

ANTH 2110
The History of Anthropological Theory
Spring 2021

Lecture: Tuesday 9:30 AM – 11:15 PM
Tutorials: Tuesday 11:30 AM – 12:15 PM
 Tuesday 12:30 PM – 1:15 PM
 TBA

Instructor: Teresa Kuan, tkuan@cuhk.edu.hk, NAH 325, 3-7728
Office Hours: Friday 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM, and by appointment
Tutor: Isabel Briz Hernández, isabelbriz@link.cuhk.edu.hk, NAH 301, 3-7671

This course introduces students to the history of anthropological theory. We start our exploration with classic sociological theory, ending the semester with theories of practice. The organization of this course is somewhat chronological, which is not meant to suggest a teleological progression, as if the latest theoretical trend is naturally the best.

The history of theory is a history of conversation and debate. Ideas emerge out of contention with other ideas, in a process of constant change that is worth studying in its own right, just as we would study any other social phenomenon from a critical distance. Observing how thinkers think – how they express their ideas and how their concerns extend from a context – we learn how to contextualize our own ideas.

Acquainting ourselves with major theories in the “canon,” as problematic as some of them are, we shall come to understand why anthropologists think the way they do. In the course of the semester, you are encouraged to pay attention to enduring anthropological themes and impulses, and to consider whether and how some “old” ideas are relevant to the questions we have today.

Required readings and original texts

Most of the required readings for this class are from *Visions of Culture: An Introduction to Anthropological Theories and Theorists* by Jerry Moore. The 3rd edition of this book is available as an eBook, the 4th edition will be available on 4-hour reserve at the University Library, but you might want to consider purchasing your own copy (5th edition is the latest version).

All other readings will be posted on Blackboard.

For each week, required readings are indicated in normal black text.

For each paper, you will be asked to discuss a minimum of **one** (paper no. 1) to **two** (paper no. 2 and final) pieces of original text, indicated in gray. This means you are not required to read every original text each week. However, you may want to “poke around” and read *some* as we move through the semester. The texts you choose to work with in answering a question will have to be read carefully for writing the papers.



Tips for reading original texts

The most important thing is to try. Simply “showing up” is a great start. At minimum, you can move your eyeballs across sentences and down paragraphs. Give yourself the permission to gather a loose impression.

When you are ready, you can read more actively by keeping some questions in mind: What are some commonly recurring words and phrases? Where does the author take you through the logical development of an idea, and where does the author make a more definitive point? Are there passages that stand out as especially important or revealing? Does the author offer concrete examples to illustrate?

Course lectures will highlight some key quotes, extracted from original texts. I encourage you to also create your own collection of illustrative quotes.

GRADE DESCRIPTORS

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Criteria for 1) the course and 2) for coursework</i>
A	<p>1) Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.</p> <p>2) The work has creatively synthesized course materials and key ideas in an original way. The argument is logical and cohesive, the discussion is well-organized, and the writing is clear. The work goes beyond merely summarizing key ideas. The work clearly differentiates between the position of the author versus the position(s) the author wishes to challenge. Concrete evidence corresponds to statements and claims.</p>
A-	<p>1) Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.</p> <p>2) The work synthesizes course materials and key ideas in an original way, but there are areas for improvement.</p>
B-range	<p>1) Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.</p> <p>2) The work demonstrates a solid grasp of course materials and key ideas. There are areas for improvement with respect to building a cohesive argument, organizing the discussion, communicating clearly, and/or identifying relevant evidence. There is some confusion over what position the author has taken versus the position(s) the author wishes to challenge.</p>
C-range	<p>1) Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.</p> <p>2) The work shows some effort, but course materials have not been sufficiently engaged or the paper fails to directly address the prompt. The argument and the writing is not clear.</p>
D-range	<p>1) Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes.</p> <p>2) The work shows little effort to engage course materials. There are major problems with clarity of argument and writing.</p>
F	<p>1) Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.</p> <p>2) The work has failed respond to the assignment prompt.</p>

Learning Outcomes

1. Students will have a solid grasp of the history of anthropological thought.
2. Students will be able to apply theoretical ideas to understanding contemporary social issues.

