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ANTY 450.01: Archaeological Theory

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ANTHROPOLOGY 450

ARCHAEOLOGICAL THEORY, FALL 2013

Class: Tuesday/Thursday, 11:10am-12:30pm, NAC 105

Instructor: Matthew Walsh, Department of Anthropology, University of Montana

Office Hours: Social Science Building 232, Mon-Fri 1:00pm-3pm; matthew.walsh@umontana.edu

Course Description & Learning Outcomes

In ANTY 450—Archaeological Theory—students will learn the history and major traditions of American archaeological theory, especially those useful in interpreting prehistoric archaeological sites, including: 1) culture history; 2) middle range/processual archaeology; 3) formation theory/behavioral archaeology; 4) evolutionary archaeology; 5) post-processual archaeology; and 6) processual-plus. A prerequisite is ANTY 250, Intro to Archaeology. Students will learn how to use theory to interpret archaeological data and how to evaluate theoretical arguments of their peers and in readings. Archaeological problem solving will be a major focus of class activities, which will include three major class activities: *Lecture/Discussion*, *In-class Debate*, and *Solving Research Problems*. ANTY 450 is an Upper Division Writing Course and will require students to effectively present their archaeological interpretations orally, visually, and in writing. Information literacy is expected of students, meaning that you will need to know how to use the library and online data sources to conduct research.

Course Requirements

The general schedule for the semester will consist of lecture and discussion of assigned readings every Tuesday, followed every Thursday by Students will prepare a paper (125 points) and a visual presentation (25 points) at the end of the semester. Each student's paper will cover a major archaeological issue, such as "The Anasazi in the American Southwest" or "Bison Hunting in the Great Plains". Students will use one or more theoretical perspectives from class (or another from outside class) to interpret the archaeological issue. Each student will submit a draft paper (November 7; **25 points**) and a final paper (Thursday, December 5; **100 points**). The visual presentations will be presented formally in class (this is quick and dirty - no more than 5 minutes!) on Thursday, December 1. In addition to these requirements, every other Tuesday students will submit either a 1 page annotated bibliography that includes a review of the week's assigned readings, or a written set of questions (at least one per reading assignment) regarding the week's readings. Each of these entries is worth 15 points each (180 total points). See the syllabus below for due dates.

The last two days of class (Dec. 6-8) will be spent discussing student paper topics and giving presentations.

During this course students will participate in four group debates based on assigned readings. Students will be assigned randomly to debate teams; each team will be evaluated based on their participation and preparation of a 1-page debate statement to be submitted and read prior to each debate. Each debate is worth 25 points (100 total points).

Finally, attendance (taken randomly over the semester) is worth **20 points**. The total points available in the class are 450, with grading based on a standard percentage of 100 (e.g., 360 points is 80% and is an B-).

Extra Credit Option: Students may write a 1-2 page article review of a pre-approved peer-reviewed paper or book chapter and receive up to 5 points. Students may do as many as 5 of these extra credit reviews for a potential total of 25 points.

All papers/essays/assignments/extra credit must be submitted to me in hard copy in class on the date due.

Required Readings

1) Archaeological Theory: An Introduction, 2nd Edition by Matthew Johnson, ~\$40 online (used and new copies available)

2) Weekly Readings; articles will be emailed or handed out in class from major archaeology journals, including *American Antiquity*. Engaging in in-class discussions of these readings will be integral to your participation and students will be required to discuss (with the class) specific aspects presented in each reading. Be sure to do each week's readings and be prepared to discuss them. Students must also come to class with a prepared (typed) and well-thought out question to pose to the class regarding each reading. These questions will be collected at the end of each class and will contribute directly to your participation grade.

WEEKLY SYLLABUS & SCHEDULE

Week 1: August 27-29

Topics: Introduction; Upper Division Writing Requirements and Technical Writing;

Class Overview—Archaeology and the Role of Theory - do we need to be concerned with more than just Culture History?

Readings: 1) AT: *Preface & Chapter 1*
2) Meltzer's *Paradigms in American Archaeology*
3) Custer's *Comments on Meltzer*

Choose a topic on which to write your final paper.

