

# Syllabus

## Anthropological Thought and Praxis 1

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ANTH 5010 Online | Dr. Christina Wasson | University of North Texas  
Fall 2019

*Ambiguity is the warp of life, not something to be eliminated. Learning to savor the vertigo of doing without answers or... making do with fragmentary ones opens up the pleasures of recognizing and playing with pattern, finding coherence within complexity... Improvisation and new learning are not private processes; they are shared with others*

— Mary Catherine Bateson, *Peripheral Visions* (1988), 9-10

### Course Description

This course is an overview of the intellectual history of social and cultural anthropology. As such, it is an account of different authors' ideas, with the emphasis placed on their major contributions to the development of anthropology. Special emphasis is given to the development of anthropological thought in the application of anthropological knowledge.

This course is taught as a seminar. Students will engage in critical analysis and reflection on the development of anthropological theory. Four themes will guide discussions:

- **Ethnographic authority.** How have anthropologists persuaded the readers of their texts that what they wrote was valid and important? How have they created their status as experts?
- **“Us” versus “the other.”** It is common for people to think about their own group (“us”) as separate and different from other groups (“the other”). In what ways have anthropologists implicitly or explicitly defined “us” and “the other” in their writings? How have these definitions changed over time?
- **Using theory to solve social problems.** How do the theoretical frameworks anthropologists use shape their understandings of particular social problems? How do those frameworks shape the approaches anthropologists develop to address social problems?
- **The genealogy of ideas.** In what ways did famous anthropologists build on the ideas of other scholars who came before them? In what ways were their theories a reaction against other scholars?

### Communication with Instructor

You are welcome to communicate with me at any time via phone or email. My phone number is 940 565 2752. My email address is [christina.wasson@unt.edu](mailto:christina.wasson@unt.edu). You can also use the email option within the online course.

### Required Texts

In this course, you will be reading 1) an overview book and 2) a set of “classic” articles and book chapters that were written over the last hundred years or so.

1. You are responsible for purchasing the book from any source you wish, such as Amazon.com. The book is:

Eriksen, Thomas Hylland and Finn Sivert Nielsen. 2013. *A History of Anthropology*, second edition. London: Pluto Press.

2. The articles are in Canvas.

The reading assignments for each week are summarized in the course schedule, below, and they are spelled out in detail at the end of the syllabus. Readings are **not** optional. Students will be thoroughly tested on them.

## Course Requirements

**1. Attendance and participation in classroom discussions (20%).** Since this course is a graduate seminar, participation is essential. Class participation makes up twenty percent of your final grade. Your contributions to the online discussions and videoconferences will all be included in your evaluation. You must post at least 5 substantive messages per week in the online discussions; more postings are encouraged. Frankly, I have produced that number due to requests from students; I myself feel that it is somewhat meaningless. You and I will know when you are actively contributing to the weekly discussions.

The goal of our online discussions is to have a good back-and-forth among class participants. This is a seminar-style class, so much of your learning will come from each other. I will be assessing you for the overall quality of the whole conversation, rather than the magnificence of an individual posting.

The following guidelines for online discussions were developed by the first online ANTH 5010 class, as we collaboratively learned how to make best use of the discussion boards. Some of you may not have much experience with asynchronous discussion boards – these simple tips can help the communication process flow smoothly!

- Post your first message(s) by Tuesday of every week.
- Try to check the discussions daily; focus on contributing to just a few threads if your time is limited.
- Only one idea per message!
- Frequent small posts are better than humongous messages at rare intervals. This will enable more back-and-forth between you and your classmates. The goal is an active and engaged conversation, not a monologue.
- If you have a new thought that you want to share, start a new conversational thread by clicking “Create Thread”– this will promote discussion of the topic. If everyone just hits “Reply” to previous messages the overall structure of the conversation will become confusing.
- Change the subject line when you are replying to a message but shifting the focus.
- If other people have already said what you wanted to say about one topic, move on to a different topic.
- Don’t put your thoughts in a Word attachment; instead, write them directly in the message field.

**2. Midterm (20%) and final (30%).** These exams will test you on your developing understanding of the evolution of anthropological thought. They will cover information contained in the readings and presented in class. Both will be essay exams. Instructions for the midterm will be made available two weeks before the due date. Instructions for the final will be made available three weeks before the due date.

**3. Discussion leader (30%).** Once during the semester, you will prepare a presentation about the week’s topic, and lead the class discussion of that topic. Instructions for this assignment are located in the Assignments area of the course, which you can access from the home page.