Evaluation

<i>Grade Item</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
Paper No. 1	25%	February 10
Paper No. 2	25%	March 19
Final Paper	30%	May 3
Participation	20%	--

Each paper assignment will be a take-home essay. Question choices will be posted ahead of time: 7 days ahead for the first paper, 9 days for the second, and 12 days for the final paper. Please manage your time wisely.

All assignments must be submitted to VeriGuide. Signed declarations must be submitted to Blackboard.

Modes of participation are many. They include: speaking up in lecture and tutorial, sharing ideas in the chat box, keeping your camera on, and communicating with us as questions arise.

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Week 1 (January 12) **Course Introduction**

☞ No readings.

Week 2 (January 19) **Marx and Weber: Necessity versus Chance**

📖 Turner, Beeghley, and Powers, "The Sociology of Karl Marx," in *The Emergence of Sociological Theory*. Read pp. 141-150, and 166-80.

📖 Karl Marx, "History," in *The German Ideology: Part I*, pp. 155-163 (1845-46).

📖 Turner, Beeghley, and Powers, "The Sociology of Max Weber," in *The Emergence of Sociological Theory*. Read pp. 228-246.

📖 Max Weber, "Asceticism and the Spirit of Capitalism," in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905).

Week 3 (January 26) **Durkheim and Mauss: Social Cohesion and Integration**

📖 Moore, "Émile Durkheim: The Organic Society," in *Visions of Culture*.

📖 Émile Durkheim, Introduction to *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, in *Readings for a History of Anthropological Theory* (1915).

📖 Ericksen, “Reciprocity,” in *What is Anthropology?*

📖 Marcel Mauss, excerpts from *The Gift*, in *Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History* (1925).

Week 4 (February 2)

The Early Years: How to understand difference?

📖 Moore, “Edward Tylor: The Evolution of Culture,” in *Visions of Culture*.

📖 Sir Edward Burnett Tylor, “The Science of Culture,” in *Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History* (1871).

📖 Moore, “Lewis Henry Morgan: The Evolution of Society,” in *Visions of Culture*.

📖 Lewis Henry Morgan, “Ethnical Periods,” in *Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History* (1877).

PAPER NO. 1 DUE (February 10)

📖 Questions will be posted Wednesday afternoon February 3 by 5:00 p.m. Paper is due February 10 @ 11:59 p.m.

Week 5 (February 9)

The Beginning of Modern Anthropology

📖 Moore, “Franz Boas: Culture in Context,” in *Visions of Culture*.

📖 Franz Boas, “Changes in the Bodily Form of Descendants of Immigrants,” in *American Anthropologist* (1912).

📖 Moore, “Bronislaw Malinowski: The Functions of Culture,” in *Visions of Culture*.

📖 Bronislaw Malinowski, “General Account of Gardening,” in *Coral Gardens and Their Magic, Volume I* (1935)

Week 6 (February 16)

📖 No class. Happy Lunar New Year!

Week 7 (February 23)

British Social Anthropology: Or, there is a rational explanation for everything

📖 Moore, “A. R. Radcliffe-Brown: The Structures of Society,” in *Visions of Culture*.

📖 A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, “On Joking Relationships,” in *Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History* (1940).

Week 8 (March 2)
Culture and Personality (American Cultural Anthropology)

- 📖 Moore, “Ruth Benedict: Patterns of Culture,” in *Visions of Culture*
- 📖 Ruth Benedict, “The Individual and the Pattern of Culture,” in *Readings for a History of Anthropological Theory* (1934).
- 📖 Moore, “Edward Sapir: Culture, Language, and the Individual,” in *Visions of Culture*
- 📖 Edward Sapir, “Why Cultural Anthropology Needs the Psychiatrist,” in *Selected Writings of Edward Sapir* (1938).

Week 9 (March 9)
Claude Lévi-Strauss and the Idea of Structure

- 📖 Moore, “Claude Lévi-Strauss: Structuralism,” in *Visions of Culture*.
- 📖 Claude Lévi-Strauss, “The Making of an Anthropologist,” in *Tristes Tropiques* (1955)
- 📖 Claude Lévi-Strauss, “Structural Analysis in Linguistics and in Anthropology,” in *Anthropology in Theory* (1963).

