

Learning Outcomes

Upon the successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Describe in general terms major theories relevant to contemporary anthropology and its historical development
- Compare different theories, focusing on the strengths and limitations of each
- Use general anthropological concepts
- Recognize theoretical leanings in particular ethnographic works
- Understand why theory is necessary and unavoidable

Course Format

The lectures will focus on the readings in their broader contexts and introduce other relevant materials. Students will benefit from the lectures only if they have done the required readings ahead of time. Students are welcome and encouraged to ask questions and make comments during lectures. Tutorials will be interactive, with additional time for questions and discussion.

Physical presence is a basic requirement of the course. Absences are generally only permitted with a medical doctor's note or in cases of a personal emergency. If you have to miss class, please e-mail me beforehand and it is your responsibility to obtain class notes from your fellow students.

Assessment

Two Take-home Tests (40% each)

For each of the two tests, you will be given a choice of questions, one of which you should answer in a paper of 2,000-word maximum length. You should refer to the readings you will have done for the course, as well as any other readings that you find relevant. The questions for the first test will be made available on Fri 14 March 9:00 and the answers will be due on Sun 16 March 17:00; The questions for the second test will be made available on Fri 25 April 9:00 and the answers will be due on Sun 27 April 17:00.

Participation and Discussion Board Postings (20%)

Participation: Participation includes demonstrating that you have done the readings ahead of tutorials, attending all the lectures and tutorials, and participating in tutorial discussions.

Discussion board postings: In the course of the semester, you are required to make three substantial contributions to the discussion board (minimum 100 words), due on Friday before 17:00 of each week, which can be an informed comment on the readings or the lectures or a response to another student's comment.

Practicalities Relevant to the Tests

- You must write clearly, concisely, and in an organized fashion. Your texts must begin with an introduction and end it with a conclusion, use sections, section titles, and paragraphs. If relevant, you must use a standard method of citing and referencing sources.
- You will not be penalized for grammar, vocabulary, or spelling mistakes, although you are asked to be as careful as possible with language, using your spellchecker.
- Remember to write your name and the name of the course, and to provide a title to your assignment.
- The test answers cannot exceed the word limit (exclusive of headings and references) and you must write the total number of words at the end.
- Test answers have no footnotes and make very limited use of quotes, and only list references cited in the text.
- Submit your files in a format that can be opened with MS Word.
- You must submit your test answers through Blackboard, which closes down at the time specified.

You will receive a one-point penalty for each of the following:

- Exceeding the word limit or failing to provide a word count
- Failing to provide your name and the title of the assignment.

Study materials

Selected readings, all required. Students are expected to have done the readings ahead of course meetings and to be able to discuss them when called upon.

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism is a serious offense. Using AI-based writing programs (such as ChatGPT) is considered plagiarism. Students are required by university policy to submit all take-home assignments to VeriGuide. A take-home assignment without a signed declaration from VeriGuide will not be graded.

University Policy on Academic Integrity:

http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_%282013-14%29/p06.htm

University Policy on VeriGuide:

https://academic.veriguide.org/academic/login_CUHK.jsp

Grade Descriptors

- A Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes. The work has creatively synthesized course materials and key ideas in an original way. The argument is logical and cohesive, the discussion is well-organized, and the writing is clear. The work goes beyond merely summarizing key ideas. The work clearly differentiates between the position of the author versus the position(s) the author wishes to challenge. Concrete evidence corresponds to statements and claims.

- A– Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes. The work synthesizes course materials and key ideas in an original way, but there are areas for improvement.
- B Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance. The work demonstrates a solid grasp of course materials and key ideas. There are areas for improvement with respect to building a cohesive argument, organizing the discussion, communicating clearly, and/or identifying relevant evidence. There is some confusion over what position the author has taken versus the position(s) the author wishes to challenge.
- C Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses. The work shows some effort, but course materials have not been sufficiently engaged or the paper fails to directly address the prompt. The argument and the writing is not clear.
- D Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes. The work shows little effort to engage course materials. There are major problems with clarity of argument and writing.
- F Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements. The work has failed to respond to the assignment prompt.

Programme

Week 1 (9 Jan): The antecedents of modern anthropology: Ancient Greek philosophers, Classical Arabic scholars, and European Renaissance thinkers reflect on Other and Self; European Enlightenment and Romanticism at the foundation of modern-day anthropology; nineteenth-century evolutionism and the beginnings of theoretical thinking about human diversity.

Week 2 (16 Jan): The sociological foundations of anthropology: Durkheim and his influence on anthropology; solidarity, the “social glue”; theorizing pre-modernity and modernity; Durkheim’s legacy in France: Mauss’ comparative ethnology and the theorization of social complexity; gifts and commodities.

Readings

- Durkheim, Émile. 1887 [1972]. “Religion and Ritual.” In *Emile Durkheim: Selected Writings*, edited by Anthony Giddens, 219–238. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mauss, Marcel. 1925 [2016]. “Of the Gift and in Particular of the Obligation to Return Presents; The Gifts Exchanged and the Obligation to Return Them.” In *The Gift*, translated by Jane I. Guyer, 65–84. Chicago: HAU Books. <https://haubooks.org/the-gift/> (Click on “download”)

Week 3 (23 Jan): The political-economic foundations of anthropology: Marx’s late influence on anthropology; approaching society and culture from a material and historical perspective.

