

Tutorial Letter 201/1/2016

The Anthropological Study of Culture in a Multicultural Context

APY1501

Semester 1

Department of Anthropology and Archaeology

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

This tutorial letter contains the comments on Assignment 01.

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1 COMMENTS ON ASSIGNMENT 01

Dear Student

From your feedback it appears that you find the tutorial matter interesting, informative and stimulating, particularly with regard to the insight it provides on the multicultural world in which we live. Information provided in this module is essential to understand people with different cultural values and norms and to prevent and avoid friction and conflict among people in daily contact with one another.

Before answering the assignment, you first had carefully study the information in the Only Study Guide for APY1501. Without a thorough knowledge of this tutorial matter, your answers to the assignment questions would have been based on mere guesswork. The answers to the assignment were a clear reflection of how well students knew the relevant tutorial matter.

The following comments contain the correct answers as well as explanations as to why a particular option of a question is correct and the others incorrect.

Note that **SG-references** in this tutorial letter refer to the Only Study Guide for APY1501.

QUESTION 1

Option 4 is correct. The most important difference between anthropology and the other human sciences such as theology, sociology and economics is that they limit their field of study to particular aspects or systems of human living, e.g. the religious system (theology), the social system (sociology) or the economic system (economy). In contrast, anthropology is concerned with the **totality of the human condition**. This implies that anthropology has a holistic approach to the study of human life. Option 2, which states that anthropology studies particular aspects of human existence, is therefore also incorrect.

Option 1 is incorrect because the study of human communities of prehistoric and historic times is the field of study of archaeology. Option 3 is incorrect. Although a few of the earliest 19th century anthropologists classified people in terms of their inferiority and superiority, the vast majority of anthropologists reject such simplistic notions of cultural development.

QUESTION 2

Option 1 is correct. See SG:12 in this regard. Option 2 is incorrect. The influence of biological and demographical factors on the behaviour in a human population is a focus area of biological or physical anthropology (see SG:7). Option 3 is incorrect because anthropologists generally do not attempt to determine which groups, communities or societies are better, superior or at a higher level of development, but study the culture of such groups on their own terms (see SG:5 and 26). Option 4 is incorrect because it relates to the field of study of archaeology.

QUESTION 3

Option 4 is correct because a holistic approach is concerned with how all facets of human life fit together to explain why a given human situation is the way it is (see SG:4-5). Option 1 is incorrect because it is not a characteristic of a *holistic approach* as such to obtain an impression of the development of culture, and it is rather one among many things anthropology as a general field is interested in. Option 2 is incorrect because a *holistic approach* does not seek to generalise, it seeks to understand all the facets in a specific situation. Option 3 is incorrect because the study of the cultural systems of societies within a global cultural pattern constitutes

a comparative study and not a holistic study where all cultural facets and factors are taken into account in the explanation of a given situation.

QUESTION 4

Option 3 is correct. See SG:15 in this regard. Option 1 is incorrect. In the case of an etic approach, an anthropologist works from the assumption that people are so subjectively involved in their own lifestyle that they find it difficult to have an impartial view of it and therefore studies the culture of a society from the outside as a scientist.

Option 2 is incorrect. Enculturation, sometimes also called socialisation, refers to the life-long learning of the culture of a society (see SG:67). Option 4 is incorrect. Ethnocentrism is the inclination of many people to regard their own culture or way of life as superior, and they use the values and practices of their own culture to judge the behaviour and beliefs of others (see SG:26)

QUESTION 5

To answer this question, you needed to be familiar with the study material dealing with the ethnographic research methodology of anthropology (see SG:19-23). **Option 1 is correct.** See SG:21 in this regard. Option 2 is incorrect. Although anthropologists use statistical surveys and questionnaires to study, for example, large concentrations of people in cities, they do not, as a rule regard such **quantitative** data collection methods as the most important sources of information on sociocultural systems. In fact, ethnographic fieldwork (a **qualitative** data collection method) can be regarded as the 'trademark' of anthropologists. Because anthropology developed as a discipline as a result of an interest in non-western or small-scale societies that generally did not have a written language, most information on such societies had to be collected by means of ethnographic fieldwork. Options 3 and 4 are incorrect. Although anthropologists often use key informants, organisations and associations as important sources on a particular sociocultural system, nobody can provide more useful information than the people at grassroots level of the society being studied.

