

Recent Cultural Theory
ANTH 5/441

Spring 2016
T,Th 4-5:20pm
260 Condon

Professor: Dr. Sara Lewis
***Office Hours:* Thursdays, 1-3pm and by appointment**
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Course description:

A theory is a lens by which we make sense of the world. It is an approach, an interpretation, or a framework for investigating problems. This course not only surveys key anthropological theories, but it grapples with the production and circulation of knowledge, itself. Students in this highly interactive course will learn to read and interpret theory, but perhaps even more importantly, they will learn to apply and make use of theory in the “real world.” With that in mind, this course places particular emphasis on power, and the structural sources of inequality within global contexts. The course is divided into three thematic units; we will investigate: 1) knowledge production; 2) deconstructing epistemologies; and 3) structure, agency and subjectivity. Through reading, writing, and engaging in structured team-based activities, students will explore a series of theoretical concerns that inform how anthropology is practiced today.

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

- Utilize critical social theory to understand core debates in anthropology.
- Identify how knowledge is produced and circulated, and how this changes over time.
- Explain how social inequality and structural sources of suffering are fundamental causes of individual problems.
- Generate multiple interpretations of how and why the categories of gender, race and sexuality are culturally constructed.
- Interrogate theoretical claims, and make use of theory in their own work.

Course Expectation and Grades:

Everyday Theory papers (weeks 3 and 8), 15% each
Midterm Exam (end of week 5), 20%
Final Paper (take home, due June 8), 30%
Attendance, 10%
Participation, 10%

Everyday Theory papers

During weeks 3 and 8, you will submit an “everyday theory” paper, which asks you to apply a specific theory or theories to a current event. The current event should articulate some problem (or solution) within the US or across the globe. Your theory, which should come from the course, will act as the lens by which you analyze the current event. The paper should be approximately 1000 words and will draw upon course readings. Your reflection should not summarize readings in a book report format, but rather be used as an opportunity to explore how theory can help us make sense of our world. I encourage you to take intellectual risks in thinking through your ideas. What is thought-provoking? What is obscured, and how does your theory help to illuminate what is going on? Good articulations of current events can be found in The New York Times, The Atlantic, and The Economist, among other periodicals. Papers that cite and make good use of course readings will earn high marks. Each paper is worth 15 points, for a total of 30 points.

Midterm Exam

A midterm exam will be taken in Canvas during the class period on Thursday, April 28, which covers weeks 1-5. The exam includes 20 multiple choice questions and 3 short answer questions. It is worth 20 points.

Final Paper

Your final paper is due on June 8, and will be submitted through Canvas. Please see last page of syllabus for specific guidelines and instructions. The final paper is worth 30 points.

Attendance and participation

Students may miss 3 classes without penalty. For every class missed thereafter, 1/3 a letter grade will be deducted from your overall attendance grade, which counts for 10% of your final grade.

An additional 10 points is devoted to participation. This course is heavily focused on critical analysis, which will largely be accomplished on a collaborative basis as a class. Therefore, simply attending class is not sufficient participation. At the beginning of the term, you will be divided into small teams. You will remain in these groups for the entire term. Classes on Tuesdays will largely be devoted to lecture, films, and interactive discussion. Classes on Thursdays will be primarily “lab” or “team-based.” Each week your group will be given a structured activity to complete that draws on what you learned from course readings and lectures. At the end of the term students will complete a peer evaluation that assesses the quality of each team member’s participation. Peer evaluations are taken seriously and will be factored into final grades.

Late Assignments

For every day an assignment is late, you will lose 1/3 of your grade (e.g. a paper that earns a B becomes a B-).

Grades

Below is a rubric to help you understand grading in the Department of Anthropology. There is no extra credit.

A+: Quality of student's performance significantly exceeds all requirements and expectations required for an A grade. Very few, if any, students receive this grade in a given course.

A: Quality of performance is outstanding relative to that required to meet course requirements; demonstrates mastery of course content at the highest level.

