

Foundations of Social and Cultural Anthropology

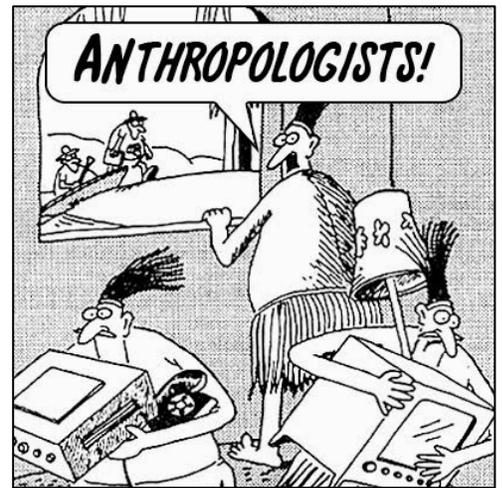
ANTH-631, Fall 2016

Monday, 5.30—8pm, EQB 207

Professor: Siobhán McGuirk
siobhan.mcguirk@american.edu

Office Hours: Wednesday, 4-6pm
Hamilton, 202B
Or by appointment via Skype
(username = Siobhán McGuirk)

Response time: I will respond to emails within 24 hours
I will return coursework within 1 week



I. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND STRUCTURE

This course will introduce you to a range of core concepts, approaches, intellectual traditions, and texts in sociocultural anthropology. We will explore topics including social relations, culture, capitalism, gifts, structuralism, pollution, the local, power, and fieldwork. The topics and readings suggest and explore a variety of entry points into thinking, arguing, and writing anthropologically. Informed by our departmental commitment to public anthropology, we will strive to identify ways in which we can use these theoretical foundations to make anthropology relevant and useful outside academia.

The schedule is grouped around core debates and paradigms. We will engage with the work of key theorists and trace their legacies, situating texts and their authors within larger, overlapping intellectual conversations. Taken together, these texts—and our conversations with and about them—will look backward historically, laterally into related discussions, and forward toward possible future trajectories in anthropological research. As such, this seminar will help prepare you for the follow-on course “Contemporary Anthropological Theory.”

As any course covering the “foundations” of a discipline, this course is unavoidably partial and subjective. With this in mind, you are encouraged to engage in your own, ongoing process of inventing and reinventing anthropology—throughout and beyond this course. I expect all students to take an active effort in defining anthropology, its foundations, and its purposes for themselves.

This seminar is discussion-based and participatory seminar. I assume energetic and thoughtful engagement from every participant and careful attention to all assigned readings. Together we will strive to ensure that the classroom is a space for passionate, engaged discussion, in which everyone is able to express their views freely, and to respectfully disagree with others—including with me. Listening to each other, and taking time to reflect on each other’s views are essential.

II. SEMINAR OBJECTIVES

By the end of the semester, seminar participants will be able to:

- Work cooperatively and constructively with other seminar participants, building a rich, thoughtful, and supportive learning environment.
- Learn some of the foundational ideas, theories, methodologies, texts, authors, and histories in sociocultural anthropology (and across the social sciences and humanities).
- Establish an anthropological and academic base upon which to build further knowledge, explore new ideas, and conduct independent research in the future.
- Analyze, critique, and theorize anthropological and other academic literature and our world in new ways.
- Speak effectively in public and communicate original ideas to others.
- Write successfully about theory.
- Self-critically reflect on the seminar and one's work in the seminar, social theory, anthropology, and one's future work in the discipline.
- Feel prepared to read and engage with contemporary anthropological and other academic literature and take follow-on course, "Contemporary Anthropological Theory."

III. REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENTS

The course is structured as a collegial seminar. You are expected to come to class having read all assigned materials closely and carefully, and prepared to engage in lively discussion of the ideas, arguments, and evidence presented in the readings.

As you read each text, ask yourself:

- What assumptions are the theorists making, e.g. about social structure, what culture is, how power operates, etc.?
- What methods and evidence do they use?
- What are the applications of these ideas?
- How do these ideas complement, extend and/or challenge other texts and paradigms we have explored?
- How does the ethnography use theory?
- How are the readings relevant to your own research?

