

ANTHROPOLOGY 7703: THEORIES IN CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

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Autumn 2015
Hours of instruction: TR 9:35 – 10:55AM
Classroom: Smith Lab 4094
Office hours: W10-1 PM or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an overview of major theoretical paradigms that have shaped anthropological research in the past and present. We will critically review selected theoretical paradigm by examining how anthropologists have used theory to study questions, such as “What is the nature of culture?”, “What is human nature?”, “What holds societies together?”, “What is the relationship between individual and society?”, and “How can another culture be understood by an anthropological outsider?” The goal is to train students to think theoretically as anthropologists by examining primary, secondary and tertiary sources for a selection of theoretical paradigms.

COURSE GOALS

The goal is to train students to think theoretically as anthropologists, i.e., understand how anthropologists use and have used theory to describe and explain cross-cultural variation, and this entails that students will be able to:

1. Understand the role of theory in shaping anthropological research (conceptual frameworks).
2. Know the history of the main theoretical paradigms in anthropology (history of anthropology).
3. Understand that writing the history of anthropological theory is an interpretive exercise (critical literacy).
4. Recognize explicit and implicit theoretical frameworks in anthropological texts (theoretical literacy).
5. Construct their own conceptual framework drawing from theoretical frameworks in anthropology (reflexivity).

DISABILITY SERVICES

Students who may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss their specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at 614-292-3307 in room 150 Pomerene Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT STATEMENT

All students should become familiar with the rules governing academic misconduct, especially as they pertain to plagiarism and cheating. Ignorance of the rules is not an excuse and all alleged cases of academic misconduct will be reported to the committee on academic misconduct.

READINGS

There are few required readings and they will be made available through Carmen. You are expected to have read the assigned readings once or twice before you come to class. As you read, highlight, take notes, summarize, look up new words or concepts, and come with questions for me and/or your classmates. In short, be prepared to discuss the readings in class and bring the readings to class. I recommend you to go over the readings once more after class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

0) Attendance and participation. You are expected to be actively engaged in class; that is, coming to class prepared, paying attention, and contributing to discussions and problem solving, both by making comments and by facilitating other people's participation. Because it is difficult to do well in the course if sessions are missed *attendance at every class meeting is required*. Late arrival and early departure are considered poor participation; they are disruptive to others and make it likely to miss essential information. Please contact me if there is an emergency situation. If you are ill and must miss a class, you are responsible for getting the notes and assignment information from your classmates.

1) Homework. You are expected to prepare for every workshop by selecting, reading, and answering questions using (at least) five different sources for the theoretical paradigm covered that week. The answers are to be posted on the course wiki before class. However, you have the option of revising and submitting an improved version after our discussions in class. The questions and answers follow the learning objectives of "knowing the history of anthropological theory" (LO2).

1. Describe the theorist and the theoretical paradigm
2. Describe the historical context of theorists and paradigms
3. Explain the theoretical paradigms and the questions they addressed
4. Describe how the paradigms have been shaped and shaped other paradigms
5. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of theoretical paradigms
6. Explain contributions of paradigms to discipline of anthropology

You have to use at least one primary source, one secondary source, and one tertiary source. A primary source is a key text written by key theorists, e.g., Marx's *Das Kapital* (1867). A secondary source is a written about the theoretical paradigm or theorist and its use in anthropology, e.g., William Roseberry's *Annual Review of Anthropology* article about 'Marx and Anthropology' (1988). A tertiary source can be a chapter on Marxism in a textbook or

an encyclopedia, e.g., McGee, R. Jon, and Richard L. Warms. 2012. *Anthropological theory: An introductory history*. 5th edition ed. Boston: McGraw-Hill. Finally, you may also want to consider using a contemporary source in anthropology that builds on the theoretical tradition, e.g., Daniel Murphy's article 'From kin to contract: labor, work and the production of authority in rural Mongolia' in the *Journal of Peasant Studies* (2015).

2) Workshop. The goal of the workshops is to make sense of the theoretical paradigms in anthropology, i.e., to understand the framework and the debates about the paradigm, to appreciate its contributions, its place in the history of anthropology, and recognize how it continues to shape anthropological research. The workshops are not competitive debates in which participants try to 'win' by arguing for their interpretation of the history of anthropological theory. Instead, the goal is to collaboratively come to an understanding of the history of anthropological theory (with the understanding that we may arrive at different understandings of the same paradigms). Everyone is responsible for making the workshop an effective learning activity. This entails not only talking, but also listening and encouraging others to participate. Students will take turn leading the workshops.

3) Writing history. One student is responsible for writing a "chapter" of the history of the theoretical paradigm discussed in the workshop. The student can use the workshop discussions, the homework of other students, and all the sources. The first draft of the chapter is due the Friday of the week following our workshop discussions; in other words, you have *one* week to write the first draft of the chapter. The chapter will be posted on the wiki and I will give you feedback on the wiki. You then have five days (after I have posted my review) to post an improved second draft. The history writer should keep in mind the learning objectives of "knowing the history of anthropological theory" (LO2) and "understanding that history writing is an interpretive exercise" (LO3). This means that the writer should: 1) write the history from the contemporary context; 2) explicitly use her own conceptual framework to write the history; and 3) consider how her history compares with other, previous histories of the paradigm.

