

ANTH4525: History of Anthropological Theory

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COURSE MEETING TIME(S):

Time: 9:10 – 10:05 AM (M,W,F)

Place: Ramseyer Hall 009

RECOMMENDED TEXT*:**

Paul A. Erickson and Liam D. Murphy, eds. 2017. Readings for a History of Anthropological Theory, 5th edition.

****All course readings will be made available on Carmen in pdf format.*

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:

This course serves as an overview of the history of anthropological thought and the study of anthropological theory in general. In other words, it is a survey of generalizable models, concepts, and understandings of human collective life. The organization of the course is chronological, tracing the early history of anthropology (as a formal discipline) up to the present while highlighting major thinkers and theoretical perspectives that have defined anthropological ways of knowing. Throughout the course, we will apply these theories to range of contemporary cultural phenomena, from social media use and online cultural expressions to gender identity and marriage equality.

By the end of the course, each student should be able to:

- Recognize major thinkers and schools of thought in anthropology in the 19th and 20th centuries
- Identify principal themes and topics of inquiry in the history of the discipline
- Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of different theoretical orientations
- Assess biases inherent to anthropological theory through its history
- Apply theoretical concepts of anthropology's past to contemporary socio-cultural phenomena
- Produce creative interpretations of past anthropological theories using both written and visual materials

BREAKDOWN OF GRADING:

Attendance: 30 points

Regular attendance is expected of all students. Participation in class discussions is strongly encouraged not only because it contributes to the intellectual environment of the classroom, but it also facilitates individual student learning as well.

Reading Responses (7): 5 points each

Seven short reading responses (300-400 words) will be administered during semester. These will serve as opportunities to analyze and reflect on key concepts from the course readings. Students must read the chapters or articles assigned here in the syllabus BEFORE the start of each class.

Group Project – Anthropological Theory Zine (35 points total):

The objective of this project is to develop a “zine” (small magazine or fanzine) that can be used to teach non-anthropologists about anthropological theory. Each group will choose a theoretical school and develop a zine that is both instructive and entertaining for fellow college students. Think of it as an opportunity to “draw outside the lines” and have fun with the ideas discussed in class. How can we take

texts written in the 19th and early-to-mid 20th centuries and translate them in ways that are compelling and new?

1. ***A Nuts & Bolts Analysis*** (5 points) – You will write a two-page introductory analysis that offers a general overview of your theoretical school as well as the concepts that are central to its formation. You will answer the following five questions, which will provide some foundation for the zine:
 - Who are the theorists associated with this school?
 - What are the over-arching claims or explanatory models that this school is known for?
 - What are important critiques weighed against this school of thought?
 - How is this theoretical school relevant today? In other words, in what instances does it provide insight into contemporary life?
 - What images or art might be helpful in depicting your theoretical school, its theorists, and ideas?
2. ***Zine Mock-up*** (10 points) – For the second assignment, as a group you will develop a mock-up (or “draft”) of your zine, which will range between 12 and 16 pages in length. It should include: a cover (with an attention-grabbing title), original art and text, and a bibliography. Prior to developing the mock-up, you will be given more detailed instructions including guidelines for content, art, and acceptable formats for the zine.
3. ***Final Zine*** (15 points) – After receiving instructor feedback, you will refine your mock-up into a final zine following the project guidelines. More information, including a grading rubric, will be made available in the weeks leading up to its due date.
4. ***Final Group Presentation*** (5 points) – Each group will make a brief presentation (5-10 minutes) at the end of the semester to share their zine with the rest of the class. Presentations will consist of short summaries of the group’s approach to the project, while highlighting unique features of the zine and responding to questions from peers.

Exams (2): 30 points each

The midterm and final exams will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions that identify key concepts, theorists, and debates reviewed in the course. Exams will require students to engage with the primary “take-home” lessons from course readings and classroom discussions.

TOTAL: 160 points

COURSE GRADING SCALE:

100- 92.0%	A
91.9-90.0%	A-
89.9-88.0%	B+
87.9-82.0%	B
81.9-80.0%	B-
79.9-78.0%	C+
77.9-72.0%	C
71.9-70.0%	C-
69.9-68.0%	D+
69.9-62.0%	D
61.9-60.0%	D-
<60.0%	F

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Your work must be your original work. If you use someone else's ideas, either paraphrasing or quoting directly, you must cite the source. If caught cheating, you will be given an automatic '0' for the assignment. Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses that could lead to an automatic failing grade in the course.

SPECIAL CLASSROOM ACCOMODATION

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. My office location and hours are at the top of this syllabus.

CALENDAR:

Week 1 (Aug. 21-23) – Course Introduction

(W): Course Introduction: What Is Theory and What Can It Do for Us?

