

**CONFLICT, COOPERATION, AND HUMAN NATURE**  
**IHUM 62**  
**Autumn Quarter, 2005**

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*The so-called savage has always been a plaything to civilized man – in practice a convenient instrument of exploitation, in theory a provider of sensational thrills. Savagery has been, for the reading public of the last three centuries, a reservoir of unexpected possibilities in human nature; and the savage has had to adorn this or that a priori hypothesis by becoming cruel or noble, licentious or chaste, cannibalistic or human according to what suited the observer or the theory.*

Malinowski, Sexual Life of Savages (p. 452)

## Course Description

What does your mother's brother's daughter call you? Chances are that she calls you "cousin," and because of this, you assume a host of duties, expectations, and social responsibilities. The classification of other people is a human universal, intimately related to the tension between conflict and cooperation that pervades human social systems, and helps define who we are.

In this course, you will explore some striking forms of human social interaction and their relationship with what makes us human. In addition to the construction of family systems, warfare and slavery are uniquely human activities: upon these we will focus our discussion of human nature. How people manipulate such social classifications as "nonhuman" or "kin" in an effort to define a potential spouse, an opponent in war, or a slave, and how people resist attempts at denying them their humanity, will provide insight into what makes a person "human."

Using tools from anthropology and history, we will approach the question "What is human?" from a broad historical and comparative perspective. Throughout our investigations, we will strive to understand how variation on social structures and cultural norms can provide more general insights into human nature and the resolution of social problems.

## About the Instructors

**James Holland Jones** is an anthropologist with a broad background that includes primate ecology and social behavior, the analysis of social structure, the ecology of infectious disease, and the dynamics of kinship. His current research interests focus on: (1) the impact of demographic change on infectious disease transmission networks, and (2) the demography of kinship, particularly with respect to the care of AIDS orphans, and (3) the evolution of human life histories.

**Libra Hilde** is a historian with a background in 19<sup>th</sup> Century American political and social/cultural history as well as Native American legal history. Her current research focuses on the lives and experiences of female hospital workers in the American Civil War. She has longstanding interests in the causes and consequences of American slavery and the subjugation of indigenous people.

**Dr. Crowder-Taraborelli** studied film and journalism at SFSU. In graduate school, he studied comparative literature, Latin American literature and critical theory at UCSD and UCI. His dissertation focuses on the travel letters of Argentine writer Domingo F. Sarmiento. He also writes short-stories, screenplays and is a member of a documentary collective.

**Dr. Barker** has a Ph.D. in English literature and film from Indiana University and an M.F.A in Creative Writing from the University of Oregon. Her work focuses on the articulation of politics in aesthetic form, particularly antifascist literature and film in the 1930s and 1940s. She has also done extensive research and writing on early African American films and filmmaking.

**Dr. Mathers** is a sociocultural anthropologist with a background in archaeology and physical anthropology. Her work is on the relationship between Africa and the US and especially the impact of travel to South Africa on Americans. She has spent a lot of time with study abroad students from California in Cape Town and also studies popular culture images of Africa in the US.

## Course Goals

Course-specific goals: (1) develop an understanding of both the unity and diversity of human social systems and their consequences for understanding what makes people "human;" (2) learn to write evidence-based prose drawn from primary source documents; (3) develop an appreciation for the importance of time-depth and cross-cultural analysis for understanding social problems that affect people today.

The programmatic goals of a fall IHUM course are to hone students' abilities (1) to read closely; (2) to think critically; (3) to recognize the possibility of different readings produced by approaching texts from different disciplinary perspectives; (4) to learn effectively from lectures; and (5) to engage in sustained intellectual discussion.

### Required Texts

Shelley, M. 1818. Frankenstein. New York, Penguin Classics (2003).

Scott, R. 1982. Blade Runner (Director's Cut, 2004).

Malinowski, B. 1929. The Sexual Life of Savages in North-Western Melanesia: An Ethnographic Account of Courtship, Marriage and Family Life Among the Natives of the Trobriand Islands, British New Guinea. Boston, Beacon Press (1987).

