SEMINAR IN ANTHROPOLOGICAL THEORY

ANTH 4901 - SPRING 2007

Course Syllabus

Professor: Dr. Donna Chollett
Office: 205 Imholt Hall
Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday, 10:30-11:30 am, 1:00-2:00 pm and by appointment
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Course Objectives

What's the point? Without an understanding of theory, the data collected by anthropologists remains a collection of "exotic" ethnographic accounts. Theories determine the questions anthropologists ask and guide the collection of data; they are the tools for giving meaning to ethnographic data. It is through theory that anthropologists address central issues, such as "What is the nature of culture?," "What is the relationship of the individual to society?," "How can another culture be understood by an anthropological outsider?," and so forth. This course introduces students to the formation of anthropological theory, the central intellectual traditions, and encourages students to develop critical thinking skills—through evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses—of different theoretical paradigms. Because current anthropological theory is built upon the work of earlier generations, students are introduced both to the history of ideas and to contemporary perspectives. This course is designed to engage students in reading the original works of various theorists in order to appreciate the richness and complexity of their ideas and to understand the influence of the sociocultural milieu on theory-building and the contributions of individual theorists.

Readings


Course Packet: A course packet will be provided to each student, at my printing cost (articles in the course packet are subject to addition, deletion, or substitution at my discretion).
Course Requirements

Class sessions will be conducted as seminars; this requires you to be present at all classes and actively contribute to discussions. You must attend all classes; 3.5% of your course grade will be deducted for any classes you fail to attend—no exceptions. Extra written work will be required for any missed class. All readings should be completed before the beginning of the week for which they are assigned. For each class, come to class with a one-half page outline of questions or arguments related to the assigned readings that you prepared to stimulate discussion—focus on the more significant issues. These will be collected, but not graded; points will be deducted for lack of preparation.

Please be advised that the reading load for this course is substantial; allow yourself adequate preparation time. Your participation should reflect understanding, critical thinking, and analytic contributions to class discussions. I reserve the right to lower any student's grade who does not participate in classroom discussions; I may also increase the course grade of any student who makes superior contributions to class discussion.

Beginning with week two, there will be one written assignment per week, approximately 4-5 pages in length, based on the assigned readings; each is worth 10 points. There are two exceptions: The paper for Week 13 asks you to draw on Sahlin's Culture and Practical Reason and Roseberry's Anthropologies and Histories; this paper is to be 7 pages and given the length and difficulty will be worth 15 points. The paper for Week 14 is again based on Sahlin's, Roseberry, and Wolf's Europe and the People Without History, should be 7 pages in length, and will be worth 15 points. Papers should reflect a careful and thoughtful reading of assigned materials and incorporate insights from class discussion. Papers are due on Friday of each week, placed in my office door mailbox by noon—no later! Absolutely no late papers accepted. I will not give incompletes for this course, except in unusual circumstances and when arrangements have been made in advance. In the case of this exception, no grade changes will be given after one semester. All assigned work must be completed to pass this course.

11 weekly papers @ 10 points 110
2 weekly papers @ 15 points 30
Total 180

Course grades will be based on the following scale:

A 93-100%  C+ 77-79%  F 59 and under
A- 90-92%  C 73-76%  
B+ 87-89%  C- 70-72%  
B 83-86%  D+ 67-69%
B- 80-82%  D 60-66%

Anthropology has a web site with information on requirements for the major in anthropology, course listings, syllabi, course materials, anthropology professors, and hot links to many web sites of relevance to anthropology students. There is also information on the theorists covered in this course on the theory seminar page. Check it out at: http://www.mrs.umn.edu/academic/anthropology
**WEEK 1 - JAN 17**

*Introduction*

*Wednesday*

**WEEK 2 - JAN 22 & 24**

*Theoretical Paradigms*

*Monday*


Course Packet: James Lett, "The Concept of Scientific Paradigms"

*Wednesday*

Course Packet: Stanley Barrett, "Paradigms or Pseudo-Paradigms"

Course Packet: Linda Smith, Imperialism, History, Writing and Theory

Course Packet: Nancy Scheper-Hughes, Demography Without Numbers

**WEEK 3 - JAN 29 & 31**

*Nineteenth-Century Evolutionism*

*Monday*


McGee & Warms: Spencer, Pp. 24-40; Tylor, Pp. 41-55

Course Packet: Joan Mark, Francis La Flesche: The American Indian as Anthropologist

Course Packet: Alice Fletcher & Francis La Flesche, The Omaha Tribe

*Wednesday*

McGee & Warms: Morgan, Pp. 56-67; Marx and Engels, Pp. 67-81

Course Packet: Karl Marx, "Classes in Capitalism and Pre-Capitalism"

McGee & Warms: Elenor Leacock 485-500

**WEEK 4 - FEB 5 & 7**

*Nineteenth-Century Evolutionism, continued*

*Monday*

Course Packet: George Stocking, "The Dark-Skinned Savage: The Image of Primitive Man in Evolutionary Anthropology"

Course Packet: Marvin Harris, "The Rise of Racial Determinism"

*Wednesday*

Course Packet: Johannes Fabian, "Time and the Emerging Other"
WEEK 5 - FEB 12 & 14

Historical Particularism

Monday
McGee & Warms: Pp. 128-132; Boas, Pp. 132-139
Course Packet: Franz Boas, "The Limitations of the Comparative Method in Anthropology"

