

ANTH 301

## History and Theory in Anthropology

Wellesley College

Fall 2006

Tuesdays, 6:30-9:00pm, PNE 351

Gregory A. Ruf

(Visiting Associate Professor)

Office: PNE 346; email: [gruf@wellesley.edu](mailto:gruf@wellesley.edu)

Office Hours: Tu/Th 5:30-6:30pm (and by appointment)

### Course Description

This course introduces students to contemporary anthropology by tracing its historical development and its specific application in ethnographic writing. It examines the social context in which each selected model or "paradigm" took hold and the extent of cognitive sharing, by either intellectual borrowing or breakthrough. The development of contemporary theory will be examined both as internal to the discipline and as a response to changing intellectual climates and social milieu. The course will focus on each theory in action, as the theoretical principles and methods apply to ethnographic case studies.

### Course Goal and Objectives

This course is a weekly seminar of intensive-reading on history and theory in socio-cultural anthropology, with the goal of presenting closely-reasoned critical analyses of theoretical ideas and their applications. The principal objectives of seminar participation include acquiring: 1) an understanding of major theoretical developments in the history of the discipline and its practice, as well as of the historical context in which such paradigms took form and gained ascendancy; 2) an ability to link theory and method to ethnographic examples and ethnological comparison; 3) an appreciation for the ways in which assumptions, biases, and other factors may influence observations, considerations of evidence, and interpretations of data.

### Requirements, Evaluation, and Grading

Active participation in weekly critical discussions will be a significant factor in determination of grades. Regular attendance is expected of all participants; absences will be excused (or extensions granted) only in special circumstance, judged in conformity with College practice. Please come to class sufficiently prepared. Assigned weekly readings are required to be completed prior to class sessions. Participants will be asked not only to respond to questions about the readings, but also to pose questions and comments of their own for the seminar to consider and discuss.

Final grades will be determined on the following basis:

- **General Participation:** 20%– includes active engagement in weekly seminar discussions, as well as short presentations of assigned material
- **Four Short Papers:** 15% each (totaling 60%) – over the course of the semester, each participant will be required to submit four short (~5 pg.) response papers that offer comparative theoretical critiques of assigned readings. The challenge is to provide an informed critique that contrasts strengths and weakness of alternative perspectives. Details regarding each evaluative exercise will be made available at appropriate junctures.
- **Final Presentation:** 20%– at the final session of the semester, each participant will present a brief review of one recent book-length anthropological study of their own choice, which they feel offers a theoretical perspective worthy of further consideration and discussion. The review will include a well-organized 10-15 minute oral presentation to the seminar, as well as a closely-reasoned written analysis of 3-5 pages in length.

### **Course Texts and Readings**

As an advanced-level seminar, this course requires intensive reading. Several texts have been ordered through the Wellesley College bookstore as suggested purchases (you are not “required” to buy any of them). Assigned readings from these main texts are provided in abbreviated form; additional required readings for each weekly session are listed with full bibliographic citations. Articles accessible via the Wellesley College Library’s subscription to electronic databases [e.g. [JSTOR](#)] are so indicated. Other assigned readings will be placed on Library Reserve (call numbers are provided). In addition, under each weekly session one or more ‘recommended’ readings of topical relevance; these are not required, but only suggested debarkation points for those with further interests. Note also that a Course Conference will be created to facilitate communication, discussion, and exchange of ideas.

### **Suggested Purchases**

The following texts will be read in or near their entirety, and have been ordered through the College Bookstore as suggested purchases:

- Paul Erickson & Liam Murphy, 2006, Readings for a History of Anthropological Theory, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Broadview Press, ISBN 1551117606 (pbk), \$58.95
- Claude Levi-Strauss, 1995, Myth and Meaning: Cracking the Code of Culture, NY: Schocken (Dist: Random House), ISBN 080521038 (pbk), \$10 [GN362 .L45 1995; also available as e-book via WC library]
- Marcel Mauss, 2000, The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies, NY: Norton, ISBN 039332043X (pbk), \$13.95 [GT3050 .M313]
- Hugh Raffles, 2002, In Amazonia: A Natural History, Princeton, ISBN 0691048851 (pbk) \$19.95
- Anna L. Tsing, 1993, In the Realm of the Diamond Queen: Marginality in an Out-of-the-Way Place, Princeton, ISBN 0691000514 (pbk) \$26.95

