



# Seminars in Anthropological Theory

ANTH 6010 (Fall 2020)

Instructor: Dr. Venera R. Khalikova

Office: NAH 322

Office hours:

Tuesday 12:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Wednesday 3:00 pm – 6:00 pm

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Course location: NAH 401

Course time: Wednesday, 6:30 pm–9:15 pm

RA: TBD

## Course description

This course introduces research postgraduate students to major theories and debates that have inspired the development of (sociocultural) anthropology. The course serves as a foundation for understanding both the history of anthropological thought and the wealth of contemporary analyses of cultural phenomena. Over the course of the semester, we will discuss a range of theoretical propositions concerning such topics as evolution, culture, structure, subjectivity, agency, social change, power, discourse, representation, and globalization. We will selectively explore some of the most prominent theories, writings, and concepts by interrogating them on three levels: (1) their explanatory power for understanding human behavior and the social world; (2) the social and historical circumstances in which they were produced; and (3) their application and value in ongoing anthropological debates, including your research.

The readings in this syllabus will serve as (re)entry points into a larger body of work produced by key scholars of anthropology. We will begin by reading the works of the discipline's foundational figures in Europe and North America in the 19<sup>th</sup>–early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries as well as their less-known contemporaries whose work gained recognition in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Then we will examine more recent theoretical developments to understand where the discipline is going.

## Course format

To minimize the risk of COVID-19 infection, this course will be conducted online until further notice. The online classes will be structured around the discussions of assigned readings and will have one break.

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to do the following:

- identify and explain the views of leading theorists in anthropology and other disciplines who have influenced anthropology since the 19<sup>th</sup> century
- identify and explain major anthropological theories, concepts, genres, and debates

- explain the strengths and weaknesses of these theories and theoretical concepts
- assess anthropological theories according to the socio-political and historical contexts in which they were developed
- provide examples of the application of these theories to ethnographic studies and the everyday life
- be able to apply these theories to the analysis of society and culture in their communities and contemporary life

## Reading Materials

***Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History*** by McGee, R. Jon and Richard L. Warms 2017. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

! I strongly recommend buying a hard copy of this textbook, as it is an excellent resource for anthropological theory and will come handy beyond this course, in writing your field statement, dissertation, and in your future academic career. Use a discount code STUDENT30 when placing an order online at [www.rowman.com](http://www.rowman.com)

***Readings for a History of Anthropological Theory*** (referred to as Readings) by Erickson, Paul A. and Liam D. Murphy. Fifth Edition 2017. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. E-book at CUHK library: <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cuhk-ebooks/detail.action?docID=4931392>

***Routledge Companion to Contemporary Anthropology***, edited by Simon Coleman, Susan B. Hyatt and Ann Kingsolver. London and New York: Routledge, 2017. E-book <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cuhk-ebooks/detail.action?docID=4748641>

***Anthropology in Theory: Issues in Epistemology***, edited by Henrietta Moore and Todd Sanders. 2014. <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cuhk-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1575629>

***Schools and Styles of Anthropological Theory***, edited by Matei Candea. London and New York: Routledge, 2018. E-book <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/easyaccess1.lib.cuhk.edu.hk/books/e/9781315388267>

***Additional articles*** will be available on Blackboard. Please, note that further readings may be assigned as the course progresses, so it is your responsibility to check Blackboard regularly.

### ***Useful resources***

- The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Anthropology (full texts are available online) is an excellent teaching and learning resource hosted at the University of Cambridge. It has comprehensive articles on various anthropological concepts, theories, and scholars <http://www.anthroencyclopedia.com/articles-a-to-z>
- Oxford bibliographies (full texts are available via CUHK library) are thorough guides to the current scholarship with original commentary and annotations <https://www-oxfordbibliographies-com.easyaccess1.lib.cuhk.edu.hk/>
- If you need concise definitions of the concepts that you encounter in readings and lectures, check out this glossary of theory terms: <http://www.utpteachingculture.com/teaching-theory/glossary-of-theory-terms/>

## Grading

### ***1. Participation***

As this is a seminar rather than a lecture, you will be expected to attend the class, having read the assigned readings and ready with questions and comments that will facilitate our discussion.