Participation and Attendance

You are required to attend all classes. I will make exceptions to this requirement only in the case of medical requirements, emergencies or observation of religious holidays. If you miss classes, or are habitually late to class, your grade will suffer. Email me in advance if you must miss a class.

I expect all students to bring their marked up texts and notes with them to each class. I highly discourage the use of computers and other electronic devices in this classroom. If you must use

a computer, you must only use it for relevant purposes. Turn your cell phone off during the seminar. Active, engaged participation is worth 25% of your final grade.

Presentations

You will be divided into small groups at the start of our first class. Each class, usually in the second half of the period, one group will give a 10-minute presentation and then facilitate part of our discussion. Each group will present twice during the semester. Presentations will (a) briefly summarize and frame the week's readings and (b) stimulate conversation with one especially provocative and important question, which addresses a key element of the week's readings (tip: it may help to have backup questions to probe and prompt deeper discussion). Every member of the group must participate in the presentation (I recommend practicing your presentation in advance, as a group). Your goal is to generate energetic discussion, not to dominate the conversation. As the presentations are very short, I encourage you to avoid PowerPoint (or similar). Do not use videos.

Presentations will be graded on content, organization, length (i.e. within allotted time), and clarity. Each presentation is worth 5% of your final grade.

Written Assignments

Readings Responses: A 1-2 page paper due at the start of class every week, except when another assignment is due. Please use Arial pt. 11-font, double-spaced, 1-inch margins. Your RR should focus on the theorists and concepts we will cover in that class, and should reference more than one reading. Avoid outside sources. Quotes from authors should be short, and carefully chosen. Use in-text citations and include a works cited list. Write clearly and concisely. Use jargon only when necessary and when it's meaning is evident.

Rrs may *not* solely be critiques—you must demonstrate open-minded engagement and understanding before offering critical appraisal. Beyond those guidelines, you may choose the format most useful to you each week. An RR could be, for example:

- A close reading of a passage or passages
- A summary of an idea, argument/debate, or concept
- A comparison of the ideas of two theorists
- An exploration of what the authors are trying to accomplish and how they are going about it

Bring two copies to class – one to hand in to me, and one to make your own notes on during class. I will provide feedback on your RRs.

Short Papers: You will write two short analytical papers, due at the start of class on Oct. 3 and on Oct. 31. These papers will be on a topic of your choice, relevant to the course. I encourage you to discuss topics and ideas comparatively across different weeks. Each paper should be 3-5 pages, including works cited. You *must* write a one-paragraph (approx. 150 words) abstract with

every paper, describing the topic of your paper and the argument you are making. Each paper is worth 15% of your final grade.

Research Paper: You will plan and work on your Research Paper throughout the semester. In this paper you will propose a project for future study, using theories explored throughout the course to conceptualize and articulate your approach to the topic, and to situate your proposed project in anthropological discourses. This assignment is intended to get you thinking about the relevance of theory to your own work, and considering how you might use key thinkers in anthropology in your own projects. Throughout the semester we will do in-class and take-home exercises to help you conceptualize a project. Your Research Paper is worth 25% of your grade.

Note: Written work is due, without exception, at the indicated class meeting, in hard copy (not emailed). You must contact me at least 24-hours in advance if you must, for some reason, hand in an assignment late, so that we can discuss other arrangements. Make sure your name and a page number is on every page, and that your paper is stapled. Use Arial pt. 11-font, double-spaced, 1-inch margins.

Review and Grading

Participation	25%	<i>Note: You must complete every assignment in order to pass the course.</i>
Presentations	10%	
Short Papers	30%	
Reading Responses	10%	
Research Paper	25%	

Following AU guidelines¹ I will grade your work as:

- A: Superior, original, thoughtful work in completion of all course requirements;
- B: Very good work in completion of course requirements;
- C: Satisfactory work in completion of course requirements;
- D: Unsatisfactory or incomplete work in course requirements and/or a failure to meet minimum attendance requirements;
- F: Failure to meet minimum course standards for assignments, participation, attendance.

