Exam Assignment – ANTH4100 Core Themes in Contemporary Anthropology
Spring 2025

EXAM INSTRUCTIONS

In answering your question, please:

- Make sure to read in full the assessment criteria before answering the questions
- Use references in your answers if you are referring to specific authors/texts.
- The references do not count towards the word limit but don't forget to include a bibliography. You can use APA or similar reference systems, just be consistent.
- You are not required to look for new sources, but using other sources is allowed. Remember that you will be assessed on your engagement with the course literature.
- Avoid very long quotes. If you quote directly, please indicate the quoted text with quotation marks ("") and cite the page number.
- The examination text is given in English. You may submit your response in Norwegian, Swedish, Danish or English.
- Note that per University policy "It is prohibited to generate an exam answer using an Artificial Intelligence either in part or in whole even where the course description stipulates that all learning aids are permitted. Submitted work shall be the student's own work."

EXAM QUESTIONS

Answer **one** of the following two questions:

Question one: How do anthropologists engage with the concept of sovereignty and with what purposes? In this course, we have analyzed different conceptualizations of sovereignty and have examined how this key concept in political anthropology relates to theorizations of the state, the nation, the family, the firm. Drawing on at least three readings from the course, write an essay answering this question by focusing on specific ethnographic examples to explain what different authors argue.

OR

Question two: How do anthropologists conceptualize history and why? Read the following excerpt from Elizabeth Davis' *Artifactual: Forensic and Documentary Knowing* and answer this question in relation to her work and drawing on at least two other authors' approach to history in this class. In your response, develop an argument that characterizes Davis' conceptualization of history and explain the overlaps and divergences with other anthropologists' takes on history studied in this course.

EXCERPT:
History Doesn't Belong to Us

And thus the production of forensic evidence yielded its own secrets, in turn. These secrets were not only a matter of what was concealed in the CMP's confidential archives. They were also a matter of what was quite literally destroyed in the process of investigation. When human remains are exhumed, the graves are destroyed. I have learned from archaeologists that such destruction is part and parcel of discovery, and that what is destroyed depends on what investigators are seeking. As the team leader at one excavation site told me: *The first thing I learned about excavations is that they destroy culture. Once you understand that, you understand that the question is how to learn as much as you can from a site while doing the least damage.* According to CMP protocols, material evidence recovered in an excavation would be removed from the site each day, brought to the lab, then washed, dried, cataloged, and stored in the climate-controlled annex until it was time for analysis — a matter of weeks, months, or years. When the analysis was complete, any bones and fragments that could be identified conclusively were returned to the relatives of the victim, along with any associated artifacts. Artifacts that could not be associated with a specific person were retained by the CMP in storage. Any potentially dangerous materials, like munitions, were turned over to the UN to be destroyed by the bomb squad. Thus, according to procedure, most of the material evidence recovered by the CMP was reburied by relatives; some was stored anonymously; and some was destroyed (p. 87-88).