

Anthropology 324D
Anthropological Theory
Fall 2005

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Office hours: M, W, F 9:00-9:50; W 1:00-4:00; or by appointment

Course Description

This course surveys key theoretical paradigms in anthropology. We begin with the advent of the discipline in the nineteenth century and look at how anthropology's examination of "primitive" societies contributed to Victorian evolutionary thinking. We then enter the twentieth century and move to essential theoretical developments in modern anthropology: the concept of culture and cultural relativism; functionalism; the significance of symbolism in culture; the significance of the environment; the formative power of political and economic systems over local cultures and societies; feminism; and globalization. We will be concerned with how twentieth century anthropologists have applied theory to data gathered via ethnographic fieldwork to reconceptualize culture, society, and social change. By focusing on the shifting of theoretical approaches in anthropology up to the present, we see the ways in which theory has undergone transformation according to historical circumstances and influential anthropologists. We also see continuity in regard to anthropology's abiding concerns: human diversity and human universals, the relationship between culture and worldview, the relationship between individual and society, and social change.

Reading assignments will correlate significant theories with the writings of significant anthropologists representative of those theories. We will view a series of videos that document the work of some major figures in the discipline. Through readings, lectures, and films, students should gain familiarity with approaches anthropologists have taken to the following questions:

- What is culture?
- How does one weigh the relative importance of the symbolic and material aspects of culture?
- How do we account for culture and social change?
- How should we deal with relationship between individual and collective, person and society, structure and agency?
- How can anthropological theory help us deal with questions of personal and social identity?
- Why is anthropology an important discipline? How should it operate in the world; what should be its role in world affairs?

- How can social theory help us understand critical, real-world issues, such as poverty, social inequalities, and environmental problems?

Course Requirements

Readings

Most readings for the course are on e-reserve at the Hamersly Library. You can reach them from the “Reserves” link on the library’s homepage. Where this is not the case, the database from which you can access the reading is noted after its citation on the course schedule. The library staff has not listed the e-reserve readings in the order we will read them, so please pay attention to what readings are scheduled for a particular week and then find them on the e-reserve list.

Reading Notes

I can’t stress enough the importance of embodying your responses to readings in notes in some form—whether they take the form of writing notes in the margins of readings or keeping a separate notebook. Reading notes serve the following purposes: 1) they will enhance your engagement with the reading; 2) they will prepare you for discussion contributions; 3) they will help you prepare for papers and the final exam. **For every class meeting, you will prepare from your reading notes three substantive comments and/or questions that you consider worthy of consideration. You will write these down**, and during the first five or ten minutes of the discussion period of a given class meeting, we will circulate these cards to grasp an idea of what’s on our minds. I will collect these and keep a record of this aspect of your class participation.

How to Do Well in Anthropology 324D

To succeed in this class, attendance is mandatory, and you must be consistent in completing readings, absorbing lectures, viewing films, and taking thorough notes.

Lectures

Lectures will seek to reinforce your attention to major concepts in the readings, and they will frequently introduce external, supplementary material. Since you will be responsible for both reading and lecture material, it will pay to take solid notes.

Videos

Films, too, will reinforce, complement, and add material to readings. The films, therefore, will form an essential part of the learning experience in this course. If you **must** be absent a class period, be sure to see the film at some other time. You should take notes on films and be prepared to draw on them for discussion in class and when you study for the final exam.

Participation

Doing the reading, heeding the lectures, and paying due attention to films are all part of participation in the course, and they lay the foundation for participation in

discussion. Your reading notes, again, are designed to help give you something to say in discussion. Given the format of the course—a four-hour seminar—it is incumbent on all of us to bring what energy we can to it. This means, among other things, active and abiding participation in discussion. All forms of participation here mentioned are important enough that 30% of your grade will rest on the qualities of your participation. Please feel free to speak with me about any concerns you have about participation, or about how I've been keeping track of this dimension of your course grade over the term.

Papers

You will submit four short papers over the course of the term. These should be 3-4 typed pages long, double-spaced, in 11- or 12-point. You will choose two weeks during the first half of the class, and two during the second half, to submit the papers. Papers should principally address the **ethnographic reading** for a particular week, not the background reading on a certain theoretical paradigm, if there is one. There is no need to tell me in advance which weeks you have decided to turn in papers. Late submissions will receive a half-grade penalty for every day late.

Thinking and writing are mutually reinforcing. The objective of paper writing is to help you think through the assigned ethnographic readings and record your carefully considered response to them.

Paper Format

Papers should contain answers to the following questions:

1. What is the main theoretical framework advanced in this work?
2. What concepts central to that framework (e.g. equilibrium in functionalism or evolution in cultural ecology) does the author emphasize in his or her analysis of the ethnographic material?
3. How does the author link data and theory? That is, what elements in the ethnographic material itself are brought forth to support the author's theoretical argument?
4. Does the author provide a convincing account? Are other interpretations possible?

Final Exam

There will be an in-class final exam at 2:00p.m., Dec. 5. Details will be forthcoming.

Grade Calculation

Papers40%
Participation.....30%
Final Exam.....30%

Course Schedule

Week 1 Introduction

Film: *Sir Walter Baldwin Spencer: Fieldwork*

Week 2 From Evolution to Cultural Relativism

Reading:

Lassiter, Luke Eric

2002 Evolution and the Critique of Race: A Short Story. *In Invitation to Anthropology*. Pp. 9-35. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Morgan, Lewis H.

1964 Ethnical Periods. *In Ancient Society*. Pp. 11-23. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Tylor, Edward B.

1965 Animism. *In Reader in Comparative Religion*. W.A. Lessa, and Evon Z. Vogt, ed. Pp. 10-20. New York: Harper and Row.

