General Certificate of Education (A-level)
June 2012

Anthropology ANTH3

(Specification 2111)

Unit 3: Global and Local: Societies, Environments and Globalisation

Report on the Examination

ANTH3

General

A relatively small number of students took the ANTH3 examination and therefore broad generalisations on the performance of the cohort as a whole are not easy to produce. However, it is possible to state that a few students produced outstanding work, some students performed extremely well and many produced very sound scripts. There was a clear improvement in overall performance by comparison with the examination in January 2012 and this is very positive and encouraging.

No question appeared to cause any particular difficulties for students. Answers for the most part were of sufficient length and most students attempted all the required questions. However, a small minority of students either did not attempt to answer one of the required two questions in Section B or alternatively produced two very short essays for this section of the examination paper. In the first case the result was that the students effectively lost 30 out of the 90 marks available on the paper and in the second the students tended not to gain very good marks for each question as the answers were too short fully to meet the assessment criteria.

Positive features:

- Most students attempted all required questions.
- There was an awareness of the specific demands of Unit 3, particularly the connections between specific topics and issues related to globalisation, and the synoptic requirements of the unit.
- There was use of detailed, contextualised ethnographic studies in particular in Section B (in relation to material culture/museums, migration and globalisation/homogenisation).
- Students made appropriate use of relevant concepts and anthropological theories.
- Answers showed knowledge of the work of specific anthropologists (both ethnographic and theoretical).
- Some students were able to incorporate methodological discussions, where relevant, into their answers.
- Better answers applied a range of perspectives and concepts in order to develop their analyses and discussion of the ethnographic examples.

Key Issues:

- There was a lack of use of anthropological theory in some scripts, with some students making no reference to any relevant anthropological concepts or theories in their answers. Alternatively, there was the inclusion of theoretical material which was not directly relevant to the question and which meant that students had less time to write material that was relevant.
- There was an over-emphasis on descriptive material with a corresponding lack of analysis and evaluation in some answers.
- There was a lack of precision in contextualising ethnographic material, with too many over-general, and sometimes problematic, statements about vague, often exoticised 'tribes' or the presentation of uncritical and unexamined material relating to an imagined idea of 'the West'. Ethnographic material referring to indigenous groups or to populations in western countries needs to be fully contextualised and the source of the information, ideally an ethnographer/anthropologist, cited.

- There were too many discussions based on apparently common-sense assumptions, particularly for Questions 05 and 06 and some of these were problematic, such as those stating that all migrants are diseased, poor, from the South (often cited as 'third world'), lacking educational or professional qualifications and 'taking our jobs'. While such ideas are certainly in the public domain, anthropology students need to evaluate, assess and, if appropriate, critique such notions and not simply take them as given. In short, there was a lack of reflexive understanding that the positions presented as 'correct' are themselves the product of the time and place in which they have developed and may say more about the person presenting the position than the people who are supposedly being described.
- There was a tendency for some students to assume that a change in a 'traditional' society constituted an automatic loss of culture and not enough understanding that cultures are not fixed and immutable entities. Change itself is not the problem, but the nature of the change and the terms under which such change takes place may be problematic. This was particularly an issue in Question 06.
- Students sometimes located the societies that they wrote about in the wrong country/continent or confused the practices of one society with those of another.
- Some students confused the theorists they cited so that particular anthropologists were linked to theories and concepts that they are not associated with.
- There was sometimes a lack of explicit comparison, with students describing one case in relative detail and another briefly, with no discussion of how the two related to each other or advanced the understanding of the question. Alternatively, the comparative case was simply 'the West' and in such instances it was often the case that the West represented democracy, justice and freedom – or conversely, a place where the colonial past and contemporary consumerism means that the West is destructive of all worthy human values, which can now only be found among isolated and threatened 'tribal peoples'. While both these positions may have some merit to them, they need to be fully supported with evidence and detailed material presented to make such cases anthropologically convincing rather than merely romantic and nostalgic musings.