Tuesday - questions on readings due

Week 2: September 3-5

Topics: Culture History & the rise of the "New Archaeology" in North America

Readings: 1) Binford's *Archaeology as Anthropology*
2) AT: *Chapters 2, 3, 4*

Tuesday - annotated bibliography entry due

Week 3: September 10-12 (Essay 1 due in class on Thursday, Sept. 12)

Topics: Middle Range Theory and Ethnoarchaeology

Readings: 1) Binford's *Willow Smoke and Dogs' Tails*
2) Student's Choice (must be pre-approved)

Tuesday - questions on readings due

Week 4: September 17-19 (Essay 2 due on Sept. 19)

Topics: Formation Theory and Behavioral Archaeology

Readings: 1) AT: *Chapters 6-7*
2) Schiffer's *Toward the Identification of Formation Processes*
3) Cordell's *What Were We Thinking..?*

Tuesday - annotated bibliography entry due

Week 5: September 24-September 26

Topics: Evolutionary Theory and Archaeology

Readings: 1) AT: *Chapter 10*
2) Prentiss's *Introduction...*
3) Dunnell's *Style and Function*

Tuesday - questions on readings due

Week 6: October 1-October 3

Topics: Post-Processual Theory

Readings: 1) AT: *Chapter 7*
2) Hodder *Interpretive Archaeology*
3) Shanks and Tilley's *Theory and Method in Archaeology*

Tuesday - annotated bibliography entry due

Week 7: October 8-10

Topics: Processual Plus (Gender, Politics, Agency, etc...)

Readings: 1) AT: *Chapters 8 and 12*
2) Hegmon's *Setting Theoretical Egos Aside*
3) Smith's *Chapter 3: Theory and the 'Politics' of the Past*
4) Hegmon's *No More Theory Wars*

Tuesday - questions on readings due

Thursday Guest Lecturer - John Ravesloot

Week 8: October 15-17

Interpreting Archaeology through a Theoretical Lens and Applying Theory

- Readings: 1) VanPool and VanPool's *Scientific Nature of Post-Processualism*
2) Alison Wylie's *On "Heavily Decomposing Red Herrings": Scientific Method in Archaeology and the Ladening of Evidence with Theory*
3) Yu's *Ethnoarchaeology as a Strategy for Building Frames of Reference for Research Problems*

Tuesday Guest Lecturer: Pei-Lin Yu
Tuesday - annotated bibliography entry due

Week 9: October 22-24 (Short Essay 3 Due on Oct. 24)

Debate: Which Theory is Better, Processual vs. Behavioral Archaeologies
Readings: Student's Choice (must be pre-approved)
Tuesday - questions on readings due

Week 10: October 29-31 (Short Essay 4 Due on Oct. 31)

Applying Evolutionary Theory to Archaeological Interpretation
Readings: 1) Prentiss' *Get Rad! The Evolution of the Skateboard Deck*
Tuesday Guest Lecturer: Anna M. Prentiss
Tuesday - annotated bibliography entry due

Week 11: November 5-7

DRAFT PAPERS/OUTLINES ARE DUE THURSDAY, NOV. 7

Debate: Should Archaeology Even Be a Science, and Why?
Readings 1) Bintliff's *Why Indiana Jones is Smarter Than the Post-Processualists*
Tuesday Guest Lecturer: John Ravesloot - Walter Taylor and the Conjunctive Approach
Tuesday - questions on readings due

Week 12: November 12-14 (Short Essay 5 Due on Nov. 14)

Debate: Is Ethnoarchaeology Good or Bad for Archaeology? Does It Provide an Accurate Depiction of Past Behavior?
Readings: 1) Binford's *Introduction to Nunamiut Ethnoarchaeology*
Tuesday - annotated bibliography entry due

Week 13: Nov 19-21 - no class this week (Thanksgiving)

Week 14: Nov. 26-28

Debate: Is Evolutionary Theory a Good Way to Look at Culture and Behavior?
Readings: 1) Shennan *Chapters 1-3*
NO annotated bibliography entry due - work on your final paper!

Week 15: December 3-5

Topics: Student Papers
View your peers visual presentations and discuss them in class; themes to be determined.

December 5: Final Papers are due in class the last day (do not email papers). Do not miss this class!

No Class, No final during Finals Week

Finally, please respect yourself and your fellow students by being polite, courteous, and attentive at all times. Please refrain from using cellular phones, iPads, iPods, iPhones, etc, during class and come prepared to engage with your peers, have a good learning experience, and work together - let's have a great productive semester.