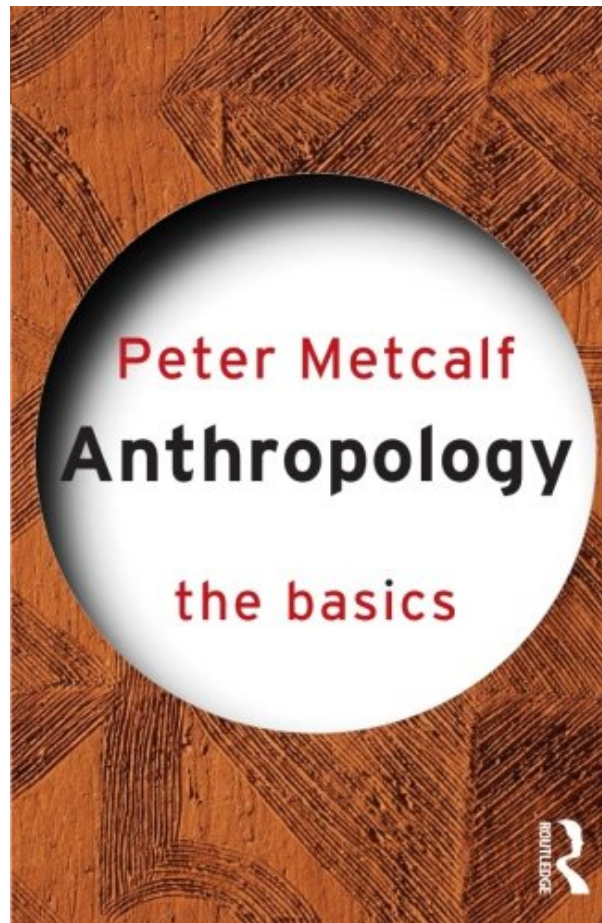
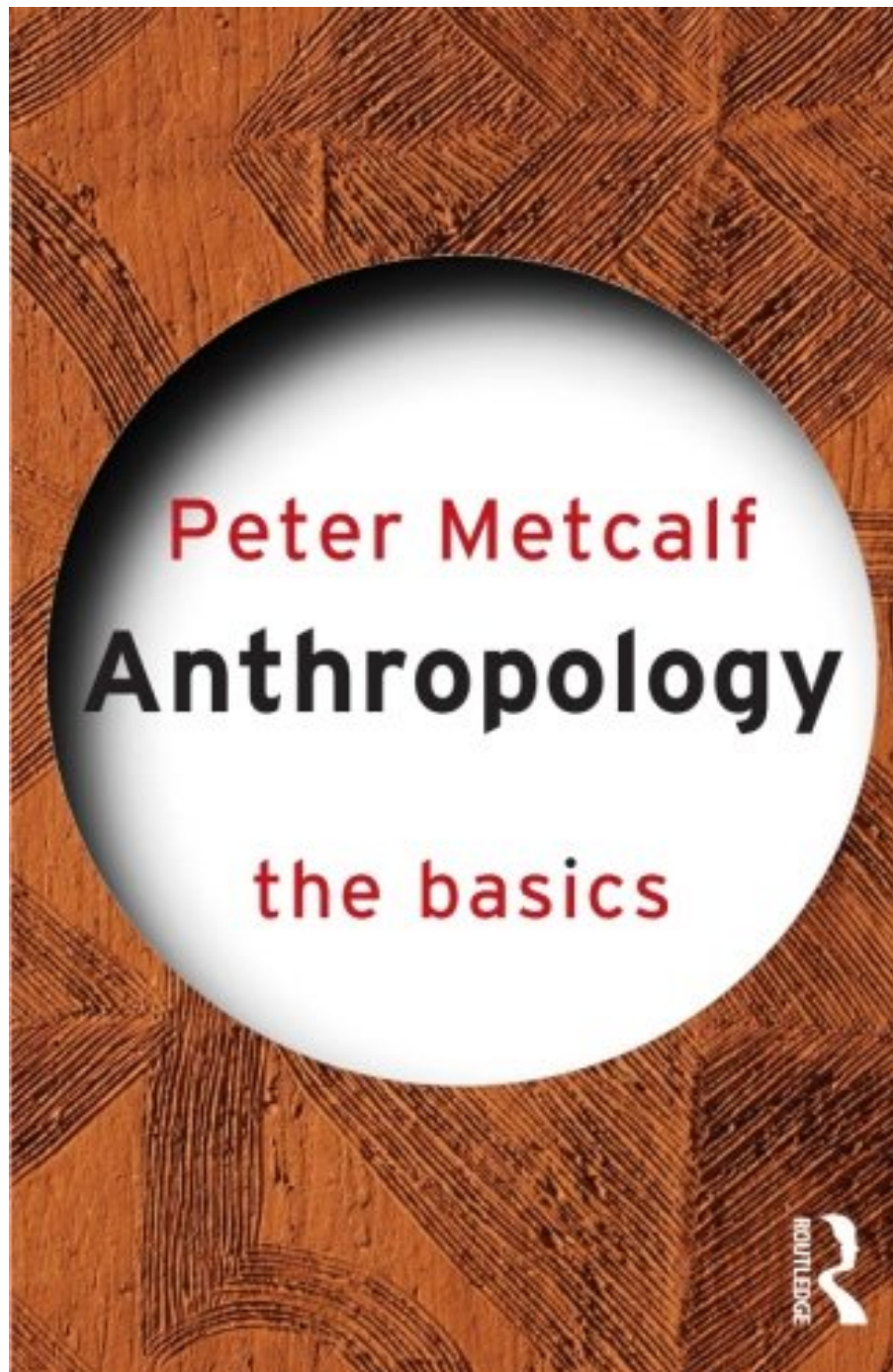