Mailer, N. 1949. The Naked and the Dead. New York, Picador (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition, 1998).

Jacobs, H. A. 1861. Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl. New York, Signet Classic (2000).

### Films

We will show three evening films in Building 420 Room 041 on Mondays at 7:30 PM, as noted in the course schedule. The films can be viewed as alternate texts and ideas drawn from them can be incorporated into paper assignments. If you cannot attend these showings, you may arrange to see them on your own (all are available at Green Library).

Blade Runner  
Dr. Strangelove  
Maria Full of Grace

### Assignments and Grade Distribution

Topics will be distributed two weeks prior to the due date of each paper. Papers are due in lecture. All late papers will receive a 1/3-grade penalty for each 24-hour period past due.

|            |                |                                                |     |
|------------|----------------|------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Paper 1:   | (3-4 pages)    | Monday, October 17                             | 10% |
| Paper 2:   | (4-5 pages)    | Wednesday, November 9                          | 15% |
| Paper 3:   | (5-6 pages)    | Monday, December 5                             | 25% |
| Final Exam | (Location TBA) | Monday, December 14 <sup>th</sup> (8:30-11:00) | 20% |

Section: 30% (Includes attendance, participation, and performance on section-based assignments)

### Course Policies

Attendance at lecture and section is mandatory.

Each student is allowed no more than two excused section absences. Following the second absence, the participation grade will be dropped by a third of a grade for each additional absence. Please discuss with your teaching fellow **in advance** any section conflict you have during the term.

More than two section absences will severely affect a student's participation grade. If a student has a prolonged illness, varsity athletic competitions, or a personal situation that might lead to more than two absences, the student should contact his or her Teaching Fellow before missing section. Under certain conditions (such as varsity athletic competitions or prolonged illness), a student may be provided an opportunity to make up the work missed in section. Note: insufficient section attendance will result in failure of the course.

Papers cannot be re-written and submitted for higher grade.

### **Grading Guidelines**

**Essays:** Area One courses are mandated to foster rigorous inquiry and critical thinking, and to promote effective written argumentation.

**A range:** This paper is outstanding in form and content. The thesis is clear and insightful; it expands in a new way on ideas presented in the course. The evidence presented in support of the argument is carefully chosen and deftly handled. The argument is not only unified and coherent, but also complex and nuanced.

**B range:** This paper's thesis is clear; the argument is coherent and presents evidence in support of its points. The argument shows comprehension of the material and manifests critical thinking about the issues raised in the course. The paper is reasonably well written and proofread. The argument, while coherent, does not have the complexity, the insight, or the integrated structure of an A range paper.

**C range:** This paper has some but not all of the basic components of an argumentative essay (i.e., thesis, evidence, coherent structure): for example, it may offer a thesis of some kind, but it presents no evidence to support this thesis; or it may present an incoherent thesis; or it may simply repeat points made in class without an overall argument. Such a paper is usually poorly organized, written and proofread. A paper will fall below a "C" if it lacks more than one of the basic components of an argumentative essay.

**Section Participation:** Area One courses are mandated to encourage vigorous intellectual exchange, the expression of various viewpoints, and the ability to speak effectively and cogently. Participation in discussion will be evaluated on the following guidelines, which stress the quality rather than the mere quantity of contributions to discussion.

**A range:** The student is fully engaged and highly motivated. This student is well prepared, having read the assigned texts, and has thought carefully about the texts' relation to issues raised in lecture and section. This student's ideas and questions are productive (either constructive or critical); they stimulate class discussions. This student listens and responds to the contributions of other students.

**B range:** The student attends class regularly, is well prepared for discussion, and participates consistently. This student contributes productively to the discussion by sharing thoughts and questions that demonstrate familiarity with the material. This student refers to the materials discussed in lecture and shows interest in other students' contributions.

