U20145 CULTURE AND CARE

INTRODUCTION

This module examines care as one of the most fundamental adaptive strategies for human survival and social flourishing, providing a counterpoint to anthropological accounts that focus on conflict, friction, and violence. The central claim that we will investigate and question over the course is that care has been fundamental to the enhancement of human biosocial evolution and continues to be central as we consider ways to enhance our future.

Though fundamental (or because it is fundamental) care has taken on a variety of cultural meanings, structuring social relations from the intimate to the global. Who is deserving of care? When does care of another supersede self-care? Do I have a right to care? Does this right include a right to sex or death?

Some of the most important questions about human wellbeing revolve around care. Ethical debates about how to treat socially marginal, non-productive, and vulnerable groups (the sick and disabled, the elderly, children, orphans, immigrants and displaced persons, etc.), for example, depend on deeply invested cultural norms and assumptions surrounding care; if we are to join these debates, we need to be able to critically examine the idea, practice, and felt experience of care.

This course begins by examining the evolution of our uniquely human capacity for care, including the neurobiological, emotional, and social adaptations that support empathy and cooperation. Next, we look at moral and ethical dimensions of care as expressed rituals of religious devotion and healing. Third, we look at modern caring institutions and how care has become linked to citizenship, education and welfare. We will look critically at these institutions with particular attention to care related to sex, aging, and death. While the focus of the course will be on human care relationships, we will also briefly touch on the potentials for care and the enhancement of life to be extended to non-human animals and the natural environment.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Come to understand and synthesize care from a variety of perspectives (bio, social, cultural, psych) in anthropology
- Be able to observe, describe and critically evaluate care behaviors, feelings, and structures
- Gain an understanding of the practice of care across different societies and one's own society
- Participate in current social debates on care from an informed and reflective perspective

MODULE LEADER

Module Leader:
Jason Danely

Gibbs 5.05 x3975 jdanely@brookes.ac.uk

Office hours posted online

Other Contributors TBD

ORGANISATION OF THE MODULE
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There is a weekly slot of **three hours, from 1-4pm Wednesday.** Each week will address a different theme. There are 12 sessions of the module.

*Discussion*

The purpose of our discussions is not to give a definitive set of facts or answers, but to outline the scope of the topic, pose relevant questions for consideration, and touch upon areas of controversy. Each week there will be 2-3 seminar leaders who will be responsible for highlighting the main points of the assigned key readings and encouraging interest in the subject. That said, your enjoyment of the discussions will largely depend on your own initiative. It is important to attend regularly and engage in our discussions and debates, keep up with the readings, and prepare your own questions and critiques. Depending on the topic, we may split up into smaller groups to facilitate discussion or debate.

*Assessment*

There will be no exam. All of the assessments will focus on your attentiveness and reflection on real world situations and your ability to clearly and concisely communicate this. The synthetic essay and blogpost both require demonstrating an ability to combine your thoughts with the arguments and evidence presented in the scholarly literature on a topic.

Students will be assessed on the basis of four writing assignments:

- **50%** fieldwork observation-based **structured report** on a ‘care environment’ (1000 words)
  - **30%** report
  - **10%** presentation

- **20%** synthetic essay that looks at data gathered in fieldwork and uses to scholarly literature to interpret and analyze findings

- **30%** 1000 word **blogpost commentary** on a current global social issue on care (a portion of this grade may includes points for peer review and commentary)

- **10%** ‘**care journal**’ to collect and share reflections on personal experiences and acts of care, or responses to events, exhibitions, lectures, etc. that deal with care

Fieldwork reports, synthetic essays and blog commentaries will be uploaded to Turnitin/Grademark to ensure that student work is original and on time. Students will receive feedback through this system either as written or recorded voice feedback. Students are expected to notify the module leader to make alternative arrangements should these be necessary.

