

**Integrating Active Learning
into Anth 4/532 Kinship,
Marriage and Family**

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Project overview

- Develop a variety of active learning exercises for Anthropology 4/532 Kinship, Marriage and Family

Background

Course description: “Family and kinship are the basis for all human organization. This course explores the role of systems of relationship in both simple and complex cultures. It presents modern analysis of kinship systems including sociobiological, evolutionary, and feminist perspectives as well as traditional kin terminology and marriage and residence patterns.”

Project objectives

- Design exercises for each class period (see following samples)
- Fully integrate active learning to engage students and improve both their theoretical understanding and methodological skills
- My aim is to show students that kinship studies are not boring and irrelevant, but rather truly fascinating and salient

Kinship

Visit the E-museum

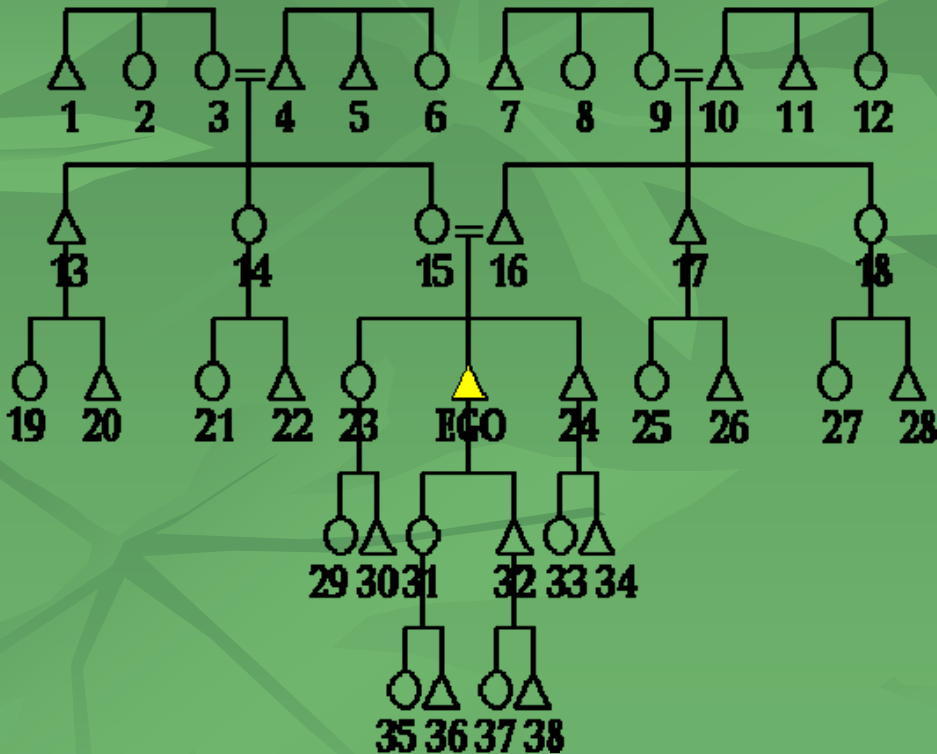
(<http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/index.shtml>)

- review the sections on kinship and do the tutorial
- Briefly explain why anthropologists study kinship

Learning the Basics of Kinship

- Test students on basic kinship calculation, terminology, and systems using team-based learning and Immediate Feedback Assessment Techniques (IF-AT)

Kinship Chart



- Identify the following:
 - Ego's patrilineal kin
 - Ego's matrilineal kin
 - Cross cousins
 - Parallel cousins
 - Lineal v. collateral kin

Kinship and Descent

The goals of the following three exercises are:

- Apply ethnographic methods, particularly interviewing and the genealogical method
- clarify the kindred, collateral v. lineal, affinal vs. consanguineal, kinship calculation
- demonstrate various forms of marriage, family and residence

Exercise I

- I serve as the “informant” and students work together as anthropologists whose common goal is to gather data on my kindred.
- By interviewing me, they should generate my genealogy with all of the appropriate notation and terminology. (Record responses on the board.)
- They should then be able to identify patterns and forms based upon my history/responses.

Exercise II: The “Family Tree”

- Students should chart their own kinship
 - Create a kinship chart at least three generations “deep”. Identify relation, terms of address, and residence if possible.
 - What patterns are visible? What does the chart tell us about you and your culture group?

Exercise III: American Kinship

- Split up into pairs. Each person should ask their partner to, “Tell me who your relatives are.” Try to generate a list of about 15 relatives for each person. Take notes on what you are told.
- Each person should diagram the other’s information.
- List of the categories of information that your informant gave you (type of kin, terms of address, residence, etc.).
- From this list:
 - What do you conclude are the bases of kinship in US society?
 - What would you say about the kinds of knowledge people have about their kin in US society?
- Next, we will compile the information to see if a generalized picture emerges.

Charting Kinship Assignment

Work with an informant from another culture to collect data and chart their kinship.

