

MODULE GUIDE:

AI 1121 THE POLITICS OF SEX AND KINSHIP

Wednesdays 9.00 – 12.00 pm. EB 2.46

Module leader: Chris Knight. Office hours: Wednesdays 2-3. Chris.Knight@uel.ac.uk

Is sexual jealousy inevitable? Is the human male a “naked ape”? How many parents has a Navaho child? Is a woman’s place the home? What features of kinship in modern London might shock an Aboriginal Australian? Why do so many hunter-gatherers view animal species as kin? Why is the population in Europe starting to decline? In European fairy tales, why does the hero so often settle in the kingdom of his bride?

This course offers an introduction to the study of kinship and marriage. We will explore monkey and ape sexual politics. We will study cross-cultural diversity in systems of human kinship and explore how these change over time. We will ask what kinship is, and examine the difference between genetic relatedness and culturally constructed kinship. Hunter-gatherer societies are self-organised, and kinship is the secret of their success. An understanding of the course readings will help make sense of the family, marriage, gender and society ranging from the prehistoric past to the present and possible future.

- The course ethnography is William H. and Jean G. Crocker, 2004. *The Canela: Kinship, Ritual and Sex in an Amazonian Tribe*. 2nd edition. Belmont CA: Wadsworth/Thomson.
- You will also need C. Knight, 1991. *Blood Relations: Menstruation and the Origins of Culture*. London & New Haven: Yale University Press.

Assessment: 30 (weekly summaries) / 40 (essay) / 30 (exam)

30 per cent for summaries using the standard template. Summaries are time-sensitive: they must be submitted weekly on the day you arrive for each lecture or they will not be marked. This policy will be strictly enforced, because successful workshops depend on everyone being familiar with the readings and providing summaries for oral presentation. You are asked to submit eight summaries; the final mark entered will be an average of your best five.

40 per cent for the essay. Word length: 2,500 – 3,000. Essay title:

EITHER: ‘Was early human kinship matrilineal?’ [Review the debate, give your verdict and explain why it matters] OR ‘Woman’s Place is the Home. Discuss’. [Remember to consider what factors might influence whether ‘home’ is a powerful place to be]. Provide full bibliographical referencing throughout, Harvard style. If you don’t know what this means, please check before proceeding any further. **Essay deadline: Wednesday May 14th, 2008.** The essay must be strictly anthropological and make full use of the SET course readings, especially those about kinship, residence and descent. Don’t rely on internet examples or references.

30 per cent for the exam.

Additional readings can be found here:

<http://homepages.uel.ac.uk/C.Knight/courserefs.htm>

http://www.radicalanthropologygroup.org/class_texts.htm

Week 1 (February 6)

1. Lecture: What is kinship? Paternity certainty versus mating effort in the evolution of kinship and marriage. Prostitution, solidarity, morality and religion.
 2. Workshop: *A matrilineal long-house: brothel or temple?*
 3. Reading for next week: W. & G. Crocker, *The Canela*. Chapter 1: 'A first visit to the Canela'.
 4. Written work for next week (1-2 pages): *Evaluating the 'mating effort' theory. How could such a system work? Write up the outcome of your workshop discussions.*
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Week 2 (February 13)

1. Lecture: Classificatory kinship terminology.
 2. Workshop: *Early Human Kinship*
 3. Reading for next week: W. H. & J. G. Crocker, 2004. *The Canela*. Chapter 2: 'The Historical Context'.
 4. Summary for next week (using the template): W. H. & J. G. Crocker, 2004. *The Canela*. Chapter 5: 'The Extramarital Sex System'.
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Week 3 (February 20)

1. Lecture: The history of kinship theory. The ideology of the family.
 2. Workshop: *Why confuse paternity?*
 3. Reading for next week: W. H. & J. G. Crocker, 2004. *The Canela*. Chapter 4: 'Affirmation through ritual'.
 4. Summary for next week: C. Knight 2008. Early human kinship was matrilineal. In N. Allen & W. James (eds), *Early Human Kinship*. Oxford: Blackwell.
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Week 4 (February 27)

- Lecture: Early Human Kinship Was Matrilineal.
- Workshop: *Must gender be disempowering for women?*
- Reading for next week: W. H. & J. G. Crocker, 2004. *The Canela*. Chapter 3: 'The Web of Kinship'.
- Summary for next week (using template): Ortner, S. B. Is female to male as nature is to culture? In M. Z. Rosaldo & L. Lamphere (eds), *Woman, Culture and Society*.

Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, pp. 67-87.

Week 5 (March 5).