Academic Integrity

By registering for this class and at the University, you have acknowledged your awareness of the Academic Integrity Code (<http://www.american.edu/academics/integrity/code.htm> or see the "Student Handbook and Planner"). You are responsible for familiarizing yourself and complying with all its standards of academic conduct, including those related to plagiarism. I take plagiarism and academic dishonesty very seriously, and I am required to report cases to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, whose policy is to fail students for the course.

¹ See "Guideline of a General Education Syllabus," online document, available at <http://www.american.edu/academics/gened/faculty.htm>

IV. PRIMARY TEXTS

These texts should be available in the campus bookstore, on 2-hour reserve in the library, and for inexpensive purchase online (often used). I will post all other required readings to Blackboard, on 2-hour reserve in the library, via the internet, or handed out in class.

Erickson, Paul A., and Liam D. Murphy (eds). 2010. *Readings for a History of Anthropological Theory*, 3rd edition. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. [Other editions available—be careful with pagination].

Foucault, Michel. 1995 [1977]. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage Books, 2nd edition.

Forgacs, David, (ed.) 2000. *The Antonio Gramsci Reader*. New York: New York University Press.

Mauss, Marcel. 1990 [1925]. *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Tucker, Robert C. (ed.) 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. 2nd Edition. New York: W.W. Norton. *Note: Other readers are available, which you may use, but double check content covers your needs—see Week 3. I will post excerpts on Blackboard but encourage you to have a Marx reader or whole texts for the long-term.*

Weber, Max. 2001 [1905]. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. New York: Routledge.

V. CLASS SCHEDULE

All assignments and readings are due on the date indicated. Texts listed in the suggested reading order.

Where to find texts? B = Book / BbC = Blackboard Content / BbR = Blackboard Course Reserves

Class 1 (August 29)

Introductions

- Hymes, Dell. 1999. "The Use of Anthropology: Critical, Personal, Political." In *Reinventing Anthropology*, ed. Dell Hymes, 3-79. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. [1972]. [BbR]. (Note: Pages 61—79 are notes and references).
- Erickson and Murphy. "Overview". In *Readings for a History of Anthropological Theory*, pp.3-21. [B].

No class September 5

Happy Labor Day!

Class 2 (September 12) Colonialism and Early Anthropology

- Asad, Talal. 1973. "Introduction." In *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*, ed. Talal Asad. London: Ithaca Press, pp. 9-19. [BbR]
- E.B. Tylor, L.H. Morgan, Herbert Spencer and Charles Darwin, in *Readings for a History of Anthropological Theory*. Chapters 2-5; pp. 30-66. [B]
- Proctor, Robert. "From Anthropologie to Rassenkunde in the German Anthropological Tradition." In *Bones, Bodies, Behavior: Essays on Biological Anthropology*, ed. George Stocking, 138-179. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988. [BbR]
- DeLoria, Vine, Jr. *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969, 78-100. [BbC]

Assignment: Reading Response

***** Meet with me by Sept. 16. (Bring your Research Paper Worksheet to our meeting)*****

Class 3 (September 19) Capitalism and Fetishism

- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. "Feuerbach: Opposition of the Materialist and Idealist Outlook" pp. 143-162; Karl Marx "Capital, Volume 1, Section 1" pp.302-364; Friedrich Engels. "The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State" pp. 734-759. In Robert C. Tucker, ed. 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. [B & BbC]
- Taussig, Michael. 1980. "The Devil and Commodity Fetishism" pp. 13-38; "The Iconography of Nature and Conquest" pp. 182-198. In *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. [BbC]

Assignment: Reading Response

Class 4 (September 26) Economics and Christianity

- Weber, Max. 2001. [1930]. "Religious Affiliation and Social Stratification" pp. 3- 12; "The Spirit of Capitalism" pp. 13-38; "Asceticism and the Spirit of Capitalism" 102-125. In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. [B]
- Weber, Max. 1946. "Class, Status, Party". In H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds. *Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. London: Oxford, pp. 180-195. [BbR]
- Bornstein, Erica. 2003. "Child Sponsorship, Evangelism, and Belonging" pp. 67-95; "Participation as a Religious Act" pp. 119-139. *The Spirit of Development: Protestant NGOs, Morality, and Economics in Zimbabwe*. New York: Routledge. [BbC].

