



GNDR_ST 332/ANTHRO 332 • Caroline Bledsoe

Anthropology of Reproduction

The goal of sociocultural anthropology, the largest subfield of anthropology and the core of the discipline, is to understand the dynamics of human variation in social action and cultural thought. A key question is how these variations are produced and reproduced, whether we speak of society (subsistence, ideas) or individuals (biology, psychology, social identity). Conversely, what happens when reproduction fails to occur, or does so when and how it should not. Because reproduction is so strongly associated with biology in our society, viewing it through a cultural lens poses significant challenges to some of our most basic tenets. Tensions arise in questions of agency vs. control, nature vs. culture, identity construction, reproducing under varying conditions, and so on. The study of reproduction, therefore, offers a window into the heart of anthropology itself. The goals of this course are (1) to expose students to just a few of the many sociocultural approaches to reproduction by ranging broadly across topics, time, and place; and (2) to identify and evaluate concepts and theories embedded in writings on the dynamics of reproduction. While the concept of “reproduction” can refer to societal reproduction, emphasis will be on the reproduction of children. To this end, possible topics may include fostering/adoption, AIDS orphans, fatherhood, technologies of fertility control, assisted reproduction, obstetrics, gender imbalances in Asia, debates over abortion, etc.

TBA • M 6:00-8:50pm