Care journals will be handed in as hard copies in class. All journal entries should be placed se

*Fieldwork Report: 50% of total mark.*

For this assignment, students will work in alone, in pairs or as small groups to conduct at least **4 hours** of ethnographic observation in an environment where two or more people are involved in acts of caring. This could be a church, a clinic, a barbershop, a care home, a school, volunteer activities, and the like. For this assignment you cannot use solely observations of humans caring for objects or non-human animals (someone in their garden, e.g.). Feel free to push the limits of the stereotypical definitions or images of ‘care,’ but be aware that you will be expected to compare your data with other scholarly work on care in anthropology and relate it to the theme of ‘enhancing life’.
All students must notify the module leader and gain permission from the leader and any other relevant persons in the care environment before beginning their observation. Ethical guidelines must be observed and agreement forms must be signed if students collect personal information (interviews etc).

Students begin thinking about what kind of project they would like to do right away and will write a short synopsis of their plan by week 4. We will do a group critique (similar to an art critique) of our plans in week 4 (although fieldwork may have already commenced by this point). This will be a way for students to learn about each other’s projects and to get ideas for their own projects.

Fieldwork should be completed by week 6. Students will compile notes and use them to complete a structured report (see appendix), including descriptions of the physical environment; the behaviors/interactions observed; the people and their relationships with each other; communicative strategies; symbolic and culture-specific behaviors. Students must also include at least 500 words of ethnographic “thick description” of a single care act as they observed it.

Finally, a self and group evaluation will be collected. Grades will be individual.

The deadline for the report is Week 9 (after Easter break). You must submit your report online through Turnitin on Moodle.

Care Journal

As we read and discuss what it means to enhance life through care in different contexts around the world, it is also important to realize that we are caring and being cared for as well. Your experience of this class benefits from practicing a reflexive sensitivity to care, be it helping an older person step out of a taxi, giving directions to a lost tourist, or watching over a three-year old nephew. Some of you might have opportunities to care in special ways through your place of work, your religious group, or through a variety of family or personal situations, and these are also potential sources of reflection.

Journals (informal, first-person narratives) should be kept of your experiences of care (something you did or saw in person). Each entry should be at least 150 words, and all students should make at least 3 entries. Total word count over the course should be between 800-900 words.

Students should upload their journals to Moodle. This will be private from other students, but not the instructor. Student who complete the assignment (at least 800 words focused on care) on time will receive full credit for this portion of the assessment.

At least one new journal entry must be posted by the end of weeks 2, 5, 8 (students cannot, for example write all their entries before week 5, nor should they wait until week 8 to write any entries. You could, however, write three entries before week 2 (450 words), one more before week 5 (600 total), and one more before week 8 (850 total), for example.

All journals will be assessed as credit/no credit based on the care that you put into them. If you are off-topic or too careless with your writing, you may not receive credit for that entry.

Blog commentary

Many of you get your news and views from blogs. These are typically short, informative, and often present the author’s point of view backed up by evidence.
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You will write a 700–900 word blog entry related to a current events topic of your choice. The topic should be global in scope (inter-ethnic conflict, climate change, welfare reform, global health inequality, child trafficking e.g.), although you may also use related local examples. Your blog must highlight the contribution that thinking anthropologically can have to address the issue you choose by citing at least 3 academic sources. Examples will be made available prior to writing the assignment and writing tips will be discussed in class.

Please remember!

Late submission of your coursework without a valid reason submitted and approved via the mitigating circumstances application process will result in a mark of zero for that component of the course. So plan ahead!

Applications for mitigating circumstances must be made on line – full details of what qualifies as mitigating circumstances and how to submit an application are available via the Brookes website.

A copy of the student feedback form is available on Moodle.

READINGS

There are no textbooks for this course (there are simply no texts that cover the breadth of topics that we will cover in this course), but students are expected to read the key texts which have been scanned and uploaded to Moodle. Other suggested readings are available in the library – all on 4 hour loan - but not enough to accommodate the high numbers taking this module.

You are not expected to read everything on the reading list, but you should read something from the key readings every week. For each week, the reading is divided into key readings (readings that directly complement the lecture), discussion readings (short articles, podcasts, blogs, etc. that serve as jumping off points for discussion) and further readings (for those who are interested in a particular aspect of the topic not covered in the key readings). Another purpose of including a wide range of further readings is avoid a rush on limited library resources, and also to give you an idea of what is available and to allow you to pursue your own interests.

