

ANTHROPOLOGY 9100/9200

Theory in Anthropology

COURSE OUTLINE

Winter 2022

Class day/time: Fridays, 9:30 to 12:30

Classroom: Zoom Synchronous

Instructors: Andrew Walsh and Jay Stock

Office hours: To be announced.

Email: awalsh33@uwo.ca and jay.stock@uwo.ca

Course Description:

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 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 their own reading lists that articulate a broad theoretical periphery around their own research. 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.

Course Materials:

Registered students will be able to access information about additional course readings through the course's on-line OWL site before the first day of class.

Evaluation:

30% -- Six 500-word reflections on weekly readings.

10% -- Personal Reading List

5% -- Project description (to be completed and circulated to both instructors and to members of your group before the first brainstorming exercise on February 7). Please note that this will not be evaluated by instructors. The grade (as a percentage) given this component of your final grade will be the same as the grade you receive on the final paper. Failure to complete this required component of the course will result in a 5% penalty on your final mark.

5% -- Final paper outline (to be completed and circulated to both instructors and to members of your group before the second brainstorming exercise on March 6). Please note that this will not be evaluated by instructors. The grade (as a percentage) given this component of your final grade will be the same as the grade you receive on the final paper. Failure to complete this required component of the course will result in a 10% penalty on your final mark.

5% -- Presentation of "Western Anthropology Reads Theory" candidate

35% -- Final paper

10% -- General participation in seminar

Descriptions of Evaluated Work

Reflections on weekly readings (6X5%=30%)

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 two of the assigned readings for the week and (1) reference to an additional paper of relevance to the theme and your own subdiscipline, and (2) some discussion of how the topics/issues raised in these readings relate (however tangentially) to your own work.

Weekly reflections must be circulated to members of your group by 12pm (noon) on the Thursday before a Friday morning class.

Personal Reading List (10%)

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, Mendeley, Zotero, 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. This list will be submitted at the end of the course along with the final paper.

Project description (5%)

On Friday, February 11 we will run the first of two brainstorming exercises intended to help individual students develop the theoretical components of their planned research projects. By 6pm on Wednesday, February 9 students are asked to circulate a 500-word statement regarding their research project to Jay, Andrew, and members of their group. This description may be drawn from previously written research proposals, and should focus especially on the specific topics and questions that the project aims to address – it must be accessible to a broad audience. Please note that this project description will be read but will *not* be evaluated by Jay and Andrew. The grade (as a percentage) given this component of your final grade will be the same as the grade you receive on the final paper. Failure to complete this required component of the course will result in a 5% penalty on your final mark.

Paper outline (5%)

On Friday, March 11 we will run the second of two brainstorming exercises intended to help individual students develop the theoretical components of their planned research projects. By 6pm on Wednesday, March 9 students are asked to circulate a one- or two-page outline of their final paper to Jay, Andrew, and members of their groups. Please note that this paper outline will be read but will *not* be evaluated/graded by Jay and Andrew. The grade (as a percentage) given this component of your final grade will be the same as the grade you receive on the final paper. Failure to complete this required component of the course will result in a 5% penalty on your final mark.

Presentation of "Western Anthropology Reads Theory" candidate (5%)

On March 25, every student will make a brief (and thus well-rehearsed!) presentation on the one source on their personal reading lists that they think everyone in class (Jay and Andrew included) should read. In a "Canada Reads" style showdown, we will then all vote on the four sources we think everyone should read. The four sources that get the most votes will be the focus of our last class discussion on April 1. 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 or a key chapter that could be understood on its own

Final paper (35%)

At the end of the semester students will submit a short paper (of no more than 3000 words) in which they will consider the different theoretical approaches they *might* incorporate into their upcoming research, ending with a discussion of and justification for the approach they are most likely to take. We will expect to see at least some reference to sources on your reading lists in the bibliography.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and [Turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com).

Week by Week Breakdown

Week 1 – Friday, January 14 (whole class Zoom)

Introductions to one another, to theory, and to the approach of the course.