## 2. *Concept papers*

For every week (except Week 1 and Week 12), you will need to submit a one-page analysis (500 words maximum) of a key concept discussed in any of the assigned readings. For example, "survivals," "structure," "class," "charisma," "governmentality," "biopower," "ontology," "precarity" etc. You should analyze the meaning of the chosen concept as articulated in the assigned reading and explain how it complements or challenges the ideas we discussed in previous weeks. These short assignments are designed to help you learn how to write carefully reasoned analyses of theoretical texts and new concepts, eliciting connections among anthropology's key scholars. The concept papers will also help facilitate class discussions.

## 3. *The Other People's Anthropology*

Most of the foundational and contemporary theoretical work in anthropology originates from Western Europe and North America. It is now also mostly in English. This does not mean that theories are not produced elsewhere. However, as a result of political-economic and language factors, theories from "the Global South"/"the East"/non-Western regions often remain less known and less read. Therefore, this assignment gives you an opportunity to "provincialize" anthropological theory or engage the "other people's anthropology," i.e., the work of contemporary non-Anglophone and/or non-Western anthropologists. You will need to choose a scholar whose work you already know and who has contributed to the advancement of anthropological theory but is not widely known. Detailed guidelines for this assignment will be posted on Blackboard. This assignment is due on Week 12 and has two components:

- Essay: 1500 words maximum (graded)
- Class presentation: 15 minutes (ungraded)

Written assignments should use 12 Times New Roman with 1-inch margins, excluding bibliography.

## 4. *Publication Ethics Training* (ungraded)

You will need to complete the publication ethics training developed by University. The training allows you to gain an understanding of the scope and examples of plagiarism as well as best practices of publishing, applicable to any written academic assignment. This assignment is ungraded, but you fail to submit the completion certificate, I will mark your class participation down.

Due November 1, via email

Access here: <https://www.research-ethics.cuhk.edu.hk/orktsResearch/Web/Quiz/public>

## Grade Descriptors

Grade	Participation	Written assignments
A	You participate in all classes. Your comments demonstrate that you have read the assigned readings, and your questions show a nuanced understanding of the course material	Your writing is original, nuanced, well-written, clear, and factual; analyses and arguments are convincing. Everything is of a required length and format, and submitted on time
A -	You participate in almost all classes, with one or two classes missed or inactive. Your comments demonstrate that you have read the assigned readings, and your questions show a good understanding of the course material	Your writing is original, nuanced, well-written, clear, and factual; analyses and arguments are convincing, but occasionally contain minor errors. Everything is of a required length and format, and submitted on time
B+	You participate in the majority of classes, with three classes missed or inactive. Your comments demonstrate that you have read most of the assigned readings, and your questions show a sufficient understanding of the course material	Your writing demonstrates an overall good grasp of concepts and theories, but occasionally lacks clarity, contains several minor errors, and / or slightly deviates from required length and format. It is original and submitted on time.

B	You participate in the majority of classes, with four classes missed or inactive. Your comments demonstrate that you have read most of the assigned readings, and your questions show a sufficient understanding of the course material	Your writing demonstrates an overall good grasp of concepts and theories, but occasionally lacks clarity, contains many minor errors, and / or deviates from required length and format. Everything is submitted on time and is original, although there might be minor problems with citations and attribution
B -	You participate in the majority of classes, with five classes missed or inactive. Your comments demonstrate that you have read most of the assigned readings, and your questions show a sufficient understanding of the course material	Your writing demonstrates an overall good grasp of concepts and theories, but lacks clarity, contains minor errors and a few major logical flaws, and / or deviates from required length and format. Everything is submitted on time and is original, although there might be minor problems with citations and attribution
C +	You participate in about half of classes, with six classes missed or inactive. Your comments demonstrate that you have read some of the assigned readings, and your questions show a partial understanding of the course material	Your writing shows an acceptable level of understanding of class material, but it lacks clarity, contains many major factual errors and logical flaws, and/or often deviates from required length and format. The assignments are submitted on time or a day late. The work is original, although there are major problems with citations and attribution
C	You participate in about half of classes, with seven classes missed or inactive. Your comments demonstrate that you have read some of the assigned readings, and your questions show a partial understanding of the course material	Your writing shows an acceptable level of understanding of class material, but it lacks clarity, contains many major factual errors and logical flaws, and does not follow the required length and format. The assignments are submitted on time or a day late. The work is original, although there are major problems with citations and attribution
C -	You participate in about half of the classes, with eight classes missed or inactive. Your comments demonstrate that you have read some of the assigned readings, and your questions show partial understanding of the course material	Your writing shows an acceptable level of understanding of class material, but it lacks clarity, contains many major factual errors and logical flaws, and does not follow the required length and format. The work is submitted a day or two late. It is original, although there are major problems with citations and attribution
D +	You participate in a small number of classes, with 9-10 classes missed or inactive; or you show a low level of engagement. Your comments demonstrate that you have not read the assigned readings, and you do not understand what is being discussed	Your writing shows a minimal understanding of concepts and theories. It lacks effort, is hard to read and understand, contains major errors, flaws, and biased viewpoints. The work is original, but citations are absent. It considerably deviates from the required length and format (answers are too short), and/or are submitted a few days late.
D	You participate in a small number of classes, with 11-12 classes missed or inactive, or you show a low level of engagement. Your comments demonstrate that you have not read the assigned readings, and you do not understand what is being discussed	Your writing shows a minimal understanding of concepts and theories. It lacks effort, is hard to read and understand, contains major errors, flaws, and biased viewpoints. The work is original, but citations are absent. It considerably deviates from the required length and format (too short), and submitted many days late.
F	You almost never participate, or you miss all the seminars or come unprepared	Your writing is submitted more than a week late or not submitted at all. The work is extremely short, factually incorrect, biased, and/or contains instances of plagiarism.

