

IT'S ABOUT TIME: The Anthropology of Time

LLC Fall 2024

TIME: Friday 10am-12pm

IN PERSON: Hybrid: Temple Beth-El & Zoom

DATES: 9 Weeks September 13-November 15 2024 (no Class Oct 4 Temple Closed)

ENROLLMENT: limited to 14 TBE; 7 Zoom

COORDINATORS: Donna Kerner and Tom Colby

Course Description:

Why do we feel 'disoriented' when we change the clocks in the fall or spring or when we travel some distance and experience 'jet lag'? How do concepts such as 'arrive on time,' 'wasting time' or accomplishing something in a 'timely manner' reveal the way our culture associates time with certain moral values? How does our experience of time change as we grow older? Is there really 'no time like the present'?

Join us in a journey of discovery as we explore how cultures have constructed and experienced time through the ages from the first prehistoric records of time reckoning to pre-literate experiences of time/space to the use of time-keeping objects to signify state power and extend empires. We will explore topics such as how time is related to location, to faith, to labor/markets, and to war. This will be a highly interactive and collaborative class. We will use David Rooney's *About Time: The History of Civilization in Twelve Clocks* (W.W. Norton, 2021) as a point of departure, but readings, films, and other materials will be contributed by class members as they facilitate weekly class discussions.

About the Coordinators:

Donna Kerner

I am a cultural anthropologist who has lived much of my life in East Africa and the South Pacific conducting field research. My research interests include: Gender and Famine; Education and Class Mobility; Material Culture and Memory; and Entrepreneurship/Micro Finance. I am a Professor Emerita at Wheaton College where I taught for thirty-three years and held the William Isaac Cole Endowed Chair, Department of Anthropology.

It was the concept of infinite time (infinity) that got me into trouble when I was around 8 years old and ultimately led me to study Anthropology. I couldn't wrap my head around how time and the universe were related and was startled to learn that life on our planet had changed over millions of years. I'm still working this out so I don't have all of the answers. Over the course of my research, I have been continuously intrigued by how people living in different societies understand time and organize their lives accordingly. I'm excited to have this opportunity for us to share our knowledge and experiences with each other as we explore a topic that most of us take for granted. After all, there's no present like time☺.

Tom Colby

Tom Colby has been a member of LLC for two years. In that time, he has taken Electric Automobiles, Winter Waterfowl, and Great Structures. His hobbies include photography, woodworking, astronomy, and electronics. Tom is currently a member of the Tech Committee.

Topics

(Please see reading calendar for both assigned and supplementary reading/browsing/viewing suggestions)

Week 1: 9/1 Introduction to course:

Foundational concepts: preliterate vs prehistoric; cultures vs. civilizations, states/nations/empires; cosmology vs. religion; ecological time, structural time, linear, circular time

Reading: *About Time* "Introduction"

Week 2: 9/20 Time Before History: Ecological and Generational Time

Time-Place-Memory: Dreamtime (Australian aborigines)

Age-Generation-Time: Structural time in lineage societies (Chagga, Maasai)

Landscapes and historical sites; cohorts (boomers, Gen X, Millennials)

Reading: see calendar

Week 3: 9/27 Civilizational Time

Monumental State Power: Clock towers of Ancient Greece/Rome/Egypt

Fixing Calendars: Mayan, Aztec and Incan Calendars; Stone Henge

Public clocks, School Calendars, Fiscal Years

Reading: *About Time* "Order"

Week 4: 10/11 Spiritual Time and the Medieval World

Christian: Religious yearly calendar and Book of Hours

Byzantium: Astronomical Clocks

Religious festivals and celebrations; faith calendars

Reading: *About Time* "Faith" "Virtue" "Knowledge"

Week 5: 10/18 Time-Space-Maps: Voyages of Discovery /the Extension of European Empire

Ships and Navigation: Longitude, Latitude and the Expansion of trade

GMT and Markets: The introduction of World Time

Times zones and jet travel, Changing the Clocks: Daylight Savings/Standard Time

Reading: *About Time* "Markets" "Empires"

Week 6: 10/25 Industrial Time

Piece-work to Hourly Wages: Time Management, Daily routines, Work & Leisure

Electricity, Trains, and Markets: Synchronization of Time in the Industrial World

