

University of Utah
Anthropology 6100: Proseminar in Cultural Anthropology
Spring 2014
Thursdays, 12:25 – 1:45
Stewart 103B

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 12:30 – 1:30
Thursdays, 11:00 – 11:45

SYLLABUS

Description: This course reviews the history of ideas in cultural anthropology. We will explore the various theories developed over the history of the discipline to explain human behavior and ideas. The aim of this course is to foster an appreciation of how the diversity of theoretical and methodological approaches, both past and present, enable anthropology to hold its unique place in Western thought. Students will read key works in the field, write short abstracts of what they have read, and discuss them in seminar.

Text: R. Jon McGee & Richard Warms, *Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History*, 5th edition, McGraw Hill, 2012
Additional readings posted on the course website

Grading: Reading Presentations: 60%
Final Paper: 40%

Reading Presentations: Every week, students will lead the discussion on the readings they have been assigned. As the number of readings each student will be assigned will depend on enrollment, the exact details will be discussed in class. The presentation will consist of summarizing the main points of the article, introducing relevant additional material about the authors, and presenting questions to spur further discussion.

Final Paper: Each student will write a final, 4-6 page paper, which relates their own research interests to the history of cultural anthropology. Points of both agreement and disagreement with relevant theorists should be highlighted, and the students theoretical and methodological commitments should be situated within the range of viewpoints in the discipline.

SCHEDULE

*Subject to change. "Reader" refers to McGee & Warms 2012; "Online" refers to articles posted on the course website. Presentation readings are marked in **bold**.*

Week 1: Introduction to Cultural Anthropology (1/9)

NO READINGS

Week 2: The Origins of Anthropology (1/16)

READINGS: *Reader*, "Introduction," pp. 1-4;
 "Nineteenth Century Evolutionism," pp. 6-13;
Morgan: "Ethnical Periods," pp. 45-57;
Tylor: "The Science of Culture," pp. 30-45;
 "The Foundations of Sociological Thought," pp. 74-77;
Marx & Engels: "Feuerbach. Opposition of the Materialist and Idealist Outlook," pp. 57-73;
Durkheim: "What is a Social Fact?" pp. 78-85;

Week 3: Historical Particularism / Culture and Personality (1/23)

READINGS: *Reader*, "Historical Particularism," pp. 112-117;
Boas: "The Methods of Ethnology," pp. 117-124;
Whorf: "The Relation of Habitual Thought and Behavior to Language," pp. 131-149;
 "Culture and Personality," pp. 195-200;
Benedict: "Psychological Types in the Cultures of the Southwest," pp. 200-210;
Mead: Introduction to *Coming of Age in Samoa*, pp. 211-217

Week 4: Functionalism / Structural-Functionalism (1/30)

READINGS: *Reader*, **Mauss:** Excerpts from *The Gift*, pp. 85-97;
 "Functionalism," pp. 150-154;
Malinowski: "The Essentials of the Kula," pp. 154-170;
Radcliffe-Brown: "On Joking Relationships," pp. 170-181;
Online, **Fortes & Evans-Pritchard:** excerpts from *African Political Systems*

Week 5: Neoevolutionism / Cultural Materialism / Cultural Ecology (2/6)

READINGS: *Reader*, "The Reemergence of Evolutionary Thought," pp. 220-223;
White: "Energy and the Evolution of Culture," pp. 223-242;
Steward: "The Patrilineal Band," pp. 243-258;
 "Neomaterialism: Evolutionary, Functionalist, Ecological, and Marxist," pp. 259-262;
Harris: "The Cultural Ecology of India's Sacred Cattle," 277-292;
Rappaport: "Ritual Regulation of Environmental Relations among a New Guinea People," pp. 293-306

Week 6: Structuralism / Cognitive Anth. / Symbolic Anth. / Interpretive Anth. (2/13)

READINGS: *Reader*, “Structuralism,” pp. 320-322;

Lévi-Strauss: “Four Winnebago Myths: A Structural Sketch,” pp. 322-330;
“Ethnoscience and Cognitive Anthropology,” pp. 344-347;

Tyler: “Introduction to Cognitive Anthropology,” pp. 352-367;
“Symbolic and Interpretive Anthropology,” pp. 438-440;

Turner: “Symbols in Ndembu Ritual,” pp. 449-467;

Geertz: “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight,” pp. 467-487

Week 7: Post-Modernism / Evolutionary Cultural Anth. (2/20)

READINGS: *Reader*, “Background to Postmodernism,” pp. 488-492;

Bourdieu: “Structures, Habitus, Practices,” pp. 492-508;
“Post Modernism and Its Critics,” pp. 520-524;

Abu-Lughod: “A Tale of Two Pregnancies,” pp. 539-549;

“Sociobiology, Evolutionary Psychology, and Behavioral Ecology,” pp. 370-372;

Online, **Tooby & Cosmides:** “Evolutionary psychology and the generation of culture: I. Theoretical considerations”;

Boyd, Richerson & Henrich: “The cultural niche: Why social learning is essential for human adaptation”