

**INTERPRETIVE
[hermeneutical]
ANTHROPOLOGY**

Interpretive Anthropology [hermeneutical]

1. Key Questions:

- how can we understand people in other cultures?

2. Methods:

- ‘thick description’

3. Key Players:

- Clifford Geertz
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EXEGETING HUMANS

1. Social Systems:

1.1 Dimensions of Social Systems:

- 1.11 *Social*: the definition, allocation and use of relationships. Examine the relationships between individuals, within groups, in the society as a whole, and globally.
- 1.12 *Economic*: the definition, allocation and use of resources. Examine the use of material and nonmaterial resources.
- 1.13 *Political*: the definition, allocation and use of power. Look at how power is allocated and used.
- 1.14 *Legal*: the definition, allocation and use of legitimacy. See how legitimacy is symbolized and used.
- 1.15 *Function*: look at the functions of activity you are observing.

1.2 Levels of Social Analysis:

- 1.21 Interpersonal relationships: roles, statuses, communication, etc.
- 1.22 Networks
- 1.23 Groups:
 - kinship groups: marriage patterns, relatives, extended family
 - geographic groups: dorms, neighborhoods, towns
 - associational groups: clubs, gangs, unions, army, churches, committees
- 1.24 Societal categories:
 - classes and interclass relationships
 - ethnic groups, and intra- and inter-ethnic relationships, and migration and assimilation
 - religious groups
- 1.25 Societies:
 - band, tribal, peasant and urban societies
- 1.26 Global Systems:
 - globalization and localization

2. Cultural Systems:

2.1 **Dimensions of culture:**

2.11 *Cognitive*: categories, logic, ideas, beliefs

2.12 *Affective*: feelings, prejudices

2.13 *Evaluative*: judgments regarding 1) truth and falsehood, 2) like and dislike, 3) right and wrong.

2.2 **Levels of culture:**

2.21 Material products.

- technology, architecture, art, use of space and time, clothing.

2.22 Patterns of behavior.

- transactions between individuals.

2.23 Sign systems [semiotics]: examine the different sign systems humans use.

- audio: words, sounds
- visual: print, pictures, signs
- tactile: touch
- taste:
- smell:

2.24 Myths and rituals: observe the formalized patterns of behavior required or expected in specific situations, and find the paradigmatic stories people believe about reality.

- greetings, partings, beginning and closing functions
- class rituals, sports rituals
- sacred rituals

2.25 Knowledge systems: gather information on the different domains of knowledge, such as science, technology [how to bake a cake, fix a car, etc.], business and religion.

2.26 Worldview: look at the unquestioned 'givens' which the people have.

- deep cognitive assumptions: related to formation of categories, semantic domains, logics used, nature of reality.
- deep affective assumptions: related to feelings
- deep evaluative assumptions: related to deep values, loyalties and allegiances.

3. Personal Systems:

3.1 **Conscious and subconscious processes:** thoughts, feelings, values

3.2 **Drives, needs, desires**

3.3 **Conflicts, strategies:** ways individuals handle life situations.

4. Biological Sphere:

- food, health, reproduction, risks, etc.

5. Physical Sphere:

- ecology, climate, terrain
- proxemics: time and space

6. Spiritual Sphere:

- God's work in the event.
- activities of angels and demons.
- 'spirit' of corporate systems.
- human spirits.

POSTMODERN ANTHROPOLOGY

Postmodern Theory

1. Key Questions:

- what is the relationship between knowledge and power?
- is objective knowledge possible?

2. Theory:

- **deconstruction:**
 - of the enlightenment
 - of science
 - of Truth
- **knowledge:**
 - constructed
 - experiential
 - personal
- **relativism**