

Tutorial Letter 201/2/2016

The Anthropological Study of Culture in a Multicultural Context

APY1501

Semester 2

Department of Anthropology and Archaeology

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

This tutorial letter contains the comments on Assignment 01.

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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

The correct answer is Option 4. 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 human existence**. This implies that anthropology has a holistic approach to the study of human life. Option 1 which states that anthropology is particularly concerned with the social aspect of human existence is therefore incorrect. Option 2 is incorrect because the study of human societies of prehistoric and historic times is the field of study of archaeology. Option 3 is incorrect. Anthropologists study societies in diverse sociocultural contexts and do not focus on the study of African societies.

QUESTION 2

The correct option is Option 2. Consult SG:4 and 15 in this regard. Option 1 is incorrect because linguistic anthropologists study the relation between language and other aspects of people's lives (see SG:8). Option 3 is incorrect. The influence of biological factors and hereditary characteristics on the behaviour in a human population is a focus area of biological or physical anthropology (see SG:7). Option 4 is incorrect because it relates to the field of study of archaeology.

QUESTION 3

In this question you were required to identify the option that does **NOT** accurately reflect scholarly work in the field of linguistic anthropology. Linguistic anthropologists initially studied the historical development of unwritten languages of non-western societies (Option 1). They also study societies to gain an understanding of how cultural phenomena are expressed verbally (Option 2), and study the way in which language is used in different social contexts (Option 4). Options 1, 2 and 4 are thus incorrect. The statement that the evolution of languages in prehistorical societies is the main focal area of linguistic anthropology (Option 3) is, however, incorrect and therefore **Option 3 is correct**.

QUESTION 4

Option 4 is correct. 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).

Option 1 is incorrect (see SG:28). Reflexivity implies a “sensitive, intensive and continual involvement of the fieldworker with the people being studied, as well as an identification with, and a moral responsibility for their problems and quality of life” (De Jongh 2010:297-298 cited on SG:28).

Option 2 is incorrect. Multivocality refers to an approach in terms of which more than one “voice” is incorporated in the ethnographic process and report, namely the “voice” of the anthropologist and the “voices” of those being studied (see SG:28).

Option 3 is incorrect. Ethnicity is usually defined in terms of a kind of sociocultural ‘character’ or ‘disposition’, i.e. the thoughts, beliefs, values, expectations, attitudes and behaviour of a group of people (consult SG:84).

QUESTION 5

In this question you first had to decide whether Items a, b, c, d and e relating to fields of application and practical work by anthropologists are correct or incorrect, and then you had to choose the correct combination in the options. Items a, b, c, d and e are correct. See SG:35 in this regard. **Option 4, which includes Items a, b, c, d and e, is therefore the correct answer.**

QUESTION 6

The correct answer is Option 3, because the concept of cultural relativism implies that the culture of a society should be understood and described in terms of the traditions and experiences **of its members** (consult SG:26). What is acceptable for one society is not necessarily acceptable or ‘correct’ for members of other societies. Many westerners regard Hindu taboos associated with the eating of beef as ridiculous and wasteful because it is an excellent source of protein. In contrast, Hindus consider the slaughter and consumption of cattle to be barbaric. It is theorised that one of the most important reasons for the taboo regarding eating beef is that in a developing country like India, cattle manure is used for the cultivation of grain, as well as for fuel. In terms of this view, the taboo developed to ensure that there would always be sufficient manure available for fuel and fertiliser.

Option 1 is incorrect. Its contents constitute an example of an ethnocentric approach because one would have to judge other people’s approaches to combating crime according to one’s own values and standards to be able to arrange them from the least to the most effective. The examples in Options 2 and 4 respectively constitute cross-cultural comparative approaches and are therefore incorrect (consult SG:5).

