**Anthropological Thought and Theory**
**SOAN 331**

**Spring 2013**

Carleton College
Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Professor Jerome Levi
Office: Leighton 227
Office Hours: T. / Th. 5-6 p.m. and by appt.
Tel: 222-4110

**Course Objectives and Description**
What is anthropology? The introductory textbook answer is that it is "the study of humankind" and indeed this is the definition offered by the *Oxford English Dictionary*. But is this study a kind of science or is it instead more like the humanities? Does it rely on objective or subjective understandings? Is it concerned with the past or the present, with other cultures or one's own? Does it study humans as biological organisms or as creatures shaped by language, society, and culture? If the discipline of anthropology addresses itself to all of these issues, as indeed it does, how is it really a discipline after all rather than simply an undisciplined assemblage of competing ideas, schools, and interests?

The best way to answer this question is to trace the development of the core issues, central debates, and internecine battles that have animated anthropology since it first emerged as a distinct field of inquiry in the nineteenth century. When viewed as the product of an ongoing dialogue among its various practitioners, synchronically as well as diachronically, with later anthropologists not just upstaging but sometimes dusting off, retooling, and recontextualizing the ideas of their predecessors, the growth of anthropology as a unique and complex discipline with a vital intellectual history readily takes shape. From this perspective, the history of anthropological thought and theory reveals itself not as a seamless, magisterial *Rise of Anthropological Theory* (*pace* Marvin Harris and his monumental book by this title), but rather unfolds as the outcome of a long and mesmerizing conversation. The objective of this course is not just to have students eavesdrop passively on these conversations, but to invite them to actively enter into them, interrogating the authors, and building upon their revolutionary ideas. This course therefore asks that you *talk back* – think, argue, get involved – because you are the next generation of anthropologists!

The "long conversation" that comprises the structure of the course is organized chronologically along five historical horizons:

1) Foundational Perspectives
2) National Anthropological Traditions
3) Symbolic, Materialist, and Integrative Anthropologies

4) Poststructuralist Anthropologies

**Readings**:
The textbooks required for this course are:

Alan Barnard, *History and Theory in Anthropology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. (Hereafter *HATIA*)

Jerry Moore (editor), *Visions of Culture: An Annotated Reader*. Lanham: Alta Mira Press, 2009. (Hereafter *VOC-Reader*)

Jerry Moore (editor), *Visions of Culture: An Introduction to Anthropological Theories and Theorists*. Lanham: Alta Mira Press, 2012. (Hereafter *VOC-Intro*)

Renato Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1993. (Hereafter *CAT*)

All readings not in the textbooks above will be placed on reserve in the library

**Pedagogy and Mechanics**:
This course will run as if it were a first year seminar in graduate school. A premium will be placed on presentation, writing, and analytical skills. The course entails a substantial amount of reading, approximately 100-150 pages for each meeting, although in some cases readings can be skimmed to garner the main ideas. This in itself is an important skill to acquire, especially in an age of information overload, and even if one is not heading to graduate school where hefty reading lists are routinely encountered.

<u>Course Requirements and Grade Breakdown</u>
Each student will:
1) attend all classes, complete the readings, and participate in discussions (10%),
2) lead two presentations/discussions (30%, 15% each),
3) write a take-home midterm exam (25%) and
4) sit a one-on-one twenty minute comprehensive oral final exam with me (35%)

<u>Participation and Presentations</u>
This course requires critical reading and active participation, and not just when it is your turn to present. Students will present and lead discussion during the first half of each period. I will lecture and lead discussion during the second half. Discussion leaders should meet in advance to orchestrate their presentation. Work together. You will be graded as a team. Presenters will jointly prepare a handout to be distributed in class consisting of 1) a précis summarizing and integrating the *main* points of the readings, 2) a thoughtful response to or critique of the material, and 3) several discussion questions. I will try to arrange a Moodle page so that this can be posted in advance, enabling other members of the class to read the material in advance and prepare responses to these discussion questions. In order to help stimulate discussion and formulate your questions, presenters are encouraged to use and build upon the "Queries" and "Connections"

sections in *Visions of Culture: An Annotated Reader*. Look for themes that run through that week's readings, connections with other weeks, and/or comparisons and contradictions within and between the readings. This is your class. Make it count.