It is very important that you feel confident about using the library and particularly the open access SHORT-TERM LOAN collection. Copies of many of the readings will be lodged in this section for a strictly limited loan, to enable you to get hold of material.

Some key readings have also been scanned and posted on Moodle, and more may be added over the course of the semester. Get into the habit of checking the Moodle page for this module regularly – it also contains essential further information about coursework assignments and assessment.
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>1-2:30</th>
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<td>Course introduction: who cares?</td>
<td>Group think</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
<td>Outline of an Anthropology of Care</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The evolution of care</td>
<td>adaptative advantage of care in primates and early humans, mirror neurons,</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>How we care for children</td>
<td>how does childcare shape both the carer and the child? How are mothers and other parents the basis for our capacity for care</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
<td>Hrdy, Spikins</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Empathy intersubjective practice- cognitive capacity for care</td>
<td>cognitive basis of subjective awareness, empathy,</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
<td>Hrdy (II) Lancy</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Religion, theology, and care as moral practice</td>
<td>care as value in religious systems</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Healing , well-being, ethics of care</td>
<td>care as meaning system, illness and narrative, person-centered care, compassion</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Rationalization of care and spread of care institutions</td>
<td>care of mentally ill in hospitals</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
<td>Foucault, Velpry</td>
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<td>Sex: public welfare and sexuality of disabled persons</td>
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<td>Fieldwork presentations 1-5</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Care at the end of life</td>
<td>eldercare, hospice, death with dignity</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
<td>Fieldwork presentations 6-10</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Guest Speaker: Ruth Patil (Carers Worldwide)</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Care in the Anthropocene</td>
<td>non-humans and the cosmos</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
<td>Humanitarian care, compassion and global care systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>one-page in class writing</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
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"Care in the Anthropocene non-humans and the cosmos"
WEEK-BY-WEEK GUIDE TO SESSIONS

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE MODULE

ISSUES, EXPERIENCES AND EXPECTATIONS

OBJECTIVES

- Introduce the module and address questions about how it will be organised and assessed
- Look at definitions of care and our associations with the term
- Discuss what we as a class hope to learn regarding care during our 12 weeks together

KEY READINGS


FOR DISCUSSION

LeGuin, Ursula K. “The ones who walked away from Omelas” (fiction short story)

FURTHER READINGS


CRITICAL THINKING 1

How has care made you who you are?

Does care have a temporal dimension?

What distinguishes caring behaviors from others? Is this distinction in the mind, in the action, elsewhere?

What possible conflicts arise when we give or receive care?

Why should anthropologists or anyone else care about...
PART I (WEEKS 2-4): THE BASICS

The evolution of the human capacity for care required an combination of cognitive and physiological adaptations that built on those of our primate ancestors in new and innovative ways. In other words, we need caring brains, bodies, and behaviors, and it is precisely these qualities that really separate us from other animals.

In week 2 we will look at care among non-human primates and archaic humans.

In week 3 we will examine childbirth and early socialization, especially relationships between children and their carers (mothers or others) in non-western cultures.

In week 4 we expand on the previous two weeks and think about the social innovations of cooperation and social organization that emerged from our capacity for empathy and care.

WEEK 2: EVOLUTION AND CARE

OBJECTIVES

- Debate the human uniqueness of care: are we so distinct? To what degree are we “programmed” by our brains to be moral or to care?
- Identify the evolution of traits and capacities necessary for care in human societies
- Evaluate Palaeolithic archaeological evidence of care in early hominin groups
- Discuss the implications of an evolution-based model of care for how we think about the “Anthropocene”

KEY READING

Spikins, P.A., Rutherford, H. E. and Needham, A. P. 2010. From Hominity to Humanity: Compassion from the earliest archaic to modern humans, Time and Mind 3 (3), November 2010

MORE FOR DISCUSSION


Interview with Lorna Tilley on the Bioarchaeology of Care Methodology. 2014. These Bones of Mine blog


FURTHER SUGGESTED READING


WEEK 3: HOW WE CARE FOR CHILDREN

OBJECTIVES

- Understand the role of child care in the supporting cognitive and social development of early human societies
- Compare alloparental models of care to dyadic genitor-offspring model
- Use the context of evolution to consider child care in other cultures and our own culture

CRITICAL THINKING

2

How has childcare shaped both carer and child over human history?

