JANUARY 2012

SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

MODULE CODE: SA4860

MODULE TITLE: Anthropology of the Amazon

EXAM DURATION: 3 hours

EXAM INSTRUCTIONS

Candidates should answer THREE questions

Do not overlap your answers to different questions.

Ethnographic examples should be used to illustrate all your answers

PLEASE DO NOT TURN OVER THIS EXAM PAPER UNTIL YOU ARE INSTRUCTED TO DO SO.
1. ‘The ancient times ancestors lived in the forest, fighting and hating each other, then the white bosses made them into slaves to work rubber, and they began to become civilized’. (Piro man). Discuss in relation to anthropological understandings of the past in Amazonia.

2. ‘It looks like a tree, but when you take hallucinogens, you see that it is a house full of people’. (Piro shaman). Discuss in relation to indigenous Amazonian understandings of nature.

3. ‘Love is the machine that generates the universe’. (Young Cashinahua schoolteacher). Discuss in relation to indigenous Amazonian ideas of the good life.

4. ‘Then the gods went into the sky. We were left as the forsaken ones. We are the future food of the gods’. (Araweté man). Discuss in relation to the emergence of socio-cosmological analysis in studies of indigenous Amazonian societies.

5. ‘Then, hunting in the forest, the shaman met many people, friendly people. They were really wild pigs, but the man saw them as people. “Come to my house to drink beer”, he said’. (Ashéninka myth). Discuss with reference to perspectival theory.


7. ‘Then all the women started to menstruate, and later people started to die. Before, people did not know about menstruation, birth or death. The moon invented these, because he was angry with his former kinspeople’. (Kuniba myth). Discuss with reference to indigenous Amazonian understanding of death and mourning.

8. ‘How should I know? I was made yesterday! I wasn't there when the Sun and the Moon made everything!’ (Mehinaku man responding to ethnographer's question). Discuss with reference to indigenous Amazonian people’s understandings of myth.

9. ‘I raid my enemy to steal his children so that they can marry my children. This way we become friends’. (Yaminahua man). Discuss with reference to accounts of indigenous Amazonian dualism.

10. ‘Then the priest showed the wild ancestral people pictures of saints and said take the names of the ones they liked as their new Christian names. That is how they became Shiwilu people, real civilized people’. (Shiwilu myth). Discuss with reference to indigenous Amazonian ideas of historical processes.
11. ‘These societies look like the games of very serious children’. (North American anthropologist). Discuss in relation to the use of comparison in recent studies of indigenous Amazonian societies.