Readings

- Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. 1845. “Idealism and Materialism.” In *Feuerbach: Opposition of the Materialist and Idealist Outlooks*. Marx and Engels Internet Archives. <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/german-ideology/ch01a.htm>

Week 4 (30 Jan): No class

Week 5 (6 Feb): The sociological foundations of anthropology: Weber and his influence on anthropology; approaching society and culture from an ideational perspective; Protestantism and the spirit of capitalism; power and charisma.

Readings

- Weber, Max. 1904. "The Spirit of Capitalism." In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.
https://english.hku.hk/staff/kjohnson/PDF/engl56_kj_weber_protestant.pdf

Week 6 (13 Feb): Historical particularism, cultural diffusion, and the turn to "culture" in North America: Boas, Benedict, and Mead

Readings

- Boas, Franz. 1920. "The Methods of Ethnology." *American Anthropologist* 22, no. 4: 311–322.
- Benedict, Ruth. 1930. "Psychological Types in the Cultures of the Southwest." In *Proceedings of the Twenty-Third International Congress of Americanists*, 572–581. New York: Science Press.

Film

- Margaret Mead and Samoa (ABC-TV, 1988), available on Google Video
[https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=Margaret+Mead+and+Samoa+\(ABC-TV%2C+1988&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:920d45ca,vid:vssjLjYvORk,st:0](https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=Margaret+Mead+and+Samoa+(ABC-TV%2C+1988&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:920d45ca,vid:vssjLjYvORk,st:0)

Week 7 (20 Feb): Durkheim's legacy in Britain: structural-functionalism and psychological functionalism; fieldwork becomes *de rigueur*; social cohesion and the problem of change.

Readings

- Radcliffe-Brown, A.R. 1940. "On Joking Relationships." *Africa* 13, no. 3: 195–210.
- Leach, Edmund R. 1954. "Gumlao and Gumsa." In *Political Systems of Highland Burma: A Study of Kachin Social Structure*, 197–212. London: London School of Economics and Political Science.

Week 8 (27 Feb): Weber's return: Symbolic anthropology in North America and the turn from function to meaning; the turn to reflexivity in North American anthropology.

Readings

- Geertz, Clifford. 1972. "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight." *Dædalus* 101, no. 1: 1–37.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. 1986. "Fieldwork in Common Places." In *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, edited by James Clifford and George E. Marcus, 27–50. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Week 9 (6 Mar): No class.

Week 10 (13 Mar): The neo-materialist revival: the return of history and power in anthropological theory.

Readings

- Nugent, David. 1982. "Closed Systems and Contradiction: The Kachin in and out of History." *Man* (n.s.) 17, no. 3: 508–527. (Followed by correspondence by Edmund Leach, 18:191–199, and David Nugent, 18:199–206.)
- Roseberry, William. 1982. "Balinese Cockfights and the Seduction of Anthropology." *Social Research* 49, no. 4: 1013–1028.

Week 11 (20 Mar): Theorizing resistance to power: weapons of the weak; against the romantic construction of the subaltern.

- Scott, James. 1986. "Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance." *Journal of Peasant Studies* 13(2): 5–34.
- Ortner, Sherry B. 1995. "Resistance and the Problem of Ethnographic Refusal." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37, no. 1: 173–193.

Week 12 (27 Mar): Culture as practice: Bourdieu and the reproduction of society.

Readings

- Bourdieu, Pierre. 2004. "The Peasant and His Body." *Ethnography* 5, no. 4: 579–599.
- McKenzie, Lisa. 2015. "Narrative, Ethnography and Class Inequality: Taking Bourdieu into a British Council Estate." In *Bourdieu, The Next Generation: The Development of Bourdieu's Intellectual Heritage in Contemporary UK Sociology*, edited by Jenny Thatcher, Nicola Ingram, Ciaran Burke, and Jessie Abrahams, 54–65. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.

Week 13 (3 Apr): The margin talks back: Feminism, orientalism, postcolonialism.

Readings

- Federici, Silvia. 2018. "Marx and Feminism." *tripleC* 16, no. 2: 468–475.
- Said, Edward W. 1978. "Introduction." In *Orientalism*, 1–28. New York: Vintage.

Film

- Edward Said on Orientalism (1998), available on YouTube.com
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OkYUkezaYw4>

Week 14 (10 Apr): The anthropology of late capitalism: understanding the subject in the globalized world.

- Comaroff, Jean, and John L. Comaroff. 2000. "Millennial Capitalism: First Thoughts on a Second Coming." *Public Culture* 12, no. 2: 291–343.
- Besnier, Niko, Daniel Guinness, Mark Hann, and Uroš Kovač. 2018. "Rethinking Masculinity in the Neoliberal Age: Cameroonian Footballers, Fijian Rugby Players, Senegalese Wrestlers." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 60, no. 4: 839–872.

Week 15 (17 Apr): Whither anthropological theory today? Rethinking the self, dismantling boundaries, dislodging the centre, dark anthropology vs. anthropology of the good.

Readings

- Robbins, Joel. 2013. "Beyond the Suffering Subject: Toward an Anthropology of the Good." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 19, no. 3: 447–462.
- Ortner, Sherry B. 2016. "Dark Anthropology and Its Others: Theory since the Eighties." *HAU* 6, no. 1: 47–73.