Anthropological Theory

Anthropology 460, Spring 2016
January 25-May 10, Tues/Thurs 11:00-12:15pm, Sabin Hall 149

Instructor: Erica Bornstein, Associate Professor
Department of Anthropology
Office: Sabin Hall 311, Office Hours: Thursdays 9-11am and by appointment
Office Phone: 229-4881, Email: elbornst@uwm.edu

TA: Heather Brinkman
Office: Sabin G36 and Sabin 114
Office Hours: Wednesdays 2-4pm and by appointment
Email: brinkm36@uwm.edu

Course Description
This course reviews major theoretical currents in the history of anthropological theory from the 19th-century to the present. Emphasis will be placed on how specific historical contexts have shaped ideas about social life and the discipline of anthropology. The structure of the course is part chronological and part thematic. The first third of the course begins with Evolutionism and continues with the three ‘founding fathers’ of classical social theory: Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber, examining their viewpoints about traditional and modern societies, religion, conflict, and social order. The second third of the course turns to British social anthropology, American cultural anthropology, structuralism, practice theory, and symbolic anthropology. We will explore how some of these classic ideas continue to influence ethnographic practice today. The final third of the course explores post-structuralism, feminist theory, power, the politics of representation, and the anthropology of globalization. Because anthropological theory is an extensive topic, the course will sacrifice breadth for depth. We will read and discuss a handful of the most central and oft-cited texts in the discipline. The goal is to learn some of the major unsettled arguments in the discipline as well as to grasp theory as a conceptual tool-kit which makes anthropology distinctive and productive. This course focuses on the close reading of texts. Students are expected to complete the assigned readings before class and come with questions and insights about the authors’ arguments.

Course Requirements & Evaluation Criteria
The course is a reading-intensive lecture/discussion class, which calls for careful engagement with the assigned theoretical texts. Students are expected to attend class ready to discuss all of the assigned readings.

Prerequisite: Senior standing: This is the “capstone” course, required of all anthropology majors.

Attendance & Participation
Attendance is mandatory. Students are allowed three absences without penalty (including absences due to illness, travel, etc.). Participation includes attendance and engaged discussion. Active and informed participation in discussion will usually raise your grade.
Reading Notes (explained in more detail below)
Readings assigned for each day must be completed by the start of class. Students will be required to submit 10 reading notes during the semester, covering one or two of the assigned articles for the week (typed, 1-2 pages). Reading notes are to be submitted in the D2L dropbox before class on the day they are assigned on the syllabus. For example, reading notes for Tuesday's readings are due by Tuesday at 11am in the D2L dropbox. 10 reading notes during the semester, one per week maximum.

Take-home exams
*Undergraduates*: Each student will complete three take-home essay exams (5 pages, typed, double-spaced). You may use only course readings in answering the exam questions; do not use materials from the web. NOTE: You must submit exams via D2L in the course dropbox. E-mailed papers will not be accepted.

*Graduate students*: Students will complete the first two take-home exam questions as above, and then write a substantial research paper for the final exam. This paper must be at least 15 pages long, and it should address the course themes in a creative, original way. You must consult with me about your topic by April 1, 2016. Research papers are due on May 16. No late papers will be accepted.

All take-home examinations must be handed in by the date stated in the syllabus. Make-ups and extensions will be granted only for documented emergency situations and must be arranged prior to the stated date of the exam or due date. Any person not making prior arrangements will automatically be given a failing grade (zero points). Any extension must be negotiated personally with the professor, at least one week before the due date. Academic misconduct, including plagiarism, will not be tolerated. If instances of academic misconduct are detected or suspected, action will be taken in accordance with written university policies. Plagiarism will warrant a grade of zero points for the entire essay.

**Grading**

*Undergraduates*: 3 take-home exams 20% each (60% of total grade)
Reading notes 30%
Participation 10%

*Graduate students*: 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> take-home exams 20% each
Reading notes 20%
Participation 10%
Research paper 30%

**Student effort**: This 3-credit course meets for 2.5 hours per week during the semester. Students are expected to spend an additional 6.5 hours per week reading, studying, and working on assignments to achieve the learning goals of this course. Important: The approximate 9 hour per week figure is a minimum for an average student. You may wish to, or need to, spend more time on coursework to achieve the learning goals and expected student outcomes of this course.

Plagiarism warning: All writing for this course must be your own. Cutting and pasting from the internet without citing the website and putting the passage in quotation marks is plagiarism. If I find evidence of plagiarism, you will receive an F for the assignment and possibly fail the course. If you have questions about this, please ask.

Technology etiquette in the classroom: Please turn off cell phones in the classroom and use computers for coursework only. Please respect your classmates. If I have reason to believe a student is checking email, social networking, or shopping during class, technology privileges will be revoked.

Required Texts
Readings marked with an (*) on the syllabus are available through the UWM library’s e-reserve. Please print out the readings and bring them to class on the day they are assigned on the syllabus. E-reserve articles are available through the UWM library’s e-reserve website: http://www.uwm.edu/Library/

Books
Books are for sale through the UWM bookstore and online booksellers. Books will also be put on reserve in the UWM library.

Required:

Recommended:

* * *

SCHEDULE OF DISCUSSION TOPICS AND ASSIGNED READINGS
Please complete readings by the date they appear on the syllabus.