B: Quality of performance is significantly above that required to meet course requirements; demonstrates mastery of course content at a high level.

C: Quality of performance meets the course requirements in every respect; demonstrates adequate understanding of course content.

D: Quality of performance is at the minimal level necessary to pass the course, but does not fully meet the course requirements; demonstrates a marginal understanding of course content.

F: Quality of performance in the course is unacceptable and does not meet the course requirements; demonstrates an inadequate understanding of course content.

Accommodations

Please contact Professor Lewis **during the first week of the term** should you require accommodations.

Class Culture

The culture of this class is based on mutual respect, decorum, and a sense of openness and curiosity. You may use laptop computers and tablets as you see fit, however please be sure to bring a pencil and paper to every class, which we will often use for in-class exercises. Lectures will be highly interactive and students may be called upon at random. Members of the class are welcome and encouraged to email the professor with questions. However, you may be redirected to attend office hours should your question require a more involved response.

Academic Honesty

The following actions may result in disciplinary action according to the university's academic honesty policies:

- Evidence of collusion when expected to submit individual work (working with someone else).
- Evidence of plagiarism (using someone else's work without proper citation).
- Multiple submissions (submitting the same paper for more than one class).

Course Readings: You are required to purchase a course packet from the UO Bookstore.

UNIT 1: KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

WEEK ONE: Introduction

March 29, March 31

Perry, Richard. 2003. "Introduction: What is a Theory." In *Five Key Concepts in Anthropological Thinking*, Pp. 1-11. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Rutherford, Danilyn. 2012. "Kinky Empiricism." *Cultural Anthropology* 27(3):465-479.

WEEK TWO: Labeling and Categories

April 5, 7

Berger, Peter and Thomas Luckmann. 1966. "The Foundations of Knowledge in Everyday Life." In *The Social Construction of Reality*, Pp. 19-46. New York: Anchor Books.

Hacking, Ian. 1999[1986]. "Making Up People." In *The Science Studies Reader*, Mario Biagioli, Ed., Pp. 161-171. New York: Routledge.

WEEK THREE: Knowledge and Power

April 12, 14

Marx, Karl. 1978[1849]. "Wage Labour and Capital." In *The Marx-Engels Reader*, Robert Tucker, Ed., Pp. 203-217. New York: Norton.

Foucault, Michel. 2010[1977]. "Panopticism," from *Discipline and Punish*. In *The Foucault Reader*, Paul Rabinow, Ed., Pp. 206-213. New York: Vintage.

Optional: Rius. 1976. Excerpts from *Marx for Beginners*. New York: Pantheon Books. (posted to Canvas)

****DUE: Everyday Theory Paper on Friday by 5pm****

WEEK FOUR: Local/Global

April 19, 21

Adams, Vincanne, Nancy Burke and Ian Whitmarsh. 2014. "Slow Research: Thoughts for a Movement in Global Health." *Medical Anthropology* 33(3):179-197.

Zigon, Jarrett. 2015. "What is a Situation?" An Assemblage Ethnography of the Drug War." *Cultural Anthropology* 30(3):501-524.

UNIT 2: DECONSTRUCTING EPISTEMOLOGIES

WEEK FIVE: Gender and Sexuality April 26, 28

Haraway, Donna. 1988. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." *Feminist Studies* 14(3):575-599.

Makley, Charlene. 2003. "Gendered Bodies in Motion: Space and Identity on the Sino-Tibetan Frontier." *American Ethnologist* 30(4):597-619.

*******MIDTERM, THURSDAY DURING CLASS PERIOD (On Canvas)*******

WEEK SIX: Race and Racism May 3, 5

Gravlee, Clarence. 2009. "How Race Becomes Biology." *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 139:47-57.

Smedley, A. and B.D. Smedley. 2005. "Race as Biology is Fiction, Racism as a Social Problem is Real: Anthropological and Historical Perspectives on the Social Construction of Race." *The American Psychologist* 60(1):16-26.