Assignment: Reading Response

Class 5 (October 3) Cultural Relativism & U.S. Anthropology

- Erickson and Murphy. 2010. "Overview." In *Readings for a History of Anthropological Theory*, pp. 105-115. [B]
- Boas, Franz. "Race and Progress." *Science*, July 3, 1931, 1-8. [BbC]

- Boas, Franz. 1966 [1940]. "The Aims of Anthropological Research" and "The Methods of Ethnology." In *Race, Language and Culture*. Ontario, Canada: Collier Macmillan Press. pp. 105-110. [BbC]
- Hurston, Zora Neal. Excerpt from *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Read and/or listen at <http://zoranealehurston.com/books/their-eyes-were-watching-god>.
- Hurston, Zora Neal. Excerpt from *Mules and Men*. Read and/or listen at <http://zoranealehurston.com/books/mules-and-men>.
- Mead, Margaret. "Introduction to Coming of Age in Samoa." In *Readings for a History of Anthropological Theory*, pp. 128-133. [B]
- Benedict, Ruth. 1934. "The Individual and the Pattern of Culture." In *Readings for a History of Anthropological Theory*, pp. 134-145. [B]

Assignment: Short Paper No.1

Class 6 (October 10) Social Structure

- Durkheim, Emile. 1938. "What is a Social Fact?" pp.1-13. (Recommended: "Rules for the Observation of Social Facts" pp. 14-46.) *The Rules of the Sociological Method*. Chicago: University of Chicago. [BbC]
- Durkheim, Emile [Karen Fields, translator]. 1995 [1912]. "Totem as Elementary Religion" pp. 84-95; "The Principle Totemic Beliefs Continued" pp. 141-157. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. New York: The Free Press. [BbC]
- Radcliffe-Brown, A.R. 1952. "On Social Structure" pp. 188-204. *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*. New York: Cohe & West Ltd. [BbC]

Assignment: Research Paper outline (max. 2 pages)
Optional Reading Response

Class 7 (October 17) Structuralism, Functionalism and Structural-Functionalism

- Readings from Erickson and Murphy: Edmund Leach; Meyer Fortes and E.E. Evans-Pritchard; Max Gluckman, Chapters 16, 20, 21. [B]
- Levi-Strauss Claude. 1963. "Structural Analysis in Linguistics and in Anthropology" pp. 31-57; "Social Structure" pp. 277-232. In *Structural Anthropology*. [BbC]
- Gayle Rubin. 2006. [1975]. "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex" pp. 87-106. In *Feminist Anthropology: A Reader*. New York: Wiley-Blackwell. [BbC]
- *Optional:* Dumont, Louis. 1980 [1966]. "Introduction" pp. 1-20. *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and Its Implications*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [BbR]

Assignment: Reading Response

Class 8 (October 24) Gifts and Exchange

- Broniskaw Malinowski. 1922. "The Essentials of the Kula" pp. 87-104. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. New York: E.P. Dutton. [BbR]

- Marcel Mauss. 1990. "The Exchange of Gifts and the Obligation to Reciprocate" pp. 8-18; "The Extension of this System: Liberality, Honour, Money" pp. 19-46; "Conclusion" pp. 68-83. *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*. New York: W.W. Norton. [B]
- Nancy Scheper-Hughes. 2007. "The Tyranny of the Gift: Sacrificial Violence in Living Donor Transplants" pp. 507-511. *American Journal of Transplantation*. [BbC]
- *Optional*: Simpson, Bob. 2004. "Impossible gifts: Bodies, Buddhism and bioethics in contemporary Sri Lanka." In *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 10: 839-859. [BbC]

