

ANTHROPOLOGY 9100/9200 THEORY IN ANTHROPOLOGY

COURSE OUTLINE 2016

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CLASS TIME: FRIDAY 9:30-12:30

ROOM LOCATION: SSC 3102



Social Network Analysis Visualization, Wikimedia

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 (phenomenology, agency, and entanglements with things and others) 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 amassing eclectic 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 put to use in anthropological thinking and practice today.
- Identify and make use of the theoretical sources and approaches that are most appropriate to their own research projects.
- Effectively communicate with colleagues/cohort-members across sub-disciplinary boundaries.

Assessment

Your final grade will be based on the following:

- Six 500-word reflections on weekly readings 30%
- Two 1000-word reflections on the brainstorming exercises 20%
- Presentation of “Western Anthropology Reads Theory” candidate 10 %
- Final paper 30 %
- General participation in seminar 10 %

Personal reading lists

Students will be required to compile a personal reading list throughout the course. At *minimum*, this reading list will consist of: (1) sources you have already read but would like to read again (or more carefully), (2) suggestions from your supervisor (see assignment for week 2), and (3) additional sources inspired by weekly readings and discussions. How you organize this reading list (i.e., with Endnote, Evernote, Refworks, etc.) is up to you, but by the end of the course we expect that students will have a list of at least 20 sources.

Six 500-word reflections on weekly readings

Weekly reflections can take different forms, but should:

- Be no more than 500 words.
- Be well thought out and clearly written.
- Include reference to at least three, but preferably all four, of the assigned readings for the week.
- End with references to at least two additional sources that you will be adding to your personal reading lists (see above). These could be sources cited in the assigned readings, or sources you’ve found on your own. For each additional source, you should include a short statement indicating why you selected it.

Two 1000-word reflections on brainstorming exercises

On October 7th and November 4th, we will complete two brainstorming exercises, to be discussed further in class.

Following each brainstorming class, students will draw from assigned and recommended readings, their own thinking *and* the suggestions of others to reflect on the theoretical approach(es) they might, or intend to, take in their work. Students should briefly discuss the approaches/perspectives suggested by their classmates, but should not feel obliged to embrace them all.

Presentation of your “Western Anthropology Reads Theory” candidate

In our penultimate class, 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 (JFM and AW included) should read. In a “Canada Reads” style showdown, we will all then vote on the four sources we think everyone should read. The top four sources will be the focus of our last class

discussion. *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 the introduction.*

Final paper

At the end of the semester you must submit a short paper (of no more than 3000 words) reflecting on the approaches and ideas covered in course readings, discussions and brainstorming sessions that seem most relevant to you at this stage. We will expect to see at least some reference to sources on your reading list in the bibliography. This paper is due on Monday, December 12.

General participation

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.

Graduate course health and wellness

As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority. Western provides several on campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your graduate degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students, as part of their registration, receive membership in Western's Campus Recreation Centre. Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. Please check out the Faculty of Music web page <http://www.music.uwo.ca/>, and our own McIntosh Gallery <http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/>. Information regarding health- and wellness-related services available to students may be found at <http://www.health.uwo.ca/>

Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director (graduate chair), or other relevant administrators in their unit. Campus mental health resources may be found at http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/resources.html

To help you learn more about mental health, Western has developed an interactive mental health learning module, found here: http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/module.html. This module is 30 minutes in length and provides participants with a basic understanding of mental health issues and of available campus and community resources. Topics include stress, anxiety, depression, suicide and eating disorders. After successful completion of the module, participants receive a certificate confirming their participation.

Class schedule

Date	Topic
Sept 9	<p>Introduction – Hobbies and Keywords</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Whole class meets in SSC 3301<li>• Introductions
Sept 16	<p>Open discussion on theory in anthropology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Whole class meets in SSC 3301<li>• Before class, students should speak (or email, if a meeting isn't possible) 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"><li>○ A source that influenced their supervisors' thinking as a graduate student starting out in the discipline.<li>○ A source that their supervisors <i>currently</i> find interesting or provocative, or that they are using in their own work.<li>○ A source that their supervisors think the student ought to look at given their specific research interests. <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>A Good Book, in Theory</i>, Chapters 1,2, and 8.

Sept 23	<p>Group A: Experience and phenomenology (JFM)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group A meets in SSC 3301 • 500 word reading response paper circulated on September 22nd <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brück, Joanna. "Experiencing the past? The development of a phenomenological archaeology in British prehistory." <i>Archaeological Dialogues</i> 12.1 (2005): 45–72. • 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." In Knappett, C. and Malafouris, L. (eds) <i>Material Agency. Towards a Non-Anthropocentric Approach</i>. Springer, New York (2008): 19–36. • Renfrew, Colin. "Towards a theory of material engagement." In Demarrais, E., Gosden, C. and Renfrew, C. (eds) <i>Rethinking Materiality</i>. McDonald Archaeological Institute, Cambridge (2004): 23–32.
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Sept 23	<p>Group B: Practice and agency (AW)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group B meets in SSC 3227 • 500 word reading response paper circulated on September 22nd <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ahearn, Laura M. "Language and agency." <i>Annual review of anthropology</i> (2001): 109–137. • Barnes, Barry. "Everyday Discourse." In <i>Understanding Agency</i> (2000): 3–16. • 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. • Ortner, Sherry B. "Power and Projects: Reflections on Agency." In <i>Anthropology and Social Theory: Culture, Power and the Acting Subject</i> (2006): 129–153.
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Sept 30	<p>Group A: Practice and agency (AW)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group A meets in SSC 3301 • 500 word reading response paper circulated on September 29th <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ahearn, Laura M. "Language and agency." <i>Annual review of anthropology</i> (2001): 109–137. • Barnes, Barry. "Everyday Discourse." In <i>Understanding Agency</i> (2000): 3–16. • 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. • Ortner, Sherry B. "Power and Projects: Reflections on Agency." In <i>Anthropology and Social Theory: Culture, Power and the Acting Subject</i> (2006): 129–153.
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Sept 30	<p>Group B: Experience and phenomenology (JFM)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group B meets in SSC 3227 • 500 word reading response paper circulated on September 29th <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brück, Joanna. "Experiencing the past? The development of a phenomenological archaeology in British prehistory." <i>Archaeological Dialogues</i> 12.1 (2005): 45–72. • 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." In Knappett, C. and Malafouris, L. (eds) <i>Material Agency. Towards a Non-Anthropocentric Approach</i>. Springer, New York (2008): 19–36. • Renfrew, Colin. "Towards a theory of material engagement." In Demarrais, E., Gosden, C. and Renfrew, C. (eds) <i>Rethinking Materiality</i>. McDonald Archaeological Institute, Cambridge (2004): 23–32.
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Oct 7