Boas, Franz

1940 The Aims of Ethnology. *In Race, Language and Culture*. Pp. 626-638. New York: Macmillan.

Lecture: "Edward B. Tylor's Unilineal Evolution"

Film: *Franz Boas: The Shackles of Tradition*

Week 3 Culture and Personality

Reading:

Benedict, Ruth

1934 The Science of Custom. *In Patterns of Culture*. Pp. 1-20. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Benedict, Ruth

1946 The Child Learns. *In The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*. Pp. 253-296. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Lecture: "On Margaret Mead"

Film: *Margaret Mead and Samoa*

Week 4 Functionalism

Reading:

Radcliffe-Brown, A.R.

1940 Preface. *In African Political Systems*. M. Fortes, and E.E. Evans-Pritchard, ed. Pp. xi-xxiii. London: Oxford University Press.

Malinowski, Bronislaw

1922 Introduction: The Subject, Method and Scope of This Inquiry. *In Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. Pp. 1-25. Prospect Heights.

Evans-Pritchard, E.E.
1940 The Nuer of the Southern Sudan. *In African Political Systems*. M. Fortes, and E.E. Evans-Pritchard, ed. Pp. 272-296. London: Oxford University Press.

Lecture: "Evans-Pritchard on Azande Witchcraft"
Film: *Bronislaw Malinowski: Off the Veranda*

Week 5 Symbolic Anthropology

Reading:
Sahlins, Marshall
1977 Colors and Cultures. *In Symbolic Anthropology : A Reader in the Study of Symbols and Meanings*. J.L. Dolgin, David S. Kemnitzer, and David M. Schneider, ed. New York: Columbia University Press.

Geertz, Clifford
2000 Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight. *In Anthropological Theory: an Introductory History*. R.J. McGee, and Richard L. Warms, ed. Pp. 496-516. Mountain View: Mayfield Publishing Company.

Lecture: "Mary Douglas on the Abominations of Leviticus"
Film: TBA

Week 6 Marxism

Reading:
Marx, Karl
1977 (1859) Preface. *In A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. Moscow: Progress Publishers. Available at:
<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1859/critique-pol-economy/preface.htm>.

Meillassoux, Claude
1980 From Reproduction to Production: a Marxist Approach to Economic Anthropology. *In The Articulation of Modes of Production*. H. Wolpe, ed. Pp. 189-201. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Bourgois, Philippe
2000 From Jibaro to Crack Dealer: Confronting the Restructuring of Capitalism in El Barrio. *In Anthropological Theory: an Introductory History*. R.J. McGee, and Richard L. Warms, ed. Pp. 315-329. Mountain View: Mayfield Publishing Company.

Lecture: "A Primer on Marxism"
Film: *The Charcoal People*

Week 7 Cultural Ecology and Cultural Materialism

Reading:
Steward, Julian
1977 The Concept and Method of Cultural Ecology. *In Evolution and Ecology*. Pp. 43-57. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Steward, Julian H. and Robert F. Murphy
1956 Tappers and Trappers: Parallel Processes of Acculturation. *Economic Development and Culture Change* 4(4):335-355. **JSTOR**

Harris, Marvin
2000 The Cultural Ecology of India's Sacred Cattle. *In Anthropological Theory: an Introductory History*. R.J. McGee, and Richard L. Warms, ed. Pp. 287-301. Mountain View: Mayfield Publishing Company.

Lecture: "Marvin Harris on the European Witch Craze"
Film: *From the Heart of the World*

Week 8 Feminist Anthropology

Reading:

Rosaldo, Michelle Zimbalist

1974 Woman, Culture, and Society: A Theoretical Overview. *In Woman, Culture, and Society*. M.Z. Rosaldo, and Louise Lamphere, ed. Pp. 17-42. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Leacock, Eleanor

2000 Interpreting the Origins of Gender Inequality. *In Anthropological Theory: an Introductory History*. R.J. McGee, and Richard L. Warms, ed. Pp. 429-444. Mountain View: Mayfield Publishing Company.

Silverblatt, Irene

1991 Interpreting Women in States: New Feminist Ethnohistories. *In Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era*. M. di Leonardo, ed. Pp. 140-171. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Lecture: "On Sherry Ortner's 'Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?'"

Film: *Femmes Aux Yeux Ouvertes*

Week 9 Discourse, Hegemony, Power

Reading:

Wolf, Eric R.

1990 Distinguished Lecture: Facing Power--Old Insights, New Questions. *American Anthropologist* 92(3):586-596. **JSTOR**

Williams, Raymond

1977 Hegemony. *In Marxism and Literature*. Pp. 108-114. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ferguson, James

2002 The Constitution of the Object of "Development": Lesotho as a "Less Developed Country". *In Development: A Cultural Studies Reader*. S. Schech, and Jane Haggis, ed. Pp. 93-102. Oxford: Blackwell.

Shrestha, Nanda

2002 Becoming a Development Category. *In Development: A Cultural Studies Reader*. S. Schech, and Jane Haggis, ed. Pp. 103-114. Oxford: Blackwell.

Lecture: "The Concept of Power in Gramsci and Foucault"

Films: *Commanding Heights; This Is What Democracy Looks Like*

Week 10 Postmodernism and Globalization

Reading:

Said, Edward W.

1989 Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors. *Critical Inquiry* 15(2):205-225. **JSTOR**

Tsing, Anna

2000 The Global Situation. *Cultural Anthropology* 15(3):327-360.

Appadurai, Arjun

1998 Dead Certainty: Ethnic Violence in the Era of Globalization. *Development and Change* 29(2):905-925. **Academic Search Premier**

Review for final

Film: *Hate*