# Weekly schedule

## Week One. September 2

- **What is theory in anthropology?**
- **19<sup>th</sup> Century Anthropology and Social Evolutionism**

### Readings:

- Herbert Spencer (1860) "The Social Organism." In *Anthropological Theory*, pp. 16–33
- Edward B. Tylor (1871) "The Science of Culture." In *Anthropological Theory*, pp. 34–49
- Lewis Henry Morgan (1877) "Ethnical Periods." In *Anthropological Theory*, pp. 50–62
- Alice C. Fletcher (1882) "I Plead for Them." In Valerie Sherer Mathes and Richard Lowitt, eds, "I Plead for Them': An 1882 Letter from Alice Cunningham Fletcher to Senator Henry Dawes" *Nebraska History* 84 (2003): 36-41

## Week Two. September 9

### Social Theory in Germany: The State, Class, and the Individual

#### Concept paper due

### Readings:

- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (1846) "Feuerbach: Opposition of the Materialist and Idealist Outlook." In *Anthropological Theory*, pp. 63–80
- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (1888) "Bourgeois and Proletarians." In *Readings*, pp. 20–28
- Max Weber (1922) "Class, Status, Party." In *Anthropological Theory*, pp. 109–125
- Max Weber (1922) "The Sociology of Charismatic Authority." In *Readings*, pp. 89–95

## Week Three. September 16

- **Sociological Thought in France**
- **Structural Functionalism and (Psychological) Functionalism**

#### Concept paper due

### Readings:

- Émile Durkheim (1895) "What is a Social Fact". In *Anthropological Theory*, pp. 86–93
- Marcel Mauss (1925) "Excerpts from *The Gift*." In *Anthropological Theory*, pp. 94–108
- Bronislaw Malinowski (1922) "The Subject, Methods and Scope of this Inquiry." In *Readings*, pp. 202–217
- A.R. Radcliffe-Brown (1940) "On Joking Relations." In *Anthropological Theory*, pp. 218–229

## Week Four. September 23 American Cultural and Psycho-Cultural Anthropology

Concept paper due

### Readings:

- Franz Boas (1920) "The Methods of Ethnology." In *Anthropological Theory*, pp. 138–147
- Ruth Benedict (1929) "The Science of Custom: The Bearing of Anthropology on Contemporary Thought." In *Anthropological Theory*, pp. 158–167
- Margaret Mead (1928) "Introduction to *Coming of Age in Samoa*." In *Anthropological Theory*, pp. 168–175
- Zora Neale Hurston (1935) "Forward" and "Introduction" to *Mules and Men*, reprint: Harper Collins, 2009

## Week Five. September 30 Structuralism and its Critique

Concept paper due

### Readings:

- **(skim for flavor)** Ferdinand de Saussure (1916) "Nature of the Linguistic Sign and Synchronic and Diachronic Law." In *Readings*, pp. 95–104
- Claude Levi-Strauss (1960) "Four Winnebago Myths: A Structural Sketch." In *Anthropological Theory*, pp. 345–353
- Edmund Leach (1972) "Structuralism in Social Anthropology." In *Readings*, pp. 173–185
- Pierre Bourdieu (1980) "Structures, Habitus, Practices." In *Anthropological Theory*, pp. 496–512
- Sherry Ortner (1984) "Theory in Anthropology Since the Sixties." In *Readings*, **from p. 490**

