

Anthropology 525

History of Anthropological Theory

Spring 2006

Dr. Amy Zaharlick
GTA: Erica Chambers

Course Time and Room: Monday & Wednesday 9:30-11:18, Lord Hall, Room 235

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Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 9:00-9:30, 11:30-12:30, and by
appointment

Course Description and Purpose

This course considers the developmental history of the major “schools” of thought in sociocultural anthropology. It covers roughly the period of the late 19th and the 20th centuries and highlights the formation of sociocultural anthropology in the United States and Western Europe. “Theory” is treated as a tool for defining and solving intellectual problems. Thus the first step in defining a theory is to ask what question lies behind it. We examine the logical structure of theories, including their general premises and methodological assumptions, as well as the empirical evidence resulting from the application of theoretical concepts and ideas. The rationale for these considerations is that anthropological theory cannot be evaluated apart from its *raison d’être*, ethnography, the description of human culture. Similarly, ethnography cannot be reasonably read if the reader is ignorant of the theory structuring it. Thus, we will be examining the basic concepts and theoretical principles proposed by the different schools, the sociocultural context within which such ideas were developed, and the interrelationship among the different schools of thought.

Required Texts

Moore, Jerry D.

2004 *Visions of Culture: An Introduction to Anthropological Theories and Theorists*. Second Edition. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.

McGee, R. Jon and Warms, Richard L.

2003 *Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History*. Third Edition. New York: N.Y.: McGraw-Hill Publishing Company.

Class Format and Grades

The format will be lecture/discussion. Students are expected to participate actively in classroom discussions and will be assigned a grade for participation. It is, therefore, imperative that students keep up with the assigned readings and attend class regularly.

There will be no in-class examinations for this course. Instead, students will be given a set of questions to be answered for a total of six different schools of thought. Responses are required for four pre-selected schools and students will select two others. Students will provide responses to the required questions in regard to historical particularism, functionalism, structuralism and symbolic and interpretive anthropology. The required responses are due on the day, or second class day, the topic is discussed in class and are indicated on the class outline. In addition, students will respond to two other perspective of their choice, one for the first half of the course and one from the second half of the course. The first elective response is due at the beginning of class on April 26th and the second elective response is due at the beginning of class on May 24th. All six responses must be typed, double spaced, with one-inch margins and numbered pages. Each school is not to exceed 5 typed pages. Assignments lose 1/2 a letter grade for each day late starting from the end of the class period they are due.

In addition, each student will be a member of a 3-4-person presentation team that will be responsible for presenting to the class a summary and assessment of 2-4 articles related to each school of thought. Each team will meet outside of class to organize a 30-minute oral presentation to the class regarding the assigned readings for their theoretical perspective. The presentation should summarize the main theoretical points and include a discussion of how the assigned readings relate to those points. Use of visuals (e.g. handouts or overheads) is encouraged. Grades for the oral presentations will be assigned to the team as a whole with all members sharing in the oral presentation.

Grades: Instructors do not give grades; students earn grades. Your final grade is your responsibility. The only legitimate reason to change a grade is one due to a clerical error in determining the grade. The following are not legitimate reasons to request a grade change: (1) you need a higher grade to graduate, keep athletic eligibility or a scholarship or (2) you are only a point shy of a higher grade. The course grade will be based on the six written responses, the in-class team presentation, and class participation. These will be weighted as follows:

Six written responses:	90%	(each of the six worth 15% of your final grade)
Team presentation:	5%	
Class participation:	5%	
	<u>100%</u>	of course grade

Academic Misconduct

All students should become familiar with the rules governing academic misconduct, especially as they pertain to plagiarism and cheating. Plagiarism is the inappropriate use of other people's work, which can often be addressed by correct citation and quotations. Ignorance of the rules governing academic misconduct or ignorance of what constitutes academic misconduct is not an acceptable defense. Alleged cases of academic misconduct will automatically be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING THEIR NEEDS KNOWN TO THE INSTRUCTOR AS SOON AS THE QUARTER BEGINS AND ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR SEEKING AVAILABLE ASSISTANCE FROM THE OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES 292-3307, PRIOR TO OR AT THE BEGINNING OF THE QUARTER. I RELY ON THE OFFICE FOR DISABILITY SERVICES FOR ASSISTANCE IN VERIFYING THE NEED FOR ACCOMMODATIONS AND DEVELOPING ACCOMMODATION STRATEGIES.

Course Outline and Reading Assignments

March 27	Introduction and orientation to the course	
March 29 & April 3	Nineteenth-Century Evolutionism	MW, 1-5; M, 1-2
April 5	The Foundations of Sociological Thought	MW, 6-9; M, 4 & 9
10 & 12	Historical Particularism* (due on 12 th)	MW, 10-12; M, 3 & 5
17 & 19	Functionalism* (due on 19 th)	MW, 13-16; M, 10-12
24	Culture and Personality	MW, 17-18; M, 6-8
26	Cultural Ecology and Neoevolutionary Thought	MW, 19-21; M, 13-14
	<u>THIRD ELECTIVE PROJECT DUE AT 9:30 AM</u>	
May 1	Neomaterialism: Evolutionary, Functionalist, Ecological, and Marxist	MW, 22-25 M, 15
3	Structuralism* (due today)	MW, 26-28; M, 17
8 & 10	Ethnoscience and Cognitive Anthropology	MW, 29-31
15	Anthropology and Gender: The Feminist Critique	MW, 35-37; M, 16
May 17 & May 22	Symbolic and Interpretive Anthropology* (due on 22nd)	MW, 38-40; M, 18-20
May 24	Postmodernism and its Critics	MW, 41-43; M 21-24
	<u>FINAL ELECTIVE PROJECT DUE AT 9:30 AM</u>	
May 29	Memorial Day--No Class	
May 31	No Class	

* Perspectives that require responses.