Brainstorming exercise I – Antipresentations of your research projects

- Whole class meets in SSC 3301
- By Tuesday October 4, please circulate (to your small group and to JF and A) a short piece of writing that describes the research you are hoping/intending to undertake – as you see it now, at least. 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. This piece of writing should be no more than 500 words. 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.
- In class, after a short meeting in 3102, you'll break up into your small discussion groups, and devote 12-15 minutes to each person's project (please use a timer!). We'd like you to use whiteboards again – divide one board up into 4 or 5 columns. The person whose project is being discussed should remain quiet for the first 2/3 of this time, writing notes on their part of the board as the discussion concerning their research goes on. For the remaining 1/3 of the time, they/you can ask for clarification on the points raised in the discussion, or respond to points that you'd 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). You might even want to face the whiteboard, and away from your classmates, as your research is being discussed.*

Oct 14	<p>Group A: Entanglement with things (JFM)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group A meets in SSC 3301 • 500 word reading response paper circulated on October 13th <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hodder, Ian. "The entanglements of humans and things: A long-term view." <i>New Literary History</i> 45.1 (2014): 19–36. • Ingold, Tim. "Toward an ecology of materials." <i>Annual Review of Anthropology</i> 41 (2012): 427–442. • Lemonnier, Pierre. "Technology." In <i>The Oxford Handbook of Linguistic Fieldwork</i> (2012) • Miller, Daniel. "Why clothing is not superficial." In <i>Stuff</i>. Polity Press, Cambridge (2010): 12–41.
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Oct 14	<p>Group B: Entanglement with others (AW)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group B meets in SSC 3227 • 500 word reading response paper circulated on October 13th <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amit, Vered. "Thinking Through Sociality: The Importance of Mid-Level Concepts" In <i>Thinking Through Sociality: An Anthropological Interrogation of Key Concepts</i>. (2015): 1–19. • Haraway, Donna. "When Species Meet: Introductions". In <i>When Species Meet</i> (2008): 3–42. • Gill, Lesley. "Power" In <i>The Handbook of Sociocultural Anthropology</i> (2013): 49–67. • Latour, Bruno. "Introduction: How to Resume the Task of Tracing Associations" In <i>Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory</i> (2005): 1–17.
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Oct 21	<p>Group A: Entanglement with others (AW)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group A meets in SSC 3301 • 500 word reading response paper circulated on October 20th <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amit, Vered. “Thinking Through Sociality: The Importance of Mid-Level Concepts” In <i>Thinking Through Sociality: An Anthropological Interrogation of Key Concepts</i>. (2015): 1–19. • Haraway, Donna. “When Species Meet: Introductions”. In <i>When Species Meet</i> (2008): 3–42. • Gill, Lesley. “Power” In <i>The Handbook of Sociocultural Anthropology</i> (2013): 49–67. • Latour, Bruno. “Introduction: How to Resume the Task of Tracing Associations” In <i>Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory</i> (2005): 1–17.
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Oct 21	<p>Group B: Entanglement with things (JFM)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group B meets in SSC 3227 • 500 word reading response paper circulated on October 20th <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hodder, Ian. “The entanglements of humans and things: A long-term view.” <i>New Literary History</i> 45.1 (2014): 19–36. • Ingold, Tim. “Toward an ecology of materials.” <i>Annual Review of Anthropology</i> 41 (2012): 427–442. • Lemonnier, Pierre. “Technology.” In <i>The Oxford Handbook of Linguistic Fieldwork</i> (2012) • Miller, Daniel. “Why clothing is not superficial.” In <i>Stuff</i>. Polity Press, Cambridge (2010): 12–41.
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Nov 4	<p>Brainstorming exercise II – What do we have to learn from the class of 2015.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole class meets in SSC 3301. • We will be reading the four “Western Anthropology Reads” articles selected by the class of 2015. • More details to come ...
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Nov 11	<p>The scope of anthropology according to Andrew Walsh</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole class meets in SSC 3301 • 500 word reading response paper circulated on November 10th <p>Readings to be announced.</p>
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Nov 18	<p>The scope of anthropology according to Jean-François Millaire</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole class meets in SSC 3301 • 500 word reading response paper circulated on November 17th <p>Readings to be announced.</p>
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Nov 25	<p>Western Anthropology Reads Part I</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole class meets in SSC 3301 • Each student will come prepared to present (in 5 to 7 minutes) a single source that they would like others in the class to read. • After class, each student will vote (anonymously, on-line) for the four sources that they would most like, and like others, to read. • By Saturday morning we will circulate a list of the four sources to read for next week. • More details to come ...
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Dec 2	<p>Western Anthropology Reads Part II</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole class meets in SSC 3301 • Readings to be determined as indicated above.
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