Week 1 Course Introduction
1/26 & 28 Film: “Sir Walter Baldwin Spencer: Fieldwork” (1990, 52 minutes)

Week 2 Evolutionism
2/2 & 4 (*) Lewis Henry Morgan: “Ethnical Periods” Ancient Society
           (*) Edward B. Tylor “Society” Anthropology
Week 3  Karl Marx
2/9  (*) Karl Marx, “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844” pp. 66-125 in Tucker
       (*) Marx, “The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof” pp. 319-329 in Tucker
2/11 (*) Marx, “The Communist Manifesto” p 469-500 in Tucker

Week 4  Emile Durkeim

Week 5  Max Weber
       ** EXAM 1 distributed in class 2/25

Week 6  British Social Anthropology
3/1  Functionalism
       (*) Bronislaw Malinowski: “Introduction: The Subject, Method, and Scope of this Inquiry” and “The Essentials of the Kula,” Argonauts of the Western Pacific
3/3  Structural-functionalism
       (*) E. E. Evans-Pritchard: “Social Anthropology Past and Present”
       ** EXAM 1 due in class 2/28

Week 7  American Cultural Anthropology
3/8  Cultural & linguistic relativism, and Cultural Ecology
       (*) Margaret Mead: “Introduction,” “Conclusion,” Sex and Temperament
3/10 Cultural ecology
       (*) Benjamin Lee Whorf: “The Relation of Habitual Thought and Behavior to Language”
       (*) Marvin Harris: “The Cultural Ecology of India’s Sacred Cattle”
       Film: “Margaret Mead: Coming of Age” (1990, 52 minutes)

       ** Spring break 3/13-20 No classes
Week 8  Structuralism
3/22 & 24  Claude Levi-Strauss: Totemism
(*) Claude Levi-Strauss: “Structural Analysis in Linguistics and Anthropology”
Optional: Listen to audio lecture by Claude Levi-Strauss
http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/MRC/audiofiles.html#lstrauss

Week 9  Practice Theory (Agency & Structure)

Week 10  Symbolic Anthropology
4/5 & 4/7  (*) Clifford Geertz: “Thick Description,” “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight,” The Interpretation of Cultures
(*) Victor Turner (Manchester School): “Betwixt & Between” The Forest of Symbols
*** EXAM 2 distributed in class 4/7

Week 11  Feminist Theory
4/12  (*) Gayle Rubin: “The Traffic in Women”
(*) Sherry Ortner: “Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?”
4/14  (*) Donna Haraway: “Situated Knowledges”
*** EXAM 2 due in D2L dropbox, 4/14

Week 12 & 13  Discourse, Power, Knowledge
4/19 & 21  Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison (pp. 1-135)
4/26 & 28  Discipline and Punish (pp. 136-308)

Week 14  The Politics of Representation
5/3  (*) Eric Wolf: “Introduction, Europe and the People Without History
(*) James Clifford: “Introduction: Partial Truths,” Writing Culture
(*) Renato Rosaldo: “Introduction: Grief and a Headhunter’s Rage,” Culture and Truth

Week 15  The Anthropology of Globalization
5/10  (*) Arjun Appadurai. Fear of Small Numbers (pages TBA)
*** EXAM 3 (undergraduates only) distributed 5/10

***  Final papers and exams due: May 16
Undergraduates: Final Exam #3/ Graduate students: Final research paper
READING NOTES

Reading notes (Undergraduates = 30% of final grade. Graduate students = 20% of final grade) are brief (1-2 page, typed summaries) of assigned readings in the course outline. They may be discussed and shared in class. These notes will serve as study guides for the three take-home exams. Notes are due in the D2L dropbox at the beginning of each class period on the day the reading is assigned. NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED. The goal of this weekly task is to help you learn to read dense theoretical material and to summarize it. Improvement will be noted. 10 reading notes are required, no more than one batch per week.

Here are a few suggestions that may help you to write your notes:
- While reading, ask yourself: what is the main point? What is the author trying to say?
- You may have to read the article more than once, the first time quickly to see the structure of the author's argument, and the second time in more close detail.
- Write on the page. Do not highlight entire paragraphs. Writing on the page gives you visual markers and helps you to engage with the reading.
- If something is confusing, put a question mark in the margin of the reading. If you agree or don't agree with something, also, write it in the margin. These comments should end up in the critical review section of your summary.
- Outline the reading. This will help you to see the logic of the argument and to summarize it in one paragraph. Keep the outline for study purposes later.

Your reading notes should include the following:

SUMMARY:
Begin your review with a summary of the main points of the article. This should be about one paragraph long. What is the main argument that the author is making? What are the most important ideas? Sometimes, there will be an abstract on the first page of the assigned reading - DO NOT COPY this paragraph - that is plagiarism. Your summary paragraph should be in your own words and should represent what you think are the main points. If you were to describe the reading to a friend who had not read it, how would you describe it?

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE:
What do you think of the reading? How does it relate to concepts discussed in class - in lecture, or other readings? Are there things that are confusing or striking in the article? Are there ideas that interested you? This section of your review, also about one paragraph, is for you to critically engage with the material and to link it to topics in the course.

LIST OF KEY CONCEPTS:
This last part can either be an elaboration of concepts listed in your summary paragraph or it can emerge from the reading itself. Again, what are the main ideas? List and define them as the author defines them.