

ATH 111 Anthropological Concepts

Assimilation: Assimilation is the process whereby individuals or groups of people from one culture are absorbed into and changed by another culture. Usually this process involves the absorption of cultures by a dominant culture, but not always. You can learn more about assimilation in the MindEdge resource in Modules Two and Seven.

Cultural Symbols/Symbolism: Symbols are objects, words, or actions that stand for something else, and hold culturally specific values. Cultural symbols communicate a culture's values and are communicated in both verbal and nonverbal ways. The communication of a culture's values that reflect the inner workings of our society helps to define who we are and with whom we associate. You can learn more about cultural symbols and symbolism in the MindEdge resource in Modules Three and Six.

Enculturation: Enculturation involves learning the cultural norms, values, and practices of a native culture. Generally, this concept is used to describe babies and children learning their native culture. You can learn more about enculturation in the MindEdge resource in Module Two. There is also additional material on the relationship between sex, gender, and enculturation in Module Five and on the relationship between social control and enculturation in Module Six.

Ethnocentrism: Ethnocentrism is the attitude or opinion that the norms, values, and customs of one's own culture are superior to those of others' cultures. You can learn more about ethnocentrism in the MindEdge resource in Module One.

Gender: In cultural anthropology, gender refers to the social component that reflects not only a person's biological identity but the cultural and social values and roles each group assigns to those identities. The number of recognized genders is not necessarily static and depends on the culture. You can learn more about gender in the MindEdge resource in Module Five. There is also information on the relationship between gender and cultural identities in Module Two and on the relationship between gender, colonialism, and development in Module Seven.

Globalization: Globalization is the integration of national economies and cultural values into the global systems with open access to people, goods, and information. Therefore, globalization affects cultures and vice versa. Because of globalization, exposure to other cultures tends to be the most predominant means by which cultures change. You can learn more about globalization in the MindEdge resource in Module Seven.

Kinship: Kinship is a culturally defined relationship established through blood ties, marriage, or adoption. Kinship groups are groups of people who culturally conceive themselves to be relatives, cooperate in certain activities, and have a sense of shared identity. You can learn more about kinship in the MindEdge resource in Module Five.

Marriage: Marriage includes the customs, rules, and obligations that establish a special relationship between sexually cohabiting adults, between those adults and any children they take responsibility for, and between the kin of the married adults. You can learn more about marriage in Module Five. There is also information on the relationship between marriage and religion in Module Six.

Modernization: Modernization involves the transition from a premodern society to a modern society. Generally, we think of the process of urbanization and industrialization and its impact on cultures. You

can learn more about modernization in the MindEdge resource in Module Seven. There is also additional information on the relationship between modernization and how cultures change in Module Two.

Political Systems: Political systems reflect a culture's distribution of power, power that is established and maintained with or without a formal government. As such, anthropologists use "political" to include all human activities involving power. You can learn more about political systems in the MindEdge resource in Module Six.

Religion/Systems of Belief: Belief systems are shared, mutually supported values, norms, and practices that reside within a specific group of people. As this pertains to religion, belief systems reflect the values of a specific religious group. You can learn more about religious systems and systems of belief in the MindEdge resource in Module Six.

Rites of Passage: Rites of passage are public ceremonies or rituals recognizing the transition of a person from one group or status to another within a culture. Some examples of rites of passage include, but are not limited to, rituals like marriage, sweet sixteen birthday parties, male circumcision, or even completion of college. You can learn more about rites of passage in the MindEdge resource in Module Six.