## Grading

I am used to grading on an A/B/etc. system, and translating A = 4.0, A- = 3.7, etc. However, the gradebook in Canvas requires me to use a point system. The table below shows how I have translated one system to the other. The number of points depends on whether the assignment is worth 20% of your course grade (200 points) or 30% of your course grade (300 points).

Letter Grade	Out of 4 (Traditional Numerical Scale)	Out of 200 (Traditional x 50)	Out of 300 (Traditional x 75)
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A	4	200	300
A-	3.7	185	278
B+	3.3	165	248
B	3	150	225
B-	2.7	135	203
C+	2.3	115	173
C	2	100	150
C-	1.7	85	128
D+	1.3	65	98
D	1	50	75
D-	0.7	35	53
F	0	0	0

An A on all assignments would result in a final score of 1000. A final score above 875 (i.e. 3.5 on a traditional scale) will result in an A in the course. According to UNT policy, final grades do not have plusses or minuses.

### Plagiarism Policy

The department of anthropology considers graduate students to be new members of the community of professional anthropologists, who are thus held to the high ethical standards of practicing professionals. They are expected to follow the American Anthropological Association's code of ethics: "*In their capacity as researchers, anthropologists are subject to the ethical principles guiding all scientific and scholarly conduct. They must not plagiarize, nor fabricate or falsify evidence, or knowingly misrepresent information or its source*" (<http://ethics.americananthro.org/category/statement/>). Any work not meeting this standard will be evaluated in a hearing before the student; infractions will merit dismissal from the master's program.

For more information on paper writing, including how to avoid plagiarism, and how to use citations, see <http://anthropology.unt.edu/resources/writing-guide>. For information on the University's policies regarding academic integrity and dishonesty, see the UNT Dean of Students, Student Conduct Operations <https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>.

### Non-Discrimination Policy

It is the policy of the University of North Texas not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability (where reasonable accommodations can be made), disabled veteran status or veteran of the Vietnam era status in its educational programs, activities, admissions or employment policies. In addition to complying with federal and state equal opportunity laws and regulations, the university through its diversity policy declares harassment based on individual differences (including sexual orientation) inconsistent with its mission and education goals. Direct questions and concerns to the Equal Opportunity Office, 940 565 2456, or the Dean of Students, 940 565 2648. TDD access is available through Relay Texas, 800 735 2989.

Anthropology does not discriminate on the basis of an individual's disability as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. The program provides academic adjustments and aid to individuals with disabilities in its programs and activities. If you have a disability, you are strongly advised to contact the Office of Disability Accommodations (UU 318A) or by telephone at 940 565 4323. **It is the responsibility of the student to make the necessary arrangements with the instructors.**

### Weekly Cycle

The course runs on a weekly cycle. There is one lesson for each week. Lessons will always be made available one week in advance, for students who wish to work ahead a bit. The students who are discussion leader for a given week must upload their reports by **Sunday morning at 8 am central time.**

All students must read the lesson, the assigned articles, and the discussion leader's report no later than **Tuesday of each week**. Also, they must start posting to the discussions no later than Tuesday of each week.

Discussions for each lesson will last one week, from Monday morning through Sunday night.

There will be a weekly one-hour videoconference. During the videoconference, the week's discussion leaders will present their topics briefly, and then all students will participate in a discussion. Every call will start with an opportunity to ask the instructor questions.

## Schedule for the Semester

The readings in Canvas are identified by author's last name and year; for full information, see the next section of the syllabus.

For specific dates of each week, see the Canvas Calendar.

The course is organized around the following structure:

- Week 1 introduces you to the fundamentals of the course
- Weeks 2-3 provide you with tools to analyze the rest of the readings
- Weeks 4-13 cover the history of ideas in anthropology
- Week 14 helps you start to put together your own toolbox of anthropological ideas and theories that will be useful to you in your career
- Week 15 is a review

For the history of ideas in anthropology, I have primarily assigned original materials written by famous anthropologists.

In addition, I have assigned chapters from the textbook. The purpose of the textbook is to provide you with a context for the other readings. The textbook describes broader trends in anthropology; it goes over scholars whose work we don't have time to cover in depth; and it gives you the political, economic, and cultural contexts that surrounded the writing of your assigned articles.