Section A

Question 01

Many students were successful in explaining what is meant by 'refugee' and in explaining two reasons why some people become refugees. Most students were also able to state that refugees had to leave their country of origin and cross an international border in order to be defined as refugees. Students were generally also able to state that war or natural disaster were often reasons why people became refugees. However, weaker answers tended, incorrectly, to treat 'migrant' and 'refugee' as synonyms, or did not make explicit the idea that to become a refugee a person needs to travel to another country. Some candidates referred to economic migrants as refugees or assumed that all refugees were non-western and were all seeking a new home in western countries.

A good proportion of students did achieve full marks or close to full marks on this question and managed to do this in a relatively short paragraph of writing.

Question 02

This question was reasonably well-answered by a good proportion of students who gained high and, in a significant number of cases, full or nearly full marks for their answers. However, others failed to gain marks often by describing how people became refugees rather than the *consequences* of becoming a refugee, and in this way they failed to explicitly answer the question. Some of the consequences that students were able to discuss included the loss of home, trauma and dependence on international organisations and charities. Some students considered the consequences on a refugee of refugee status in a receiving country and were clear that refugees form a stigmatised group that is often discriminated against and misrepresented in the media. All these responses, when developed satisfactorily, were rewarded. Some students, however, listed one consequence and then developed several points on this one consequence and these students did not do as well as those who answered the question exactly as set. Some students offered more consequences than they did development of the consequences.

Students need to be aware of the structure of the marks for this question: one for each consequence and two for developing each of these in a satisfactory manner.

Question 03

All students attempted this question and many appeared to use some of the knowledge they had from Unit 1 to answer the question, sometimes in great detail. The main weaknesses in answers stemmed, again, from not reading the question carefully enough and so producing answers that were not directly relevant. In this regard, some students wrote answers that compared humans with other primates or considered the cultural differences between human populations rather than sticking simply to reasons for biological differences between human populations.

The very best answers were able to describe and evaluate different theories of human evolution (multi-regional, out of Africa) and provide reasoned evidence to support one model of evolution which accounted more completely for the biological differences between human populations than any other. Some students were also able to contextualise the different theories in historical terms to suggest that the theories themselves are the product of specific times and places. Students who wrote about 'Mitochondrial Eve', however, often assumed that there was just one woman from whom all modern humans descend and others assumed that mitochondrial DNA is only to be found in females and not in males.

Environmental factors were often cited as helping to explain the biological differences between populations and most often body shape and skin colour were chosen as the examples for discussion. The overwhelming majority of students who wrote on brain size and intelligence were able to avoid racist interpretations that link some populations and their skin colour to intelligence or were able explicitly to describe such theories as flawed because of the methodologies used to obtain results. However, unfortunately some students were not able to avoid drawing potentially racist conclusions from the materials they presented.

Section B

Question 04

Of the optional questions this was the one that fewest students chose to answer. The weaker answers did not refer to specific collections, specific peoples, or to any clearly anthropological sources or debates on material culture held in western museum collections. These answers were mostly relatively brief, repetitive and moralistic, providing little or no evidence that the students had studied material culture.

Better answers discussed the history of collections both in general terms and also in relation to specific collections. They were aware of the problems of representation of material culture, issues of ownership both legal and moral, access to collections and the preservation of objects for study and for future generations. The strongest answers were also able not only to outline developments in relations between museums and the peoples whose material pasts are held in collections, but also critically to evaluate the impact of, for example, legislation such as NAGPRA, and to consider both the positive and potentially negative consequences of such legislation. However, not all those who mentioned NAGPRA seemed entirely clear what this was and some assumed that this legislation applied internationally rather than simply in the USA. Some students discussed ethnographic collections they had been to visit as part of their Anthropology A-level studies and this often permitted students to express their interest and enthusiasm for the subject. This was developed on fieldtrips where they were encouraged to view material objects not in isolation but as embedded in a complex history and a sometimes fraught ethical, legal and representational present. Some students were also able to discuss the different positions held by contemporary curators on the matter of the repatriation of objects and to describe and evaluate some of the policies that museums now have in place when requests for the return of objects are made. Many students were clear that human remains constituted a special case of 'object' and required particular care when dealing with the mistreatment of peoples in the past and the concerns of their descendants in the present.