What kind of diversity do we find in child rearing around the world?

Why do we find some ways of caring for children acceptable, and others not?

KEY READING:

Hrdy, Sarah Blaffer. 2009. Mothers and Others, Harvard Univ. Press. CHAPTERS 1, 2, 6.

Lancy, David, ed. 2014. CHAPTER 4: IT TAKES A VILLAGE In Anthropology of Children and Childhood: Cherubs, Chattel, Changelings (pp.120-150)

FOR DISCUSSION

Scientific American blog Interview with Sarah Blaffer Hrdy on Mother Nature (2012)

Nibbling Babies Scientific American blog (2014)

No Big Deal, but this Researcher’s Theory Explains Everything About How Americans Parent. Nicholas Day, Slate.com

WATCH

Bathing Babies in Three Cultures - Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson

Babies 2010. Directed by Thomas Balmès. TRAILER

FURTHER SUGGESTED READING:


Spiro, Melford. 1965. Children of the Kibbutz: A study in child training and personality

CRITICAL THINKING

3

Is care “altruistic”?

How do ToM, distributed cognition, and other views of cooperation change how we think of personhood?

To what degree can we know what another person is thinking and feeling?

What does empathy and care have to do with imagination?

WEEK 4: INTERSUBJECTIVITY, COOPERATION, RECIPROCITY

OBJECTIVES

- Connect our cognitive capacity for care to caring practices
- Define Theory of Mind and discuss how it developed and why it is essential to care, empathy, altruism, sharing
- Define Distributed Cognition and how it allow us to think about human life

KEY READING

Tomasello, Michael. Why We Cooperate. London: MIT Press. PART 1 (pp.1-47) Brookes EBOOK

FOR DISCUSSION

The empathy machine

FURTHER READING


Bloch, M. 2013. In and out of each other’s bodies: Theory of mind, evolution, truth, and the nature of the social. Paradigm Publishers, Taylor and
Francis. (especially Chapter 1 Durkheimian Anthropology)


PART II: CARE, CULTURE, AND ETHICS (WEEKS 5-6)

Building on previous week’s discussions on the evolution and psychology of care, the next two weeks will examine care as ethical narrative. What does care tell us about cultural values, and what questions does this bring up about moral universalism and cultural relativism? How is care given special meaning by associating it with social customs and structures? In order to respond to these questions, we will look at care as embodied practices related to physical, psychological, and spiritual healing. We will compare the ethics of care to other moral systems such as law and justice, utilitarianism, virtue ethics, and religion.

WEEK 6 RELIGION, THEOLOGY, AND CARE AS MORAL PRACTICE

OBJECTIVES

- Examine myths, parables, and religious laws concerning care
- Debate: Are religious formulations of care different from secular ones?
- Form critical views of religious care and altruism in practice

KEY READING


MORE FOR DISCUSSION


Vimalikirti Nirdesa Sutra Translated by Robert A. F. Thurman (1976) Part 2 Inconceivable Skill in Liberative Technique

FURTHER READING


WEEK SEVEN: HEALING, WELL-BEING, ETHICS OF CARE

OBJECTIVES

- Distinguish between cure and care in concept and practice
- Discuss the relationship between care, embodiment and narrative using examples from healing rituals/case studies from different cultures
- Identify ways in which contemporary health practices devalue or prioritize aspects of care.

