

Department of Anthropology - College of Public Affairs and Community Service
The University of North Texas

ANTHROPOLOGICAL THOUGHT

ANTH 4021

Fall 2014

TU-TH 9:30-10:50 AM – Gateway #131

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Office Hours: T 12:30 – 2:00 PM
and by appointment.

Office Hours: Th 1:00 – 3:00 PM
and by appointment

“Why study the history of anthropological theory?” The answer is straightforward: the most effective way to understand anthropology today is looking at its past. To understand anthropology with sophistication, students need to know how it developed. Throughout this course, we will explore the historical background and philosophical principles embedded in the emergence of different anthropological theories as a way to explain them through their contexts of particular times, places, and personalities. Although this senior capstone course in anthropology presents the past and present development of anthropological knowledge, it does not cover the entirety of anthropological theory; we will rather focus on trends, which are directly acting in the development of classic and current epistemologies in the discipline.

The exposure to this diversity of ways to explain the social and cultural phenomena becomes a very productive scenario for the students to exercise the holistic explanatory nature of the anthropological discipline applied to the social and ideological contexts from which the different anthropological approaches emerged. Most of the students think that theory is arid, abstract, and has nothing to do with reality. At this point, most of the students know that anthropology’s strength is about revealing the intricacies embedded in cultural stereotypes. That’s the ‘mysticism’ that engages the students in this course: to unveil the intriguing social, political, economic and ideological tapestry intrinsic in the emergence of particular anthropological theories, as a way to ‘de-construct’ the stereotype of anthropological theory as dull, dry and an exercise in mental acrobatics.

Throughout the semester, students review key concepts in the anthropological arena such as structure, thought, culture, ethnography, history and social change, related to epistemological frameworks centered on the discussion of objectivity, interpretation and ethnographic representation. In sum, this course frames anthropology as a humanist discipline and provider of responses to social issues with a broad public impact. Students exercise different theoretical glasses to analyze, interpret and explain social and cultural phenomena such as social violence, ethnic clashes, or social inequalities.

Major Learning Outcomes

- A. Identify different approaches in the analysis and understanding of anthropological concepts (i.e. culture, structure, agency, time, space, social change, representation.)
- B. Reflect upon the limitations, challenges and repercussions of the diversity of theoretical frameworks they are exposed to in this course.
- C. Learn about our discipline's ancestors so we can better understand current theoretical approaches and trends in our field.
- D. Examine critically the ways the anthropological knowledge learned can be applied to students' own understanding of the social reality.

Structure and Requirements

The course is a combination of lectures and seminar. Lectures provide the introduction to major debates surrounding the readings; students are expected to engage in class discussions. Everyone must come to class prepared; discussion will often take the form of a formal debate of the issues read for that class session. **All readings that are listed on the syllabus should be done prior to the class.**

Reading Comments (30% of grade)

Reading comments consist of a paragraph or two describing your thoughts-reflection to the reading(s) for **each** session. Do not summarize, but rather elaborate your response to the reading. In addition, prepare 2-3 questions that you might ask your classmates or discuss yourself. You need to post your comments on Blackboard before class meeting. Bring your comments and questions with you to class.

Two Take-Home Exams (60% of grade, 30% each)

Each student will write two take-home exams based on several integrative questions, which will be distributed one week in advance. Questions on the exam will be drawn from the readings, lectures, and discussions. Your response must include the references you used.

Course Participation and Attendance (10% of grade)

You are expected to come to each session having read the assigned material. Informed participation by everyone in discussions is expected. Those who fail to attend often disrupt class. Your regular attendance will be noticed by the performance in your presentations and discussions. Notify the instructor of any planned absences. More than 3 absences will result in the subtraction of 10% of your grade. Please note that 10% is one letter grade.

Extra Credit

Occasionally, additional assignments will be given to monitor how well you are absorbing the material. These assignments are likely to become more frequent if students are missing the class or failing to participate. These assignments will receive a checkmark (for an average response) or a plus (for an excellent response). These marks become important at the end of the term. If your final grade is on the margin between two marks, the accumulated points earned on these assignments are used to adjust your grade up or down.

Please turn off all electronic devices in class (cell phones, Blackberries, ipods, etc.). You may not receive or send text messages during class. Personal computers are allowed only for taking notes. **Any use of computers for other purposes will lead to a ban on all computers in the classroom.** The professor reserves the right to alter this syllabus via class announcements or email to students.

PLAGIARISM POLICY

The Department of Anthropology does not tolerate plagiarism, cheating, or helping others to cheat. Plagiarism is defined as misrepresenting the work of others (whether published or not) as your own. It may be inadvertent or intentional. Any facts, statistics, quotations, or paraphrasing of any information that is not common knowledge, should be cited. Students suspected of any of these will be provided the opportunity for a hearing; if found guilty they can receive an automatic "F" in the course. In addition, I reserve the right to pursue further disciplinary action within the UNT legal system, which may result in your dismissal from the university. For more information on paper writing, including how to avoid plagiarism, and how to use citations, see <http://www.unt.edu/anthropology/writing.htm>. For information on the University's policies regarding academic integrity and dishonesty, see the UNT Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities, <http://www.unt.edu/csrr/>.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Anthropology Department does not discriminate on the basis of an individual's disability as required by the Americans With Disabilities Act. Our program provides academic adjustments or help to individuals with disabilities in its programs and activities. Attempts will be made to meet all certified requirements

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Treat class time as an opportunity to learn.
2. Arrive on class on time.
3. Complete assignments on time. There will be no exceptions.
4. Cite all research, text and image sources.
5. Participate in all class discussions and critiques.
6. Confront difficulties in your work in the spirit of learning, creative exploration, and personal growth.
7. Ask for help from your instructor when needed.
8. Respect your fellow students at all times.
9. Disruptive behavior, including inappropriate language and talking in class, is not tolerated. Students whose behavior is disturbing the class will be asked to leave and will be marked absent.

