COURSE DESCRIPTION

Anthropologists today draw their theoretical concepts and methods from a range of disciplines (philosophy, literary criticism, sociology, and history), that is, interdisciplinary studies. At the heart of anthropological inquiry is the relationship between structure (society) and agency (humans), that is, how do social structures and humans interact to create, obstruct, and transform the environment and social institutions and conduct. In the seminal text, “Dark Anthropology and Its Others,” Sherry Ortner, one of the leading theoretical anthropologists of our times, posits the idea of a “dark anthropology.” She defines it as the cluster of “several emergent trends in anthropology since the 1980s against a backdrop of the rise of neoliberalism as both an economic and a governmental formation. Dark anthropology focuses on the harsh dimensions of social life (power, domination, inequality, and oppression), as well as on the subjective experience of these dimensions in the form of depression and hopelessness.” Taking dark anthropology as a point of departure, the course will focus on contemporary society with a focus on race, class, and gender. Some of the topics we will cover are:

a) Class and systems of economic inequality
b) Postcolonial and Feminist Theory
c) Gender and Society
d) Race and Identity
e) Globalization, Neoliberalism and Precariat Labor

REQUIRED TEXTS
All required readings will be posted on Canvas s PDFs.

Katherine Boo. *Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life and Death in a Mumbai Undercity*

e-book available at Knight Library

Many of the readings are from *The Companions to the Anthropology of Politics*, eds. David Nugent and Joan Vincent. The full PDF is uploaded to Canvas Modules.

The *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* is an excellent source for many of the philosophical concepts covered in this class. It is available free online.
https://plato.stanford.edu/

**Recommended Movies/Documentaries for discussion**

*Parasite*, available on Hulu with a student Spotify account and also on Amazon Prime.

Michael Moore’s *Roger and Me*

*Hillbilly Elegy*, available on Netflix.

Unfortunately, none of these movies/documentaries can be streamed by the Knight Library. If students have access to these films via Prime, Netflix, Hulu, it would be good for us to discuss them together as a class. They raise many important issues on social relations, capitalism, class, gender, the American dream, etc. that we will read about. If some of you do not have access to these film streaming services, please let me know, so I can assign a different movie for discussion.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- Use critical social theory to understand core debates in anthropology.
- Identify how anthropological theory relates to practice and how it is applied in contemporary ethnographic writing.
- Critically analyze theory and understand its usefulness and limitations.
- Interrogate theoretical claims and make use of theory in their own work.
- Generate connections between theoretical discussions and current debates outside anthropology.
- Understand the socio-historical contexts of anthropological theories

**COURSE STRUCTURE**

This course is designed as a seminar and will focus on the assigned readings, class presentations, and critical discussions on the points raised in the texts. Students are encouraged to reflect on the theoretical, methodological, and ethical implications of the assigned readings and also connect them to our everyday lives in the US and in other parts of the world. This is an interactive course and requires students to fully participate, keep up with the readings, engage in discussions, and attend all sessions. You are encouraged to bring in external materials such as news stories, podcasts, movies, novels to engage with the readings. For example, when we discuss issues of class/precarity and race/inequality, you are encouraged to reflect on how these issues are unfolding during the pandemic in our lives in the US and in other parts of the world.

**STRUCTURE OF CLASS DISCUSSIONS**

When you read the assigned articles, focus on the following questions:

1) What are the strengths of a particular theoretical perspective? What is it useful for?
2) What are the limitations of this particular theoretical perspective? What are its critiques or blind spots.
3) What are some of the implications of this theory beyond the academic community?
4) Select one quote from the readings that illustrates the main (or one of the main) argument/concept presented by the author for discussion.

**GRADED ASSIGNMENTS**

1. Class Participation 20%
2. Midterm Exam 40%
3. Final Paper or Project 20%
4. Pandemic Journal 20%

1. **Class Participation 20%**

This is a seminar and will be focused on class discussions. In the beginning of each class, I will give students background on the author and highlight the key points raised in the text that we are reading, and then open it for class discussion. Beginning Week Two, I will solicit your participation in class discussions. Each class, I will assign a few students to start the conversation. You will sign up for discussion during Week 1.