Assignment: Reading Response

Class 9 (October 31) Cosmology and Symbolic Anthropology

- Turner, Victor. 1967. "Symbols in Ndembu Rituals" [From *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*.] In Erickson and Murphy, Chapter 25, pp. 322—340. [B]
- Mary Douglas. 1971 [1966]. "Secular Defilement" pp. 29-40; "The Abomination of Leviticus" pp. 41-57; "External Boundaries" pp. 114-128. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. London: Routledge. [BbR and BbC]
- Adam Ashforth. 2005. "Death, Pollution, and the Dangers of Dirt" pp. 154-169. In *Witchcraft, Violence, and Democracy in South Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [BbR]

Assignment: Short Paper No.2

Class 10 (November 7) Interpretive Anthropology

- Clifford Geertz. 1973. "Thick Description." In Erickson and Murphy, Chapter 26, pp. 341—359. [B]
- Clifford Geertz. 1973. "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cock Fight". *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, pp. 412-454. [BbR]
- Renato Rosaldo. 1989. "Introduction: Grief and the Headhunter's Rage" pp. 1-21; "The Erosion of Classical Norms" pp. 25-45; "Subjectivity in Social Analysis" pp. 168-195; "Border Crossings" pp. 196-217. In *Culture and Truth*. Boston: Beacon Press. [BbR and BbC]

Assignment: Reading Response

Class 11 (November 14) Power I: Agency

- Gramsci, Antonio. 2000. *The Antonio Gramsci Reader*. Forgacs, David, ed. New York: New York University Press. Page numbers TBA.
- Louis Althusser. 1971. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus (Notes Toward an Investigation)" pp. 127-186. *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. New York: Monthly Review Press. [BbC]

- Michel Foucault. 1980. "Two Lectures" pp. 78-108. In *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. New York: Vintage. [BbR]

Assignment: *Revised Research Paper outline (max. 2 pages)*
Optional Reading Response

Class 12 (November 21) Power II: Discipline

- Michel Foucault. 1995 [1977]. "The Body of the Condemned" pp. 3-31; "Docile Bodies" pp. 135-169; "The Means of Correct Training" pp. 170-194. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage Books, 2nd edition. [B]
- Lisa Rofel. 1997. "Rethinking Modernity: Space and Factory Discipline in China" pp. 155-178. In *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*. Durham, NC: Duke. [BbR].

Assignment: *Reading Response*

Class 13 (November 28) Urban Anthropology and the "Culture of Poverty" Debates

- Liebow, Elliot. "Introduction," "Men and Jobs," and "Conclusion" in *Tally's Corner: A Study of Negro[sic] Streetcorner Men*, 2nd ed. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003, 1-46, 135-150. [BbR and Library Reserve]
(*This short book is about DC, and is worth reading in its entirety when you get chance.*)
- Lewis, Oscar. "The Culture of Poverty." *Scientific American* 215, no. 4 (1966): 19-25. [BbC]
- Leacock, Eleanor. 1971. "Introduction." In *The Culture of Poverty: A Critique*, ed. Eleanor Leacock. New York: Simon and Schuster, 9-37. [BbR]
- Kelley, Robin D.G. 1998. "Looking for the 'Real' Nigga: Social Scientists Construct the Ghetto." In *Yo' Mama's Dysfunktional: Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban America*. Boston: Beacon Press, pp. 15-42. [BbR]

Assignment: *Reading Response*

Class 14 (December 5) Revisiting Theory, Reinventing Anthropology

- Ortner, Sherry B. 1984. "Theory in Anthropology Since the Sixties" In *Readings for a History of Anthropological Theory*, pp. 499-529. [B]

And at least two of the following:

- Gough, Kathleen. "New Proposals for Anthropologists," *Current Anthropology* 9, no. 5 (1968): 403-407. [BbC]
- Caulfield, Mina Davis, "Culture and Imperialism: Proposing a New Dialectic." In *Reinventing Anthropology*, Dell Hymes (ed.). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, pp. 182-212. [BbR]

