

Anthropology 370: Theory in Anthropology
Fall 2004: Wednesday 1:30 – 4:20, Chambers 1062

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Office Hours: M, W, F 9:30 – 10:30 am
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This seminar provides an overview of historical and contemporary anthropological theory. In this class, we will read samples of major theoretical works by anthropologists and other social and cultural theorists, and examine how they continue to inform both academic cultural theory and popular understandings of social life today. The goal of this seminar is to ground us in a wide variety of theoretical perspectives so that we can apply them to social issues of major concern to us today.

Our emphasis will be on understanding the premises and perspectives of different theorists and critically evaluating their assumptions and their reasoning. What were the historical and social positions that shaped the development of a particular theoretical perspective? What did they illuminate, and what did they obscure? Are they useful for us in understanding contemporary issues such as globalization, environmental issues, ethnic conflict, or social justice?

Course Readings

- R. Jon McGee, Richard L. Warms 2000. *Anthropological theory : an introductory history*, 2nd ed. Mountain View, Calif. : Mayfield Pub. Co.. ISBN: 0767411668
- Nicholas B. Dirks, Geoff Eley, and Sherry B. Ortner, eds 1994. *Culture/power/history : a reader in contemporary social theory*. Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press. ISBN: 0691021023.
- Weber, Max 2001. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. New York: Routledge. ISBN: 041525406X
- Harvey, David 1989. *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Cambridge: Blackwell. ISBN: 0631162941

Additional articles will be available on Blackboard.

Course Requirements

The most important work in this course is to be prepared for each seminar meeting; this means having thoroughly read the material and being prepared to discuss particular points from the reading. Readings are due on the day listed in the class schedule. Your engagement with the material is vital for the success of this learning experience.

Seminar Participation: (25%) Students are expected to attend all classes, do the readings prior to class, and **discuss the implications of the issues** in the classroom. This includes your leading two seminar meetings (10%; we will schedule this on the first day of class).

Response papers: (10%) Each week, students will write a response paper: one page, double-spaced. I will have a handout on response papers in class, but in general they are individually ungraded and require only timely submission for full credit. **LATE RESPONSE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

Short Essays: (total: 30%) There will be two short essays (15% of the total grade each) due on **22 September 2004** and **20 October 2004**. These essays of no more than five pages will be critiques on the material that we have read; **outside research is not required, expected, or desired.** I will have a handout about these short essays later in the term.

Term Paper: (35%) Based on individual interests, students will select a particular theoretical perspective and apply this model to a particular contemporary topic. Use of ethnographies are permitted, but the bulk of the analysis should be from newspaper clippings, web sites, past fieldwork, or fieldwork conducted specifically for this project. The paper will be due on 8 December 2004.

While we will work together on various issues and projects, your papers are your own individual work. All work is subject to the Davidson College Honor Code as stated in the student handbook. If there are individual accommodations for special needs, please let me know and authorize the Dean of Students to contact me so that we can work something out.

Course Schedule (subject to modification)

Week 1, 25 August: Seminar Introduction
Reading: Herzfeld's essay (on Blackboard)

Week 2, 1 September: Evolutionism, Marx
Readings: Warms and McGee: Spencer, Tylor, Marx and Engels, Marx excerpt (available on Blackboard)
Start reading Weber's *Spirit of Capitalism*

Week 3, 8 September: Durkheim
Readings: Warms and McGee: Durkheim (both), Mauss, Durkheim excerpt (available on Blackboard)

Week 4, 15 September: Weber and Rationalization
Readings: Warms and McGee: Weber article; Weber book *Spirit of Capitalism*;

Week 5, 22 September: American Cultural Anthropology: The Boasians
Readings: Warms and McGee: Boas, Kroeber, Radin, Benedict, Mead (last two in Culture and Personality section)
Assignment: First Short Essay Due

Week 6, 29 September: British Social Anthropology: Functionalism
Readings: Warms and McGee: Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, Evans-Pritchard

Week 7, 6 October: Structuralism

Readings: Warms and McGee: Levi-Strauss (both), Ortner

Week 8, 13 October: Symbolic and Interpretive Anthropology

Readings: Warms and McGee: Douglas, Turner, Geertz

Week 9, 20 October: Culture, Power, and History

Readings: Dirks, Eley, and Ortner: Introduction

Start reading Harvey's *Postmodern Condition*

Assignment: Second Short Essay Due

Week 10, 27 October: Foucault

Readings: Dirks, Eley, and Ortner: Chapter 5; Foucault articles; Foucault essay (available on Blackboard)

Week 11, 3 November Postmodernism

Readings: Harvey book, Jameson essay (available on Blackboard)

Week 12, 10 November: More on Postmodernism

Reading: Warms and McGee: Rosaldo, Crapanzano, D'Andrade, Geyh selection (available on Blackboard)

Week 13, 17 November: Practice and Process

Readings: Dirks, Eley, and Ortner: Chapter 4, Chapter 12; Falk Moore article (available on Blackboard)

24 November: Have a good holiday break!

Week 14: 1 December: Student Choice (from outside of assigned readings)

8 December: Final Paper Due

Schedule of Presentations

Week 2, 1 September: Evolutionism, Marx	
Week 3, 8 September: Durkheim	
Week 4, 15 September: Weber and Rationalization	
Week 6, 29 September: British Social Anthropology: Functionalism	
Week 7, 29 September: Cultural Ecology and Neomaterialism	
Week 8, 6 October: Structuralism	
Week 9, 13 October: Symbolic and Interpretive Anthropology	
Week 11, 27 October: Foucault	
Week 12, 3 November Postmodernism	
Week 13, 10 November: More on Postmodernism	
Week 14, 17 November: Practice and Process	
Week 15: 1 December: Student Choice	