life?

A Maasai man from East Africa holds a phone with his photograph. Although most Maasai still engage in cattle herding as their primary means of livelihood, they also frequently use twenty-first-century information technology.

CHAPTER

2 The Concept of Culture

Jason, an associate in an internationally known architectural firm in Philadelphia, was assigned to head up a project designing public housing units in Nairobi, Kenya. Working with a small team of colleagues, Jason spent about three months preparing the schematics for a large, nine-building project consisting of more than 200 separate units. The units were laid out in much the same way that public housing units are designed in Philadelphia, Atlanta, or Chicago—that is, with two bedrooms, a large bathroom, a living room, and a dining area with an adjoining open kitchen. The plans were accepted by the Nairobi City Council, and the buildings were constructed over a period of several years.

Once completed, the units were rented (with substantial government subsidies) to needy families. Unfortunately, many of the new residents, although grateful to live in new housing with modern conveniences, were not at all satisfied with one particular design feature. Jason and his team of Western architects had designed every unit with a dining room that opened up into the kitchen. Such a design reflects the typical U.S. lifestyle of using the kitchen for both preparing food and socializing. It is, in other words, not at all unusual for dinner guests in the United States to socialize in the kitchen (with or without drinks) while the host puts the final touches on the dinner. For Kenyans (most of whom retain strong ties to their traditional rural cultures), however, the place where food is cleaned, prepared, and cooked is considered unclean and is totally unsuitable for entertaining one's guests or, for that matter, even letting them see. To serve dinner to guests in the dining room while they can look into the "unclean" place where food is prepared is as unthinkable as having a bathroom without a door next to the dining room. After residents complained to the public housing officials, the units were modified by the addition of a door between the dining room and kitchen.

Jason and his design team were guilty of failing to remove their cultural blinders. They assumed that people the world over deal with their personal domestic space in similar ways. Perhaps the municipal government of Nairobi could have been spared the needless expense of altering the kitchens if Jason had enrolled in a cultural anthropology course while he was studying architecture. ■

WHAT WE WILL LEARN

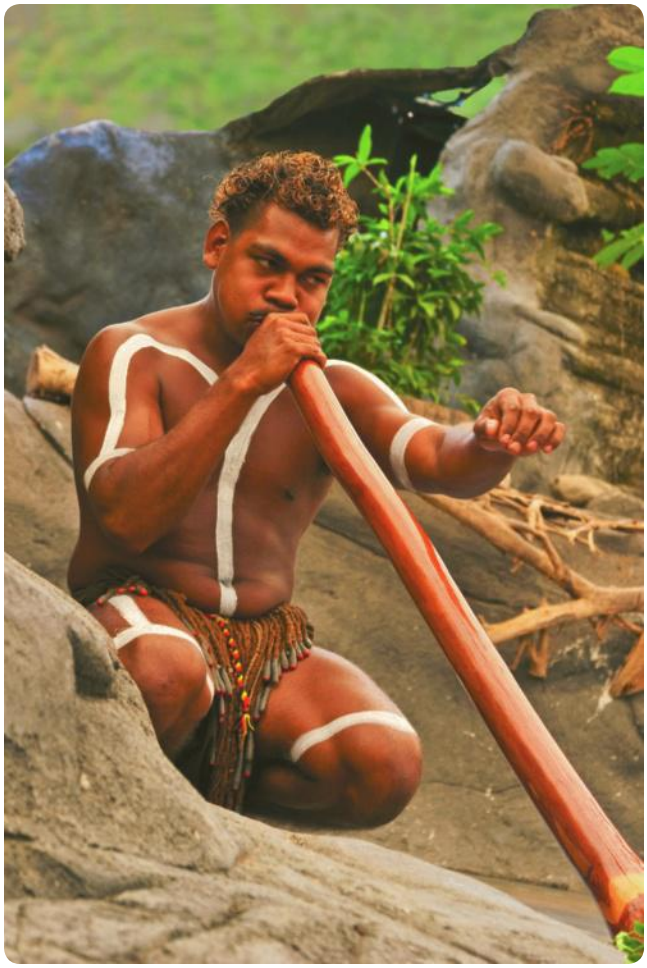
- What do anthropologists mean by the term *culture*?
- How do we acquire our cultures?
- Despite the enormous variation in different cultures, are some features common to all cultures of the world?
- Do cultures change over time, and if so, how do they change?
- How does culture inform one's thoughts and behaviors?
- How can the understanding of the concept of cultures help us more effectively address societal challenges?