Primary and secondary readings
All students are required to complete all the primary readings for each class meeting. Secondary readings provide additional information but are optional. Presenters may wish to consult these readings to provide additional insights and perspectives not covered in the primary readings but which would be helpful in generating questions and discussion.

Videos
In addition to the readings, some days also have videos that are listed. These will be on reserve at the library if they are not available to be viewed online. Technically these are not required but it is highly recommended that you watch these if possible as they add an important dimension to understanding the readings. The only exception to this pattern is the day you hand in your take home midterm, when the video will be watched in class and there are no assigned readings.

Note: Please let me know if there are any special needs that would affect your performance in this class.

## I. FOUNDATIONAL PERPSECTIVES

Tues 4/2 (Week 1)
**En/visioning anthropology**

Primary reading
Michel de Montaigne, *On Cannibals* (1580) (handout)
Franz Boas, "An Anthropologist's Credo." *The Nation*, (August 1938).
Stanley Tambiah, "An Anthropologist's Creed" (1985)

Thurs 4/4
**Victorian evolutionary anthropology (and its predecessors)**

Primary reading
Barnard, A "Visions of anthropology," "Precursors of the anthropological tradition," and "Changing perspectives on evolution" pp. 1-46 in *HATIA*
Tylor, E. B. *Primitive Culture* pp. 3-12 in *VOC-Reader*
Tylor, E. B. pp. 5-16 in *VOC-Intro*
Morgan, L. H. *Ancient Society* pp. 13-24 in *VOC-Reader*
Morgan, L. H. pp. 17-29 in *VOC-Intro*

Secondary reading
Marcus, G. and M. Fischer, pp. vii-16 in *Anthropology as Cultural Critique*
Stocking, G. W. "The Darwinian Revolution and the Evolution of Human Culture (1858-1871) pp. 144-185 in *Victorian Anthropology*

## II. NATIONAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL TRADITIONS

Tues 4/9 (Week 2)
**American cultural anthropology (Franz Boas and historical particularism)**

Primary reading
Barnard, A. "Diffusionist and culture-area theories" and "From relativism to cognitive science," pp. 47-60 and 99-119 in *HATIA*
Boas, F. "The Methods of Ethnology" pp. 25-36 in *VOC-Reader*
Boas, F. pp. 30-41 in *VOC-Intro*
Boas, F. "Decorative Designs of Alaskan Needle-cases" pp. 564-592 in *Race, Language, and Culture* (on reserve)

Video: *Franz Boas 1858-1942* from the Odyssey series (1980)

Secondary reading
Stocking, G. W. "The Basic Assumptions of Boasian Anthropology" pp. 1-20 in *A Franz Boas Reader: The Shaping of American Anthropology, 1883-1911*

Thurs 4/11
**American cultural anthropology (Boasians, culture areas, & patterns of culture)**

Primary reading
Kroeber, A. L. "History and Science in Anthropology" *American Anthropologist* (1935) 37(4): 539-569 (on reserve)
Boas, F. "History and Science in Anthropology: A Reply" *American Anthropologist* (1936) 38(1): 137-141 (on reserve).
Kroeber, A.L. "Disposal of the Dead" and "Eighteen Professions" pp. 51-62 in *VOC-Reader*
Kroeber, A.L. pp. 59-70 in *VOC-Intro*
Benedict, R. "Configurations of Culture in North America" pp. 63-88 in *VOC-Reader*
Benedict, R. pp. 71-80 in *VOC-Intro*

Video: *Ishi, The Last Yahi* (1992)

