WHAT IS ANTHROPOLOGY?
ANTHROPOLOGY

• Who are we?

• Where have we come from?

• Why do we look like we do?

• Why don’t we all look alike?

• Why do we behave the way we do?
George Harrison

“For every human is the quest to find the answer to ‘Why are we here?, Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going?’ That, to me, became the only important thing in my life. Everything else is secondary.”
ANTHROPOLOGY

• Scientific Approach

• Study of Humankind - Human groups

• Seeks to Produce useful GENERALIZATIONS about people & their BEHAVIOR

• To arrive at an UNBIASED UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN DIVERSITY
ANTHROPOLOGY

• Objectivity

• Chagnon and the Yanamamo
ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

• HOLISTIC APPROACH

• CULTURAL RELATIVISM

• COMPARATIVE APPROACH
HOLISM

• To view things in the broadest possible context

• To cover the whole scope of humanity

• To provide a total or composite view

1) Human Culture as a System
2) Biocultural Perspective
Kuru

- Highland New Guinea Tribes
- Neurological Disorder
Cultural Relativism

• To view the beliefs & customs of other peoples within the context of their culture not one’s own.

• Practice of not judging other cultures based on the standards of one’s own culture.
ETHNOCENTRISM

• Group-centeredness

• Tendency to see one’s own culture as the center of everything.

• The measure or standard against which all other lifeways are evaluated.

• Tendency to consider one’s own culture as superior or better than all others
War in Iraq
CULTURAL RELATIVISM

• Anthropologists must be unbiased, objective

• Involves an effort to remain unbiased in one’s observations

• Acknowledges that cultures are DIFFERENT, but NOT RANKED

• No right or wrong cultures
Critical Cultural Relativism

• Recognizes Plural Interest Groups

• Understands Power Relationships

• Human Rights
Ideals of Democracy
Comparative Approach

- Compares society with society; tradition with tradition
- Identifies Similarities & Differences
- In order to arrive at Generalizations
- Variability in people’s behavior
- Testifies to the Range of the Human Experience
"Anthropologists! Anthropologists!"