Question 05

This was a popular choice of question in Section B and students varied considerably in their ability to answer on the impact of migration on local societies. The best answers were excellent, with detailed and relevant ethnographic examples analysed using appropriate concepts and theories. Some schools and colleges had clearly prepared students very well with a clear and sensible definition of migrants as well as a thorough knowledge of both the long- and the short-term impacts of migration on local societies. This was understood both as the societies that migrants move to and as the local societies from which the migrants come. Students were aware of the impact of remittances on the home societies of migrants and some were able to discuss the impact of migration on families, for example, of women who leave their children in order to work elsewhere to provide for their educations and futures. Many were able to discuss such gendered forms of labour migration as part of a contemporary global movement of people from poorer to richer countries and to consider the long-term effects on the children and families left behind by women who are absent because of economic necessity. Other students chose to focus more on the impact of migrants on the societies they move to. Here, in addition to more positive discussions on hybrid cultures, there were case studies of migrants subjected to discriminatory practices, segregation and the particular issues faced by second generation migrants. Some of these studies were cases of internal migration, often from rural to urban contexts in one country.

Some students misread the question and wrote on the causes rather than the impacts of migration on local cultures. Alternatively, some appeared to be continuing to answer Question 03 by discussing the migration of early humans across the globe and especially migratory patterns out of Africa. Some students defined tourists as migrants, and for those who then described migrants as people who move and settle to live and/or work on a longer-term basis in a place that is not their 'home' or place of origin, this was not a particularly significant problem. However, some students wrote entire essays on tourism and this was not an appropriate way to answer the question. Tourists and short-term business travellers are not migrants: migrants are people who *settle* in another place, even if this is for a relatively short period of time.

A very small number of weaker answers did not include any sound ethnographic case studies or relevant concepts but rather reproduced tabloid misrepresentations and stereotypes about diseased migrants and illegal immigrants. These answers asserted migrants come and 'take our jobs' by working for less than 'we' would without any intention of integrating, or who are useful for the economy because as 'Africans' they are 'obviously not educated', 'naturally' and 'innately' suited to taking on poorly paid, menial jobs such as providing social care to the old and the sick which make them 'content'. It does not take much anthropological imagination to understand just how problematic such answers, and the limited views they presented, were.

Question 06

This question elicited varied responses, with some excellent essays at one extreme and at the other some very brief, very general common sense ruminations on the destruction of all diversity that will inevitably result from the spread of global technology and pernicious western influences. The very best answers usually provided a sound definition of globalisation, sometimes in the form of a quotation and often attributed to an appropriate theorist. These answers also usually included detailed ethnographic material which was analysed using suitable concepts and theories, including fears of homogenisation, localisation and the commodification of cultures as well as often demonstrating an awareness of how aspects of globalisation can either undermine or promote cultural diversity in different places and when used for different ends. In this vein, studies of the Kayapo were particularly popular as an example of how global technologies can be used to preserve, protect and even revitalise indigenous cultures. Better uses of the Kayapo ethnographic material also noted how the introduction of video cameras had altered internal power relations between older and younger men and how different Kayapo groups used their control over resources in different ways. Such answers were able to make fine distinctions and to demonstrate awareness that even within one social group there may be different sub-groups choosing different strategies to achieve their goals, resulting in diverse outcomes. Cheese-making in the Italian Alps and hip-hop music in Japan were other popular ethnographic case studies used by many of the students in their answers. Weaker answers simply listed global technologies such as Facebook leading to time-space compression and made general statements about how such technologies would lead to a uniform and homogenised future for humankind.

It was especially pleasing to see that students were aware of, and able to use in critical and nuanced fashion, the work of anthropologists such as Appadurai and Hannerz, and that even when sociologists such as Saskia Sassen were cited it was usually in an informed and relevant context.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the Results Statistics page of the AQA Website.

Converting Marks into UMS marks

Convert raw marks into Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) marks by using the link below.

UMS conversion calculator www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion