

ANTHROPOLOGY 9100/9200 THEORY IN ANTHROPOLOGY

COURSE OUTLINE 2017

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CLASS TIME: FRIDAY 9:30-12:30

ROOM LOCATION: SSC 3102



BANKSY

Course aim

This course introduces students to the significance and uses of theory in anthropological thinking and practice today. Instead of attempting a comprehensive overview of the history and/or current state of anthropological theory, we will focus on selected readings related to several broad themes of common interest (community, and culture, experience and embodied knowledge, and entanglement with Others and with Things) in an attempt to illustrate theory's place in anthropological thinking and practice. As the course progresses, students will be encouraged to look beyond assigned readings and begin compiling reading lists of their own. These reading lists will ultimately inform students' final papers.

Learning outcomes

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

- Appreciate the different ways in which theory is used in anthropological thinking and practice today.
- Identify, understand, and apply theoretical approaches appropriate to their research.
- Engage effectively in discussions about theory with peers across sub-disciplinary boundaries.

Assessment

Your final grade will be based on the following:

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| • Six 500-word reflections on weekly readings | 30% |
| • 1000-word reflection on anti-presentations | 10% |
| • 1000-word reflection on the discipline of anthropology | 10% |
| • Western Anthropology Reads Theory presentation | 10% |
| • Personal reading list | 10% |
| • Final paper | 20% |
| • General participation in seminar | 10% |

Six 500-word reflections on weekly readings (5% each for 30%)

Weekly reflections should:

- Be no more than 500 words.
- Be well thought out and clearly written.
- Include reference to at least three (but preferably all) of the assigned readings for the week.
- Be uploaded to the course drop box by noon the day before class.

1000-word reflection on anti-presentation (10%)

Students will write a 1000-word reflection on the anti-presentation exercise, describing their experience. The text should address the constructive comments and critiques formulated by the people discussing their writing, the merit of the approaches and perspectives suggested by their classmates, as well as the misunderstandings that may have ensued. Submit your reflection by email to the instructors by Wednesday November 1st.

1000-word reflection on why anthropology may still matter (10%)

Students will write a 1000-word reflection on why anthropology may still matter, as they see it at this stage of their academic career. Submit your reflection by email to the instructors by Wednesday November 22nd.

Western Anthropology Reads Theory presentation (10%)

On November 24th, students will make a brief (and thus well-rehearsed!) presentation on the one source on their Personal reading lists that they think everyone in class should read. The sources you choose to present should be no more than 40 pages in length. If you are thinking of a book, you might present just one chapter. In a “[Canada Reads](#)” style showdown, we will all vote on the four sources we think everyone should read. The top four sources will be the focus of our last class discussion.

Personal reading list (10%)

Students will be required to compile a Personal reading list relevant to their budding research project. How you organize this reading list is up to you, but by the end of the course we expect that students will have compiled at least 20 sources. Each source will include a statement (1-3 sentences) indicating why you selected it. Include a series of 6-10 keywords that best describe your work. Submit reflection by email to the instructors by December 11th.

Final paper (20%)

At the end of the semester, you must submit a short paper (of no more than 3000 words) reflecting on the theoretical approaches and ideas that seem most relevant to you at this stage. We would like you to identify theoretical tools you wish to keep in your research toolbox and tell us how you envision to put them to use in practice. To do that, (1) Select one or two theoretical perspectives that resonate with you today. (2) Discuss what these perspectives afford, make tangible, or help illuminate, explicate, elucidate, etc. as you are framing your graduate research project. (3) Discuss the limitations of these perspectives. What is underdefined, left out, incorrectly assumed, etc.? (4) What are the methodological implications associated with working with them? Submit your final paper by email to the instructors by December 11th.

General participation (10%)

Your grade for this component of the course will be based on the extent and quality of your participation in seminar discussions. All students are expected to attend every class session, and to come to class having read all of the assigned readings and prepared to participate actively in seminar discussions.

Academic policies

All students should familiarize themselves with Western's current [Academic policies](#) regarding accessibility, plagiarism and scholastic offences, and medical accommodation.

