

KEY ISSUES IN SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

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2 credits (MA, 1 year and 2 year programs)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: The course examines key theoretical concepts and approaches in past and contemporary anthropology, following two parallel paths. The first focuses on the history of the discipline and explores the development of the French, British and American schools of anthropology. The second and parallel path is thematic and examines key themes and debates in anthropology, namely, on myth and ritual, structure and function, culture and history, meaning and power, gender, capitalism and neoliberalism. The two trajectories start from a questioning of the anthropological canon and some reflections on the project of decolonizing anthropology. During this course, therefore, we will read some parts of this canon but also reflects on its relation to the colonial encounter, its short-comings and potential alternatives. The course is designed to provide students with knowledge of the inventive traditions in anthropology as well as with a critical perspective on the creative process of theory-building.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES:

As this is an introductory course there are no previous requirements. Students are expected to critically engage with the intellectual history of the discipline, address the strength and weakness of different theories and employ the conceptual paradigms in their own research projects (see mid-term paper and final paper).

[1] Careful preparation of assigned readings by the date on which they are to be discussed in class. Class discussion will require informed participation on the part of all.

[2] Submit via e-learning **by Wednesday 5 PM** a substantive discussion question on the then-current reading material for potential use in the class discussion on Thursday.

NOTE: A discussion *question*, to stimulate discussion, not to close it off, is concise; it is not just a *declaration of a [= your] position*, though in its formulation you probably reveal a positioned perspective on issues. A discussion question properly emerges, in reading, from your perceiving that there is an issue needing exploration or clarification, perhaps to resolve or at least confront problematic concepts or analyses in one or another of the current week's readings. It can involve as well the concurrent or contrastive positions on an issue you may see in two of the readings, the nature of that concurrence or contrast being perhaps in question in some way. A (very!) short quotation or citation (with page reference) is generally useful to orient discussion of the point, since it gives a textual location to the issue. The text of the question as formulated should make clear what is being sought in the way of responses; avoid such formats as: "[Quote].? Discussion".

CLASS FORMAT:

The course consists of lectures and seminar discussions. We will begin each class with an introductory lecture that grounds the themes and readings for the week in their historical, intellectual, and political context. The second part will instead be based on discussion and student-led conversation about the various reading assignments and other materials.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADE:

Each student will have to prepare at least 3 discussion questions throughout the term, in response to texts discussed in class.

MID-TERM PAPER: a short essay (1500 words) which is meant to help you practice your ability to apply theory to empirical case studies. The paper should consist of 3 parts: part one provides a description of a social phenomenon, a cultural practice, a political development or a historical event of your choosing. Part two details one theory you find appropriate. Part three applies the theory to the case study and points to the limitations and advantages of your choice. The paper should be written in an essay format and include an introduction and conclusion, title and subtitle.

FINAL PAPER: Take the case study you discussed in the mid-term paper and analyse it through one of the theories covered in the second part of the course. Compare with the first approach you chose and discuss critically by referring to the monographs, particular field sites and the more general context in which the respective anthropologists developed their ideas. This will allow you to bring out the strengths and weaknesses of the theories you have chosen in relation to the empirical case. The paper should be 1500- 2000 words.

Reading and Participation: 15% Discussion questions: 15%

Midterm paper: 35%

Final Paper: 35%

Working introductions and histories of anthropology (available on the e-learning site or in the CEU Library):

McGee, Jon and Richard Warms. 2004. *Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History*. 3rd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Barnard, Alan. 2000. *History and theory in anthropology*. Cambridge, U.K. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Engelke, M., 2019. *How to Think Like an Anthropologist*. Princeton University Press

Week 1

Why we read the classics? On Canon and Decolonization.

Asad, Talal. 1973. "Introduction." In Talal Asad, ed., *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*, London: Ithaca Press, pp. 9-19.

Da Col, G., Sopranzetti, C., Myers, F., Piliavsky, A., Jackson Jr, J.L., Bonilla, Y., Benton, A. and Stoller, P., 2017. Why do we read the classics? *Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, 7(3), pp.1-38.