### **Recommended References**

There are a number of helpful references on the historical development on anthropological theory, both in text and on-line. Each offers a slightly different focus and interpretation. You are encouraged to consult these resources, on your own initiative. A few helpful entry points include:

- Alan Barnard, 2000, History and Theory in Anthropology, Cambridge [e-accessible via [Questia Online Library](#)]
- Marvin Harris, 1968, The Rise of Anthropological Theory: A History of Theories of Culture, NY: Crowell [GN320 .H33]
- Joan Vincent, 1990, Anthropology and Politics: Visions, Traditions, & Trends, Tucson: University of Arizona [GN492 .V55 1990]
- Adam Kuper, 1996, Anthropology and Anthropologists: The Modern British School, NY: Routledge [GN308.3.G7 K86 1996]
- Sydel Silverman (ed.), 1981, Totems and Teachers: Perspectives on the History of Anthropology, Columbia [GN17 .T69]
- See also the (currently) 10-volume ‘History of Anthropology Series’ published by the University of Wisconsin [http://www.wisc.edu/wisconsinpress/History\_of\_Anthropology.html]

### **Please Note:**

Students with disabilities who are taking this course and who need disability-related accommodations are encouraged to work with Barbara Boger, the Director of Programs of the Pforzheimer Learning and Teaching Center (if you have learning or attention disabilities), and Jim Wice, the Director of Disability Services (if you have a physical disability or are uncertain) to arrange these accommodations. Their offices are located in the Pforzheimer Learning and Teaching Center in Clapp Library.

## Course Outline

### Week 1 (September 5)

#### **Introduction & Orientation: The Nature of Humanity**

- Don Brenneis, 2004, "A Partial View of Contemporary Anthropology," American Anthropologist 106(3):580-588 [JSTOR]
- Film: 'Fieldwork' (Sir Baldwin Spencer; Strangers Abroad Series [GN20.S77 1990])

### Week 2 (September 12)

#### **Intellectual Foundations: Evolutionary Legacies**

- Erickson & Murphy (eds.), Readings, chs 1-5 (M&E, Tylor, Morgan, Spencer, Darwin)
- Derek Freeman, 1974, "The Evolutionary Theories of Charles Darwin & Herbert Spencer," Current Anthropology 15(3):211-38 [JSTOR]
- Film: 'Everything is Relatives' (WHR Rivers; Strangers Abroad Series)

#### Recommended:

- "Discussion & Criticism: Morgan & Materialism" (Thomas Harding; Eleanor Leacock; Morris Opler), Current Anthropology 1964, 5(2), pp. 109-114 [JSTOR]
- Eleanor Leacock, 1972, "Introduction," in Frederick Engels [1884], The Origins of the Family, Private Property, & the State, NY: International Publishers, pp. 7-67 [e-book at WC library]
- Marx & Engels Internet Archive
  - K. Marx & F. Engels, 1845-6, The German Ideology
  - K. Marx, 1851-2, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon

### Week 3 (September 19)

#### **Boasian American Traditions: Historical Particulars of Culture, Character, & Personality**

- Erickson & Murphy (eds.), Readings, chs 8-12 (Boas, Lowie, Kroeber, Mead, Benedict)
- Franz Boas, 1896, "The Limits of the Comparative Method of Anthropology" [JSTOR]
- Franz Boas, 1932, "The Aims of Anthropological Research" [JSTOR]
- George Stocking, 1966, "Boas & the Culture Concept in Historical Perspective," American Anthropologist 68:867-882 [JSTOR]
- Film: 'The Shackles of Tradition' (Franz Boas; Strangers Abroad Series)

#### Recommended:

- Franz Boas, 1940, Race, Language, & Culture, [GN6 .B56 1940]
- Derek Freedman, 1983, Margaret Mead & Samoa, Harvard [GN671.S2 F73 1983]

### Week 4 (September 26) – Essay 1 Due

#### **Colonial Fields: Functionalism and Organic Analogies**

- Erickson & Murphy (eds.), Readings, chs 6, 15-18 (Durkheim, Radcliffe-Brown, Malinowski, Fortes & Evans-Pritchard, Gluckman)
- A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, 1935, 'On the Concept of Function in Social Science' [JSTOR]
- A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, 1940, "On Joking Relationships," Africa: Journal of the International African Institute 13(3):195-210 [JSTOR]
- George Stocking, 1992, "The Ethnographer's Magic: Fieldwork in British Anthropology from Tylor to Malinowski," in The Ethnographer's Magic & Other Essays in the History of Anthropology, Wisconsin, pp. 12-58 [GN308 .S76 1992]
- Film: 'Off the Verandah' (Bronislaw Malinowski; Strangers Abroad Series)