You must read the articles/watch documentaries/listen to podcasts prior to the class and you must come prepared to contribute to our discussions. I also understand that not everyone is comfortable speaking in front of groups and there are others who are stronger in the written form. In that case, please send me a short write-up with your questions/thoughts on the readings/visual texts, and I will share that with the class for discussion.

A) Each week students will post questions and comments on the readings. Students will be formed in groups of five, and you will decide amongst yourselves what are the relevant questions for that week. You will post them by Monday morning on the Weekly Discussion Board on Canvas. I expect all the students in the class to respond to these questions online and participate in the discussions in class. **10%**

B) During Weeks Nine and Ten, students will make 10-minute presentations on some themes agency (autonomy, individual sovereignty), gender, class, race, American Dream, precarity, social structure (capitalism, economy, education, state) raised in theories that we have covered in class. We will scrutinize how they are reproduced in society through various social and political mechanisms. **10%**

**Midterm Exam 40%**

A midterm exam will be taken on Canvas during Week Six that covers Weeks 1-5. The exam will include one/two essay questions.

**Pandemic Journal 20%**
The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting us globally. All the students will write at least three journal entries (you can write more entries) on how the pandemic is changing our lives. Increasingly, we are self-isolating and celebrating birthdays, holidays and special events online and families. Our experience of collective social events like games, gyms, parties, theaters, movies, restaurants have also been dramatically changed. Netflix has replaced going to the theater; gym is now work-outs at home or running by yourself or with a friend. Are social media, twitter/Instagram/Tik Tok playing a bigger role in your life? Is it changing the way you think/talk/behave? What can theory teach us about social relations during the pandemic? This should be a thoughtful analysis of how the pandemic is changing our lives and composed in 1-2 pages, double-spaced.

**Final Project or Paper 20%**

Option 1: I encourage you to think creatively with theory, and you can also come up with alternative formats for the final such as a poster, painting, spoken word/poetry, a short video. If you opt for option 1, please consult with me by Week Six about your plans.

Option 2: This option is for those of you who like to write and feel more comfortable in this format. A reflexive essay on theory approximately 5 pages that covers some theoretical concepts that you found stimulating.

**GRADING RUBRIC**

A: student demonstrates exceptional understanding of and ability to analyze well the course material; an outstanding performance relative to that required to meet course requirements.

B: student demonstrates substantial understanding of the course material, including analytical procedures and theoretical concepts; performance is significantly above that required to meet course requirements.

C: student does the assignments but not more, demonstrating reasonable knowledge of the course material; demonstrates adequate understanding of content and meets course requirements.

D: student demonstrates minimal effort to complete the assignments and/or limited understanding of the class material; does not fully meet the course requirements.

F: student makes little or no effort to complete the assignments and/or limited understanding of the class material; poor written communication skills; performance does not meet the course requirements.

If the class is taken P/NP, a C- or higher is required to pass the course.

**GRADES**

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

Late assignments are not accepted in this course and will receive a failing grade. Students must notify the professor as soon as possible if a serious issue arises that prevents them from
completing an assignment on time. Late assignments will be accepted only in the event of documented accidents, family emergencies, or illnesses. No make-up examinations will be granted without proper documentation. There is no extra credit offered in this course. If the student is facing a serious issue that intervenes with their academic performance, please notify the professor as soon as possible.

**INCOMPLETE POLICY**
Incomplete will be given only for extreme circumstances such as a documented critical illness (mental or physical). If there is a serious issue that comes up and causes delays in the student’s assignments or interrupts attendance, it is the student’s responsibility to communicate with the professor immediately. The University does not allow incompletes to be given retroactively.

If a student registers for the class and does not complete the assignments and does not communicate and attain the professor’s agreement for the specific terms for granting an incomplete, the student will be given credit for the work turned in and receive an F for work not turned in. The official University grading policy can be found at [http://registrar.uoregon.edu/incomplete_policy](http://registrar.uoregon.edu/incomplete_policy).

