Below you will find six (6) questions to choose from for assessment 2, choose ONLY one question.

Sources: The textbook Hylland Eriksen, T. (2015) Small Places, Large Issue: An Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology, (4th. ed.) Pluto Press is useful reference source for all the questions. All the questions have some recommended sources. You are expected to undertake some independent research – anthropological literature, public/popular texts (as empirical examples), and/or documents and films. You need to use at least eight (8) sources for the Essay – at least four (4) for the Essay Plan (keep in mind that this component is OPTIONAL). You can of course use the same sources for your Essay Plan and the Essay.

There are some full books included in the references. Keep in mind that you are not expected to read the full book (neither are you deterred from doing so). Keep in mind that it is always useful to find review articles (usually short articles) for such books, simply look for them in the databases in the Library.

All sources available via the WSU Libraries.

There are a number of WOS recordings and iSprings (the iSprings date from 2018 and 2019 due to current situation), which will give you guidance on how to approach the topics set for this Assessment.

Finally, if you have any general questions on topics and/or writing an academic essay, please post them on your discussion board on vUWS. There is a specific link for Assessment 2 and simply create your own posting/tread and it is good to use subheadings which indicate the content of your posting. Keep in mind, there are no stupid questions, and all of us benefit from your questions!

The recommend structure for the Essay Plan (OPTIONAL):
Introduction to the topic (ca. 100 words)
Body of the Essay (ca. 300 words).
Conclusion (ca. 100 words)

The recommended structure for the Essay (this will be a bit different for those attempting Question 1 on Kinship, slightly fewer words in each section):
Introduction (100-150 words).
Body of the Essay: This section can be broken into sub-section, depending on the topic. I recommend the use of sub-headings as these will guide you as the writer and the marker as the reader (1100-1300 words).
Conclusion (100-150 words). Keep in mind that you should never introduce new material in the conclusion.

See Marking criteria/rubric to be posted soon under the Assessment 2 folder.
Respect the word limit, the plus/minus 10% rule applies.
Assessment 2: Essay questions.

**Question 1: My kinship diagram + Reflection on ‘What is kinship?’**

Draw a kinship diagram of your own family that extends back to at least your grandparent’s generation (enlist a parent or older relative to help you). Identify relatives with kinship terms from Ego’s - your - perspective, in whatever languages are used within the family. What categories of kin are most important, and why? How does your experience of kinship reflect your own cultural and historical background? Finally, and having completed your diagram and reflected upon it, how would you answer the question, ‘what is kinship?’

The Essay itself should be 1300 words and the kinship diagram makes up for the other 200 words.

**Readings:**

Besides the textbook (esp. Chapters 7 and 8), there are several other references that you will find very useful:

Peletz, Michael. 1995. 'Kinship Studies in Late Twentieth Century Anthropology' in Annual Review of Anthropology, Vol. 24. (This is a more complex read than Stone, but a good source and one that will also introduce you to the annual review series).


We will discuss the construction of a kinship diagram in ZOOM sessions in weeks 4 and/or information will be provided in the Workshop 4 folder.
**Question 2: Critical comparison of Matriarchy vs. Patriarchy.**

Outline the social and cultural organisation of the Mosuo of Yunnan province, China. Is this matrilineal society a matriarchy (you should distinguish between matrilineal and matriarchy)? Is matriarchy simply the opposite of patriarchy (you should define patriarchy). Why does Goettner-Abendroth (2018) argue that modernisation is threatening the Mosuo matriarchal way of life?

**Readings:**

Besides the textbook (**esp. Chapters 7 and 8**), there are several other references that you will find very useful:


Peletz, Michael. 1995. 'Kinship Studies in Late Twentieth Century Anthropology' in *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 24. (This is a more complex read than Stone, but a good source and one that will also introduce you to the annual review series).


We will discuss the construction of a kinship diagram in ZOOM sessions in weeks 4 and information will be provided in the Workshop 4 folder.
**Question 3: Gifts and Commodities in Contemporary Society.**

How is the distinction between ‘gifts’ and ‘commodities’ articulated in everyday economic practice in late modern consumer capitalism? Is there such a thing as a ‘pure gift’ or a ‘pure commodity’? In your answer you should engage with the extensive literature discussing Mauss’ conceptualisation and draw upon specific examples or case studies that clarify or complicate the distinction between gifts and commodities.

Besides the textbook (especially Chapter 12), there are several other references that you will find very useful:

**Key Readings:**


**Other Readings:**


Question 4: Salt Harvesters in Ghana.

Watch Marcia Rock’s ethnographic film ‘Salt Harvesters of Ghana’ (a link will be provided for Workshop 5 and in the Assessment 2 folder). This film depicts a traditional economic practice that has remained unchanged for hundreds of years. Discuss to what extent you think this activity should be maintained as a culturally significant practice for this community or whether the salt harvesters of Ghana would be better off if their methods gave way for more industrialised processes. In your essay you should utilize both social and cultural analyses in order to reflect on the consequences of social and economic change in this context.

Reading/Sources:

Besides the textbook, there are other references that you will find very useful:


Other sources will be discussed as we ZOOM/Discuss online for Workshop 5.
**Question 5: What is Ethnography? A critical reflection.**

Eriksen (2015) claims that:

> Anthropology distinguishes itself from the other social sciences through the strong emphasis placed on ethnographic fieldwork as the most important source of new knowledge about society and culture (p. 32).

Start your essay by outlining the key elements of Ethnographic research/fieldwork. Then provide some critical reflection on the methodological and epistemological strengths and limits (weaknesses) of this approach. It will be good to refer to particular ethnographic work to support your reflection.

**Readings**

Besides the textbook *(especially Chapter 3)*, there are other references that you will find very useful:

- Hammersley, M. 2018 ‘What is Ethnography? Can it Survive? Should it?’ *Ethnography and Education*, 13:1, pp. 1-17 (there is a strong focus on the field of Education, but this article provides you with a number of reference to definitions of ‘what is ethnography?’, hence links to other sources which might be useful).


We will discuss this topic in ZOOM/online discussion for Workshop 4.

**Question 6: Constructing the Field: Ethnographic Fieldwork in the Contemporary World.**

*Constructing the Field: Ethnographic Fieldwork in the Contemporary World* (ed. Amit 2003) is an edited collection containing the accounts of nine scholars, critically reflecting on their experiences of conduction Fieldwork (Ethnographic research). Choose one of these accounts for a critical reflection. You need to draw on both the descriptive components provided by the chapter author as well as the ‘particulars’ (pros and cons) associated with their fieldwork. Make sure to consult the Introductory chapter, before choosing one of the eight chapters (i.e. chapters 2-9)

**Key reference**

Amit, V. (2003) *Constructing the Field: Ethnographic Fieldwork in the Contemporary World* – the book is available as an ebook or full download from the WSU Library (The link is under ‘Sources’ for Assessment 2.

The iSpring on the earlier Question 6 is still useful.

**ESSAY PLAN feedback criteria. This is an OPTIONAL task and does not attract marks.** There will not be any rubric feedback for the Essay Plan. The feedback will be provided in track changes in-text, short comments, and a summary comment.

**Marking rubric will be updated and sent to you.**