Secondary reading (other Boasians)
M. Mead in *VOC-Reader* and *VOC-Intro*
E. Sapir in *VOC-Reader* and *VOC-Intro*

Tues 4/16 (Week 3)
**British social anthropology (functionalism & structural-functionalism)**

Primary reading

Barnard, A. "Functionalism and structural-functionalism" pp. 61-79 in *HATIA*
Malinowski, B. "The Functional Theory" pp. 147-174 in *A Scientific Theory of Culture and Other Essays* (on reserve)
Malinowski, B. "The Primitive Economics of the Trobriand Islanders" 137-152 in *VOC-Reader*
Malinowski, B. pp. 122-133 in *VOC-Intro*
Radcliffe-Brown, A. R. pp. 134-145 in *VOC-Intro*
Radcliffe-Brown, A. R. "The Comparative Method in Social Anthropology" pp. 153-168 in *VOC-Reader*

Video: *Savage Memory* (2011)

Secondary reading
Young, M. "Malinowski and the Function of Culture" pp. 124-140 in D. J. Austin-Broos, ed. *Creating Culture*
Stocking, G. W. "Radcliffe-Brown and British Social Anthropology" pp. 131-191 in *Functionalism Historicized*

Thurs 4/18
**British social anthropology (functionalisms and their critiques)**

Primary reading
Leach, E. "Rethinking Anthropology" pp. 1-27 in *Rethinking Anthropology* (on reserve)
Gellner, E. "Concepts and Society" pp. 18-49 in B. R. Wilson, ed. *Rationality* (on reserve)
Geertz, C. "Ritual and Social Change: A Javanese Example" pp. 315-342 in *VOC-Reader*
Rosaldo, R. "The Erosion of Classic Norms," "After Objectivism" and "Imperialist Nostalgia" pp. 25-90 in *CAT*

Secondary reading
Evans-Pritchard, E. E. "Social Anthropology: Past and Present" in VOC-Reader
Leach, E. "Introduction" pp.1-17 in *Political Systems of Highland Burma* (on reserve)

Tues 4/23 (Week 4)
**French structuralism (linguistics, exchange theory, social structure)**

Primary reading
Barnard, A. "Structuralism, from linguistics to anthropology" pp. 120-138 in *HATIA*
Lévi-Strauss, C. pp. 209-223 in *VOC-Intro*
Lévi-Strauss, "Structural Analysis in Linguistics and Anthropology" and "Social Structure" pp. 31-54 and 277-323 in *Structural Anthropology* (on reserve)

Secondary reading
Mauss, M. *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies* and "The origins of the concept of money" in *VOC-Reader*
Mauss, M. in *VOC-Intro*

Thurs 4/25
**French structuralism and critiques (symbols, totemism, and myth)**

Primary reading
Lévi-Strauss, C. "The Effectiveness of Symbols" pp. 186-205 in *Structural Anthropology* (on reserve)
Lévi-Strauss, C. "The Structural Study of Myth" pp. 277-298 in *VOC-Reader*
Geertz, C. "The Cerebral Savage: On the Work of Claude Lévi-Strauss" pp. 345-360 in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (on reserve)
Levi, J. "Structuralism and Kabbalah: Sciences of Mysticism or Mystifications of Science?" (just the last section titled 'The Confrontation with Empiricism: Maybury-Lewis and Lévi-Strauss' i.e. pp. 973-981) *Anthropological Quarterly* (2009), 82(4): 929-984 (on reserve)

Secondary reading
Lévi-Strauss, C. *Totemism* or *The Savage Mind* (selections)

## III. SYMBOLIC, MATERIALIST, AND INTEGRATIVE ANTHROPOLOGIES

Tues 4/30 (Week 5)
**Symbolic, semiotic, and interpretive anthropologies**

Primary reading
Douglas, M. "Animals in Lele Religious Symbolism" pp. 343-360 in *VOC-Reader*
Douglas, M. pp. 247-266 in *VOC-Intro*
Turner, V. "Symbols in African Ritual" pp. 299-314 in *VOC-Reader*
Turner, V. pp. 224-234 in *VOC-Intro*
Geertz, C. pp. 235-246 in *VOC Intro*
Geertz, C. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture" and "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight" in *The Interpretation of Cultures* pp. 3-30 and 412-453 (on reserve)