#### Recommended:

- Emile Durkheim, 1949 [1893], The Division of Labor in Society, Free Press [HD51 .D9613 1949]
- Bronislaw Malinowski, 1939, "The Group & the Individual in Functional Analysis," American Journal of Sociology 44(6):938-964 [JSTOR]
- Bronislaw Malinowski, 1984 [1923], Argonauts of the Western Pacific, Waveland [GN671.N5 M3]
- A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, 1952 [1940], Structure & Function in Primitive Society, NY: Free Press [GN490 .R3 1952]
- E.E. Evans-Pritchard, 1945, "The Sanusi of Cyrenaica," Africa 15(2):61-79 [JSTOR]
- Joan Vincent, 1991, "Functionalism Historicized," in Fox (ed.) Recapturing Anthropology, op. cit, pp. 45-58 [GN33 .R43 1991]

## Week 5 (October 3)

### **Deep Thoughts: Structuralism & the Symbolic Expression of Meaning**

- Levi-Strauss, Myth & Meaning
- Erickson & Murphy (eds.), Readings, chs. 13-15, 23 (Levi-Strauss, Leach, Sapir, Turner)
- Mary Douglas, 1991 [1966], "The Abominations of Leviticus," in Purity & Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution & Taboo, Routledge, pp. 54-72 [[GN494 .D6 1991](#)]

Film: 'Strange Beliefs' (E.E. Evans-Pritchard; Strangers Abroad Series)

#### Recommended:

- Claude Levi-Strauss, 1981, Tristes Tropiques, NY: Atheneum [[F2520 .L4813 1981](#)]
- Claude Levi-Strauss, 1963, Structural Anthropology, NY: Basic Books [[GN362 .L4813](#)]
- Mary Douglas, 1975 [1972], "Deciphering a Meal," in Implicit Meanings, Routledge & Kegan Paul, pp. 249-275 [orig. in Daedalus, winter, 1972]
- Robert Murphy, 1963, "On Zen Marxism: Filiation & Alliance," Man 63:17-19 [[JSTOR](#)]
- Victor Turner, The Ritual Process: Structure & Anti-Structure, Cornell, pp. 94-130 [[GN473 .T82](#)]

## Week 6 (October 10) – No Class: Fall Break

<recommended: use this time to read [Raffles](#), [In Amazonia](#)>

## Week 7 (October 17)

### **Ties that Bind: Exchange, Reciprocity, and Action**

- Marcel Mauss, The Gift
- Bronislaw Malinowski, 1923, "Essentials of the Kula," in Argonauts of the Western Pacific, NY: Dutton, pp. 81-104 [[GN671.N5 M3](#)]
- Weiner, Annette. 1979. "Trobriand Kinship from Another View: the Reproductive Power of Women and Men," in Man 14(2): 328-48 [[JSTOR](#)] <20>
- Erickson & Murphy (eds.), Readings, ch. 29 (Bourdieu)
- Pierre Bourdieu, 1980, "Structures, Habitus, Practices," in The Logic of Practice, pp. 52-65 [[GN468 .B6813 1990](#)]
- Film: 'Trobriand Cricket'

#### Recommended:

- Abraham Rosman & Paula Rubel, 1971, Feasting with My Enemy: Rank & Exchange among NW Coast Societies, Columbia [[E78.N78 R65](#)]

## Week 8 (October 24) – No Class: Tanner Conference – Essay 2 Due

<recommended: use this time to read [Tsing](#), [Diamond Queen](#) >

## Week 9 (October 31)

### **Systems Theory**

- Erickson & Murphy (eds.), Readings, chs. 20-22, 27 (White, Harris, Sahlins)
- Julian Steward and Robert Murphy, 1956, "Tappers and Trappers: Parallel Processes in Acculturation," Economic Development and Culture Change 4:335-353 [[JSTOR](#)]
- Roy Rappaport, 1967, "Ritual Regulation of Environmental Relations among a New Guinea People," Ethnology 6:17-30 (reprinted in A. Vayda (ed.), 1969, Environment & Cultural Behavior: Ecological Studies in Cultural Anthropology, Garden City: Natural History Press, pp. 181-201 [[Clapp GF51 .V35](#)])
- Marvin Harris, 1966, "The Cultural Ecology of India's Sacred Cattle," Current Anthropology 7(1):51-66 [[JSTOR](#)]

