ANTH 301
History and Theory in Anthropology
Fall 2005
Thursdays, 2:50-5:20 pm, PNE 151

Gregory A. Ruf
Visiting Associate Professor
Office: PNE 346; 781-283-2946; gruf@wellesley.edu
Office Hours: M/Th, 12:00-1:00 (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-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 is 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 the ‘JSTOR’ electronic database are so indicated, and will NOT be put on Library Reserve. Other assigned readings will be placed on reserve (call numbers are provided). If necessary, personal copies will be provided for publications not carried by the Wellesley College Library. 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 (particularly considering that the Wellesley College Library currently holds only one of these titles):

- Eric Wolf, 1997, *Europe and the People Without History*, University of California, 0520048989 (pbk) $24.95

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:

- 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 & Schedule of Topics/Readings

Week 1 (September 8)
**Theorizing the Nature of Humanity: Preludes to Reason & Enlightenment**
Read:
- Erickson & Murphy, HAT, pp. 21-42

Recommended:

Week 2 (September 15)
**Comparative Victorian Foundations: Materialism, Empiricism, & Evolutionary Legacies**
Read:
- Erickson & Murphy, HAT, pp. 42-72
- Vincent, AoP, Part I, pp. 15-26
- Thomas Harding; Eleanor Leacock; and Morris Opler, 1964, 'Discussion & Criticism: Morgan & Materialism,' *Current Anthropology* 5(2), pp. 109-114 [JSTOR]
  - 1844, "Estranged Labour" (from *Economic & Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*)
  - 1846-46, "Camera Obscura" (from *The German Ideology*)
  - 1848, "Class Struggle" (from *Communist Manifesto* [with Frederick Engels])
  - 1852, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (excerpt)
  - 1867, "The Values of Commodities" (from *Capital*, Vol. 1)

Week 3 (September 22)
**Boasian Traditions: Historical Particulars of Culture, Character, & Personality**
Read:
- Erickson & Murphy, HAT, pp. 73-89, 115-17
  - 1896, “The Limits of the Comparative Method of Anthropology,” pp. 270-80 [JSTOR]
Recommended:


>> Short Paper 1 DUE TUESDAY 9/27 <<

Week 4 (September 29)

**Colonial Fields: Structural-Functionalism & Organic Analogies**

Read:

- Erickson & Murphy, HAT, pp. 100-112
- Vincent, AoP, pp. 27-65
  - 1935 'On the Concept of Function in Social Science' (pp. 178-87) [JSTOR]
  - 1940 'On Social Structure' (pp. 188-204) [JSTOR]

Recommended:


Week 5 (October 6)

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

Read:

- Erickson & Murphy, HAT, pp. 89-100, 131-39
- Vincent, AoP, pp. 96-102
  - 1955, “The Structural Study of Myth” [JSTOR]
  - 1966, “The Scope of Anthropology” [JSTOR]
Recommended:

  - 1953, “Social Structure” (pp. 277-323)
  - 1955, “The Structural Study of Myth” [JSTOR]
  - 1963, “Structural Analysis in Linguistics and Anthropology”
  - 1966, “The Scope of Anthropology” [JSTOR]

Week 6 (October 13)

**Ties that Bind: Reciprocity, Exchange, & Transaction**

Read:

- Erickson & Murphy, *HAT*, pp. 143-45
- Vincent, *AoP*, pp. 65-96
- Mauss, *The Gift*

*Film:* ‘The Feast’

Recommended:


>> Short Paper 2 DUE TUESDAY 10/18 <<

Week 7 (October 20)

**From Systems to Processes: Neo-Evolutionism, Cultural Ecology, and Political Economy**

- Erickson & Murphy, *HAT*, pp. 117-31, 148-55

Recommended:

Week 8 (October 27)
Histories of Contention:
Read:
- Wolf, Europe & the People Without History (chs. 3, 5-8, 9, 11-12) [D208 .W64 1982]

Recommended:
- Correspondence: "Imaginary Kachins"
  - Edmund Leach – David Nugent, Man (ns) 18(1) (Mar):191-206 [JSTOR]
  - Victor King Man (ns) 18(2):405-406 [JSTOR]
  - Leach, Man (ns) 18(4):787-788 [JSTOR]
- Sidney Mintz, 1985, Sweetness & Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History, Penguin

Week 9 (November 3)
Anthropology as Cultural Interpretation
Read:
- Erickson & Murphy, HAT, pp. 139-43, 155-65
  - "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretative Theory of Culture," pp. 3-54
  - "The Impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of Man," pp. 33-54

Film: "The Cockfight"

Recommended:

>> Short Paper 3 DUE TUESDAY 11/8 <<
Week 10 (November 10)
Critical Reflections: Predicaments of Focus, Representation, and Authority
Read:
- Erickson & Murphy, HAT, pp. 155-80
- Vincent, AoP, pp. 110-20

Film: “Bronislaw Malinowski: Off the Veranda”

Recommended:
- Paul Rabinow, 1977, Reflections of Fieldwork in Morocco, California [GN346.R3]
- Renato Rosaldo, 1986, “From the Door of His Tent,” in Writing Culture, op cit., pp. 77-97

Week 11 (November 17)
New Dimensions of Global Modernity
Read:
- Erickson & Murphy, HAT, pp. 168-73
- Vincent, AoP, pp. 257-355

Recommended:

November 24 – No Class: Thanksgiving Recess (11/22-27)

Recommended:

>> Short Paper 4 DUE Tuesday 11/29 <<
Week 12 (December 1)

**Power Matters: Hegemony, Domination, and Resistance**

Read:
- Vincent, AoP, pp. 127-255.
  - "What is Enlightenment?" pp. 78-108
  - "Truth and Power," pp. 104-133
- Recommended:

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Week 13 (December 8)

**History and Theory in Anthropology: Contemporary Ethnographic Case Study**

Read:
- Heckenberger, Ecology of Power

>> Final Presentations <<

*Final Presentation Paper Due: Tuesday, Dec. 13*