## Week Six. October 7 Rethinking Materialism and Marxism

Concept paper due

### Readings:

- Marvin Harris (1966) "The Cultural Ecology of India's Sacred Cattle." *Anthropological Theory*, pp. 309–224
- Eric Wolf (1966) "Peasantry and Its Problems." In *Anthropological Theory*, pp. 324–338
- Sidney Mintz (1985) Introduction. In *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*
- Louis Althusser (1970) "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses"

### **Week Seven. October 14**

- **The Interpretive Turn**
- **the Early Feminist Anthropology**

Concept paper due

#### **Readings:**

- Mary Douglas (1966) "External Boundaries." In *Anthropological Theory*, pp. 439–448
- Clifford Geertz (1973) "Thick Description: Towards an Interpretive Theory of Culture." In *Readings*, pp. 320–337
- Sally Slocum (1975) "Woman the Gatherer: Male Bias in Anthropology." In *Anthropological Theory*, pp. 408–417
- Eleanor Leacock (1983) "Interpreting the Origins of Gender Inequality: Conceptual and Historical Problems." In *Anthropological Theory*, pp. 418–434

### **Week Eight. October 21**

#### **Body and Power**

Concept paper due

#### **Readings:**

- Michel Foucault (1976) "The Incitement to Discourse." In *Anthropological Theory*, pp. 513–531
- Michel Foucault (1991) "Governmentality." In *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, edited by Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press
- Rabinow, Paul and Nikolas Rose 2006. "Biopower Today." *Biosocieties* 1: 195–217.
- Judith Butler (1988) "Performative Acts and Gender Construction." In *Readings*, pp. 347–358

### **Week Nine. October 28**

- **A Crisis of Representation**
- **The Postcolonial Critique**

Concept paper due

#### **Readings:**

- Talal Asad (1973) "Introduction" [Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter]. In *Readings*, pp. 383–390
- James Clifford (1986) "Partial Truths." In *Readings*, pp. 454–474
- Allan Hanson (1989) "The Making of the Maori: Culture Invention and Its Logic." In *Anthropological Theory*, pp. 532–546
- Edward Said (1979) "Knowing the Oriental." In *Readings*, pp. 391–403

## **Week Ten. November 4**

### **Questioning Gender, Race, and Culture**

Concept paper due

#### **Readings:**

- Katherine Lutz (1995) The Gender of Theory. In *Women Writing Culture*, Ruth Behar and Deborah Gordon eds. pp. 249–266
- Oyeronke Oyewumi (1997) The Invention of Women. In *Anthropology in Theory: Issues in Epistemology*, edited by Henrietta Moore and Todd Sanders, Chapter 44
- Chandra Mohanty (1988) “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses.” *Feminist Review* 30: 61–88
- Lila Abu-Lughod (2002) “Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others” *American Anthropologist* 104(3):783-790.

## **Week Eleven. November 11**

### **Globalization, Mobility, and Capital**

Concept paper due

#### **Readings:**

- Arjun Appadurai (1990) “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy.” In *Anthropological Theory*, pp. 614–636
- Igor Kopytoff (1986) Social Biographies of things: Commoditization as Process. In *The Social Life of Things* - edited by Arjun Appadurai
- David Harvey (1989) “Time-Space Compression and the Postmodern Condition.” In *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*
- Aihwa Ong (1999) Introduction. In *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 1–26

## **Week Twelve. November 18**

### **The Other Anthropological Theory**

Class presentations today. No concept paper.

#### **Readings:**

- Faye Harrison (2016) Engaging Theory in the New Millennium. In *Routledge Companion to Contemporary Anthropology*, Chapter 2
- Aleksandar Boskovic and Thomas Eriksen (2008) “Introduction to Other People’s Anthropologies.” In *Readings*, pp. 586–599