**HOW TO SUCCEED IN AN ONLINE COURSE**

To succeed in an online course, you need to be motivated and self-disciplined. I will provide the materials and resources to guide you through the course. It is up to YOU to learn the course materials by keeping up with the assigned readings, watching films, and reviewing weekly synopses. You should also take all assignments seriously and submit them on time. Assignments have been designed to test your knowledge of the course material and to build your skills as a student. To get the most out of each assignment be sure you study before completing them and submit thoughtful and analytical writing.

To have a less stressful experience with an online course, you will need to have access to highspeed Internet in order to take timed quizzes, review lectures and to watch assigned films. You must have access to such resources at home or on campus. If you cannot access these resources, consider taking the course in a traditional classroom setting.

**CHECK YOUR CANVAS MESSAGES AND UNIVERSITY EMAILS FREQUENTLY**

I will use email and Canvas Announcements to keep you informed of various course-related information. I (Instructor) will attempt to respond to Canvas messages and emails within 24 hours. Over the weekend it may take longer. If I do not respond, please follow up with a second email.

When you email me, Dr. Karim, please do the following:

1. In the subject line include the course number (ANTH 441) and a subject that summarizes the purpose of the email. Doing so will make sure your email does not get lost in my inbox.
2. Always include a salutation (e.g. “Dear Dr. Karim”) and a closing that identifies who you are (e.g. “Sincerely, ‘Your Name’”).

**Please get into the habit of composing an email in this manner. This is a skill that will be useful in the future when applying for jobs and graduate/professional school.**

VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS AND VIDEO CHAT WITH INSTRUCTOR BY APPOINTMENT:

Currently, we will not conduct any face to face conversation. At any time in the course if you would like to talk with me face to face about the course content or clarifications in assignments you may email me, or we can set up a video chat via zoom. We can also use the Conference feature on Canvas to do a video chat.

CULTIVATING A SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT ONLINE:

In this course, we will be discussing controversial and important issues in relation to sexuality. I expect students to show respect and consideration to themselves and other members of the learning community. All perspectives are welcome in this course if presented with civility and scholarly rigor.

Two standards of expectations regulate student responsibility in this course—these standards are non-negotiable.

1. Respect yourself and others: a diversity of views should be expected and protected. You are expected to engage the issues in a mature, reasonable, and respectful manner, and to show respect for other students and the instructor at all times.

2. Bring your minds: This course is an intellectual, not an experiential, endeavor. Therefore, an informed discussion of the issues addressed in this course is essential for success.

COMPUTER AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES POLICY

The use of laptops and other electronic devices in class is discouraged. This can be distracting and we want to create an environment that encourages engaged learning. Please refrain from using cell phones and have them in silent mode before class starts.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

Punctuality arrive on time. And leave at the end. Please keep your audios muted. Focus Limit conversations with friends to time before and after class. Be prepared You are expected to come to class having done the readings and ready to be engaged with the lecture and discussion.

ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION AND ACCOMMODATIONS

The University of Oregon is dedicated to the principles of equal opportunity in education and accepts diversity as an affirmation of individual identity within a welcoming community.
Disability is recognized as an aspect of diversity integral to the university and to society. Accommodations will be made for all students needing them in consultation with that student and any other support team members. Contact the Office of Accessible Education (164 Oregon Hall) if you are not already documented but wish accommodation. Please notify the professor during the first week of class of any necessary accommodations.

ACADEMIC HONESTY
The University Student Conduct Code is available at http://conduct.uoregon.edu. Academic misconduct includes cheating, plagiarism, or fabrication (see website for definitions and further information). Students should always properly acknowledge and cite all sources of information, including documents, images, or photographs. Plagiarism is taking and using as one’s own the ideas, concepts, analysis and writings of another without giving appropriate credit through proper documentation. “Proper documentation” includes quotation marks, foot- or endnote citations, or noting that a sentence or paragraph is paraphrased (with references to where the original information was found). Providing assistance to another student who is attempting to cheat or plagiarize is also considered academically dishonest.

If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the student's obligation to clarify the question prior to taking any action. Principles of academic honesty and professional ethics also apply to any use of computers associated with the class. This includes observing all software licensing requirements and respecting copyrights of intellectual property published on the Internet.

The following actions may result in disciplinary sanction 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).
- Plagiarism will receive a failing grade.