Deloria, Vine. *Custer died for your sins: An Indian manifesto*. University of Oklahoma Press, 1969. Chapter 4.

Additional Readings:

Aleksandar Bošković and Thomas Hylland Eriksen. 2008. Other People's Anthropologies. In *Other People's Anthropologies: Ethnographic Practice on the Margins*. New York: Berghahn Books, 1-19.

Harrison, Faye V. 1991. "Ethnography as Politics." In Faye Harrison, ed., *Decolonizing Anthropology: Moving Further Toward an Anthropology for Liberation*, Washington, DC: Association of Black Anthropologists, American Anthropological Association, pp. 88-109.

Week 2

"The Psychic Unity of Mankind": Social Evolutionism and the Concept of Primitive Society

Tylor, Edward. 1871. The Science of Culture. In *Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History*, NY: McGraw-Hill, pp.41-55.

Kuper, Adam. 1988. The Idea of Primitive Society In *The Invention of Primitive Society*.

Fanon, F. 1963. On Violence. In *The wretched of the earth*, New York: Grove Press.

Engelke, M., 2019. *How to Think Like an Anthropologist*. Princeton University Press, Chapter 8

Additional Readings:

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. 1991. Anthropology and the Savage Slot In Fox, ed., *Recapturing Anthropology*. Pp. 17-44. School of American Research Press.

Arens, W. 1979. The Man-Eating Myth: Anthropology and Anthropophagy. New York: Oxford University Press. (v-vii, 5-40)

Ellingson, Ter. 2001. The Myth of the Noble Savage. Berkeley: University of California Press (Ch. 7, "The Ethnographic Savage from Rousseau to Morgan," pp. 99-125)

Fanon, Frantz. 1967 [1952]. *Black Skin, White Masks*. New York: Grove Press. Chapter 1

Week 3

The Early American School: Cultural Relativism

Boas, Franz. 2004 (1920). The Methods of Ethnology. In: MgGee, John and Warms, Richard (ed). *Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History*. Pp. 132-140. NY: McGraw-Hill.

Stocking, George (ed). 1974. The Basic Assumptions of Boas' Anthropology. In: *A Franz Boas Reader. The Shaping of American Anthropology, 1883-1911*. Pp. 1-20. Chicago/London: The Chicago University Press.

Whorf, Benjamin. 1956. An American Indian Model of the Universe. In: Carroll, John (ed). *Language, Thought and Reality. Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*. Pp. 57-64. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Hurston, Zora Neale, Franz Boas, Miguel Covarrubias, and Arnold Rampersad. *Mules and men*. Perennial Library, 1935, pp.1-19, 181-191

Additional Readings:

Borneman, John. 1995. "American Anthropology as Foreign Policy." *American Anthropologist* 97 (4): 663-672.

Firmin, Joseph-Anténor. *The Equality of the Human Races (Positivist Anthropology)*. Taylor & Francis, 2000.

Fluehr-Lobban, C. (2000). Anténor Firmin: Haitian Pioneer of Anthropology. *American Anthropologist* 102(3): 449-466.

Benedict, Ruth. 2004. (1930). Psychological Types in the Cultures of the Southwest. In MgGee, John and Warms, Richard (ed). *Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History*. Pp. 205-215. NY: McGraw-Hill.

Harrison, Ira E., and Faye V. Harrison, eds. *African-American pioneers in anthropology*. University of Illinois Press, 1999, Chapter 3

Week 4

British Social Anthropology (I): Functionalism

Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1922. Introduction. The Subject, Method and Scope of this Inquiry. In *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. Pp. 1-25. New York: Dutton.

Malinowski, Bronislaw. 2004 (1922). The Essentials of the Kula. In: MgGee, John and Warms, Richard (ed). *Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History*. Pp. 157-172. NY: McGraw-Hill.

A. R. Radcliffe-Brown. 1940. On Joking Relationships. *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* Vol. 13 (3): 195-210

Feuchtwang, Stephan. 1973. "The Colonial Formation of British Social Anthropology." In Talal Asad, ed., *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*, London: Ithaca Press, pp. 71-100.

