Overview
The aim of this course is to introduce students to the discipline of anthropology: to distinguish anthropology from other social science disciplines and show how anthropologists apply their concepts and methods to the varieties of human experiences. More importantly, this course is designed to explore how anthropologists generate meaningful knowledge about the human condition and solve real-world problems. Students in the course will examine a diverse range of ethnographic case studies from around the world that reflect key thematic areas in anthropology both from a theoretical and applied perspective including language and communication, environments and subsistence, economics, marriage and family, identities (gender, race, ethnicity, nation), political organization, religion and ritual, and globalization. Central to all of these themes will be the question of power and conflict in human relations: how is power constituted within the experience of human relations and in what ways does it reveal social conflicts?

Role of Service-Learning in the Course
The service-learning option will play a critical role in enhancing students’ understanding of the course concepts, materials, and goals. For example, it will provide an exceptional opportunity for students to understand the meaning and experience of anthropological research. One of the distinguishing features of anthropological research is participant-observation: prolonged interaction with, and observation of, a particular community. For most students in introductory classes, this kind of experience is inaccessible. Their courses typically include an event-based exercise in which participation and observation are confined to one event and setting. Grounded in weeks of participation, the service-learning option offers a rare chance for students to move beyond a single event and participate in a lengthy experience while supporting a local community initiative. Such an experience will allow students to reflect on the process of anthropological fieldwork and better understand the kinds of challenges and rewards anthropologists experience during the course of their research. In addition, the service-learning option will provide an excellent opportunity for students to gain a deeper understanding of local social issues and the various ways community organizations attempt to address them. This is an important feature of the service-learning option as many of the course readings and lectures will focus on the work of anthropologists concerned with solving some of the world’s most pressing social issues. Indeed, it is an essential goal of this course to show students the value of anthropological thinking on critical social problems and the practical contributions anthropologists can make towards improving the lives of others.

Assignments Related to Service-Learning
Students enrolled in the service-learning option will have one primary assignment related to their experience. Each student will submit one end-of-the-quarter reflection journal. The journal will require one to two paragraphs of critical reflection for each hour of service at their respective sites. Their reflections will incorporate class themes, ideas, concepts, etc. in a way that demonstrates how anthropological thinking can be applied to real world experiences. This assignments will allow students to think critically about their experiences by linking course materials to their participation in the service-learning program.