KEY READING


FOR DISCUSSION

Transcript for Joan Halifax- “Compassion's Edge States and Caring Better” (AUDIO available as well)

FURTHER READING


Kleinman, Arthur. 1980. Patients and healers in the context of culture: an exploration of the borderland between anthropology medicine, and psychiatry


Noddings, Nel. 2013. Caring: A relational approach to ethics and moral education


PART III CARE AND SOCIETY (WEEKS 7-10)

Every human society has institutions that formalize and maintain norms and values, including care. The next four weeks looks at the development of care institutions, focusing on the care of the persons living with mental illness, the care of the sexual needs of disabled persons, and care at the end of life. In each case we will revisit previous discussions of ethics, experience, and enhancing life. We will also focus on the ways social institutions can affect who we consider to be deserving of care, the social limits of care, the rights of an individual to certain forms of care (including the right to a dignified death). We will think about how care institutions are shaped by forces of modernization, capitalism, globalization, neoliberalism, and humanitarianism.

WEEK 7: RATIONALIZATION AND THE SPREAD OF CARING INSTITUTIONS

This week will continue to concentrate on the care of vulnerable populations as

OBJECTIVES

- Discuss the some aspects of the cultural and philosophical development of the modern welfare state and its institutions of care
Consider the impact of bureaucratic technologies and rationalization techniques on our relationship to care and to each other.

**KEY READING**


**RECOMMENDED READING**


Mulligan, Jessica M. 2014. *Unmanageable Care: an ethnography of health care privatization in Puerto Rico*


**CRITICAL THINKING**

4

*Why is care so important to religious faith?*

*Do rituals and teachings based in spiritual traditions enhance the depth or scope of care?*

*How is care embodied by healers?*

*What narratives produce or inhibit care for others?*

*What are the advantages and possible shortcomings of an*
Week 9: Care at the End of Life

Objectives

- Discuss: How have modern care institutions and technologies complicated rather than facilitated the process of giving EOL care?
- How do dynamics of power and governmentality hold a grip over who is aloud to live or die?

Key Reading


For Discussion

Miller, Daniel. 2015. The Tragic Denouement of English Sociality. Cultural Anthropology

Ricart, E., Frances Norwood, Alan Carver. 2015 Right to Die (3 posts). PAAGE blog

 Recommended Reading


Sacks, O. 2011. The Mind’s Eye (selections TBD)


**WEEK 10 NEOLIBERALISM, GLOBALIZATION, HUMANITARIAN**

**OBJECTIVES**

- How are charity and philanthropy shaping the way care is perceived and enacted in the contemporary world?
- Discuss the role of care ethics, emotion, and cultural values in humanitarian policy and decision making

**KEY READING**

Bornstein, Erica, and Peter Redfield. 2011. Forces of Compassion: Humanitarianism Between Ethics and Politics. Santa Fe: SAR Press. CHAPTERS 6 (Bornstein), 8 (Ticktin)


**RECOMMENDED READING**

**CRITICAL THINKING 6**

How do global humanitarian aid organizations decide who is deserving of care?

Are they replacing national governments as the source of welfare care?

What negative consequences can arise for aid organizations due to cultural difference?


Han, Clara. 2012. Life in Debt: Times of Care and Violence in Neoliberal Chile

Redfield, Peter. 2013. Life in Crisis: The Ethical Journey of Doctors Without Borders


**PART IV: CARING IN THE ANTHROPOCENE (WEEKS 11-12)**

The majority of our discussions have focused on care by and for humans. In these final weeks we will reflect on how humans also care for non-humans and for the natural world. The “Anthropocene” is a term used to denote an age characterized by the dramatic impact of humanity on the planet. What responsibilities to care do we have in this new era?

**WEEK 11 CARE FOR NON-HUMANS/COSMOS**

**OBJECTIVES**

- Describe the ways humans have cared for non-human animals and the natural world
- Apply previous weeks readings on humans to non-human objects

**KEY READING**
For Discussion


Knight, Sam. 2015. The incredible plan to make money grow on trees. The Guardian Long Read, 24 Nov.

Recommended Reading


Pereira, L. 2015. Seeing the Anthropocene as a responsibility: To act with care for each other and for our Planet.

Critical Thinking 7

To what degree is empathy able to extend to animals, plants and objects?

How does care of nature enhance our lives and caring societies?