**C range:** The student meets the basic requirements of section participation: preparedness and regular attendance. This student participates rarely in class discussion. This student may offer a few interesting or insightful ideas from time to time, but these ideas do not connect well to the general discussion: they do not help to build a coherent and productive discussion. (Failure to fulfill satisfactorily any of these criteria will result in a grade of "D" or below.)

### **Provost's Statement concerning Students with Disabilities**

Students who have a disability which may necessitate an academic accommodation or the use of auxiliary aids and services in a class must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education's

Disability Resource Center (DRC). The DRC will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend appropriate accommodations, and prepare a verification letter dated in the current academic term in which the request is being made. Please contact the DRC as soon as possible; timely notice is needed to arrange for appropriate accommodations (phone 723-1066; TDD 725-1067).

### **The Honor Code**

Violating the Honor Code is a serious offense, even when the violation is unintentional. The Honor Code is available at: <http://www.stanford.edu/dept/vpsa/judicialaffairs/guiding/honorcode.htm>. You are responsible for understanding the University rules regarding academic integrity; you should familiarize yourself with the code if you have not already done so. In brief, conduct prohibited by the Honor Code includes all forms of academic dishonesty, among them copying from another's exam, unpermitted collaboration and representing as one's own work the work of another. If you have any questions about these matters, see your teaching fellow during office hours.

### **Detailed Course Outline:**

#### **Week One: Introduction and Overview**

**Monday 09.26:** "Introductions" (Jones & Hilde)

**Wednesday 09.28:** "Thinking about Human Nature" (Jones)

#### **Week Two: Shelley**

**Monday 10.03:** "Mary Shelley and the Birth of Frankenstein" (Hilde)

**Film:** Blade Runner

**Wednesday 10.05:** Panel Presentation on Blade Runner (Barker, Crowder-Taraborelli, Jones)

#### **Week Three: Shelley and Soctt**

**Monday 10.10:** "Physical Disfigurement and Social Isolation" (Jones)

**Wednesday 10.12:** "Waking the dead: monstrosity in the twentieth century" (Crowder-Taraborrelli).

#### **Week Four: Malinowski**

**Monday 10.17:** "The Historical Context of Malinowski , and the Logic of Marriage and Classificatory Kinship" (Jones)

#### ***First Paper Due in Lecture***

**Wednesday 10.19:** "Human Sexuality" (Jones)

**Week Five: Malinowski**

**Monday 10.24:** "Surviving Savages" (Mathers)

**Wednesday 10.26:** "Cosmology and the Clash of Cosmologies" (Jones/Hilde)

**Week Six: Malinowski and Mailer**

**Monday 10.31:** "A Critique of Functionalism/Fictive Kinship" (Hilde)

**Wednesday 11.02:** "On War and WWII" (Jones/Hilde)

**Week Seven: Mailer**

**Monday 11.07:** "Race, Propaganda, and the Pacific Theater of WWII" (Hilde)

**Film:** Dr. Strangelove

**Wednesday 11.9:** "The Pacific Theatre, Firebombing, and the Dropping of the Atomic Bomb" (Jones)

***Second Paper Due in Lecture***

**Week Eight: Mailer**

**Monday 11.14:** "The Home Front and Civilian Response" (Barker)

**Wednesday 11.16:** "The Rise Atlantic Slave Trade" and "Modern Slavery" (Hilde/Jones)

**Week Nine: Jacobs**

11.21-11.25 Thanksgiving vacation

**Monday 11.28:** "Harriet Jacobs, Slave Narratives, and American Slavery" (Hilde)

**Film:** Maria Full of Grace

**Wednesday 11.30:** "Human Resistance" (Hilde)

**Week Ten: Jacobs and Conclusion**

**Monday 12.05:** "The Heart of Darkness and the Universality of the Human Predicament" (Jones)

***Third Paper Due in Lecture***

**Wednesday 12.07:** Wrap up (Jones/Hilde)

***Final Exam During Exam Week***