1. Lecture: Partible paternity.
 2. Workshop: *Costs and benefits of free love*.
 3. Reading for next week: W. H. & J. G. Crocker, 2004. *The Canela*. Chapter 2: 'The Historical Context'.
 4. Summary for April 9 (using template): Beckerman, S., & P. Valentine, 2002. *Cultures of Multiple Fathers*. Introduction. Gainesville, Florida: University of Florida Press, pp. 1-13.
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Easter break

Week 6 (April 9)

1. Lecture: The myth of primitive matriarchy.
 2. Workshop: *The sweatlodge*. Feedback from Wales field trip.
 3. Reading for next week: C. Knight, 1991. *Blood Relations*. Chapter 12, 'The Reds'.
 4. Summary for next week (using template) Bamberger, J. 1974. The myth of primitive matriarchy. In M. Z. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere (eds), *Woman, culture and society*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, pp. 263-80.
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Week 7 (April 16)

1. Lecture: Decoding myths and fairy tales.
 2. Workshop: *The wives of the sun and moon*.
 3. Reading for next week: C. Knight, 1997. The wives of the sun and moon. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* **3**(1): 133-153.
 4. Summary for next week (using template) C. Knight, 1997. The wives of the sun and moon. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* **3**(1): 133-153. Lecture: On European fairy tales.
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Week 8 (April 23)

1. Lecture: The matrilineal puzzle.
 2. Workshop: The brothel model revisited.
 3. Reading for next week: C. Power 2006. *The Matrilineal Puzzle*. London: Radical Anthropology Group.
 4. Summary for next week: Knight, C. and C. Power 2005. Grandmothers, politics and getting back to science. In E. Voland, A. Chasiotis and W. Schiefenhövel (eds), *Grandmotherhood. The evolutionary significance of the second half of female life*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, pp. 81-98.
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Week 9 (April 30)

1. Lecture: The grandmother hypothesis
 2. Reading for next week: Hawkes, K. 2004. The grandmother effect. *Nature* 428 (March 11), pp. 128-9.
 3. Summary for next week (using template) A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, 1952 [1924]. 'The Mother's Brother in South Africa'. In A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, pp. 15-31.
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Week 10 (May 7)

1. Finishing your essay. Exam revision.
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Bamberger, J. 1974. The myth of primitive matriarchy. In M. Z. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere (eds), *Woman, culture and society*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, pp. 263-80.

Beckerman, S. and P. Valentine, 2002. Introduction. The concept of partible paternity among Native South Americans. In Beckerman, S. and P. Valentine (eds), 2002. *Cultures of Multiple Fathers. The theory and practice of partible paternity in Lowland South America*. Gainesville, FL.: University Press of Florida, pp. 1-13.

Bieseke, M. 1993. The creation of the world. Chapter 6, Selected tales and analyses. Part II, Origins and Initiations. *Women Like Meat. The folklore and foraging ideology of the Kalahari Ju/'hoan*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 124-138.

Hawkes, K. 2004. The grandmother effect. *Nature* 428 (March 11), pp. 128-9.

Knight, C. 1987. Decoding fairy tales. Chapters 12 and 13 from C. Knight, 'Menstruation and the origins of culture. A reconsideration of Lévi-Strauss' work on symbolism and myth'. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. London: University of London.

Knight, C. 1997. The Wives of the Sun and the Moon. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 3 (1): 133-153.

Knight, C. 2005 *The politics of early kinship*. London: Radical Anthropology Group.

Knight, C. 2006 [1978] *Family ideology and the crisis in twentieth century kinship theory*. London: Radical Anthropology Group.

Knight, C. 2008. Early human kinship was matrilineal. In N. Allen & W. James (eds), *Early Human Kinship*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 61-82.

Knight, C. and C. Power 2005. Grandmothers, politics and getting back to science. In E. Volland, A. Chasiotis and W. Schiefenhövel (eds), *Grandmotherhood. The evolutionary significance of the second half of female life*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, pp. 81-98.

Ortner, S. B. 1974. Is female to male as nature is to culture? In M. Z. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere (eds), *Woman, culture and society*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, pp. 67-87.

Power, C. 2006. *The matrilineal puzzle*. London: Radical Anthropology Group.

Radcliffe-Brown, A.R. 1952 [1924]. In A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, pp. 15-31.

Sahlins, M. D. 1960. The Origin of Society. *Scientific American*, 203, No. 3, pp. 76-86. Reprinted in P. B. Hammond (ed.), 1964. *Physical Anthropology and Archaeology. Selected readings*. New York: MacMillan, pp. 59-65.

Siskind, J. 1973 *To hunt in the morning* (extract: 'The special hunt'). Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 96-109.