Class schedule

Sept 8	Introduction Whole class meets in SSC 3301 Introductions and hobbies
Sept 15	Opening discussion on theory in anthropology Whole class meets in SSC 3301 Before class, students should speak with their interim supervisors about the importance of theory as <i>they</i> see it. Each student should ask for, and come to class with, three references for their reading list: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A source that influenced their supervisors' thinking as a graduate student starting out in the discipline.• A source that their supervisors currently find interesting or provocative, or that they are using in their own work.• A source that their supervisors think the student ought to look at given their specific research interests. Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sears, Alan and James Irvine Cairns. <i>A Good Book, in Theory</i> (2010): Chapters 1,2, and 8.

<p>Sept 22</p>	<p>Group A: Culture (JFM)</p> <p>Group A meets in SSC 3301</p> <p>500-word reflections on weekly readings uploaded by noon on Sept 21st</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geertz, Clifford. "Thick description: toward an interpretive theory of culture." <i>The Interpretation of Cultures</i> (1973): 3-30. • Abu-Lughod, Lila. "Writing against culture." <i>Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present</i> (1991): 137-162. • Brumann, Christoph. "Writing for culture: why a successful concept should not be discarded." <i>Current Anthropology</i> 40.S1 (1999): S1-S27. • Ingold, Tim. "Introduction to culture." <i>Companion Encyclopedia of Anthropology</i> (2003): 329-349.
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<p>Sept 22</p>	<p>Group B: Community (AP)</p> <p>Group B meets in SSC 3227</p> <p>500-word reflections on weekly readings uploaded by noon on Sept 21st</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creed, Gerald W. "Constituted through conflict: images of community (and nation) in Bulgarian rural ritual." <i>American Anthropologist</i> 106.1 (2004): 56-70. • Balthazar, Ana Carolina. "Made in Britain: Brexit, teacups, and the materiality of the nation." <i>American Ethnologist</i> 44.2 (2017): 220-224. • Gupta, Akhil and James Ferguson. "Beyond 'Culture': space, identity and the politics of difference." <i>Cultural Anthropology</i> 7.1 (1992): 6-23. • Amit, Vered. "Thinking through sociality: the importance of mid-Level concepts" <i>Thinking Through Sociality: An Anthropological Interrogation of Key Concepts</i> (2015): 1-19. • Postill, John. "Localizing the internet beyond communities and networks." <i>New Media and Society</i> 10.3 (2008): 413-431.
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Sept 29	<p>Group A: Community (AP)</p> <p>Group A meets in SSC 3227</p> <p>500-word reflections on weekly readings uploaded by noon on Sept 28th</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creed, Gerald W. "Constituted through conflict: images of community (and nation) in Bulgarian rural ritual." <i>American Anthropologist</i> 106.1 (2004): 56-70. • Balthazar, Ana Carolina. "Made in Britain: Brexit, teacups, and the materiality of the nation." <i>American Ethnologist</i> 44.2 (2017): 220-224. • Gupta, Akhil and James Ferguson. "Beyond 'Culture': space, identity and the politics of difference." <i>Cultural Anthropology</i> 7.1 (1992): 6-23. • Amit, Vered. "Thinking through sociality: the importance of mid-Level concepts" <i>Thinking Through Sociality: An Anthropological Interrogation of Key Concepts</i> (2015): 1–19. • Postill, John. "Localizing the internet beyond communities and networks." <i>New Media and Society</i> 10.3 (2008): 413-431.