- Nader, Laura, "Up the Anthropologist—Perspectives Gained from Studying Up," In *Reinventing Anthropology*, Dell Hymes (ed.). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, pp. 284-311. [BbC]
- Abu-Lughod, Lila. 1991. "Writing Against Culture" pp. 137-162. In *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*. Santa Fe: SAR. [BbR]

Assignment: Reading Response

***** Final Paper due: December 12, received in person or by emailed by 5.30pm *****

VI. Life Resources

American University provides numerous services that help students maximize their academic success and social and emotional wellbeing. I encourage you to make use of them as needed.

Academic Support and Access Center (MGC 243, 202-885-3360).

All students may take advantage of the Academic Support and Access Center (ASAC) for individual academic skills counseling, workshops, Tutoring and Writing Lab appointments, peer tutor referrals, and Supplemental Instruction. Additional academic support resources available at AU include the Bender Library, the Department of Literature's Writing Center (located in the Library), the Math Lab in the Department of Mathematics & Statistics, and the Center for Language Exploration, Acquisition, & Research (CLEAR) in Asbury Hall. A more complete list of campus-wide resources is available in the ASAC.

Students with Disabilities (MGC 243, 202-885-3360)

If you wish to receive accommodations for a disability, please notify me with a letter from the Academic Support and Access Center. As accommodations are not retroactive, timely notification at the beginning of the semester, if possible, is strongly recommended. To register with a disability or for questions about disability accommodations, contact the Academic Support and Access Center at 202-885-3360 or asac@american.edu, or drop by ASAC.

Counseling Center (MGC 214, 202-885-3500)

There to help students make the most of their university experience, both personally and academically. We offer individual and group counseling, urgent care, self-help resources, referrals to private care, as well as programming to help you gain the skills and insight needed to overcome adversity and thrive while you are in college. Contact the Counseling Center to make and appointment in person or by telephone, or visit the Counseling Center page on the AU website for additional information.

Center for Diversity & Inclusion (MGC 201, 202-885-3651)

Dedicated to enhancing LGBTQ, Multicultural, First Generation, and Women's experiences on campus and to advance AU's commitment to respecting & valuing diversity by serving as a

resource and liaison to students, staff, and faculty on issues of equity through education, outreach, and advocacy.

OASIS: The Office of Advocacy Services for Interpersonal and Sexual Violence (202-885-7070)

Provides free and confidential advocacy services for anyone in the campus community who experiences sexual assault, dating or domestic violence or stalking.

American University expressly prohibits any form of discriminatory harassment including sexual harassment, dating and domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. The University is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution that operated in compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy), age, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, personal appearance, gender identity and expression, family responsibilities, political affiliation, source of income, veteran status, an individual's genetic information or any other bases under federal or local laws in its programs and activities.

If you experience any of the above, you have the option of filing a report with the AU Department of Public Safety 202-885-2527 or the Office of the Dean of Students 202-885-3300 dos@american.edu. Please keep in mind that all faculty and staff - with exception of counselors in the Counseling Center, victim advocates in the Wellness Center, medical providers in the Student Health Center, and ordained clergy in the Kay Spiritual Life Center - who are aware of or witness this conduct are required to report this information to the university, regardless of the location of the incident.

The Writing Center First floor of Bender Library

Offers free, individual coaching sessions to all AU students. In your 45-minute session, a student writing consultant can help you address your assignments, understand the conventions of academic writing, and learn how to revise and edit your own work. Hours: 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday. Call 202-885-2991 to arrange a session. Meanwhile find handouts, information, and a weekly writer's blog at the Writing Center website and on Facebook.

International Student & Scholar Services, Battelle 4th Butler Pavilion, Room 410

Has resources to support academic success and participation in campus life including academic counseling, support for second language learners, response to questions about visas, immigration status and employment and intercultural programs, clubs and other campus resources.