

ANTH 300 (History of Anthropological Theory)

Fall 2004

TR 10:00-11:15

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This course reviews the key theoretical ideas that have structured anthropological research and writing. By focusing on the diverse theoretical approaches that have guided anthropological research up to the present, we see the important ways in which anthropological theory has been revised and refined over time as theorists continue to grapple with such central conundrums as the following:

- What is culture?
- Which is more relevant and determinant: the material or the symbolic aspects of culture?
- How does one conceptualize the individual agent apart from the group (structure vs. agency)?
- How does one theorize social function versus social change?
- How can social theories explain power and inequality between nations, ethnic groups, races, castes, genders, and generations?
- How do people reinforce social identity and difference through symbolic means as well as social practices?
- How can one conceptualize society and culture during the contemporary era of neoliberal globalization?
- What tensions exist between the anthropological ideal of cultural relativism and the notion of universal human rights?
- What is the purpose of anthropology, and how can one legitimize the anthropological quest to post-modern critics?

The class is organized chronologically, and thus provides students with a processual, dynamic view of anthropological theory. By presenting anthropological theory in a historical context, it aims to: a) demonstrate to students how specific issues within anthropology reflect larger social issues of the time; and b) show students how anthropological theorists develop schools of thought that build on or refute the ideas of their predecessors.

Reading assignments couple historical and biographical descriptions of the major anthropological theorists with excerpts of their ethnographic writings. In addition, we view some excellent video-recordings that document the fieldwork and intellectual contributions of great anthropological forefathers and foremothers.

Prerequisite: ANTH 103 or 106

Relationship to the major and minor: ANTH 300 fulfills one of the requirements for both the Anthropology major and minor. Majors are reminded that you must earn a grade of C- or better.

READINGS

Students should complete all readings the date that are assigned (see the schedule below). They should bring the textbook to class every day along with any additional assigned readings for that week.

A. Books: Students are required to read two textbooks, which are available in the college bookstore:

1. *Visions of Culture: An Introduction to Anthropological Theories and Theorists*, 2nd Ed. By Jerry D. Moore (2004: AltaMira Press)
2. *Perspectives on Culture*. By H. Sidky. 2004: Pearson)

B. Articles: Students are also required to read a collection of readings by the key anthropological theorist whom we study. Most of these readings are excerpts from the anthropologists' most influential books. These readings are available electronically on Blackboard by clicking the button "Course Documents." I will give an in-class demonstration on how to access the articles. Students must *print up all articles*. To see a list of articles and their full references, go to the end of this syllabus.

RESOURCES

I have an excellent bibliography on my computer and a good collection of books on my shelves, so students are welcome to come see me during office hours for suggestions on additional readings for their class projects and for general edification. In addition, the library has some helpful anthropology encyclopedias/dictionaries in the reference section:

- Levinson, David, and Melvin Ember
1996 Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology. New York: Henry Holt. **GN307E52 1996**
- Barnard, Alan, and Jonathan Spencer
1997 Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology. London, NY: Routledge. **GN307E525 1996**
- Seymour- Smith, Charlotte
1986 Dictionary of Anthropology. Boston: G.K. Hall. **GN11D48 1986**
- Winthrop, Robert H.
1991 Dictionary of Concepts in Cultural Anthropology. New York: Greenwood Press. **GN307 W56 1991**
- Barfield, Thomas
1997 The Dictionary of Anthropology. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell. **GN307 D485**

ATTENDANCE POLICY

This class is highly participatory and revolves around regular discussions and group work. Therefore attendance is required. Students are permitted 3 un-excused absences, but each absence beyond that will result in a 3-point penalty to the individual's grade. To grasp the weight of such a penalty, note that three such absences would lower one's final grade by a full letter.

GRADING

A. Participation	13%
B. Lead discussion and write paper on major anthropologist	15%
C. Exams (2 exams @ 17 pts. each)	34%
D. Reading summaries (10 summaries @ 3 pts. each)	30%
E. Article Exegesis (paper and short presentation)	8%

A. Participation:

dates: ongoing throughout the semester

Students are expected to participate in open-ended class discussions and group-work. Please note that successful participation requires you to *carefully and thoroughly* read the assigned books and articles by the date they are assigned, and to attentively view all films. The instructor will write weekly comments in a participation log to give you feedback on how you are doing, and you will give a self-assessment of your participation at mid-term and semester's end. Please see me if you are uncomfortable speaking in class so that we can discuss the matter.

B. Lead discussion and write paper on major anthropologist:

dates: leadership dates will differ for each student (choose your theorist then see the schedule); papers will be due week 10 for the theorists we study before then, or on the day that we study that theorist for those we study after week 10.

Each student will choose a major theorist whose work they will study in depth. They are required to 1) be in charge of class discussion on the day we study that theorist. This will involve giving a 10-15 minute analysis of the assigned reading by that theorist (see bibliography at end of this syllabus); and formulating and distributing discussion questions on that reading which they will use in leading a 15-minute class discussion; and 2) write a 10-page research paper that examines the research, theoretical orientation, and contribution to the field of that anthropologist, based on study of biographical materials, the person's major works, and discussions of those works by other anthropologists. See hand-out for more details.

C. Exams:

dates: Midterm: Thursday, October 14; Final: Wednesday, December 15 8:30-11:30

Exams will test students comprehension of the major theories and ask them to synthesize material by comparing and contrasting major theorists and schools of thought. The exams will consist of one take-home essay question that asks you to synthesize material, and some in-class short-answer, multiple-choice, and essay questions.