Wednesday
Course Packet: Alfred Kroeber, "The Concept of Culture in Science"

WEEK 6 - FEB 19 & 21

The Silencing of Marginalized Voices in Anthropology

Monday
Course Packet: Kamala Visweswaran, Defining Feminist Ethnography
Course Packet: Louise Lamphere, Feminist Anthropology: The Legacy of Elsie Clews Parsons
Course Packet: Elsie Clews Parsons, The Old-Fashioned Woman
Course Packet: Beatrice Medicine, Ella C. Deloria: The Emic Voice

Wednesday
Course Packet: Graciela Hernández, Multiple Subjectivities and Strategic Positionality: Zora Neale Hurston’s Experimental Ethnographies
Course Packet: Zora Neale Hurston, Mules and Men (Introduction & Ch. 1)
Course Packet: Zora Neale Hurston, Their Eyes Were Watching God (Ch. 2)

WEEK 7 - FEB 26 & 28

Testimonio Literature

Monday
Course Packet: Excerpts from I, Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Woman in Guatemala
Course Packet: Mary Louise Pratt, I, Rigoberta Menchú and the “Culture Wars”
Course Packet: Un-Writing the “Authentic” Subaltern: Testimonio, Autobiography and the Possibility of Global Hybridity in Knowledge Production
Course Packet: Nancy Saporta Sternbach, Remembering the Dead: Latin American Women’s “Testimonial” Discourse

Functionalism

Wednesday
McGee & Warms: Radcliffe-Brown, Pp. 173-184

* Note: essay on functionalism will be due on Friday, March 9
WEEK 8 - MAR 5 & 7

Functionalism, continued
Monday
Course Packet: bell hooks, reel to reel

Culture and Personality
Wednesday

* Note: essay on culture and personality will be due on Friday, March 23

WEEK 9 – SPRING BREAK

WEEK 10 - MAR 19 & 21

Culture and Personality, continued
Monday
McGee & Warms: Mead, Pp. 230-236
Course Packet: Mead, “Sex and Temperament"
Course Packet: Sanday, “Margaret Mead’s View of Sex Roles”

Wednesday
Course Packet: Lowell Holmes, Ch. 8 "Assessing Margaret Mead" and Ch. 10 "Assessing Derek Freeman"

WEEK 11 – MAR 26 & 28

Neoevolution
Monday
Course Packet: Murphy, “Julian Steward”; Carneiro, “Leslie A. White”

Cultural Materialism
Wednesday
Course Packet: Marvin Harris, from The Rise of Anthropological Theory, "Introduction"
### WEEK 12 – APR 2 & 4

**Structuralism**

**Monday**
- Course Packet: Susan Sontag, "The Anthropologist as Hero"
- McGee & Warms: Sherry Ortner, Pp. 371-384

**Wednesday**
- Course Packet: Chandra Mohanty, Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses
- Course Packet: Audre Lorde, The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House; Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference
- Course Packet: Hodge, Colonization of the Cuban Body
- Course Packet: Cherrie Moraga, La Guera

### WEEK 13 - APR 9 & 11

* The readings for weeks 13 and week 14 are lengthy and difficult; it would be wise to begin reading these early

* **Symbolic and Interpretive Anthropology**

  **Monday**
  - Course Packet: Marshall Sahlins, Ch. 2, "Culture and Practical Reason"

  **Wednesday**
  - McGee & Warms, Pp. 524-526; Turner, Pp. 536-553; Geertz, Pp. 553-574
  - Course Packet: William Roseberry, Ch. 1, "Balinese Cockfights and the Seduction of Anthropology"

### WEEK 14 - APR 16 & 18

* **Political Economy**

  **Monday**
  - Course Packet: Marshall Sahlins, Ch. 3, "Anthropology and Two Marxisms"
  - Course Packet: William Roseberry, from *Anthropologies and Histories*, Ch. 2, "Marxism and Culture"

  **Wednesday**
  - Course Packet: Eric Wolf, from *Europe and the People Without History*, "Introduction"
  - Course Packet: William Roseberry, from *Anthropologies and Histories*, Ch. 5, "European History and the Construction of Anthropological Subjects"
WEEK 15 - APR 23 & 25

Feminist Anthropology

**Monday**
- McGee & Warms: 473-475; Slocum, Pp. 476-485
- Course Packet: Sandra Morgen, "Feminism and Anthropology"
- Course Packet: Judith Stacey, Can There Be a Feminist Ethnography? (7 pp.)
- Course Packet: Aihwa Ong, Center, Periphery, and Hierarchy: Gender in Southeast Asia

**Wednesday**
- Course Packet: Ruth Behar, "Introduction: Out of Exile"
- Course Packet: Catherine Lutz, “The Gender of Theory”

WEEK 16 – APRIL 30 & MAY 2

Post-Modernism

**Monday**
- McGee & Warms: Pp. 575-578
- Course Packet: George Marcus & Michael Fischer, Ch. 1, "A Crisis of Representation in the Human Sciences"
- Course Packet: James Clifford, “On Ethnographic Allegory"

**Wednesday**
- Course Packet: Lila Abu-Lughod, Writing Against Culture
- Course Packet: Ariana Hernández-Reguant, Cuba’s Alternative Geographies
- Course Packet: Nancy Schepel-Hughes, The Primacy of the Ethical: Propositions for a Militant Anthropology
- Course Packet: Jerry Moore "Current Controversies"