Secondary reading
Roseberry, W. "Balinese Cockfights and the Seduction of Anthropology" in *Anthropologies and Histories* pp. 17-29 (on reserve)

Thurs 5/2
**Political economy, Marxist, and historical anthropologies**

Primary reading
Barnard, A. "Action-centered, processual and Marxist perspectives" pp. 80-98 in *HATIA*
Wolf, E. pp. 308-326 in *VOC-Intro*
Wolf, E. in "Types of Latin American Peasantry: A Preliminary Discussion" "Distinguished Lecture: Facing Power – Old Insights, New Questions" pp. 419-456 in *VOC-Reader*
Wolf, E. pp. 3-23 in *Europe and the People Without History* (on reserve)
Sahlins, M. pp. 327-345 in *VOV-Intro*
Sahlins, M. "Poor Man, Rich Man, Big Man, Chief: Political Types in Melanesia and Polynesia" pp. 457-474 in *VOC-Reader*
Sahlins, M. pp. 1-32 *Islands of History* (on reserve)
Obeyesekere, G. pp. 3-22 in *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook: European Mythmaking in the Pacific* (on reserve)

Secondary reading
Marcus G. and M. Fischer, pp. 17-76 *Anthropology as Cultural Critique*

**Hand out take-home midterm**

Tues 5/7 (Week 6)
**Hand in take-home midterm**

Video: *Papua New Guinea: Anthropology on Trial* (from the NOVA series, 1983)

Thur 5/9
**Human sociobiology, cultural materialism, and neo-evolutionary approaches**

Primary reading
Chagnon, N. "Life Histories, Blood Revenge, and Warfare in a Tribal Population." *Science* 239 (26 February 1988): 985-992 (on reserve)
Sahlins, M. "A Critique of Vulgar Sociobiology" in *The Use and Abuse of Biology* pp. 3-16 (on reserve)
Harris, M. *VOC-Intro*
Harris, M. "Anthropology and the Theoretical and Paradigmatic Significance of the Collapse of Soviet and East European Communism" pp. 229-244 in *VOC-Reader*
Harris, M. "Theoretical Principles of Cultural Materialism" and "Sociobiology and Biological Reductionism" pp. 46-76 and 133-137 in *Cultural Materialism* (on reserve)

Video: *Secrets of the Tribe* (2012) on Veoh.com

Secondary readings
Ferguson, B. "Materialist, cultural, and biological theories on why Yanomami

make war" Anthropological Theory (2001) 1(1): 99-116.

## IV. POSTSTRUCTURALIST ANTHROPOLOGIES

Tues 5/14 (Week 7)
**Practice, experience, agency, and emotion**

Primary readings
Ortner, S. "Theory in Anthropology since the Sixties" pp. 372-411 in *Culture/Power/History* (on reserve)
Bourdieu, P. pp. 292-308 in *VOC-Intro*
Bourdieu, P. "The Berber House of the World Reversed" pp. 405-417 in *VOC-Reader*
Bourdieu, P. "Structures and Habitus" (selections from *Outline of a Theory of Practice*) pp. 407-416 in H. L. Moore and T. Sanders, eds. *Anthropology in Theory* (on reserve)
Bourdieu, P. "From Rules to Strategies" pp. 59-75 in *In Other Words* (on reserve)
Rosaldo, R. "Grief and the Headhunter's Rage," "Putting Culture into Motion" and "After Objectivism" pp. 1-24 and 91-126 in *CAT*

Secondary reading
Marcus G. and M. Fischer, pp. 77-110 *Anthropology as Cultural Critique* (on reserve)