PAPER NO. 2 DUE (March 19)

- 📖 Questions will be posted Wednesday afternoon March 10 by 5:00 p.m. Paper is due March 19 @ 11:59 p.m.

Week 10 (March 16)
The Materialists: Neo-evolutionism and Cultural Materialism

- 📖 Moore, “Leslie White: Evolution Emergent,” in *Visions of Culture*.
- 📖 Leslie White, “Energy and Tools,” in *Readings for a History of Anthropological Theory* (1959).
- 📖 Moore, “Marvin Harris: Cultural Materialism,” in *Visions of Culture*.
- 📖 Marvin Harris, “The Cultural Ecology of India’s Sacred Cattle,” in *Anthropological Theory* (1960)

Week 11 (March 23)
Symbolic Anthropology, Part I: Systems of thought

- 📖 Thomas H. Ericksen, “Thought,” in *What is Anthropology?*

📖 E. E. Evans-Pritchard, “The Notion of Witchcraft explains Unfortunate Events,” in *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande* (1937).

📖 Mary Douglas, “Secular Defilement,” in *Purity and Danger* (1966).

🎥 clip from *Witchcraft among the Azande* (André Singer, Granada Television)

Week 12 (March 30) and Week 13 (April 6)

📧 No class. Enjoy Reading Week and happy Easter!

Week 14 (April 13)

Symbolic Anthropology, Part II: Drama and Text

📖 Moore, “Victor Turner: Symbols, Pilgrims, and Drama,” in *Visions of Culture*.

📖 Victor Turner, “Symbols in Ndembu Ritual,” in *Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History* (1967).

📖 Moore, “Clifford Geertz: An Interpretive Anthropology,” in *Visions of Culture*.

📖 Clifford Geertz, “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight,” in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973).

Week 15 (April 20)

Practice: Sociological and Ecological Perspectives

📖 Moore, “Pierre Bourdieu: An Anthropology of Practice,” in *Visions of Culture*.

📖 Pierre Bourdieu, “Structures and the habitus,” in *Outlines of a Theory of Practice* (1972).

📖 Moore, “Tim Ingold: Anthropology Beyond Humanity,” in *Visions of Culture*.

📖 Tim Ingold, “Knowing from the Inside,” in *Making: Anthropology, archaeology, art and architecture* (2013).

FINAL PAPER DUE (May 3)

📧 Questions will be posted Wednesday afternoon April 21 by 5:00 p.m. Paper is due May 3 @ 11:59 p.m.

TIPS & POLICIES

Participation in an on-line environment

Participating in class is extremely important for two reasons. 1) Asking questions and making comments helps to energize a class. This is especially important in an on-line environment because it can get boring if only the teacher or tutor is talking. 2) Participating is a way of trying out ideas and working through material for your own sake. Getting comfortable with speaking up in class is important in learning how to think. In fact, saying the “wrong” thing is a necessary part of learning. (Actually, there is no such thing as “wrong” or “right.” When it comes to comments, we could do something with anything. We only ask that students are respectful to one another.)

Us professors are not here to “transmit” ideas to you. We are not here to “pour” content into your brain. We would like for you to go beyond regurgitation of course materials in your written assignments, and learning to contribute to class discussion, learning to integrate multiple perspectives during class discussion, will help you strengthen your independent thinking skills.

Opinions vs. Arguments

There is a difference between opinion and argument. Your personal viewpoints are welcome during class discussion, but your papers will be evaluated based upon your ability to formulate an argument rather than your ability to express an opinion.

An argument is analytical. Arguments propose relationships between variables, and they support assertions being made with empirical evidence – either ethnographic data, or, in the case of studying theory, passages from original texts that illustrate how a particular theorist formulated an idea.

There is also a difference between opinion and perspective. An opinion usually contains some kind of judgment about how the world should or should not operate. A perspective, on the other hand, is a way of looking at the world. In other words, having perspective involves the ability to see patterns and themes, or differences and divergences, which may not be obvious at first glance. Having an opinion is easy. Having the insight that comes with perspective is much harder.

Late Submissions

Papers submitted after the due date will suffer a fraction of a grade deduction for every day it is late. For example, an A- will become a B+, a B will become a B-, et cetera.