Additional Readings:

Adam Kuper. 1996. Radcliffe-Brown. In: *Anthropology and Anthropologists. The Modern British School*. Pp. 35-65. London/NY: Routledge.

Adam Kuper. 1996. Malinowski. In: *Anthropology and Anthropologists. The Modern British School*. Pp. 1-34. London/NY: Routledge.

Radcliffe-Brown, A. R. (2004). The Mother's Brother in South Africa. In *Anthropological theory: an introduction history*. pp. 173-184.

Hsiao-t'ung Fei. *Peasant Life in China: A Field Study of Country Life in the Yangtze Valley*. Routledge & K. Paul, 1939, Preface and Introduction

Week 5

British Social Anthropology (II): Structural Functionalism

Evans-Pritchard, Edward. 1940. The Nuer of the Southern Sudan. In *African Political Systems* edited by Meyer Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, London (et al). Oxford University Press, 272-96.

Evans-Pritchard, E.E.. "The Notion of Witchcraft explains Unfortunate Events." In *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande*.

Winch, Peter. "Understanding a primitive society." *American Philosophical Quarterly* 1, no. 4 (1964): 307-324

Additional Readings:

Karp, Ivan and Maynard, Kent. 1983. "Reading The Nuer". *Current Anthropology* 24 (4), 481-503.

Zitelmann, Thomas. 2018. Kinship Weaponized: Representations of Kinship and Binary Othering in U.S. Military Anthropology. in *Reconnecting State and Kinship*, edited by Tatjana Thelen & Erdmute Alber. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 61–86.

Week 6

French Anthropology: Structuralism

Mauss, Marcel. 1990 [1950 (1925)]. *The Gift. The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*. 2nd ed., London/NY: Routledge, 1-23 (Introduction and chapter 1).

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1963. Structural Analysis in Linguistics and Anthropology. In *Structural Anthropology*. London: Penguin Books, 31-54.

Additional Readings:

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 2004 (1960). Four Winnebago Myths: A Structural Sketch. In *Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History*, 362-371.

Leach, Edmund. 1976. The Logic of Sacrifice. in *Culture and Communication: The Logic by which Symbols are Connected*. Cambridge University Press, 81-97.

Hénaff, Marcel. 1998. Chapter 4. Unconscious Categories and Universality of the Mind. in *Claude Lévi-Strauss and the Making of Structural Anthropology*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 94-119.

Johnson, Christopher. 2003. The Place of Anthropology. In *Claude Lévi-Strauss. The Formative Years*, 12-30.

On the Anthropology of Levi-Strauss by Marshal Sahlins (blogpost)
<http://blog.aaanet.org/2009/07/07/on-the-anthropology-of-levi-strauss/>.

Week 7

Historical Structuralism: A Synthesis

Sahlins, Marshall. 2004 (c1981). *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities: Structure in the Early History of the Sandwich Islands Kingdom*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 3-9 (History and Structural Theory) and 67-72 (Structure in History).

Obeyesekere, Gananath. 1992. "British Cannibals": Contemplation of an Event in the event of Death and Resurrection of James Cook, Explorer. *Critical Inquiry* 18 (4), 630-54.

Tambiah, Stanley Jeyaraja. *World conqueror and world renouncer: A study of Buddhism and polity in Thailand against a historical background*. Cambridge University Press, 1976, Introduction

Additional Readings:

Kuper, Adam. 1999. Marshal Sahlins: History as Culture. In *Culture: the Anthropologists' Account*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. (Chapter 5), 159-200.

CA Forum on Theory in Anthropology: Cook, Lono, Obeyesekere, and Sahlins. *Current Anthropology* 38 (2), 255-282 (Apr. 1997).

Sahlins, Marshal. 1999. Two or Three Things That I Know About Culture. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 5, 399-422.

MID-TERM PAPER

Week 8

Structure and Anti-Structure: Liminality, Hybridity and Boundaries

Douglas, Mary. 1992 (1966). *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* London: Routledge, 1-29 (Read Introduction and Chapter 1).