Strauss/Curtis/Getty Images

Although the term *culture* is used by most of the social sciences today, over the years it has received its most precise and comprehensive definition from the discipline of anthropology. Whereas sociology has concentrated on the notion of society; economics on the production, distribution, and consumption of goods

and services; and political science on the concept of power, anthropology for the most part has focused on the culture concept. From anthropology's nineteenth-century beginnings, culture has been central to both ethnology and archaeology and has been an important, if not major, concern of biological anthropology. Anthropology, through its constant examining of different lifeways throughout space and time, has done more than any other scientific discipline to refine our understanding of the concept of culture.

Our discussion of the concept of culture in this chapter will examine such topics as how anthropologists define culture, how culture is acquired, the relationship between culture and biology, cultural universals, and how culture changes over time.



Miva Stock/DanitaDelimont /Alamy

FIGURE 2.1 According to anthropologists, this Australian Aborigine playing the didgeridoo has as much culture as the conductor of this symphony orchestra.

Culture Defined

In nonscientific usage, the term *culture* refers to personal refinements such as classical music, the fine arts, world philosophy, and gourmet cuisine. For example, according to this popular use of the term, cultured people listen to Bach rather than Miley Cyrus, order escargot rather than a burger and fries when dining out, can distinguish between the artistic styles of Monet and Toulouse-Lautrec, prefer Champagne to Red Bull, and attend the ballet instead of professional wrestling. Anthropologists, however, use the term in a broader sense to include far more than just "the finer things in life" or what is growing in a petri dish. Anthropologists do not distinguish between cultured people and uncultured people. All people have culture, according to the anthropological definition. An Australian aboriginal, living with a bare minimum of technology, has as much culture as Yo-Yo Ma or Placido Domingo (see Figures 2.1 and 2.2). Thus, for anthropologists, projectile points, creation myths, and mud huts are items of culture as legitimate as a Beethoven symphony, a Kandinsky painting, or a Sondheim musical.

Over the past century, anthropologists have formulated a number of definitions of the concept of culture. In fact, in the often-cited work by Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn (1952), more than 160 different definitions of culture were identified. This proliferation of definitions should not lead to the conclusion that anthropology is a chaotic battleground where no consensus exists among practicing anthropologists. In actuality, many of these definitions say essentially the same thing. One early definition was suggested by nineteenth-century British anthropologist Edward Tylor. According to Tylor, culture is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom,

Ferenc Szelepcsenyi/Shutterstock.com

FIGURE 2.2

and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" ([1871] 1958: 1). In the early twentieth century, the soldier and independent scholar FitzRoy Richard Somerset (1885–1964), the 4th Baron Raglan, is reputed to have defined culture as "roughly everything we do and monkeys don't." Although this was a clever and catchy definition for its time, it has become much less relevant today because we now know that monkeys and other nonhuman primates engage in some cultural or quasi-cultural behavior unknown to Somerset and his contemporaries. Since then, culture has been defined as "a mental map which guides us in our relations to our surroundings and to other people" (Downs 1971: 35) and perhaps most succinctly as "the way of life of a people" (Hatch 1985: 178).