Assembly Lines and Home Economics

Viewing: Charlie Chaplin "Modern Times" Lucy and Ethel in the Chocolate factory

Reading: *About Time* "Manufacture" "Morality" "Resistance"

Week 7: 11/1 Digital Time

Death of Analog Time: The World We Have Lost

GPS and Atomic Time: World-wide Web, Satellites, War/Peace

Reading: *About Time* "Identity" "War" "Peace"

Week 8: 11/8 Carnival: Gender Reversals and Reproductive Time

Circular Vs. Linear Time

Perceptions of Time and the Developmental Process

Reading: see calendar

Week 9: 11/15 Slow Food and Quiet Quitting

When Time Stood Still: The Pandemic and Its Aftermath

Meditations on Work-Life Balance

Reading: see calendar

CLASS FORMAT

The first half of each class [roughly 10:00-10:45] will focus on exploring the day's topical theme, taking off from relevant chapters of the book *About Time*. Ideally, the first discussion will be based on questions generated from either a different historical period, a different culture(s) or both. Let's use this first hour to do some space/time travel and exercise our imaginations. For example, how was time thought about differently in Ancient Greece or the world of the Incas? How was time experienced in cloisters of the Middle Ages? How might you experience time differently if you grew up in a culture that didn't have a vocabulary for "past, present, or future"?

10:55-11:05 Break

The second half of each class [roughly 11:05-11:50] will explore contemporary examples of this thematic content in our own lives. Beaming down to earth, what are influences of ancient cultures/civilizations in the how we organize and experience time in our own lives in 2024? Are there remnants of the pre-industrial world still in operation? When do we "lose track of time"? What is Déjà vu? Why do children and adults experience time differently? These are just a few examples to get you thinking.

GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATING A CLASS

Choosing a Focus:

The course calendar section of the syllabus lists readings and activities for the class each week. You can use these readings/websites/films/podcasts as a starting point, but the goal of taking turns facilitating class discussions is for us to learn what passionately interests YOU. The course syllabus provides you with some sample sub-topics that might be explored for each segment of the course. You can choose one of these or suggest one of your own. I am happy to brainstorm with you well in advance to choose a sub-topic that interests you and to suggest some readings and activities to stimulate class discussion.

Guidelines for How to "Own the Hour"

Two class members facilitate class discussion for each class. The two discussion facilitators for the day may choose to work together collaboratively to organize discussion for both hours or work separately by dividing the class theme in two different segments.

Facilitation Time and Structure

Class facilitators want to think about how to construct questions that generate discussion and/or review themes and sub-topics for the week. I want to encourage you to think creatively about how to approach this and there is no need to show a PowerPoint. I am happy to brainstorm with you how to plan activities that can serve just as effectively. If there is something that you want to show, please discuss this with me so that we can have things working efficiently. Classes can be entirely based on discussion or a mix of presentation/discussion. Facilitators should plan to "own" about 45 minutes of each half of the class. Whatever way you organize your segment of the class, we want to make sure you have left time for interactive discussion and questions. Please think of facilitations in the **broadest** possible way.

Preparation for Facilitating

Please use relevant research material from a variety of sources; not just Wikipedia, although you can begin there. Google Scholar Advanced search is also very helpful. Many copyright-free images are available on www.creativecommons.com. Check out YouTube and Kanopy for short videos. Take your research and think about a good way to use your hour by putting questions in your own words. If you are using audio visual materials (that includes Power Point slides) keep in mind that sometimes **Less is More**. Please use the resource links provided on the LLC website to start you off. Also remember that in keeping to the allotted time, you are being courteous to your fellow presenter(s) who also have limited time to talk about their interests. No matter how you organize the class for the allotted time, please remember the old adage: how do good musicians get to Carnegie Hall? **PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE**. Make sure you have the materials you need well organized, check any digital files and backups, and do a run-through so you know you can present the topic within the allotted time. If you are using a PowerPoint for your presentation, please save your materials in both PP and PDF, marked with your last name, save on a thumb drive to use in class, and send me a copy of the PDF in advance.