TEXTBOOK and READINGS

McGee, Jon. and Warms, Richard. 2011. Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History. 5th. Edition. McGraw-Hill Publishers

Additional readings will be assigned and posted in the Blackboard Page of the course.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week No.	Dates	Topics
1	August 26-28	Historical Foundation of Anthropological Theory. Nineteenth-Century Foundations and Forerunners I Evolutionism (McGee and Warms 1,2&3)
2	Sept. 2-4	Nineteenth Century Foundations and Forerunners II K. Marx and S. Freud (McGee and Warms 4&5)
3	Sept. 9-11	Foundations of Sociological Thought (McGee and Warms 6,7,8&9)
4	Sept. 16-18	Early Twentieth Century. Historical Particularism (McGee and Warms 10,11&12)
5	Sept. 23-25	Functionalism (McGee and Warms 13,14&15) Psychological Anthropology (McGee and Warms 16&17)
6	Sept. 30- Oct. 2	Neoevolutionism and Ecological Anthropology (McGee and Warms 18,19&20)
7	Oct. 7-9	REVIEW – GENERAL DISCUSSION
8	Oct. 14	FIRST TAKE-HOME EXAM
	Oct. 16	Cultural Materialism and Marxism (McGee and Warms 21,22,23&24)
9	Oct. 21-23	Structuralism (McGee and Warms 25,26&27)
10	Oct. 28-30 Sociobiology	Ethnoscience, Cognitive Anthropology and (McGee and Warms 28,29,30&31)
11	Nov. 4-6	Anthropology and Gender (McGee and Warms 32,33&34) Guest Speaker: TBA
12	Nov. 11-13	Symbolic and Interpretive Anthropology (McGee and Warms 35,36&37) Guest Speaker: TBA
13	Nov. 18-20	Postmodernism (McGee and Warms 38,39&40) Guest Speaker: TBA
14	Nov. 25	Applied Anthropology

Guest Speaker: TBA

	Nov. 27	THANKSGIVING
15	Dec. 2-4 Dec. 4	FINAL REVIEW SECOND TAKE-HOME EXAM

**LIST OF ETHNOGRAPHERS AND TOPICS TO COVER IN CLASS LECTURES
AND DISCUSSIONS**

- 3 Durkheim's Elementary Forms of the Religious Life
- 4 Mauss' The Gift
Historical Particularism, Functionalism
- 5 Boas's Mind of Primitive Man
- 6 Kroeber's Configurations of Culture Growth
- 7 Malinowski's Theory of Needs
- 8 Malinowski's Argonautas of the Western Pacific
- 9 Radcliffe-Brown's Adoman Island Society
Personality and Culture
- 10 Benedict and Cultural Relativism
- 11 The Individual and the Pattern of Culture
- 12 Freeman/Mead controversy
- 13 Mead on Samoa
- 14 Mead, the Observer, Observed
Neoevolutionism and Ecological Anthropology
- 15 Leslie Whites' The Evolution of Culture
- 16 Marvin Harris' Cows, Pigs, Wars and Witches
- 17 Sahlins and Service's Evolution of Culture
- 18 Rappaport's Pigs for the Ancestors
- 19 Julian Steward's Theory of Culture Change
Structuralism
- 20 Levi-Strauss' Structural Anthropology
- 21 Ocasio Paz's Levi-Strauss: An Introduction
- 22 Leach, ed., The Structural Study of Myth and Totemism
Ethnoscience, Cognitive Anthropology, Sociobiology
- 23 Sapir on Language and Culture
- 24 Sapir's Time Perspective in Aboriginal American Culture
- 25 Withspoon's Navajo Categories of Objects at Rest
- 26 E.O. Wilson's Sociobiology: The New Synthesis
- 27 R. Dawkin's The Selfish Gene
Anthropology and Gender
- 28 Ruth Behar's Translating Woman
- 29 Ortner and Whitehead's Sexual Meaning
- 30 E. Martin's The Woman in the Body
- 31 Eber's Women and Drinking in a Highland Maya Town
- 32 Rosembaum's With Our Heads Bowed
Symbolic and Interpretive Anthropology
- 33 Turner's The Ritual Process
- 34 Mary Douglas' Purity and Danger
- 35 Turner's The Forest of Symbols

36	Geertz's Person, Time and Conduct in Bali
37	Geertz's on the Balinese Cockfight
38	Taussig's The Devil and Commodity Fetishism Anthropology as a Cultural Critique
39	Edward Said's Orientalism
40	Oscar Lewis's Children of Sanchez
41	Jameson's Postmodernism or the Cult. Logic of Late Capitalism
42	Tedlock's The Spoken Word and the Work of Interpretation
43	Dumont's The Headman and I
44	Rosaldo's Culture and Truth
45	Rabinow's Reflections on Fieldwork in Marrocco Toward 2000 and Beyond
46	Derrida's Intertextuality
47	Eric Wolf's Europe and People Without History
48	Pierre Bourdieu's Structures, Habitus and Practices