- 1) Interview your informant and take detailed notes (fieldnotes must be submitted)
- 2) Create a kinship chart
- 3) Write a 3-5 page paper addressing:
 - the questions/issues raised in the project
 - Correctly identify the kinship terminology (lineal, bifurcate merging, bifurcate collateral, etc.) and system (Eskimo, Hawaiian, Sudanese, Omaha, etc.) of your informant.
 - a brief reflection on your experience of applying the genealogical method. How did you elicit data, what did you learn, how do you evaluate your performance?

Marriage and The Family

Goal: The exercise should challenge students to consider not only different forms of marriage and family, but also how marriage and family organize groups and how the various forms relate to other sub-systems.

- 1) Divide the class into five groups:
 - two matrilineages. Their adaptive strategy is horticulture
 - two patrilineages. Their adaptive strategy is pastoralism
 - one bilateral group. They can be either an industrial-state or foragers.

Marriage and The Family, con't.

2) Students role play three different marriages: one between the matriline; one between the patriline; and one within the bilateral group

A) Regarding marriage arrangements, the groups must determine the most appropriate form for the ethnographic data (e.g. adaptive strategies).

Consider:

- appropriate marriage partners, i.e. kinship, the incest taboo, and plural marriage
- who decides and arranges the marriage and on what basis is it decided.
- exchange of wealth/prestations, are there any, what form do they take (i.e. bridewealth)
- rights and responsibilities of spouses

B) Regarding family, consider the most appropriate form and outline:

- structure and organization
- residence patterns
- role of the spouse in relation to their "in-laws"
- the role of the family members in the marriage itself

C) Try to solve the following problems/issues:

- Progeny
- Infertility
- Death of a spouse
- Infidelity

Marriage and The Family, con't.

3) Each of the different types of societies report back to the larger group.

- Minimally, they should generate all of the various marriage and family forms.
- They should also be able to generate many of the related issues covered in readings and lecture.

Kinship, Marriage, and Group Behavior

Based on your readings, do you believe that marriage is a cultural universal? Why/why not? Provide concrete ethnographic examples to support your response.

Policy

- Write a policy report to the Minnesota legislature on the issue of gay marriage.
- Be sure to address cross-cultural variation and make use of multiple ethnographic examples

Gender and Kinship

In the Spencer family, Mrs. Spencer did grocery shopping, housework, child care and gardening. Mr. Spencer earned the living, took care of the car and house repairs, mowed the lawn, and cleared the snow. Together Mr. and Mrs. Spencer planned for retirement, vacations and their children's education, but Mr. Spencer had the final say on major financial decisions. Then, Mrs. Spencer's book, a romance novel she had written during evening hours, became a best seller. They hired a housekeeper. Mr. Spencer quit his job and took over some of the shopping and child care, especially driving the children to their various events. He set up a home office and continued to manage the family's assets. Mrs. Spencer worked half days on her writing and publishing, but was home when the children returned from school, helped with homework and driving to the children's sports and music lessons, and made dinner 2 or 3 nights per week. The housekeeper did the rest of the cooking, laundry and housecleaning, but went home for the weekends to her own family and three children.

Gender and Kinship, con't.

1. Use each of the approaches for understanding gender asymmetry to analyze the case:
 - a. symbolic or meaning based;
 - b. public-domestic dichotomy;
 - c. political economy (control of scarce resources and the division of labor)
2. How effective is each theory in explaining and understanding the situation, including the changes which take place?

Political Organization, Social Control, and Kinship

1. You will be assigned a culture from the list below. Determine your most likely political organization, type of leadership, and system) of social control.
 - A. Ju/hoansi: Foragers, exogamous, bilateral descent, nuclear family.
 - B. Dinka: Pastoralists, exogamous, patrilineal clans
 - C. Iroquois: Horticulturalists, matrilineal clans, exogamous
 - D. Hawaiian: Horticulturalists, patrilineal, endogamous
 - E. United States: Industrial, bilateral descent, exogamous
2. You are confronted with a dispute. The case is as follows: A man has had an affair with his FBD. She is a married woman and her husband is very angry. The husband has brought the affair to the attention of your group. Now you must determine:
 - a. Is this an offense? If so, what kind of offense is it? Why is it unacceptable? In particular, is it a breach of the incest taboo? If not, why not?
 - b. How will your group deal with the dispute? Role-play a resolution to the dispute--assign someone to be "the man," the FBD, the FBD's husband, etc. Support your resolution of the dispute with appropriate ethnographic examples. Report your case to the class.

Kinship, Assisted Reproduction and the Law

- Read the case of Jaycee Buzzanca, the little girl who was deemed “parentless” by a California judge (Buzzanca v. Buzzanca, Sup. Ct. No. 95D002992).
- What are the facts of the case?
- Had you been the judge, what would your ruling have been and why?
- What are the implications for American kinship?