<b>Week Start Date</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Lesson</b>
1 Aug 26	N/A	Course Fundamentals
2 Sep 2	Clifford 1983 Narayan 1993	Critical Analysis of Readings
3 Sep 9	Klinenberg 2002a Klinenberg 2002b Klinenberg 2002c Duneier 2006	Using Theory to Solve Problems
4 Sep 16	<i>History</i> Ch.2, Ch.3:58-61 Morgan 1973 [1877] Boas 1940 Deloria 1944	American Foundations
5 Sep 23	<i>History</i> Ch.4:68-80, Ch.7:161-165 Mead 1928 Hurston 2018	Culture and Personality
6 Sep 30	<i>History</i> Ch.3:46-58, 61-67, Ch.4:86-92 Malinowski 1922a and 1922b	Functionalism <b>Midterm Instructions Available on Monday</b>

	Radcliffe-Brown 1973 [1952]	
7 Oct 7	<i>History</i> Ch.6 Turner 1967 Geertz 1973a and 1973b	Symbolic and Interpretive Anthropology
8 Oct 14	<i>History</i> Ch.7:138-151 Heyman 2013 Wolf 1982	Political Economy <b>Midterm Due on Monday</b>
9 Oct 21	<i>History</i> Ch.7:151-155 Lewin 2006 Ortner 2006 [1974] Visweswaran 2004	Feminist Anthropology
10 Oct 28	<i>History</i> Ch.8:176-179 Nader 1972 Said 1978 Harrison 199	Studying Up and Postcolonial Studies
11 Nov 4	<i>History</i> Ch.8:166-175, 179-191 Foucault 1977 Rabinow 1977	Postmodernism and Poststructural Approaches 1
12 Nov 11	<i>History</i> Ch.7:158-161 Bourdieu 1990a and 1990b	Poststructural Approaches 2
13 Nov 18	<i>History</i> Ch.9 Appadurai 1996 Marcus 1995	Anthropology of Globalization <b>Final Exam Instructions Available on Monday</b>
14 Nov 25	<i>Choose:</i> Baba 2005 Wasson 2000 OR Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987 Kleinman et al. 1978 OR LeCompte and Preissle 1992 Foley 1991 OR Malkki 1995 Brettell 2000 OR Sponsel 2007 (web article) Kottak 1999 OR Low 2011 Bayat 2012 OR A mix of these, or other readings if you have different interests – need to get approval from me beforehand!	<i>Your Area(s) of Interest:</i> Business Anthropology  OR Medical Anthropology  OR Anthropology of Education  OR Migration/Border Studies  OR Environmental Anthropology  OR Urban Anthropology  OR Customized to Your Interests
15 Dec 2	N/A	Review
Finals Dec 9		<b>Final Exam Due on Monday</b>

## Readings Available on Canvas

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**Week 2** Clifford, James. 1983. On ethnographic authority. *Representations* 1(2):118-146.  
Narayan, Kirin. 1993. How native is a "native" anthropologist? *American Anthropologist* 95(3):671-686.

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**Week 3** Klinenberg, Eric. 2002. *Heat wave: A social autopsy of disaster in Chicago (Illinois)*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. The following chapters:

- Prologue: The urban inferno, 1-13
- Introduction: The city of extremes. 14-36
- Chapter 2: Race, place, and vulnerability, 79-128

Duneier, Mitchell. 2006. Ethnography, the ecological fallacy, and the 1995 Chicago heat wave. *American Sociological Review* 71:679-688.

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**Week 4** Morgan, Lewis Henry. 1973 [1877]. Ancient society. In *High points in anthropology*, ed. Paul Bohannan and Mark Glazer. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 32-60.  
Boas, Franz. 1940. The aims of anthropological research. In *Race, language and culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 243-259.  
Deloria, Ella Cara. 1944. *Speaking of Indians*. Pickle Partners Publishing. Selected sections.

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**Week 5** Mead, Margaret. 1973 [1928]. *Coming of age in Samoa: A psychological study of primitive youth for western civilization*. Washington, DC: American Museum of Natural History. The following chapters:

- Introduction, 1-8
- A day in Samoa, 8-11
- The education of the Samoan child, 11-21
- The experience and individuality of the average girl, 73-87

Hurston, Zora Neale. 2018. *Barracoon: The story of the last "black cargo"*. New York: Amistad Press. Selected sections.

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**Week 6** Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1950 [1922]. *Argonauts of the western Pacific: An account of native enterprise and adventure in the archipelagos of Melanesian New Guinea*. New York: E.P. Dutton & Co. The following chapters:

- The subject, method and scope of this inquiry, 1-25
- The essentials of the Kula, 81-104

Radcliffe-Brown, A. R. 1973 [1952]. On the concept of function in social science and On social structure. In *High points in anthropology*, ed. Paul Bohannan and Mark Glazer. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 297-316.