#### Recommended:

- John Comaroff, 1982, "Dialectical Systems, History, & Anthropology: Units of Study & Questions of Theory," Journal of Southern African Studies 8(2):143-172 [[JSTOR](#)]
- Roy Rappaport, 1984, Pigs for the Ancestors, New Haven: Yale [[DU740.42 .R36 1984](#)]
- Marvin Harris, 1979, Cultural Materialism, NY: Random House [[GN360 .H37](#)]
- Joan Vincent, 1986, "System and Process, 1974-85," Annual Reviews of Anthropology 15:99-119 [[JSTOR](#)]

## Week 10 (November 7)

### **Process & Power**

- Erickson & Murphy (eds.), Readings, ch. 27-28 (Wolf, Foucault)
- Immanuel Wallerstein, 1974, "The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist System: Concepts for Comparative Analysis," Comparative Studies in Society and History 16(4): 387-415 [JSTOR]
- Sydel Silverman, 1979, "On the Uses of History in Anthropology: The 'palio' of Siena," American Ethnologist 6(3):413-436 [JSTOR]
- David Nugent, 1982, "Closed Systems and Contradictions: The Kachin In and Out of History," Man (ns) 17(3):508-27 [JSTOR]

#### Recommended:

- Sally Falk Moore, 1987, "Explaining the Present: Theoretical Dilemmas in Processual Ethnography," American Ethnologist 14(4):727-36 [JSTOR]
- George Marcus, 1995, "Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography," Annual Reviews of Anthropology 24:95-117 [JSTOR]

## Week 11 (November 14)

Discussion of Raffles, In Amazonia

## Week 12 (November 21) – **Essay 3 Due**

### **Anthropology as Cultural Interpretation**

- Erickson & Murphy (eds.), Readings, chs. 24-26 (Geertz, Gal, Strathern)
- Thomas Scheff, 1986, "Toward Resolving the Controversy over 'Thick Description,'" Current Anthropology 27(4):408-409 [JSTOR]
- Clifford Geertz, 1983 [1974], "'From the Native's Point of View: On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding,'" in Local Knowledge, NY: Basic Books, pp. 55-70 [GN316 .G43 1983]
- Clifford Geertz, 1973, The Interpretation of Cultures, NY: Basic Books [GN315 .G36]
  - "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," pp. 412-453

Film: 'The Cockfight'

#### Recommended:

- William Roseberry, 1989, "Balinese Cockfights and the Seduction of Anthropology," in Anthropologies and Histories: Essays in Culture, History, and Political Economy, Rutgers, pp. 17-29 [GN448 .R48 1989]

## Week 13 (November 28)

### **Critical Reflections: Predicaments of Focus, Representation, and Authority**

- Erickson & Murphy (eds.), Readings, chs. 28-34 (Clifford, Marcus & Fischer, Ortner, Lock & Scheper-Hughes, Appadurai)
- Michel Foucault, 1980, "Truth and Power," in Power/Knowledge, Colin Gordon (ed.), Pantheon, pp. 104-133 [HM291 .F59]
- Lila Abu-Lughod, 1990, "The Romance of Resistance: Tracing Transformations of Power through Bedouin Women," American Ethnologist 17:41-55 [JSTOR]

#### Recommended:

- Bronislaw Malinowski, 1969 [1917-1918], A Diary in a Strict Sense of the Term, London: Routledge [GN671.N5 M343]
- Paul Rabinow, 1977, Reflections of Fieldwork in Morocco, California [GN346 .R3]
- Edward Said, 1979, Orientalism, NY: Basic Books [DS12 .S24 1979]
- Arjun Appadurai, 1986, "Theory in Anthropology: Center & Periphery," Comparative Studies in Society & History 28(2):356-361 [JSTOR]
- Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, 1997, "Discipline and Practice: 'The Field' as Site, Method, and Location in Anthropology," in Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science, California, pp. 1-46

## Week 14 (December 5)

Discussion of Tsing, In the Realm of the Diamond Queen

## Week 15 (December 12) – **Essay 4 Due**

### **Student Presentations**