Additional Help
If you will be working off campus, you will need to download the UO VPN link (virtual private network).
If you have technical issues with any part of the course, contact the helpdesk (541-346-HELP).
There are a number of campus resources to help students. For help with citing sources or developing arguments visit the Teaching and Learning Center:
http://tlc.uoregon.edu/subjects/writing/.

OPEN LEARNING ENVIRONMENT
The intention and structure of university level courses are to provide open, thoughtful forums for a wide variety of topics and ideas. The University of Oregon affirms and actively promotes the right of all individuals to equal opportunity in education and employment at this institution without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, age, religion, marital status, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity,
gender expression, or any other consideration not directly and substantively related to effective performance. We will value each class member’s experience and contributions and communicate disagreements respectfully. Please notify the professor if you feel any aspect of this course undermines these principles in any way.

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE**
The UO is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of prohibited discrimination and sexual harassment (sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and gender or sex-based bullying and stalking). If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, know that help and support are available. UO has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more. You can call 541-346-SAFE, UO’s 24-hour hotline to be connected to a confidential counselor.

**Weekly Readings All PDFS are Available under Modules on Canvas**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week One</th>
<th>Introduction to Theory</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>Class Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="https://fs.blog/2012/04/david-foster-wallace-this-is-water">https://fs.blog/2012/04/david-foster-wallace-this-is-water</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>Immanuel Kant. “What is Enlightenment?”</td>
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<td>Ralph Emerson. “English Traits”</td>
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<td>Start reading Katherine Boo. <em>Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity.</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>e-book available at Knight Library</td>
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<td>We will discuss the book in Weeks Four and Five</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week Two</th>
<th>Anthropology and Theory</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>Alan Barnard. “Preface” and “Visions of Anthropology,” in <em>History and Theory in Anthropology</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>Sherry Ortner. “Dark Anthropology”</td>
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<th>Week Three</th>
<th>Body, Power, and Discipline</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>Michel Foucault. “The Subject and Power”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>Michel Foucault. “The Body of the Condemned” in <em>Disciple and Punish</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Michel Foucault. “Panopticon,” in <em>Discipline and Punish</em></td>
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<td>Author’s biography from the <em>Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy</em></td>
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Students reflect on the system of incarceration in the US

Week Four  Globalization/Neoliberalism
Mon  Jonathan Friedman. “Globalization” in *The Companions to the Anthropology of Politics*, eds. David Nugent and Joan Vincent, pp. 179-197

Students reflect on globalization in *Behind the Beautiful Forevers*

Week Five  Class and Culture
Mon  Sherry Ortner. “Identities: The Hidden Life of Class” in Anthropology and Social Theory, pp. 63-79

[https://greattransition.org/publication/precariat-transformative-class](https://greattransition.org/publication/precariat-transformative-class)

Also watch Guy Standing on *The Precariat: New Dangerous Class*
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N5n4j8-zUE4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N5n4j8-zUE4)

Student discussion on the pandemic and precariat

Week Six  Gender and Race
Mon  Micaela di Leonardo. “Gender, Race, and Class”, in *The Companions to the Anthropology of Politics*, eds. David Nugent and Joan Vincent, pp. 138-181

Feminist Standpoint Theory from *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

Wed  Chandra Mohanty. “Under Western Eyes”

Watch Prior to class
Video: Edward Said *On Orientalism* (watch prior to class)
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3MYYDEj4fiU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3MYYDEj4fiU)

Class discussion on *The Parasite*

Week Six  Race and Culture US Perspectives
Mon

Michael Hames-Garcia. “Identity Complex: Making the Case for Multiplicity”

Wed
Students reflect on *Black Lives Matter* in the US and global responses

Midterm Exam on Canvas on Friday available for 72 hours.

**Week Seven**
**Development and Cities**

Mon

Wed
Saskia Sassen. “Global Cities” in *The Companions to the Anthropology of Politics*, eds. David Nugent and Joan Vincent, pp. 168-178

Students reflect on the changing demographics in US cities

**Week Eight**
**Development and Ethnography**

Arturo Escobar. “Encountering Development”


Student discussion on how anthropologists apply theory to practice

**Week Nine**
**Student Presentations**

**Week Ten**
**Student Presentations**