Anthropology 301
Fall 2011
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Office Hours: Mondays and Thursdays 1:30-2:30 pm

History and Theory in Anthropology

Course Description
This course introduces students to theoretical discourse in anthropology by tracing its historical development and its specific application in ethnographic writing. It examines the historical social context in which each selected model or “paradigm” took hold and the extent of cognitive sharing, by either intellectual borrowing or breakthrough each entails. While this is not a course in the history of anthropological theory, it does seek to root the understanding of theory in a historical perspective, both social and intellectual. The development of theory in a historical perspective will be examined both as internal to the discipline and in response to changing intellectual climates and social milieu. But, in order to avoid the pitfalls of infertile debate over theoretical dogma, we will focus our evaluation of each theory in action, i.e. on the application of theoretical principles and methods in as many ethnographic case studies as we can.

Course Goal and Objectives
The objectives of this seminar are threefold:
1) To acquire an understanding of major theoretical developments in the history of the discipline, as well as of the historical context in which such paradigms took form and gained ascendancy.
2) To develop the skill of linking theory to ethnographic examples
3) To gain an appreciation for the ways in which assumptions and biases may influence observations, and interpretations of anthropological data.
**Course Requirements**
This course is a seminar and it will proceed in a form similar to Platonic dialogue as students critically evaluate the logical merit of each theory examined. Needless to say, class attendance is required. Each student will be assigned two readings during the semester and will be required to lead the class discussion on those readings. In addition, two short response papers on the readings should be handed in within a week of the oral presentation (3-5 pages). A final paper (10 pages), and a final examination are also required. The paper will be due the last day of classes and it will entail the critical analysis of an ethnography that you will choose (a list of possible ethnographies and more guidelines will be provided). The details for the final exam will be announced later.

**Grade will be based on**
Class participation/reading presentations 30%
Short response papers 20%
Final paper 25%
Final exam 25%

**Required Readings**
The following books have been ordered at the bookstore for purchase.

James Clifford and George Marcus 1986 *Writing Culture*
Paul Erickson and Liam Murphy 2003 *A History of Anthropological Theory*
Clifford Geertz, 1973 *The Interpretation of culture*
Claude Levi-Strauss 1955 *Tristes Tropiques*
Paul Rabinow 1977 *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco*
Eric Wolf, 1982 *Europe and the People without History*

**Additional readings** are either on sakai, or can be found through the web. JSTOR is an independently maintained full-text database service to which Wellesley College subscribes. You may log-on to JSTOR via the WC library website (do not attempt to log-on to JSTOR directly at their homepage -- it requires payment of a subscription fee; the College has an institutional subscription, and you must log-on via the College library website). Once you are in JSTOR, you may search for full-text articles by a number of different means (Author, Title, Subject, Keywords, etc). JSTOR articles may be read on-screen or printed out.
Class Schedule

Monday September 5, No class, Labor Day

Wednesday, September 7, Monday schedule
Introduction to the course
Film:
In-class viewing of *W.H. Rivers (Strangers Abroad Series)*

Monday, September 12
Seeking the roots of anthropology in the Enlightenment? The Legacy of Victorian Era Evolutionism

Read:
Erickson and Murphy

Charles Darwin
The Descent of Man, Ch. 21: “General Summary & Conclusions” (1859)

Lewis Henry Morgan
‘Ethnical Periods,’ from Ancient Society (1877)

Karl Marx
“Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy” (1859)
http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1859/critique-pol-economy/preface.htm
Monday, September 19
Culture, history, and personality in American anthropology
Read:
Erickson and Murphy
“American Cultural Anthropology” (2003) pp. 73-88
Boas, Franz
“Race, language and culture” (1940) (sakai)
Lesser, Alexander
‘Franz Boas’ (1981) (sakai)
Mead, Margaret
Coming of Age in Samoa (1961) (sakai)
Film:
Franz Boas: The Shackles of Tradition