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<p>Oct 6</p>	<p>Group A: Experiencing the world (JFM)</p> <p>Group A meets in SSC 3301</p> <p>500-word reflections on weekly readings circulated by noon on Oct 5th</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Johnson, Matthew H. "Phenomenological approaches in landscape archaeology." <i>Annual Review of Anthropology</i> 41 (2012): 269-284. • Ingold, Tim. "Culture on the ground: the world perceived through the feet." <i>Journal of Material Culture</i> 9.3 (2004): 315-340. • Malafouris, Lambros. "At the potter's wheel: an argument for material agency." <i>Material Agency. Towards a Non-Anthropocentric Approach</i> (2008): 19-36. • Dawson, Peter, Richard Levy, and Natasha Lyons. "'Breaking the fourth wall': 3D virtual worlds as tools for knowledge repatriation in archaeology." <i>Journal of Social Archaeology</i> 11.3 (2011): 387-402.
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<p>Oct 6</p>	<p>Group B: The body, embodiment and affect (AP)</p> <p>Group B meets in SSC 3227</p> <p>500-word reflections on weekly readings circulated by noon on Oct 5th</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herzfeld, Michael. "Senses." <i>Anthropology: Theoretical Practice in Culture and Society</i>. (2001): 240-253. • Scordas, Thomas. "Somatic modes of attention." <i>Cultural Anthropology</i> 8.2 (1993): 135-156. • Lyon, Margot. L. and Jack M. Barbalet. "Society's body: emotion and the 'somatization' of social theory. <i>Embodiment and Experience: The Existential Ground of Culture and Self</i> (2003): 48-66. • Ramos-Zayas, Ana. "Learning affect, embodying race: youth blackness and neoliberal emotions in Latin Newark." <i>Transforming Anthropology</i> 19.2 (2011): 86-104.
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<p>Oct 13</p>	<p>Fall Reading Week</p> <p>No class</p>
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<p>Oct 20</p>	<p>Group A: The body, embodiment and affect (AP)</p> <p>Group A meets in SSC 3227</p> <p>500-word reflections on weekly readings circulated by noon on Oct 19th</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herzfeld, Michael. "Senses." <i>Anthropology: Theoretical Practice in Culture and Society</i>. (2001): 240-253. • Scordas, Thomas. "Somatic modes of attention." <i>Cultural Anthropology</i> 8.2 (1993): 135-156. • Lyon, Margot. L. and Jack M. Barbalet. "Society's body: emotion and the 'somatization' of social theory. <i>Embodiment and Experience: The Existential Ground of Culture and Self</i> (2003): 48-66. • Ramos-Zayas, Ana. "Learning affect, embodying race: youth blackness and neoliberal emotions in Latin Newark." <i>Transforming Anthropology</i> 19.2 (2011): 86-104.
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<p>Oct 20</p>	<p>Group B: Experiencing the world (JFM)</p> <p>Group B meets in SSC 3301</p> <p>500-word reflections on weekly readings circulated by noon on Oct 19th</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Johnson, Matthew H. "Phenomenological approaches in landscape archaeology." <i>Annual Review of Anthropology</i> 41 (2012): 269-284. • Ingold, Tim. "Culture on the ground: the world perceived through the feet." <i>Journal of Material Culture</i> 9.3 (2004): 315-340. • Malafouris, Lambros. "At the potter's wheel: an argument for material agency." <i>Material Agency. Towards a Non-Anthropocentric Approach</i> (2008): 19-36. • Dawson, Peter, Richard Levy, and Natasha Lyons. "'Breaking the fourth wall': 3D virtual worlds as tools for knowledge repatriation in archaeology." <i>Journal of Social Archaeology</i> 11.3 (2011): 387-402.
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Oct 27

