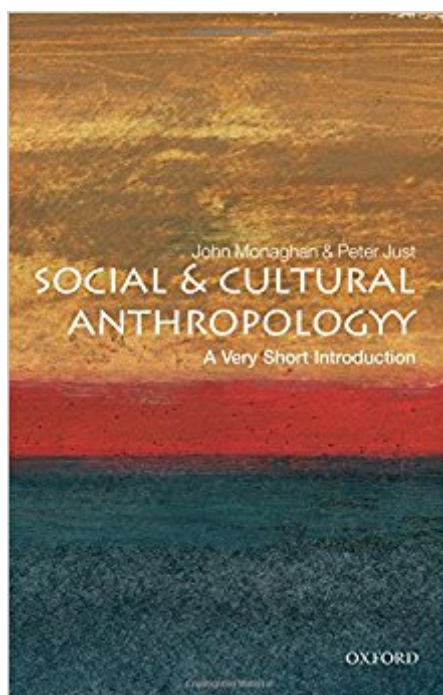


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# Social And Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction



## Synopsis

"If you want to know what anthropology is, look at what anthropologists do," write the authors of *Social and Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction*. This engaging overview of the field combines an accessible account of some of the discipline's guiding principles and methodology with abundant examples and illustrations of anthropologists at work. Peter Just and John Monaghan begin by discussing anthropology's most important contributions to modern thought: its investigation of culture as a distinctively human characteristic, its doctrine of cultural relativism, and its methodology of fieldwork and ethnography. Drawing on examples from their own fieldwork in Indonesia and Mesoamerica, they examine specific ways in which social and cultural anthropology have advanced our understanding of human society and culture. Including an assessment of anthropology's present position, and a look forward to its likely future, *Social and Cultural Anthropology* will make fascinating reading for anyone curious about this social science. About the Series: Combining authority with wit, accessibility, and style, *Very Short Introductions* offer an introduction to some of life's most interesting topics. Written by experts for the newcomer, they demonstrate the finest contemporary thinking about the central problems and issues in hundreds of key topics, from philosophy to Freud, quantum theory to Islam.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"I cannot imagine a better short introduction to anthropology... it is firmly anchored in the traditional concerns of fieldwork and participant observation."--Kent V. Flannery, University of Michigan  
"The most original introduction to anthropological thinking I have seen... The reader is made to

experience anthropology as it is practiced, as a process that begins in the field of observations and continues on as an explanatory, interpretive, theoretical, and finally disciplinary activity-- anthropology as it is done rather than talked about. The writing is notably lucid, simple, and unpretentious. The book gives the reader a sense of unique achievements of anthropology among the social disciplines, and of its position as evolving and never finished business."--Igor Kopytoff, University of Pennsylvania

Peter Just has done extensive research among the Dou Donggo of Sumbawa Island in Indonesia. His research interests include dispute settlement and law, kinship and social organization, and religion ritual. He is the author of *Dou Donggo Justice: Conflict and Morality in an Indonesian Society*, and is Associate Professor of Anthropology at Williams College. Over the last twenty years John Monaghan has carried out a number of ethnographic research projects among the indigenous people of Mexico and Guatemala. His most recent book on the subject is *The Covenants With Earth and Rain: Exchange, Sacrifice, and Revelation in Mixtec Sociality*. He is currently a professor at Vanderbilt University.

I purchased this to see if it would work as an introduction to anthropology for under graduate students. It might work for higher levels, but it isn't written in a way that is easily understood for those with no grounding in the discipline.

What a great book! When it first arrived, I was annoyed because it's so small... I figured I got ripped off... but nothing could be less true! This is a great intro to Cultural Anthropology. I have a Master's in Counseling, and a familiarity with Sociology, and I found this easy and insightful.

As I had to read this for college, I didnt choose to read it.However, the premise is interesting, with the study of anthropology being its core subject. I did like some of the topics being discussed and how anthropologists studied and delved into those cultures. The only thing I majorly did not like was the pace of the book, with the first chapter being 13% into it. Otherwise, I would definitely recommend this to anyone interested in anthropology.

Perfect for the budding professor who is about to teach anthropology for the first time or the reluctant student too lazy to read more than a handful pages at a time. Whilst its designed to be used to accompany a larger textbook, it nevertheless quenches the thirst for understanding what

anthropology is generally all about.

After disheartening forays into text books and frustration at readers that are either too thematic or otherwise not quite right for a quick orientation in the discipline, I decided to check this out. This is about as perfect a scene-setter as I could ask for for either an intro course or any course that is likely to attract students who do not have an anthropological background. It's pocket-sized, it's affordable, it's readable, and it's SMART. It covers theoretical debates in a straight-forward and understandable way that shows why anyone should care about evolution vs. diffusion (to name one example). This little book as does about a good a job as any at showing how (and why) anthropologists and others use the word "post-modernity" (pg 69). The field examples are well chosen and engaging. The chapters are of a length and written in a style students are likely to read. Even better, the authors give enough tantalizing detail that I suspect it will inspire students to read MORE.

I like how it's written as it introduces an idea and gives an example. Then, moves on to keep to the theme of a very short introduction. Don't get me wrong it is packed with info and for taking first class this semester. I wanted to read something that made more sense first as an introduction. I feel a little less wary of my class now. Thank you.

This was a requirement for one of my wife's college courses. It was perfect for her needs.

Informative and approachable. The author makes clear the value and the criticisms of postmodernism. I picked this book up to give my self an introduction to topic that, as of recent, has become part of the general narrative.

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