4) Paradigm detection. You will select one recent article from faculty in the department that was published in the last five years (2010-2015) and identify the theoretical paradigms that are used explicitly and implicitly used in the article. You will write a two-page analysis in which explain how you detected the paradigms (e.g., terminology, theorists, questions, explanations, concepts, approaches) and explain how the paradigms have shaped the article (or research). Students should keep in mind the learning objectives of "recognizing theoretical frameworks" (LO4).

5) Reflective essay. You will write a reflective essay in which you 1) reflect on your own worldviews and how they articulate with theoretical paradigms in anthropology; 2) develop your own conceptual framework drawing from theoretical paradigms in anthropology and your own worldviews. The essay should be no more than 5,000 words long, excluding the sources cited. Students should keep in mind the learning objectives of "understanding conceptual frameworks" (LO1) and "constructing conceptual frameworks" (LO5). The final paper needs to be posted on Carmen and is due on Friday 11 December before 5PM.

Evaluation: Course responsibilities will be weighted in the following way:

1. Homework (11)	25%
2. Workshop (11)	15%
3. Writing history (1)	25%
4. Paradigm detection (1)	10%
5. Reflective essay (1)	25%
Total	100%

Final grades are based on the OSU Standard Scheme. A general guide to how you are doing is: A 93; A- 90-92; B+ 87-89; B 83-86; B- 80-82; C+ 77-79; C 73-76; C- 70-72; D+ 67-69; D 60-66; E < 60.

Additional notes from the instructor:

- Except in cases of properly documented illness or personal emergency will late assignments be accepted; they will progressively lose value and will be evaluated as time allows.
- I strive to make this a paper-less course. All assignments are to be submitted on the wiki (or on Carmen), not in hard copy or by email.
- I will use Carmen to post assignments and other information for the class (e.g., cancelled office hours, changes in readings). Check it regularly (at least twice a week).
- Please note that the schedule below is tentative and that the instructor reserves the right to make changes.

SCHEDULE AND TOPICS

The theoretical paradigms that we will cover in the course will be collectively determined in the first two weeks of the course.

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION

Aug. 25: Conceptual frameworks (Ravitch and Riggan 2012)

Aug. 27: Learning objectives and paradigm selection

WEEK 2: FOUNDATIONS

Sept. 1: The anthropological approach (Henrich et al. 2010)

Sept. 3: Theories in anthropology (Ellen 2010)

WEEK 3: BIRTH OF AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGY

WEEK 4: BIRTH OF BRITISH ANTHROPOLOGY

WEEK 5: BIRTH OF FRENCH ANTHROPOLOGY

WEEK 6: STRUCTURALISM

WEEK 7: CULTURAL ECOLOGY AND OTHER MATERIALIST APPROACHES

WEEK 8: EVALUATION

WEEK 9: INTERPRETIVE AND SYMBOLIC ANTHROPOLOGY

WEEK 10: MARXIST ANTHROPOLOGY

WEEK 11: PRACTICE THEORY

WEEK 12: POSTMODERNISM

WEEK 13: FEMINIST AND QUEER ANTHROPOLOGY

WEEK 14: DETECTING PARADIGMS

WEEK 15: SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS

WEEK 16: REVIEW

Dec. 8: Conceptual frameworks (Ravitch and Riggan 2012)

FINALS WEEK

→ *Final paper is due on Friday 11 December before 5PM.*

REQUIRED READINGS

Ellen, Roy. 2010. Theories in anthropology and 'anthropological theory'. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 16(2):387-404.

Henrich, Joseph, Steven J. Heine, and Ara Norenzayan. (2010). Most people are not WEIRD. *Nature* 466(1 July 2010):29.

Ravitch, Sharon M., and Matthew Riggan. 2012. *Reason & Rigor: How conceptual frameworks guide research*. Los Angeles (CA): Sage.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The goal is for students to think theoretically as anthropologists, i.e., understand how anthropologists use and have used theory to describe and explain cross-cultural variation, and this entails that students will be able to:

1. Understand the role of theory in shaping anthropological research (conceptual frameworks).
 - a. Explain what a conceptual framework is
 - b. Explain how conceptual frameworks shape research
 - c. Explain how theoretical paradigms are applied in research
2. Know the history of the main theoretical paradigms in anthropology (history of anthropology).
 - a. List the main theorists and paradigms
 - b. Describe the historical context of theorists and paradigms
 - c. Explain the theoretical paradigms and the questions they addressed
 - d. Describe how the paradigms have shaped other theoretical paradigms
 - e. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of theoretical paradigms
 - f. Explain contributions of paradigms to discipline of anthropology
 - g. Compare and contrast different theoretical paradigms
3. Understand that writing the history of anthropological theory is an interpretive exercise (critical literacy).
 - a. Describe how context shaped the history writers
 - b. Identify the conceptual framework of the history writers
 - c. Explain how frameworks shape writing of the history of anthropology
 - d. Critically analyze histories of anthropological theory
4. Recognize explicit and implicit theoretical frameworks in anthropological texts (theoretical literacy).
 - a. Identify key terminology and theorists for paradigms
 - b. Identify key questions and explanations for paradigms
5. Construct their own conceptual framework drawing from anthropological theories (reflexivity).
 - a. Reflect on their own world views
 - b. Compare own world views with theoretical paradigms
 - c. Apply relevant theoretical paradigms
 - d. Construct their own conceptual framework
 - e. Articulate clearly their own conceptual framework