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ANTY 500.01: Contemporary Anthropological Thought

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ANTHROPOLOGY 500: CONTEMPORARY ANTHROPOLOGICAL THOUGHT

Wednesday - 2:10-5:00pm – Social Sciences 252

Fall 2015

INSTRUCTOR: Richard A. Sattler
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OFFICE: SS 222
OFFICE HOURS: T/R 11:00-12:00am
W 1:00-2:00pm

Course Description:

Contemporary anthropology in the last three decades has gone through a number of theoretical and methodological transformations with regard to the major concepts, goals, and concerns of anthropology as a scientific discipline. These theoretical issues, historically and today, remain central to the development of anthropological knowledge. The purpose of seminar is to explore these concepts to illuminate the relationships between our thinking about people, our discipline, and the relevance of anthropological concepts to changing conditions in the world. During the course, we will analyze the manner in which anthropology, as a science of humanity, must struggle with our enterprise to comprehend human behavior.

Course requirements:

Discussion

Each student is required to read everything assigned for that particular discussion period and to attend class prepared to discuss critically all the assigned readings. Your ability to articulate and analyze the reading materials and the ideas of your classmates in an in-depth fashion will determine a portion of your grade. Discussion is worth 30 percent of your grade. **(See Guide to Discussion on Moodle.)**

Discussion leaders

Each week I will randomly appoint one person to lead the discussion of each article. Your performance as a discussion leader counts for 1/3 of your discussion grade.

Reading journal

All students will post a weekly reading journal entry over that week's assigned readings. These will be posted on Moodle and are **due on Tuesday by midnight**. Reading Journals are worth 10% of your grade. **(See Guide to Reading Journal on Moodle.)**

Annotated bibliography

of no less than 30 sources about a contemporary theoretical position. Ideally of the thirty annotated sources five sources will be data oriented case studies that apply that theory to address an anthropological issue. The bibliography is to be posted on Moodle and is due on **Wednesday, December 3**, and is worth 15 percent of your grade. **(See Guide to Bibliographies on Moodle.)**

Research paper

You must choose a contemporary theoretical position (from the rise of neo-evolutionism to the present). In the paper, discuss that theory's central tenets, identifying the major proponents of the theoretical position, and critically analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the theory, as well as its relationship to other theoretical positions. You will determine topic, but the instructor must approve your topic. The paper is not a description, but a piece of analytical research that is theoretically and methodologically focused to sharpen your research skills. Ideally, the final paper should be a publishable piece. The project must be 20 to 25 typed pages, formatted in the American Anthropologist style. The paper will constitute 30 percent of your final grade. The paper is to be posted on Moodle and is due in class on **Wednesday, December 3**. **(See Guide to Papers on Moodle.)**

Presentations

Each student will provide a synthesis of your work, pointing out the major tenets of the theory, its strengths and weaknesses to understanding anthropological problems, as well as its relationship to other theoretical positions. The presentation should open new directions for critical discussion and provide you with the opportunity to give your opinion. Ideally the presentation will be about 10 minutes in length, followed by a class questions. You will be graded on presentation, organization, content, delivery style, and ability to respond to questions. The purpose of the oral presentation is to provide you with the experience of delivering a paper at a conference. The presentation is worth 15 percent of your grade. **(See Guide to Presentations on Moodle.)**

Extra Credit

Select as many as the recommended readings you wish and write a critical review of the work(s), discussing the work's relevancy to anthropology as a mode of inquiry. The work must be at least five typed pages formatted in the American Anthropologist book review style. The assignment is to be posted on Moodle and due the last day of seminar. Each extra credit assignment is worth 25 points. **(See Guide to Reviews on Moodle.)**

Academic Honesty

The University of Montana expects its students to be academically honest, particularly in regard to plagiarism.

“Plagiarism is the representing of another’s work as one’s own.” Both copyright laws and University policies are rigid as concerns plagiarism. Consult the current “[Student Conduct Code](#)” for details regarding penalties for plagiarism.

Students with Disabilities

If you need special accommodations, you should contact [Disability Services for Students](#) to make arrangements and let me know if there is anything I need to be aware of or that I need to do to assist you.

You will need to check your university email regularly, several times a week, as this is the principle means that I have to communicate with you outside of class. Failure to do so could adversely affect your grade.

Required readings:

Online articles available on Moodle

Provisional Course Outline

Week 1 - Introduction & Overview

Readings: Kuhn, “The Nature of Normal Science;” Kuhn, “The Priority of the Paradigm;” Kuhn, “Postscript-1969;” Kaplan & Manners, “Anthropology: Methods and Issues in Theory Formation;” Binford, “Where do Research Problems Come from.”

MATERIALISM

Week 2 - Neo-Evolutionary Theories

Readings: Durham, “The Evolutionary Significance of Cultural Behavior;” Lyman & O'Brien, “The Goals of Evolutionary Archaeology: History and Explanation;” Prentiss, Kuijt, & Chatters, “Introduction;” Kimura, “The Neutral Theory of Molecular Evolution;” Relethford, “Do You Know Where Your Ancestors Are?;” Gregory, “Understanding Natural Selection;” Croft, “Evolutionary Linguistics.”

Week 3 - Adaptation, Ecology, & Cultural Materialism

Readings: Balee, “The Research Program of Historical Ecology;” Biersack, Introduction: From the “New Ecology” to the New Ecologies;” Turner, *et al.*, “Living on the Edge;” Harris, “The Theoretical Principles of Cultural Materialism;” Harris, *et al.*, “The Cultural Ecology of India's Sacred Cattle;” Porro, Palms, Pastures, and Swidden Fields;” Fuentes, “It’s not all sex and violence;” Leslie & Little, “Human Biology and Ecology.”