Adding to the already sizable number of definitions, we will define the concept of culture as "everything that people have, think, and do as members of a society." This definition can be instructive because the three verbs *(have, think,* and *do)* correspond to the three major components of culture. That is, everything that people *have* refers to material possessions; everything that people *think* refers to the things they carry around in their heads, such as ideas, values, and attitudes; and everything that people *do* refers to behavior patterns. Thus, all cultures are composed of material objects; ideas, values, and attitudes; and patterned ways of behaving (see Figure 2.3).

Although we compartmentalize these components of culture, we should not conclude that they are unrelated. In fact, the components are so intimately connected that it is frequently hard to separate them in real life. To illustrate, a non-American anthropologist studying the mainstream culture of the United States would observe people engaged in writing in a wide variety of contexts. Middle-class North Americans fill out job applications, pen letters to loved ones, scribble messages on sticky notes, write books, and compose e-mail and text messages, to mention only a few examples. When we write, we are using tangible *things* (or artifacts), such as pens, pencils, computers, word-processing software, hard drives, and paper. Although these artifacts are both obvious and visible, they represent only one part of writing. If we are to understand the full significance of writing in U.S. culture, it is imperative that we look below the surface to those other components of culture, such as ideas, knowledge, attitudes, and behavior patterns. For example, for New Yorkers to use English in its written form, they must know the alphabet, correct spelling, basic English grammar and syntax, and the rule that words are written from left to right and from top to bottom. They must know how to manipulate a writing implement (pen or pencil) or have basic computer skills. They need to know a wealth of cultural information to communicate written messages coherently. In addition, they must follow certain behavioral conventions, like not writing while sitting nude in a public library. Thus, the cultural process of writing involves an intimate knowledge of the fundamental aspect of culture, things or artifacts, ideas and knowledge, and patterns of behavior.

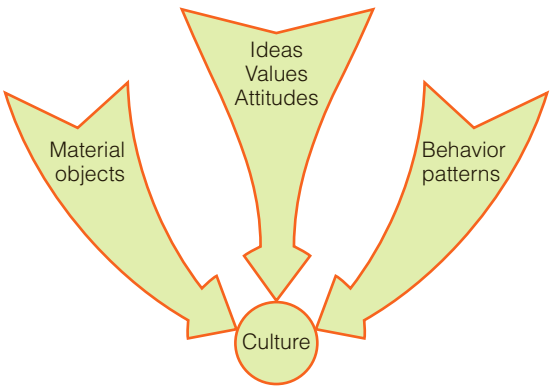


FIGURE 2.3 The three components of culture.

Perhaps the most fundamental aspect of culture, and what makes humans unique in the animal world, is the capacity to symbolize. A **symbol** is something that stands for (represents) something else. When North Americans see a Nazi swastika, a multitude of images come to mind, including the Holocaust, Adolf Hitler, concentration camps, and goose-stepping storm troopers. Most citizens of the United States have a generally positive feeling when they see the red, white, and blue stars and stripes of the U.S. flag. That particular arrangement of colors and shapes symbolizes, among other things, democracy, the Bill of Rights, due process, and the war on terrorism. Yet, as we have seen in recent years, the American flag represents a host of different meanings for angry young men who delight in burning it in the streets of Tehran, Aleppo, Djakarta, and Karachi. Whether the U.S. flag symbolizes positive or negative images, it is true that all human behavior begins with the use of symbols.

As Leslie White (1959) stated so eloquently more than half a century ago, the ability to symbolize is the single most important hallmark of humanity. This capacity to create and give meaning to symbols helps people identify, sort, and classify things, ideas, and behaviors. When people symbolize by using language, they are able to express experiences that took place at a previous time or suggest events that may happen in the future. Without symbols we would not be able to store the collective wisdom of past generations, and consequently we would be prone to repeating the mistakes of the past. Symbols tie together people who otherwise

symbol Something, either verbal or nonverbal, that stands for something else.

might not be part of a unified group. The power of our shared symbols becomes clear when we meet others from our own culture in a far-off country. We generally are drawn to them because we share a common set of symbols—for example, language, nonverbal forms of communication, and material culture such as clothing. The shared meaning of our symbols enables us to interact with one another with the least amount of ambiguity and misunderstanding.

