

Anth 211 Introduction to Anthropology: History, Theory, Method

Analytic Paper Template

Grounded in ethnographic methods, cultural anthropology emphasizes an 'inductive' approach to research and cross-cultural understanding. We seek ways to bring our own deeply held cultural and linguistic assumptions into critical dialogue with those of others. We do this in order to avoid as much as possible projecting our values, categories and worldviews onto others' experiences and situations. The aspiration is for the approach to be more "bottom up" than "top down" (e.g., in "deductive" forms of research that start with a preconceived model). This also means that anthropologists must constantly test the applicability of social theories that claim to explain human experience across vast cultural, linguistic and political economic differences.

*Thus any good anthropology paper includes both **explicit** discussion of theory and method and compelling ethnographic and/or historical description. We try to make our theoretical and methodological assumptions, as well as any potential problems with them, clear at the beginning of the paper.*

Here is a typical structure of an anthropology paper aimed at analyzing a specific ethnographic case or event.

Title: reflects the thesis or main point of your paper

1) (Optional) 1-2 paragraph descriptive vignette from the event

- using a narrative voice: compellingly written in narrative form
- draws reader into the setting, introduces main participants
- gives reader glimpse of the issues and stakes

2) 1-2 pages opening section explicating main theory/methods

- using a more "academic" voice: start with a compelling opening sentence that points to the main issues or questions.
- This section should answer the question: what can an anthropological approach contribute to understanding the dynamics of this event?
- lay out your main questions and **define principle methodological terms** (don't assume your reader knows these terms or why they're important!)
- describe main problems or issues to address
- give a sense of how the paper will be organized and follow it
- draw on readings from the syllabus** to discuss main debates
- use multiple forms of citation to directly engage texts (direct quotes, paraphrase and in-text citation, mentions of theorists' names, etc)
- give the reader a sense of what a theorist's main goal is in a piece you cite for the first time
- (optional here or below in no. 3) introduce the reader to your main ethnographic methods, address ethics, how your presence shaped the event, etc.

-end with a thesis statement: the controlling idea of the essay, presents topic and writer's perspective on it. Explicitly state what you will argue is going on in this event.

-In anthropology papers, we regularly situate ourselves by using the first person: "I argue that...", or "In this paper, I claim that..", or "I will show that..."

3) 3-5 paragraphs introduction to the social, cultural and/or political economic nature of the event to be analyzed.

- Describe the social space and structure of relations of the event(s)
- Give a sense of the demographics of participants (how many, race, class, gender, age, occupation, what social roles, etc.)
- Give a sense of the nature of relevant organizations and their goals
- Focus in on describing the key aspects of the event you think are most illuminating and why.

4) 3-6 pages main analysis of the event

- each paragraph should have clear topic sentence, linked to main thesis and supported by evidence.
- Return to the theorist or terms you introduced** in the opening paragraphs
- Show how they apply to understanding important social/cultural politics in the event
- Quote and paraphrase theorists and any secondary sources by name to back up your points or critique theirs': providing credible evidence is crucial.

5) 1-2 paragraphs conclusion

- Return to your main terms and the questions you raised in the opening
- Clarify and render compelling (don't just summarize) what you concluded
- Emphasize the larger stakes of these dynamics (power, inequality, resistance, etc)

6) Bibliography