Week 4 - Political Economy

Readings: Godelier, “Fetishism, Religion and Marx’s General Theories Concerning Ideology;” Roseberry, “Anthropology, History, and Modes of Production;” Taussig, *The Genesis of Capitalism amongst a South American Peasantry;”* Chas-Dunn and Hall, “Comparing World Systems;” Wolf, “Introduction;” McGuire, “The Making of History;” Singer, “The Development of Critical Medical Anthropology;” Yerkes, “Bone Chemistry, Body Parts, and Growth Marks;” Morgan, “The African American Speech Community.”

Week 5 - The Biosocial Interface

Readings: Bennett, *et al.*, “Biocultural Ecology;” Cronk, “Human Behavioral Ecology;” Voland, “Evolutionary Ecology of Human Reproduction;” Thomas, “The Evolution of Human Adaptability Paradigms;” Laland, Kumm, & Feldman, “Gene-Culture Coevolutionary Theory;” Oller & Griebel, “Contextual Freedom in Human Infant Vocalization and the Evolution of Language.”

IDEALISM

Week 6 - Scripts, Discourse, & Grounded Theory

Readings: Charmaz & Mitchell, “Grounded Theory in Ethnography;” Eyre, Hoffman, & Millstein, “The Gamesmanship of Sex;” Potter, “Discourse Analysis as a Way of Analyzing Naturally Occurring Talk;” Wodak & Reisigl, “Discourse and Racism;” Lerner, Rapoport, & Lomsky-Feder, “The Ethnic Script in Action;” Paolisso, “Cultural Models and Cultural Consensus of Chesapeake Bay Blue Crab and Oyster Fisheries;” Roche, Neaigus, & Miller, “Street Smarts and Urban Myths;” Ortner, “Patterns of History.”

Week 7 - Structure, Habitus, & Agency

Readings: Giddens, “Marx’s Correct Views on Everything;” Bourdieu, “Structures and Habitus;” Chomsky, “Basic Principles;” Hodder, “Structuralism, Post-Structuralist, and Semiotic Archaeologies;” Frank, “Agency;” Dornan, “Agency and Archaeology: Past, Present, and Future Directions;” Ahearn, “Language and Agency.”

Week 8 - Interpretivism & Symbolism

Readings: Geertz, “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture;” Sahlins, “Culture and Practical Reason;” Douglas, “Social Control of Cognition;” Turner, “Symbols in African Ritual;” Keane, “The

Value of Words and the Meaning of Things in Eastern Indonesian Exchange;" Rob, "Archaeology of Symbols;" Renfrew, "Symbol Before Concept."

POSTMODERNISM

Week 9 - Feminism & Identity

Readings: Di Leonardo, "Introduction;" Stockett & Geller, "Feminist Anthropology;" Claassen, "Changing Venue;" Gal, "Language, Gender, and Power;" Leibowitz, Perspectives on the Evolution of Sex Differences;" Gutmann, "Trafficking in Men;" Weston, "Lesbian/Gay Studies in the House of Anthropology;" Voss, "Feminisms, Queer Theories, and the Archaeological Study of Past Sexualities."

Week 10 - Representation & Critique

Readings: Clifford, "Introduction: Partial Truths;" Carrithers, "Is Anthropology Art or Science?;" Errington, "Colonial Linguistics;" Marcus, "Critical Anthropology Now;" Marcus and Fisher, "A Crisis of Representation in the Human Sciences;" Thornton, "The Rhetoric of Ethnographic Holism;" Crapanzano, "Hermes Dilemma;" Cartmill, "PaleoAnthropology."

Week 11 - Power & Postcoloniality

Readings: Comaroff, "Images of Empire;" Escobar, "Power and Visibility;" Farmer, "An Anthropology of Structural Violence;" Foucault, "The Subject and Power;" Nader, "Controlling Processes;" Said, "Latent and Manifest Orientalism;" Shackel, "Public Memory and the Search for Power in American Historical Archaeology;" Walsh, "Will Indigenous Languages Survive?"

Week 12 - Place & Landscape

Readings: Foucault, "Of Other Spaces;" Escobar, "Culture Sits in Places;" Gupta and Ferguson, "Beyond 'Culture': Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference;" Cavalli-Sforza, "Genetic and Cultural Diversity in Europe;" Thomas, "Archaeologies of Place and Landscape;" Levinson, "Language and Space;" Mather, "Shrines and the Domestication of Landscape;" Oubiña, Boado, & Estevez. "Rewriting Landscape"

Week 13 -

Thanksgiving Holiday

No Class

Week 14 Globalization

Readings Lewellen, "The Anthropology of Globalization;" Appadurai, "Global Ethnoscapes;" Friedman, "Globalization and Localization;" Turner, "Class Projects, Social Consciousness, and the Contradictions of Globalization;" Englund, "Ethnography After Globalism;" Bhatt, "World Englishes;" Wijsman & Cavalli-Sforza, "Migration and Genetic Population Structure with Special Reference to Humans;" Relethford, "Three Tales from Ireland"

Week 15 - Presentations

Dec 9 (Wed)

Papers & Bibliographies Due

Week 16 – Presentations

(Class Meets on Thur, Dec 8, at 1:10-3:10pm)