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**Week 7** Turner, Victor. 1967. Symbols in Ndembu ritual. In *The forest of symbols: Aspects of Ndembu ritual*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 19-47.  
Geertz, Clifford. 1973a. Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture. In *The interpretation of cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 3-30.  
Geertz, Clifford. 1973b. Deep play: Notes on the Balinese cockfight. In *The interpretation of cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 412-453.

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- Week 8** Heyman, Josiah M. 2013. Political economy. In *The handbook of sociocultural anthropology*, ed. James G. Carrier and Deborah B. Gewertz. London: Berg.
- Wolf, Eric R. 1982. Introduction. *Europe and the people without history*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 3-23.
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- Week 9** Lewin, Ellen. 2006. Introduction. In *Feminist anthropology: A reader*, ed. Ellen Lewin. Malden: Blackwell, 1-38.
- Ortner, Sherry B. 2006 [1974]. Is female to male as nature is to culture? In *Feminist anthropology: A reader*, ed. Ellen Lewin. Malden: Blackwell, 72-86.
- Visweswaran, Kamala. 2004. Gendered states: Rethinking culture as a site of South Asian human rights work. *Human Rights Quarterly* 26:486-511
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- Week 10** Nader, Laura. 1972. Up the anthropologist – perspectives gained from studying up. In *Reinventing anthropology*, ed. Dell Hymes. New York: Random House/Vintage, 284-311.
- Said, Edward. 1978. Chapter 1: The scope of orientalism (section I). In *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 31-49.
- Harrison, Faye V., ed. 1991. *Decolonizing anthropology: Moving further toward an anthropology for liberation*. Arlington, VA: American Anthropological Association. Selected sections.
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- Week 11** Foucault, Michel. 1977. The means of correct training. In *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books, 135-169.
- Rabinow, Paul. 1977. Ali: An insider's outsider. In *Reflections on fieldwork in Morocco*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 31-69.
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- Week 12** Bourdieu, Pierre. 1990a. Structures, habitus, practices. In *The logic of practice*. Trans. Richard Nice. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 52-65.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1990b. Symbolic capital. In *The logic of practice*. Trans. Richard Nice. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 112-121.
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- Week 13** Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. Disjuncture and difference in the global cultural economy. In *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 27-47.
- Marcus, George. 1995. Ethnography in/of the world system: The emergence of multi-sited ethnography. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24:95-117.
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**Week 14** *Business Anthropology*

Baba, Marietta L. 2005. Anthropological practice in business and industry. In *Applied anthropology: domains of application*, ed. Satish Kedia and John Van Willigen. Westport: Praeger, 221-261.

Wasson, Christina. 2000. Ethnography in the field of design. *Human Organization* 59(4):377-388.

*Medical Anthropology*

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy and Lock, Margaret. 1987. The mindful body: A prolegomenon to future work in medical anthropology. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 1(1): 6-41.

Kleinman, Arthur, Leon Eisenberg, and Byron Good. 1978. Culture, illness, and care: Clinical lessons from anthropological and cross-cultural research. *Annals of Internal Medicine* 88(2):251-258.

*Anthropology of Education*

LeCompte, Margaret D. and Preissle, Judith. 1992. Toward an ethnology of student life in schools and classrooms synthesizing the qualitative research tradition. In *The handbook of qualitative research in education*, ed. Margaret D. LeCompte, Wendy L. Millroy, and Judith Preissle. San Diego: Academic Press, 815-860.

Foley, Douglas. 1991. Reconsidering anthropological explanations of ethnic school failure. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 22:60-83.

*Migration and Border Studies*

Malkki, Liisa. 1995. Refugees and exile: From "Refugee Studies" to the national order of things. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24:495-523.

Brettell, Caroline B. 2000. Theorizing migration in anthropology: The social construction of networks, identities, communities, and globalscapes. In *Migration theory: Talking across disciplines*, ed. C. B. Brettell and J. F. Hollifield. New York: Routledge, 97-135.

*Environmental Anthropology*

Sponsel, Leslie E. 2007. Ecological anthropology. In *The encyclopedia of Earth*. Go to [http://editors.eol.org/eoearth/wiki/Ecological\\_anthropology](http://editors.eol.org/eoearth/wiki/Ecological_anthropology).

Kottak, Konrad P. 1999. The new ecological anthropology. *American Anthropologist* 101(1):23-55.

*Urban Anthropology*

Low, Setha. 2011. Claiming space for an engaged anthropology: Spatial inequality and social exclusion. *American Anthropologist* 113(3):389-407.

Bayat, Asef. 2012. Politics in the city-inside-out. *City & Society* 24(2): 110-128.

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