Anthropologists today draw their theoretical concepts and methods from a range of disciplines such as philosophy, literary criticism, sociology, media, and history. 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. 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. 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 colonial forms of knowledge, state, power, globalization, neoliberalism, necropolitics, subject, race, class, gender, and aspirations.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
- Explain why social theory is important to the study of anthropology, and how can theory help us explain complex social problems.
- Trace the major theoretical frameworks in Cultural Anthropology from the 1970s to the present and explain how these frameworks dialogue with each other, create new questions and theoretical concepts.
- Become theoretically conversant with current debates in Anthropology.

REQUIRED TEXTS:
e-book available via Knight Library
2. Sara Ahmad. *Complaint*
e-book available via Knight Library

RECOMMENDED BUT NOT REQUIRED:
Recommended for those interested in the history of cultural anthropology.
All articles are posted under Canvas or are available via jstor at uoregon.library.edu.

**ONLINE RESOURCES:**
Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy
[https://plato.stanford.edu/](https://plato.stanford.edu/)

Emory University has several blogs on postcolonial studies. These are valuable sites of information.
[https://scholarblogs.emory.edu/postcolonialstudies/terms-issues/](https://scholarblogs.emory.edu/postcolonialstudies/terms-issues/)

You are welcome to bring articles that you find of interest to my attention.

**SOCIAL THEORY IS A COMPLEX SUBJECT. WHAT FOLLOWS IS A SUGGESTED GUIDE ON HOW TO READ THE TEXTS.**
- What is the question being explored?
- What is the explanation being offered?
- Assess the evidence in support of the author’s propositions.
- How well does the author deliver on the arguments?
- Who are the author’s interlocutors and how does author engage with previous theories?

**CLOSE READING OF TEXTS IS ALSO EXPECTED IN THIS COURSE.**
- Identify parts of the text that you want to explore further in class.
- Identify unclear and difficult concepts so we can go over them in class
- Identify areas that you think explain the author’s propositions well.

* Professor reserves the right to add/delete some readings based on class interest.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1. **Attendance 10%**.
   Late arrivals and early departures will count as an absence. Note that we meet once a week and have a lot of material to cover, so please be on time.

2. **Weekly Summaries 40%**
   All students must write a one-page summary of at least two of the readings that were assigned for that day. This should be single-spaced. You should provide a critical reading of the issues raised in the texts. The summary should be uploaded to Canvas by 11:59 PM on Sunday for us to read the comments. By the end of the term, you will write approximately 10 single-spaced pages on the major theoretical works covered in the course.

3. **Oral Presentations 20%**
   Each week one student will make a presentation from the readings. You will sign up for it during Week One.
The oral presentation should be approximately 15 minutes long and should be conducted in the manner of a conference paper. You can do a Power Point presentation. The presentation will include the following:

a) brief biographical information on the author:

b) identify the scholars/ideas that influenced the author:

c) explore the questions/arguments raised in the articles.

d) ascertain the use of evidence in support of author’s arguments.

e) assess the article’s strengths and weaknesses.

4. Essay 30%
Each student will write an essay on a topic in consultation with professor. You should turn in your essay by the end of Week Nine.

Grades: 600-level courses in the Department of Anthropology are graded. To pass the course, it is necessary to get at least a B-. If the student does not pass the course, they may retake it the following year.

Possibility: If there is interest, I would like the class to do a watch party where we critically analyze a movie that raises many of the issues that vex our contemporary times. I am soliciting your input on movies.

CULTIVATING A SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT ONLINE:

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.

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 the ideas, concepts, analysis and writings of another without giving appropriate credit through proper documentation. “Proper documentation” includes quotation marks, footnote 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.

OPEN LEARNING ENVIRONMENT
The intention and structure of university level courses are to provide open, thoughtful forums (American English) 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.
Week One  Introduction to Course

All PDFs have been uploaded to Canvas. You will be able to find many articles on jstor as well.

1. Sherry Ortner. “Dark Anthropology”
3. Michael Brown. “Cultural Relativism 2.0”
4. Sara Ahmad. “Introduction,” *Complaint*

Highly Recommended:

Knauft, Bruce. “Stories, histories, and theories,” pp. 9-40

Week Two  Anthropology & Colonialism

1. Franz Fanon. “Black Skins, White Masks” (Full PDF Uploaded). Read the following chapters from Fanon.
   
   a. The Woman of Color and the White Man

   b. The Man of Color and the White Woman

2. Ania Loomba. “Situating Colonial and Postcolonial Studies” (Skim)

   (Alternately, you can look at Leela Gandhi’s *Postcolonialism*)

3. Quijano, Anibal. “Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism and Social Classification”


5. Sara Ahmad. “Chapter 1” *Complaint* (e-book)

6. Forum: Anthropology in Public: Perspectives on Tierney’s Darkness in El Dorado

The article addresses the controversy over Patrick Tierney’s Darkness at El Dorado that exposed how some anthropologists working with the Yanomami violated ethics rules. Please do some online reading on this as well.

Watch prior to Class:

Philosopher Achille Mbembe on Frantz Fanon and the Politics of Visceralitity
Week Three  Speaking For Others


Watch prior to class Edward Said On Orientalism
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3MYYDEj4fIU

Additional readings for those who are interested in this topic:

Week Four  Anthropology and Race

1. Maria Lugones. “Toward a Decolonial Feminism”


4. Leila Abu-Lughod. “Do Muslim Women Need Saving”

5. Puar, Jasbir. Terrorist Assemblages, read Chapter

Watch the following about the subaltern in Gayatri Spivak’s writing
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ZHH4ALRFHw

Achille Mbembe “Raceless Future”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VkqmAi1yEpo

Week Five  Constructing Identities

2. Sherry Ortner. “Identities: The Hidden Life of Class” in *Anthropology and Social Theory: culture, power and the acting subject (e-book)* pp. 63-79


https://greattransition.org/publication/precariat-transformative-class

Anthropologist David Graeber on *Bullshit Jobs*. You can either read Graeber’s *Vox* interview or watch the video. It is an original concept about the state of work.


Week Six Subject and Power

1. Ortner, Sherry. “Subjectivity and Cultural Critique” pp. 107-128

2. Foucault, Michel. *Subject and Power*


Since Foucault’s theory on biopower/biopolitics is not very clear, I have uploaded the following link on Foucault on biopolitics on Canvas.

http://criticallegalthinking.com/2017/05/10/michel-foucault-biopolitics-biopower/

5. Mbembe, Achille. “Necropolitics”

Week Seven Student Meetings

Individual Meetings with Professor

Week Eight Globalization Eight


2. Antonio Gramsci. Selected Passages


https://www.jacobinmag.com/2020/12/neoliberalism-wendy-brown-interview-nihilism-political-theory

Week Nine  Neoliberal Aspirations

1. Freeman, Carla. “On Neoliberal”


Week Ten  Anthropology and Its Futures

Arturo Escobar. “Anthropology and The Future”

Donna Haraway. From Cyborg to Companion Species”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9gis7-Jads

David Valentine and Amelia Hassoun. “Uncommon Futures,” Annual Review of Anthropology 2019