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'A good read, with instructive boxes and useful summaries, and it will doubtless whet many's appetite for more.' – Thomas Hylland Eriksen, University of Oslo, Norway

## About the Author

Peter Metcalf is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Virginia. His most recent publications include *They Lie, We Lie: Getting On With Anthropology* (2000), and *Celebrations of Death: The Anthropology of Mortuary Ritual* (with Richard Huntington, 1991).

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- how can we distinguish cultural differences from physical ones?
- what is culture, anyway?
- how do anthropologists study culture?
- what are the key theories and approaches used today?
- How has the discipline changed over time?

This student-friendly text provides an overview of the fundamental principles of anthropology and is an invaluable guide for anyone wanting to learn more about this fascinating subject.

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Good intro to anthropology, but intros can only do so much.

By Vincent

Metcalf's approach to anthropology is admirable because it consciously incorporates self-critical aspects I feel are important for anthropology novices to be aware of and understand. Many anthropology texts cover

only in passing some of the inherent problems of the field, not giving, in my opinion, the proper impression that anthropology is currently a field in flux, one that is constantly in the process of reinventing itself. Metcalf establishes this clearly, covering thoroughly and repeatedly central themes like cultural relativism, the relationship between anthropology and imperialism, and the sticky issue of power relations between ethnographers and informants.

So four stars for taking this fresh approach, but negative 1 star for the style: I can't blame him, because he is treading the academic minefield of explaining complex issues in an introductory text, however, I really did think Metcalf erred on the side of simplicity on this one. Metcalf's text is critical of anthropology, and criticism of anthropological methods usually involves a call for a more complex, nuanced understanding of indigenous peoples/gender/sexuality/whatever. Yet, in the enthusiastic rush to elaborate this criticism in an introductory text, Metcalf often makes the types of generalizations that he claims anthropology should try to avoid. This mistake doesn't happen too much... but it certainly leaps out from the page at you when the last two paragraphs you read are exactly about the inadequacies and insidious malice of generalizing.

3 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

BO

By James Adams

NOT SO MUCH A REVIEW AS THE AUTHOR'S ATTEMPT TO MAKE SURE THAT RACE AND CURRENT OPINIONS OF THE OBSERVER DON'T INFLUENCE RESEARCH AND IMPRESSIONS OF OBSERVED GROUPS. WHILE ADMIRABLE, IT DIDN'T REALLY TELL ME WHAT ANTHROPOLOGY IS. IT ALSO SPENT A LOT OF TIME TELLING WHAT ANTHROPOLOGISTS DID WRONG IN THE PAST, WHEN INFLUENCED BY RACIAL AND "CURRENT CULTURE" ARROGANCE. ALSO A LOT OF DESCRIPTION OF OF BASIC RESEARCH.

REALLY DIDN'T GIVE AN OVERVIEW OF ANTHROPOLOGY AT ALL, AND COMING FROM A MATH/PHYSICS BACKGROUND THIS WAS WHAT I WANTED. I AM CURRENTLY READING WINDOW ON HUMANITY BY KOTTAK WHICH IS ACTUALLY A GOOD OVERVIEW OF ANTHROPOLOGY

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Four Stars

By basem jastaniah

Simple and great

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