D. Reading summaries:

dates: You can choose 10 days on which we have an e-reserve reading assigned. The only rule is that half of your reading summaries must be handed in *before* Week #9 (October 26th). If you hand more than five reading summaries in after this date they will not be accepted.

Reading summaries are meant to encourage a deeper reading of the e-reserve readings, which are original texts by the theorists we will be studying. You are to write short (2-3 pages maximum) summaries of the e-reserve readings (not the textbooks!). Your reading summary should succinctly describe the main theoretical and interpretive issues. Do NOT go over specific ethnographic facts (talk about people and places) except as they are relevant to an understanding of the issues. Someone reading your summary should know what that anthropologist's original ideas and concepts are—in other words, what was the main point of the reading? The format of the summary is flexible as long as it is typed and coherent. You may use an outline or note format, or a more standard paragraph format (note that this is not expected to be a formal critical essay, but a substantive overview). The student leader and I will select exemplary reading summaries to be posted on Blackboard to assist other students in studying for the exams. See hand-out for more details.

LATE POLICY: a summary cannot be handed in after the reading has been discussed.

E. Article Exegesis:

dates: December 7th & 9th

Each student will review recent issues one of the flagship journals in anthropology: *American Anthropologist* or *American Ethnologist* (within the past five years). They will choose one article of interest to them and read it very carefully. Their goal is to write a paper (5-6 pages) and to give a class presentation on this paper. In both the paper and presentations students will 1) give an overview of the article and discuss the central theoretical concerns that the author explores; and 2) link the ideas of this article with the theories that we have already discussed in class (by comparing or contrasting). Students are encouraged to be critical in their analysis of the article. See hand-out for more details.

LATE POLICY: presentations cannot be postponed; papers lose 3 points a day for every day they are late.

Schedule ANTH 300: History of Anthropological Theory

1	8/31–Overview of the Course	
	9/2–Victorian Views of the “Other”	S 1-32 M xi-xv Gould (hand-out)
2	9/7–Evolutionism & the Beginnings of Anthropology 📖 Focus on: Tylor, Morgan	S 33-59 M 1-16
	9/9–cont’d	S 60-81 M 18-30 Morgan e-reserve
3	9/14–The Early American School 📖 Focus on: Boas 🎬 Film: "Franz Boas: The Shackles of Tradition"	S 112-130 M 33-43 Boas e-reserve
	9/16–cont’d	S 131-146 M 61-77
4	9/21–Post-Boas American Anthropology 📖 Focus on: Sapir, Kroeber, Benedict	S 147-156 M 78-103 Benedict e-reserve
	9/23–cont’d 📖 Focus on: Mead 🎬 Film: "Margaret Mead and Samoa"	S 157-163 M 104-115 Mead e-reserve
5	9/28–cont’d	
	9/30–The Early British School: Functionalism 📖 Focus on: Malinowski 🎬 Film: "Bronislaw Malinowski: Off the Veranda" (watch on own)	S 117-119; 164-182 M 134-146 Malinowski e-reserve
6	10/5–British Structural-Functionalism 📖 Focus on: Durkheim, Radcliffe-Brown	S 183-199 M 46-58; 147-158 Durkheim e-reserve Rad-Brown e-reserve
	10/7–cont’d 📖 Focus on: Evans-Pritchard 🎬 Film: "Sir Edward Evans-Pritchard: Strange Beliefs"	
7	10/12–cont’d	M 161-172 Evs-Pritchard e-reserve
	10/14–exam	* midterm exam
8	10/19–Cultural Ecology 📖 Focus on: White & Steward	S 200-244 M 175-201 Steward e-reserve
	10/19--cont’d	* Bibliography due (extension--Sunday)
9	10/26–French Structuralism 📖 Focus on: Lévi-Strauss	S 245-276 M 231-244 Lévi-Strauss e-reserve
	10/28–Symbolic Anthropology 📖 Focus on: Turner	S 305-319 M 227-230; 247-256 Turner e-reserve

1 0	11/2–cont'd ☞ Focus on: Douglas, Geertz	S 320-333 M 258-282 [Douglas e-reserve] Geertz e-reserve
	11/4–Marxist Anthropology	S 334-348; 353-370
1 1	11/9–cont'd ☞ Focus on: Harris, Wolf	S 370--393 M 203-214; 338-358 Harris e-reserve -OR- Wolf e-reserve
	11/11–Feminist Anthropology ☞ Focus on: Leacock	M 216-223 Leacock e-reserve
1 2	11/16–cont'd ☞ Focus on: Ortner, Scheper-Hughes	M 303-318 Ortner e-reserve Schep-Hughes e-reserve biography e-reserve
	11/18–Structure & Agency ☞ Focus on: Bourdieu	M 285-289; 320-335 Bourdieu e-reserve Papers due
1 3	11/23–Post-Modernism & Identity ☞ Focus on: Barth, Rabinow, Clifford	S 393-412 Barth e-reserve Rabinow e-reserve biography e-reserve
1 4	11/30–cont'd	Clifford e-reserve biography e-reserve
	12/2–Power & Globalization ☞ Focus on: The Comaroffs, Appadurai	M 338-358 Comaroff e-reserve Appadurai e-reserve biography e-reserve
1 5	12/7–Presentation of contemporary article	S 413-415 M 360-370
	12/9–Presentation of contemporary article	