Monday, September 26
Structure and function in primitive society: The British School of Social Anthropology
Read:
Erickson and Murphy
“British social Anthropology” (2003) pp. 100-112
Bronislaw Malinowski
“Kula” (1920) [JSTOR]
“The Group and the Individual in Functional Analysis” (1939) [JSTOR]
“Introduction” to Argonauts of the Western Pacific (1921) (sakai)
Stocking, George
The Ethnographer’s Magic, Chapter 6 (1992) (sakai)
Film:
Bronislaw Malinowski: Off the Verandah (Strangers Abroad Series)
Monday, October 3
Positivism and French Structural Anthropology
Read:
Erickson and Murphy
Emile Durkheim
“Division of Labor” (1933)
http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/socsi/undergraduate/introsoc/divlabor.html
“What is a Social Fact?” (1938)
http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/socsi/undergraduate/introsoc/socfact.html
Claude Levi-Strauss
Tristes Tropiques (1955)
(Six presentations Parts 1+2, Parts 3+4, Parts 5+6, Part 7, Part 8, Part 9)

Monday, October 10 No Class, Fall break

Monday, October 17
Reducing the importance of structure: process
Read:
Erickson and Murphy
“The Later Twentieth century” pp.115-129
Leslie White
“Energy & the Evolution of Culture” (1943) [JSTOR]
Robert Murphy & Julian Steward
“Tappers and Trappers” (1956) [JSTOR]
Marvin Harris
“The Cultural Ecology of India’s Sacred Cattle” (1966) [JSTOR]
Victor Turner
“Social Dramas and Stories About Them” (1980) [JSTOR]
Monday October 24
A discipline in crisis
Read:
Malinowski, Bronislaw
   A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term (1967) (sakai)
Gough, Kathleen
   “New Proposals for Anthropologists” (1968) (sakai)
Asad, Talal
   “From the History of Colonial Anthropology to the Anthropology of Western Hegemony” (1973) (sakai)

Monday, October 31
The crisis of representation
Read:
Rabinow, Paul
   Reflections, (1977) four presentations: Intro+chapters1,2; Chapters 3+4, Chapters 5+6; Chapters 7,8+Conclusion

Monday, November 7
Anthropologists meet the world system: History and the political economy of the state
Read:
Erickson and Murphy
Wolf, Eric
   Europe and the people without history (1982) Five presentations: Introduction; Chapter 2; Chapters 3+4; Chapter 9; Chapter 12
Monday, November 14
Ethnography as Cultural Translation: Symbols and meaning in the field of action
Read:
Erickson and Murphy
“Symbolism and meaning in anthropology and archaeology” (2003) pp. 131-143
Geertz, Clifford The Interpretation of Cultures (1973)
“The impact of the concept of culture on the concept of man”
“Thick Description: Toward and interpretive theory of Culture”
“Religion as a Cultural System”
“Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight”

Film:
The cockfight

Monday, November 21
Anthropology and the Study of Power
Read:
Michel Foucault
“The Subject & Power” (1982)(JSTOR)
“Two Lectures” (1994) (sakai)
“What is Enlightenment?” (1992) (sakai)
Edward Said
“Representing the Colonized” (1989) (JSTOR)
Pierre Bourdieu
“Social Space & Symbolic Power” (1989) JSTOR)
Monday, November 28
Post-modern anthropology and meta-ethnography

Read:
Erickson and Murphy
Clifford, James
   “Introduction” In Writing Culture (1986)
Rosaldo, Renato
   “From the door of his tent” In Writing Culture
Tyler, Steve
   “Post-modern ethnography” In Writing Culture
Appadurai, Arjun
   “Disjuncture and difference in the global cultural economy” (1990) (e-reserve)
Akhil Gupta & James Ferguson
   “Beyond Culture” (1992) (JSTOR)

Film:
Roshomon

Monday, December 5
Student presentations of their final papers

Friday, December 16
final papers and final exams are due by by 8:30 p.m.

Have a wonderful winter break
Monday September 26

Monday October 3

Monday October 10 No Class, fall break

Monday October 17

Monday October 24

Monday October 31

Monday November 7

Monday November 14

Monday November 21

Monday November 28

Monday December 5 student presentations