QUESTION 6

To answer this question, you had to select the option in which the description corresponds to the anthropological method listed. **Option 1 is correct** because participant observation involves anthropologists sharing in the intimacy of daily life with the people they study (SG:19). Option 2 is incorrect because the genealogical method focuses on the principles of kinship (SG:22) and not social and friendship relationships. Option 3 is incorrect because in-depth interviewing does not involve quantitative strategies but rather qualitative ones. **Option 4** is incorrect because social network analysis is not limited to kinship relations.

QUESTION 7

In this question you were required to identify the option that is **NOT** characteristic of anthropology. **Option 4 is correct** because anthropologists, as a rule, do not collect **quantitative** data by means of surveys and questionnaires. In fact, anthropologists collect **qualitative** data. See also the comment on Option 2 of Question 5 above. An emic approach (Option 1), a comparative approach (Option 2) and the concept of sociocultural systems (Option 3) are characteristic of anthropology, and consequently these options are incorrect. Consult SG: 3-5, 25 and 34 in this regard.

QUESTION 8

Option 4 is the correct answer because **Options 1 and 3 are correct**. See SG:32 in this regard. Option 2 is incorrect. The University of South Africa's Bureau of Market Research did not find that the skill shortage was worsening. See SG:32 in this regard.

QUESTION 9

A thorough study of the tutorial matter on culture shock would have revealed that **Option 2 is the correct answer**. Culture shock is a psychological condition of uncertainty and stress which arises from being in unfamiliar circumstances and among unfamiliar people. Consult SG:23-4 in this regard.

QUESTION 10

Option 2 is correct. Consult SG:43 in this regard. Options 1, 3 and 4 are incorrect. Dwellings which are made of piled stones, a highly developed toolkit and the possible use of fire are not characteristic of these hominids.

QUESTION 11

Option 4 is correct. Consult SG:25 in this regard. Option 1 is incorrect because it relates to the emic approach. Option 2 is incorrect. Although ethnocentrism gives a perspective from outside the culture of a society, it differs totally from the etic approach. It comprises the inclination of many people to regard their own culture or way of life as superior, and to use their own cultural values and practices as measure to judge the behaviour and beliefs of other groups (see SG:26).

QUESTION 12

Item a is correct. External features of humans were initially used to classify people into races (see SG:44). Item b is also correct. It is unscientific to classify humans according to racial characteristics which often are based on stereotyping and prejudice (see SG:45). Item c is incorrect. Society at large (and not scientists) are more likely to classify humans into races on the grounds of biological features (see SG:46). Item d is incorrect. Predispositions such as alcoholism and drug abuse can be linked to culture rather than race (see SG:46). **Option 1, which includes Items a and b, is therefore correct**.

QUESTION 13

Option 3 is correct. Female genital cutting is often enforced by older women in an attempt to control the perceived rampant sexual desires of women (see SG:55-6). Option 1 is incorrect. Clitoridectomy is not part of female initiation in South Africa and therefore also not of Venda communities in Limpopo Province. Option 2 is incorrect. Genital cutting is not done for hygienic reasons. Option 4 is incorrect. Genital cutting is not universally condemned as an infringement of universal human rights as can clearly be seen from the fact that it is still practised in some 28 African countries. The practice is highly contentious and many divergent views about it are found in the countries in which it is practised. It is possible that the contemporary emphasis on gender equality in most, if not all the countries in the world, may eventually lead to the abolition of the practice.

QUESTION 14

In this question you first had to decide whether Items a, b, c and d regarding images and perceptions of the body are correct or incorrect, and then you had to choose the correct combination in the options. Items a, b and c are correct. See SG:50, 52 and 55 in this regard. Item d is incorrect. Tattooing may simply be done because it is regarded as attractive or may even be used to punish, for example, by marking slaves or prisoners. **Option 3, which includes Items a, b and c, is therefore the correct answer**.

QUESTION 15

Option 1 is clearly incorrect because the study of the perception and use of space is called *proxemics* (see SG:58). Option 2 is clearly incorrect too. While a person says something it can easily be a lie and the person's body language may convey this contradiction (see SG:57). Option 4 is incorrect. *Verbal* communication is mostly communicated *verbally* while communication that is more emotional is conveyed via body language (see SG:57). **Option 3 is the correct option.** See SG:57 in this regard.

We hope that these comments will have assisted you to understand how you should have gone about answering this assignment.



We wish you all the best with your studies. Please get in touch with us if you are experiencing any problems with the study material.

Kind regards

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