Anti-presentations exercise (AP and JFM)

Whole class meets in SSC 3301

By Monday October 24, you will upload a 500-word piece of writing to the course drop box that describes the research you are hoping/intending to undertake. Feel free to draw from your application letter or a research proposal in progress, or to write up something just for this class. Obviously, the better it reflects your current sense of what you will be doing, the more you will get out of this exercise. Keep in mind that others reading this will not be specialists in your field – your goal is not to impress others with what you know, but to communicate as clearly as possible what you hope to focus on in your research, and why it matters.

After a short meeting in 3102, students will break up into small discussion groups, and devote ~15 minutes to each person's project. We'd like you to use whiteboards– divide one board up into 4 or 5 columns. The person whose project is being discussed should remain quiet most of this time, writing notes on their part of the board as the discussion concerning their research goes on. They may even want to face the whiteboard as their research is being discussed. For the remaining time, they can ask for clarification on the points raised in the discussion, or respond to points that they would like to discuss further.

Think of these as “anti-presentations” – you are being asked to do the opposite of what a class presentation on your research would normally entail (listening when you would normally be speaking, asking questions when you would normally be answering them, writing notes on the spot when you would normally be referring to notes you'd previously prepared).

Finally, you are asked to submit a 1000-word reflection on anti-presentations by email to the instructors by Wednesday of the following week (November 1st).

<p>Nov 3</p>	<p>Group A: Entanglements (JFM)</p> <p>Group A meets in SSC 3301</p> <p>500-word reflections on weekly readings circulated by noon on Nov 2nd</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lyons, Diane, and A. Catherine D'andrea. "Griddles, ovens, and agricultural origins: an ethnoarchaeological study of bread baking in highland Ethiopia." <i>American Anthropologist</i> 105.3 (2003): 515-530. • Fontein, Joost. "Between tortured bodies and resurfacing bones: the politics of the dead in Zimbabwe." <i>Journal of Material Culture</i> 15.4 (2010): 423-448. • Miller, Daniel. "Why clothing is not superficial." <i>Stuff</i> (2010): 12-41. • Ingold, Tim. "Toward an ecology of materials." <i>Annual Review of Anthropology</i> 41 (2012): 427-442. • Hodder, Ian. "The entanglements of humans and things: a long-term view." <i>New Literary History</i> 45.1 (2014): 19-36.
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<p>Nov 3</p>	<p>Group B: Beyond the human (AP)</p> <p>Group B meets in SSC 3227</p> <p>500-word reflections on weekly readings circulated by noon on Nov 2nd</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haraway, Donna. "When species meet: introductions". <i>When Species Meet</i> (2008): 3-42. • Tsing, Anna. "Unruly edges: mushrooms as companion species." <i>Environmental Humanities</i> 1 (2012): 141-154. • Latour, Bruno. "Introduction: how to resume the task of tracing associations." <i>Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory</i> (2005): 1-17. • Escobar, Laura M. "The power of (dis)placement: pigeons and urban regeneration in Trafalgar Square." <i>Cultural Geographies</i> (2013): 1-24.
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<p>Nov 10</p>	<p>Group A: Beyond the human (AP)</p> <p>Group A meets in SSC 3227</p> <p>500-word reflections on weekly readings circulated by noon on Nov 9th</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haraway, Donna. "When species meet: introductions". <i>When Species Meet</i> (2008): 3–42. • Tsing, Anna. "Unruly edges: mushrooms as companion species." <i>Environmental Humanities</i> 1 (2012): 141-154. • Latour, Bruno. "Introduction: how to resume the task of tracing associations." <i>Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory</i> (2005): 1–17. • Escobar, Laura M. "The power of (dis)placement: pigeons and urban regeneration in Trafalgar Square." <i>Cultural Geographies</i> (2013): 1-24.
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<p>Nov 17</p>	<p>Why anthropology may still matter (AP and JFM)</p> <p>Whole class meets in SSC 3301</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brecht, Bertolt. "Writing the truth: five difficulties." <i>Galileo</i>. ed. Eric Bentley ([1935]1966) • Flannery, Kent V. "The golden Marshalltown: a parable for the archeology of the 1980s." <i>American Anthropologist</i>, 84.2 (1982): 265-278. • Bloch, Maurice E. F. "Where did anthropology go? or, the need for 'human nature'." LSE Research Online ([2005] 2010): 1-12. • Haraway, Donna. "Situated knowledges: the science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective." <i>Feminist Studies</i> 14. 3 (1988): 575-599. <p>Submit a 1000-word reflection on the discipline of anthropology by email to the instructors by Wednesday of the following week (November 22nd).</p>
<p>Nov 24</p>	<p>Western Anthropology Reads Part I</p> <p>Whole class meets in SSC 3301</p> <p>Each student will come prepared to present (in 5 minutes) a single source that they would like others in the class to read.</p> <p>After class, student will anonymously vote for the four sources that they would most like, and like others, to read.</p> <p>After class, we will circulate a list of the four sources to read for the following week.</p>
<p>Dec 1</p>	<p>Western Anthropology Reads Part II</p> <p>Whole class meets in SSC 3301</p> <p>Readings to be determined as indicated above.</p>