## Week Thirteen. November 25

### Some Current Trends: Ontology, Assemblage, Multispecies Anthropology

#### Concept paper due

#### Required

- Bruno Latour (2005) "Introduction" to *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 1–17
- Eben Kirksey and Stefan Helmreich (2010) "The Emergence of Multispecies Ethnography." In *Cultural Anthropology* 25(4): 545–576
- Lesley Sharp "Hybridity: Hybrid Bodies of the Scientific Imaginary." In *Anthropology in Theory: Issues in Epistemology*, edited by Henrietta Moore and Todd Sanders, Chapter 29
- Eduardo Viveiros de Castro. Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism. In *Anthropology in Theory: Issues in Epistemology*, edited by Henrietta Moore and Todd Sanders, Chapter 44

Also check out posts and articles in "Curated Collections" in *Cultural Anthropology*: <https://journal.culanth.org/index.php/ca/catalog/categories>. These curated collections include a variety of current theoretical debates and thematical foci such as precarity, infrastructure, sovereignty, and embodiment, among others.

#### Further readings

- Lila Abu-Lughod (2008) Speaking About Anthropological Theory. In *A History of Anthropological Theory*, pp. 203–204
- Laura Nader (2011) Ethnography as Theory. *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 1(1): 211–219
- "The Early History of Anthropological Theory," 2016. In *Readings*, pp. 3–10 (until "Marxism")
- Charles Darwin (1871) "The Descent of Man." In *Readings*, pp. 57–66
- Nineteenth-Century Evolutionism. In *Anthropological Theory*, pp. 7–15
- Harry Liebersohn (2009) Anthropology Before Anthropology. In *A New History of Anthropology*, edited by Henrika Kuklick, pp. 17–32
- Émile Durkheim (1915) "Introduction to *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*." In *Readings*, pp. 75–88
- Benjamin L Whorf (1922) "The Relations of Habitual Thought and Behavior to Language." In *Anthropological Theory*, pp. 176–193
- Sigmund Freud (1930) "Civilization and its Discontents." In *Readings*, pp. 67–75
- A.R. Radcliffe-Brown (1958) "Social Structure." In *Readings*, pp. 195–201
- Julian Steward (1955) "The Patrilineal Band." *Anthropological Theory*, pp. 273–288
- Clifford Geertz (1972) "Deep Play: Notes on a Balinese Cock Fight." In *Anthropological Theory*, pp. 468–490
- Karen Sacks (1974) "Engels revisited: Women, the Organization of Production, and Private Property." In *Woman, Culture, and Society*, pp. 207–222
- Michel Foucault (1961) "The Birth of the Asylum." In *Readings*, pp. 421–436

- Judith Butler (1988) "Performative Acts and Gender Construction." In *Readings*, pp. 347–358
- Strathern, Marilyn (1987), 'An Awkward Relationship: The Case of Feminism and Anthropology', *Signs*.12:(2): 276-292
- Kirin, Narayan (1993), 'How native is Native Anthropology?', *American anthropologist*, New Series, 95(3): 671-686.
- Spivak, Gayatri (1995), 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in D. Landry and G. Maclean (eds.), *The Spivak Reader*, New York: Routledge.
- George Marcus and Michael Fischer (1986) "A Crisis of Representation in the Human Sciences." In *Readings*, pp. 475–483
- Mascia-Lees, Francis, Patricia Sharpe & Colleen Cohen (1989) "The Postmodernist Turn in Anthropology: Cautions from a Feminist Perspective." *Signs* 15(1): 7–33
- Jonathan Friedman and Kajsa Ekholm Friedman (2013) "Globalization as a Discourse of Hegemonic Crisis." In *Anthropological Theory*, pp. 649–668
- Soumhya Venkatesan (2010) "Ontology is Just Another Word for Culture," *Critique of Anthropology* 30(2): 152–200

The AAA's stance on race: <http://www.aaanet.org/stmts/racepp> and on immigration: <http://www.aaanet.org/issues/press/upload/Georgia-Anti-Immigration-Law.pdf>

## Policies

**Disability Services.** If you need special accommodations or classroom modifications, you need to notify both me and the University's Wellness and Counselling Center (<https://www2.osa.cuhk.edu.hk/disability/en-GB>) no later than the third week of classes.

**Academic Integrity.** The University has recently updated its policy on Academic Integrity and the penalties for plagiarism and cheating. You can find the information here: [http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng.htm#files\\_2013-14/p06.htm](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng.htm#files_2013-14/p06.htm) Read it carefully: every student is expected to comply with the policy; otherwise, if you are suspected of violating these obligations you will be subject to the outlined sanctions. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask me or your TA about this!

**Late Work.** Late or incomplete assignments will be marked down: a grade will be subtracted for each late day.