WEEK SEVEN: Postcolonial Conundrums May 10, 12

Horton, Richard. 2014. "Is Global Health Neocolonialist?" *The Lancet* 383(9916):509-510.

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. 2008. "On Tricky Ground: Researching the Native in the Age of Uncertainty." In *The Landscape of Qualitative Research*, Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, Eds., Pp.113-143.

UNIT 3: STRUCTURE, AGENCY AND SUBJECTIVITY

WEEK EIGHT: What is 'Structure'

May 17, 19

Bourdieu, Pierre 2001[1978]. Structures, Habitus, Practices. In *Readings for a History of Anthropological Theory*, Paul A. Erickson and Liam D. Murphy, Eds., Pp. 533-543. Ontario: Broadview Press.

Harris, Oliver J.T. and John Robb. 2012. "Multiple Ontologies and the Problem of the Body in History." *American Anthropologist* 114(4):668-679.

****DUE: Everyday Theory Paper on Friday by 5pm****

WEEK NINE: Social Suffering, Structural Violence

May 24, 26

Farmer, Paul. 2010. "The New Malaise: Medical Ethics and Social Rights in the Global Era." In *A Reader in Medical Anthropology: Theoretical Trajectories, Emergent Realities*, Byron Good, Michael Fischer, Sarah Willen and Mary-Jo DelVecchio Good, Eds., Pp. 437-451. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Fassin, Didier and Estelle d'Halluin. 2007. "Critical Evidence: The Politics of Trauma in French Asylum Policies." *Ethos* 35(3):300-329.

WEEK TEN: Subjectivity

May 31, June 3

Biehl, Joao. 2007. "A Life: Between Psychiatric Drugs and Social Abandonment." In *Subjectivities*, Joao Biehl, Byron Good and Arthur Kleinman, Eds., Pp. 397-421. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Hicks, Deborah. "Growing Up Girl in Working-Poor America: Textures of Language, Poverty and Place." *Ethos* 32(3):214-232.

*****Final Exam submitted to Canvas by June 8 at 11:59pm*****

Due: Wednesday, June 8 by 11:59pm, submitted to Canvas through *Vericite*. (Click on final paper prompt under Assignments and you will see where to upload the paper. Be sure to leave yourself enough time for submission: internet problems or computer glitches will not excuse you from the deadline unless there is a documented network problem on campus.

Prompt: Drawing on what you learned in this course you will analyze Claire Wendland’s article: “Moral Maps and Medical Imaginaries.” To conduct your analysis, you will put FIVE readings from class into conversation with one another. These readings will act as evidence to support the claims you make about Wendland’s study. You may reflect on lecture and films to guide you, but your evidence should come directly from course readings. Please use one citation style, such as APA, MLA or Chicago that includes internal citations and a bibliography. Your paper should be at least 2000 words. Graduate student papers should be at least 3000 words.

Assessment: This paper is worth 30% of your grade; for every day late you will lose 1/3 a letter grade (e.g. if you earn a B it becomes a B-). Papers that earn high marks will articulate an argument and use course readings as evidence to support claims. Exams are graded on the following rubric:

	F-D grades	C-B grades	B-A grades
Mastery of course material	Inadequate understanding of key concepts	Acceptable demonstration of key concepts	Excellent demonstration of key concepts
Strength of argument	None or very weak argument	An argument is articulated	Strong and persuasive argument
Quality of evidence	Little or no use of sources	Adequate use of sources to support argument	Excellent use sources to support argument
References and Writing	No internal citation or bibliography; unintelligible writing	Internal citations or bibliography incorrect; writing lacks coherence	References cited correctly; clear and concise writing

Support: I am unable to “check” any papers in advance. However, there are a number of campus resources to help you successfully complete this assignment. For help with citing sources or developing strong arguments you can visit the Teaching and Learning Center: <http://tlc.uoregon.edu/subjects/writing/>

Academic Integrity: Please revisit the syllabus and read through the academic honesty section. It is a good idea to leave yourself plenty of time to submit and run through *Vericite* to ensure that you have not mistakenly plagiarized any sources.