QUESTION 7

Items a and b are correct. Not only is ethnographic research a **process** of collecting first-hand information directly from the people being studied (Item a), it is also the **product** of fieldwork, namely it comprises the analysis, interpretation and representation of fieldwork data (Item b). Consult SG:15 in this regard. Item c is also correct. See SG:23 in this regard. Item d is incorrect. Although anthropologists generally apply the principle of cultural relativism in terms of which they do not judge the behaviour in a specific sociocultural system by the values and norms of another system, cultural relativism should not be taken to the extreme. This would imply that there is no such thing as universal human mortality and human rights and if one adopts such a view, then one has to find acceptable the gas chambers for Jews in Nazi Germany during World War II (see SG:26-27). **Option 1, which includes Items a, b, and c, is therefore correct.**

QUESTION 8

In this question you were required to identify the option which Le Roux did not mention as reason for the failure of African societies to produce enough food to feed their populations. "Accelerating sociocultural change" was not mentioned by Le Roux and therefore **Option 3 is correct**. Consult SG:32 in this regard. A lack of training among subsistence farmers (Option 1), a lack of proper leadership (Option 2) and a need for constitutional reform (Option 4) were identified as reasons for the failure and therefore Options 1, 2 and 4 are incorrect.

QUESTION 9

In this question you were required to identify the option which is **NOT** characteristic of anthropology. Although an etic approach (Option 3) is characteristic of anthropology, the definition in the option reflects an **emic** and not an etic approach. An etic approach gives priority to the interpretations of the anthropologist as researcher. Consult SG:25 in this regard. **Option 3 is therefore correct**. A contextual approach (Option 1), a comparative approach (Option 2) and the concept of sociocultural systems (Option 4) are characteristic of anthropology and consequently these options are incorrect. Consult SG:3-5 and 34 in this regard.

QUESTION 10

In this question you first had to decide whether Items a (australopithecines), b (tarsiers), c (*Homo habilis*), d (*Homo sapiens*) and e (lemurs) belong to the hominid line, and then you had to choose the correct combination in the options. Australopithecines (Item a), *Homo habilis* (Item c) and *Homo sapiens* (Item d) belong to the hominid line. Consult SG:42-3 in this regard. **Option 4, which includes Items a, c, and d is therefore the correct answer**. Items b and e are incorrect. Tarsiers and lemurs are primates but do not belong to the family of *hominidae* (hominids).

QUESTION 11

In this question you were required to identify the option that does **NOT** reflect body language correctly. The statement in Option 2 is incorrect. Body language does not always correspond to spoken messages and may contradict them. **Option 2 is thus the correct answer**. See SG:57 in this regard. The statements in Options 1, 3 and 4 are correct (see SG:57) and therefore these options are incorrect.

QUESTION 12

Option 2 is correct. Consult SG:55 in this regard. Option 1 is incorrect. Female genital cutting is performed amongst other reasons, to deny women sexual pleasure (see SG:55). Option 3 is incorrect. The practice occurs particularly among African Muslims and not African Christians. 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 13

Option 2 is correct. Consult SG:45 in this regard. Option 1 is incorrect because it circumscribes a general definition of the concept of a race in strictly biological terms, which is not applicable to human beings. Option 3 is incorrect. Genetic differences among individuals and *within* a population are generally greater than the genetic differences *among* populations. Option 4 is incorrect. Humans do not have innate behavioural characteristics, but adapt to their environment by means of culture.

QUESTION 14

In this question you first had to decide whether Items a, b, c and d regarding human nature are correct or incorrect, and then you had to choose the correct combination in the options. Items a, b and c are all correct. Consult SG:43-44 in this regard. **Option 1, which includes Items a, b and c is therefore the correct answer.** Item d is incorrect because it is characteristic of an older kind of pseudoscience practiced with regard to 'human nature'.

QUESTION 15

In this question you first had to decide whether Items a, b, c and d regarding body language are correct or incorrect, and then you had to choose the correct combination in the options. Items a and c are correct. See SG:57 and 58 in this regard. **Option 5, which includes Items a and c is therefore the correct answer.** Item b is incorrect. The people of Sri Lanka move their heads slowly in a sideways movement to indicate "yes" if asked to do something. Item d is incorrect. In Spain people may stand quite close to each other, and even touch, when talking, but in the United States and England, the "personal space" is often much bigger.



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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