Thurs 5/16
**Hegemony, domination, and resistance**

Primary reading
Scott, J. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* pp. 304-350 (on reserve)
Scott, J. "Hills, Valleys, and States: An Introduction to Zomia" pp. 1-39 *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (on reserve)
Levi, J. "Hidden Transcripts among the Rarámuri: Culture, Resistance, and Interethnic Relations in Northern Mexico" *American Ethnologist* (1999) 26 (1): 90-113 (on reserve)

Secondary reading
Ortner, S. "Resistance and the Problem of Ethnographic Refusal" *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37(1): 173-193 (on reserve)

Tues 5/21 (Week 8)
**Postcolonialism, postmodernism, and their critiques**

Primary reading

Barnard, A. "Interpretive and postmodernist approaches" pp. 158-177 in *HATIA*
Said, E. "Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors" in *Critical Inquiry* (1989) 15: 205-225 (on reserve)
Clifford, J. "Introduction: Partial Truths" pp. 1-26 in J. Clifford and G. Marcus *Writing Culture* (on reserve)
Lewis, H. "The Misrepresentation of Anthropology and its Consequences" *American Anthropologist* (1998) 100 (3): 716-731 (on reserve)
Rosaldo, R. "Narrative Analysis" pp. 127-146 in *CAT*

Secondary reading
Marcus, G. "The Postmodern Condition and the Teaching of Anthropology" pp. 103-112 in *The Teaching of Anthropology* (on reserve)

Thurs 5/23
**Feminist and "native" anthropologies, part I**

Primary reading
Barnard, A. "Poststructuralists, feminists, and (other) mavericks" pp. 139-157 in *HATIA*
Leacock, E. pp. 196-208 in *VOC-Intro*
Leacock, E. "Women's Status in Egalitarian Society: Implications for Social Evolution" pp. 245-276 in *VOC-Reader*
Ortner, S. pp. 277-292 in *VOC-Intro*
Ortner, S. "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" pp. 67-88 in M. Z. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere, eds. *Woman, Culture, and Society* (on reserve)
Rosaldo, R. "Changing Chicano Narratives" pp. 147-167 in *CAT*

Secondary reading
Mascia-Lees, F., P. Sharpe, and C. Cohen "The Postmodern Turn in Anthropology: Cautions from a Feminist Perspective" *Signs* (1989) 15 (11): 7-33 (on reserve)

Tues 5/28 (Week 9)
**Feminist and "native" anthropologies, part II**

Primary reading
Narayan, K "How Native is a 'Native' Anthropologist?" *American Anthropologist* (1993) 95: 671-684 (on reserve).
Abu-Lughod, L. "Writing Against Culture" in R. Fox, ed. *Recapturing Anthropology* pp. 137-162 (on reserve)
Rosaldo, R. "Subjectivity in Social Analysis" and "Border Crossings" pp. 168-217 in *CAT*

Secondary reading
Lutz, C. "The Gender of Theory" in R. Behar and D. A. Gordon, eds., pp. 249-246 in *Women Writing Culture* (on reserve)

Thurs 5/30

**Globalization and the project of culture**

Primary reading

Appadurai, A. "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy" pp. 27-47 in *Modernity at Large* (on reserve)

Inda, J. X. and R. Rosaldo, "Tracking Global Flows" pp. 3-46 in *The Anthropology of Globalization*, 2nd ed. (on reserve)

Secondary reading

Friedman, J. "From roots to routes" *Anthropological Theory* (2002) 2 (1): 21-36 (on reserve)

Tues 6/4 (Week 10)

**Conclusion and wrap up**

Barnard, A. "Conclusions" pp. 178-184 in *HATIA*

Sahlins, M. "What is Anthropological Enlightenment? Some Lessons of the Twentieth Century" pp. 479-497 in *VOC-Reader*

"Postscript: Current Controversies" pp. 346-352 in *VOC-Intro*

Rosaldo, R. "Epilogue: A Raging Battle" pp. 218-224 in *CAT*