In everyday usage the term *race* often is used as a synonym for *culture*. But anthropologists consider these to be two *different* concepts. A *race* is an interbreeding population whose members share a number of important physical traits with one another, such as blood types, eye color and shape, skin color, and hair texture, to mention just a few (for a fuller discussion of race, see Chapter 12). By way of contrast, *culture* refers to our *nonbiological* and *nongenetic* characteristics. All people can be classified according to their physical traits and according to their acquired or cultural characteristics. And even though many groups share both a common culture and a similar set of physical traits, these two concepts vary quite independently of each other.

Another popular misunderstanding involves the confusion between culture and civilization. Again, the concepts of civilization and culture are not interchangeable. Although all civilizations are cultures, not all cultures are civilizations. The concept of **civilization**, as used by anthropologists, refers to a specific type of culture that first appeared around 5,500 years ago in the Fertile Crescent (present-day Iraq). Civilizations are essentially cultures that have developed cities. Based largely on the definition of archaeologist V. Gordon Childe (1936), civilizations (or urban societies) are characterized by traits such as monumental architecture, centralized (hierarchical) governments, fully efficient food production systems, and writing. Although we sometimes hear such statements as "Oh, how uncivilized!" modern anthropologists do not use the term *civilization* to designate a superior type of cultures.

An inescapable conclusion from studying cultural anthropology is that there are an enormous number of discrete societies with their own unique cultures. Just how many distinct cultures there are depends largely on how one defines the term *culture,* an issue on which there is no absolute consensus among anthropologists. Many scholars equate the number of discrete cultures with the number of mutually unintelligible languages; that is, they assume that if two groups speak mutually unintelligible languages, then other parts of their cultures are sufficiently different to consider them distinct (unique) cultures. Using this equation, we can get a rough estimate of world cultural variation by realizing that approximately 850 separate cultures (speaking mutually unintelligible languages) are on the continent of Africa alone and more than 5,000 throughout the world.

But in addition to linguistic differences, there are literally hundreds of cultural features that vary from one society to another, including ideas, values, ideologies, religions, material objects, and behavior patterns. To illustrate the magnitude of cultural diversity in today's world, we can look at how the beginning of a new year is celebrated in different cultures. In most cases, the rituals symbolize doing away with the old year and welcoming in the good fortune of a new year. Here are some examples from around the world:

- As a harbinger of good fortune, people in Venezuela carry a suitcase around the house on New Year's Day if they want to travel during the new year.
- New Year's Day in Italy, called *Capodanno*, is a time of feast and festival for family and friends, including such symbolic foods as lentils and pork (considered to bring prosperity and good luck in the new year). Dancing, fireworks, and white sparkling Italian wine (Prosecco and Spumante) add to the festivities.
- In Denmark people save old dishes year round and throw them at the homes of their friends on New Year's Eve. Having a pile of broken dishes outside one's front door on New Year's Day symbolizes that the homeowner has many friends and will have good fortune in the new year.
- In the Philippines people in rural villages beat pots and pans to drive away evil forces and ensure good fortune in the new year.
- As a way of securing twelve happy months in the coming year, people in Spain follow the custom of eating twelve grapes at midnight, one grape for each chime of the clock.
- People celebrate New Year's Day in China by placing paper cuttings (a popular folk art) on all the windows of the house because they are thought to scare away the evil spirits and bring good fortune for the new year.
- In Thailand the New Year's Day celebration is also known as the "water festival" because it is thought that water cleanses and washes away bad luck (see Figure 2.4). Traditionally, people sprinkled several drops of water on monks and respected elders, but today people wet down any passersby with cups or buckets of water, hoses, and even squirt guns. Although many people get drenched, it is done in a spirit of friendliness, blessing, and good cheer. (Peterson 2008)

civilization A term used by anthropologists to describe any society that has cities.