Reading: None

(F): The “Why” and “How” of Reading the Classics

Readings: Benton “Reading the Classics” <https://ethnography911.org/2017/12/23/1056/>; Concepción “Reading Philosophy”

Week 2 (Aug. 26-30) – 19th Century Foundations

(M): Foundations of (European) Social Science

Reading: Marx and Engels “Bourgeois and Proletarians”

(W): The Science of Culture

Reading: Tylor “The Science of Culture”

(F): Unilineal Cultural Evolution

Reading: Morgan “Ethnical Periods”

DUE: Reading Response #1

Week 3 (Sept. 2-6) – Unilineal Evolution

(M): NO CLASS – Labor Day

Reading: None

(W): Evolutionary Thought in Historical Context

Reading: Spencer “The Organic Analogy Reconsidered”

(F): Tensions between Cultural and Biological Evolution

Reading: Darwin “The Descent of Man” (Conclusion)

Week 4 (Sept. 9-13) – Historical Particularism

(M): Historical Particularism

Reading: Boas “The Methods of Ethnology”

(W): The Boasians and Their Legacy

Reading: Lowie “Primitive Society” (Conclusion); Kroeber “What Anthropology Is About”

DUE: Reading Response #2

(F): Particularism and the Poetics of Zora Neale Hurston

Reading: Hurston “Spunk”

Week 5 (Sept. 16-20): Sociological Foundations

(M): Durkheim and the Sociology of Religion

Reading: Durkheim “The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life”

(W): Weber and Charismatic Authority
Reading: Weber “The Sociology of Charismatic Authority”
DUE: Reading Response #3
(F): Social Structure (and Individual Agency)
Reading: Radcliffe-Brown “Social Structure”

Week 6 (Sept. 23-27) – Functionalism and Anthropological Fieldwork

(M): Functionalism
Reading: Malinowski “The Subject, Method, and Scope of This Inquiry” (from *Argonauts*)
(W): Participant Observation
Reading: Tedlock “From Participant Observation to the Observation of Participation”
(F): Zine Project Work Day
Reading: None
DUE: Group Project “Nuts & Bolts” Analysis

Week 7 (Sept. 30-Oct. 4) – Culture and Personality

(M): Margaret Mead and Coming of Age in Samoa
Reading: Mead “Introduction” (from *Coming of Age in Samoa*)
(W): The Culture and Personality School
Reading: Benedict “The Individual and the Pattern of Culture”
(F): Race, Class, Language, and the Arts in the Anthropological Canon
Reading: Walker “Looking for Zora”; Video: Living St. Louis – Katherine Dunham
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7vyx6ue7K6o&t=12s>.

Week 8 (Oct. 7-11) – Structuralism

(M): Claude Levi-Strauss
Reading: Levi-Strauss “Structuralism and Ecology”
(W): Structuralism, Myth, and Meaning
Reading: Leach “Structuralism in Social Anthropology”
(F): FALL BREAK – NO CLASS
Reading: None

Week 9 (Oct. 14-18) – Cultural Materialism & Interpretivism

(M): Cultural Materialism
Reading: Harris “The Epistemology of Cultural Materialism”
(W): **Midterm Exam**
Reading: None
(F): Interpretive and Symbolic Approaches
Reading: Turner “Symbols in Ndembu Ritual”

Week 10 (Oct. 21-25) – Symbolic Anthropology

(M): “Matter out of Place”
Reading: Douglas “Introduction” (from *Purity and Danger*)
(W): Thick Description
Reading: Geertz “Thick Description” and “Deep Play: Notes on a Balinese Cockfight”
DUE: Reading Response #4
(F): In-Class Work Day
Reading: None

Week 11 (Oct. 28-Nov. 1) – Bourdieu and Practice Theory

(M): Bourdieu on Symbolic Power

Readings: Bourdieu “The Peculiar History of Scientific Reason”

(W): “Textese” as a Case Study in Legitimate Language

Readings: Bourdieu “...Legitimate Language”; Watch McWhorter “Txtng is killing language. JK!!!”

https://www.ted.com/talks/john_mcwhorter_txtng_is_killing_language_jk?language=en

(F): Zine Project Work Day

Readings: None

DUE: Group Project Zine Draft

Week 12 (Nov. 4-8) – Poststructuralism and Postmodern Critique

(M): Poststructuralism

Reading: Foucault “The Body of the Condemned”

(W): The “Writing Culture” Moment

Reading: Clifford “Partial Truths”

(F): The Crisis of Representation

Reading: Behar “Introduction to Women Writing Culture”

DUE: Reading Response #5

Week 13 (Nov. 11-15) – Feminist Anthropology and Gender Studies

(M): NO CLASS – Veteran’s Day

Readings: None

(W): Feminist Anthropology

Reading: Slocum “Woman the Gatherer”

(F): Sex, Gender, and Performativity

Reading: Gal “Language, Gender, and Power”; Butler “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution”

DUE: Reading Response #6

Week 14 (Nov. 18-22) – Postcolonial Studies

(M): Orientalism

Reading: Said “Knowing the Oriental”

(W): Epistemic Violence

Reading: Spivak “Can the Subaltern Speak?”

DUE: Reading Response #7

(F): The Problem of Double Consciousness

Reading: DuBois “The Souls of Black Folk”; Fanon

Week 15 (Nov. 25-29) – Globalization Studies

(M): Globalization and “Modernity at Large”

Readings: Appadurai “Disjuncture and Difference”

DUE: Final Zine Projects

(W): Thanksgiving Break – NO CLASS

Reading: None

(F): Indigenous People’s Day Observed – NO CLASS

Reading: None

Week 16 (Dec. 2-4) – Course Conclusion

(M): Group Project Presentations

Reading: None

(W): Group Project Presentations
Reading: None

Final Exam: Take-Home (online)