Turner, Victor. 1991 (1969). Liminality and Communitas. in *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 94-130.

Viveiros de Castro, Eduardo (2009/2014). *Cannibal Metaphysics*. Minneapolis: Univocal. Chapter 13.

Additional Readings:

Turner, Terence. 1980. The Social Skin. in *Not work alone: A cross-cultural view of activities superfluous to survival*, edited by Jeremy Cherfas & Roger Lewin. London: Temple Smith, 112-140. <http://www.haujournal.org/index.php/hau/article/view/236/244>.

Turner, Victor. 1967. Symbols in Ndembu Ritual. In *The Forest of Symbols: aspects of Ndembu ritual*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 19-47.

Week 9

Interpretative Anthropology and Writing for/against Culture

Geertz, Clifford. 2008. Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture. In *The cultural geography reader*, Routledge, pp. 41-51.

Clifford, James. 1986. Introduction: Partial Truths. in *Writing Culture. The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, edited by James Clifford and George E. Marcus, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1-26.

Abu-Lughod, Lila. 1991. Writing against Culture. in: *Recapturing Anthropology. Working in the Present*. edited by Richard Fox. Santa Fe (New Mexico): School of American Research Press, 137-162.

Additional Readings:

Ortner, Sherry. 1984. Theory in Anthropology since the Sixties. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 26 (1), 126-166.

Kuper, Adam. 1999. Clifford Geertz: Culture as Religion and as Grand Opera. in *Culture. The Anthropologist's Account*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 75-121.

Week 10

Re-reading the Nuer (I): Gender and Anthropology

McKinnon, Susan. 2000. Domestic Exceptions: Evans-Pritchard and the Creation of Nuer Patrilineality and Equality. *Cultural Anthropology* 15 (1), 35-83.

Weiner, Annette. 1992. *Inalienable Possessions: The Paradox of Keeping- while- Giving*. Berkeley: University of California Press, Introduction

Additional Readings:

Evans-Pritchard, Edward. 1951. Kinship and the Local Community, in *Kinship and marriage among the Nuer*, Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1-28.

James, Wendy. 1990. Introduction. in E.E. Evans-Pritchard: *Kinship and Marriage among the Nuer*, 2nd ed., Oxford U.P, ix-xxii.

Slocum, Sally. 2004 (1975). Woman the Gatherer: Male Bias in Anthropology. *Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History*, 435-59.

Stoler, Ann. 2004 (1989). Making Empire Respectable: The Politics of Race and Sexual Morality in Twentieth-Century Colonial Cultures. in *Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History*, 459-81.

Week 11

Re-reading the Nuer (II): Global Capitalist History and the (Colonizing) State

Hutchinson, Sharon Elaine. 1996. Blood, Cattle, and Cash: The Commodification of Nuer Values. in *Nuer Dilemmas: Coping with Money, War, and the State*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 56-102.

Additional Reading:

Wolf, Eric. 1982. Introduction. in *Europe and the People Without History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 3-23.

Ortner, Sherry B. 2016. 'Dark Anthropology and Its Others: Theory since the Eighties'. *HAAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 6 (1): 47-73.

Week 12

Re-reading the Nuer (III): War, Transnational Livelihoods, & the Neoliberal Global

Falge, Christiane. 2015. Outmigration to the United States: We are no longer the Nuer of before, in *The Global Nuer: Transnational Life-Worlds, Religious Movements and War*. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 123-54.

Comaroff, John. 2010. The End of Anthropology, Again: On the Future of an In/Discipline. *American Anthropologist* 112 (4), 524–538.

Additional Readings:

Hirsch et al. 2007. Anthropologists are Talking on Anthropology After Globalization. *Ethnos* 72 (1), 102-26.

Hutchinson, Sharon and Naomi Pendle. 2015. Violence, Legitimacy, and Prophecy: Nuer Struggles with Uncertainty in South Sudan. *American Ethnologist* 42 (3), 415–30.