In preparation for this class, students are asked to complete a short survey in which they will provide Jay and Andrew with references to one or two sources that they have found inspiring in/for their own work or learning, and to come to class prepared to talk (in small groups) about what they understand to be the place/role of theory in these sources and in the research they refer to. Please note that these sources need not be primarily theoretical, and that there are no wrong approaches here. In fact, we anticipate that students will come to this class with varying understandings of what theory is, what it does, and why it might be the focus of a required course in this program.

Students should also come to class having read:

Sears, Alan, and James Cairns. Introduction. In *A good book, in theory: Making sense through inquiry*. University of Toronto Press, 2015.

Week 2 – Friday, January 21 (whole class Zoom)

In preparation for class, students should speak with (or email, if a meeting isn't possible) their interim supervisors about the importance of theory as *they* see it. Each student should ask for, and come to class with references for their reading list that fall into these two categories:

1. At least one source that influenced their supervisors' thinking as a graduate student starting out in the discipline OR a source that their supervisors *currently* find interesting or provocative, or that they are using in their own work
2. At least two sources that their supervisors think they (i.e., the student) ought to look at given their specific research interests. These CAN be sources they have recommended previously.

Students should come to class having at least browsed sources from the first category and having read at least one source from the second (or parts of it, if a book).

Additional Required Reading:

Benton, Adia. "Reading the classics: Ideology, tautology, and memory." *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 7.3 (2017): 29-33.

Week 3 – Friday, January 28 (Group A with Jay in Zoom, Group B with Andrew in Zoom)

500-word discussion of readings due before class.

Group A (Jay) Topic and Readings:

Topic: Theory in the service of understanding/explanation

Harris, O.J.T. and Cipolla, C.N. "Ch1: An introduction to contemporary archaeological theory: confronting dualisms", and "Ch2: Beyond paradigms: a potted history of archaeological thought". In *Archaeological Theory in the New Millenium: Introducing Current Perspectives* (2017): 1-34.

Fogelin, Lars. "Inference to the best explanation: A common and effective form of Archaeological Reasoning" *American Antiquity* 72.4 (2007): 603-625.

Either:

Brück, Joanna. "Experiencing the past? The development of a phenomenological archaeology in British prehistory" *Archaeological Dialogues* 12.1 (2005): 45-72

Or:

Ingold, Tim. "Culture on the Ground. The World Perceived through the Feet" *Journal of Material Culture* 9.3 (2004):315-340.

Group B (Andrew) Topic and Readings: Theory in the service of critique/complication

Lyons, Natasha, and Kisha Supernant. "Introduction to an Archaeology of the Heart." *Archaeologies of the Heart*. Springer, Cham, 2020. 1-19.

Rosa, Jonathan, and Yarimar Bonilla. "Deprovincializing Trump, decolonizing diversity, and unsettling anthropology." *American Ethnologist* 44.2 (2017): 201-208.

Either:

Gould, Stephen Jay, and Richard C. Lewontin. "The spandrels of San Marco and the Panglossian paradigm: a critique of the adaptationist programme." *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London. Series B. Biological Sciences* 205.1161 (1979): 581-598.

Or:

Graeber, David, and David Wengrow. "Farewell to Humanity's Childhood". In *The dawn of everything: A new history of humanity*. Penguin UK, 2021.

Week 4 – Friday, February 4 (Group A with Andrew in Zoom, Group B with Jay in Zoom)

500-word discussion of readings due before class.

Group A (Andrew) Topic and Readings: Theory in the service of critique/complication

Lyons, Natasha, and Kisha Supernant. "Introduction to an Archaeology of the Heart." *Archaeologies of the Heart*. Springer, Cham, 2020. 1-19.

Rosa, Jonathan, and Yarimar Bonilla. "Deprovincializing Trump, decolonizing diversity, and unsettling anthropology." *American Ethnologist* 44.2 (2017): 201-208.

Either:

Gould, Stephen Jay, and Richard C. Lewontin. "The spandrels of San Marco and the Panglossian paradigm: a critique of the adaptationist programme." *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London. Series B. Biological Sciences* 205.1161 (1979): 581-598.

Or:

Graeber, David, and David Wengrow. "Farewell to Humanity's Childhood". In *The dawn of everything: A new history of humanity*. Penguin UK, 2021.

Group B (Jay) Topic and Readings: Theory in the service of understanding/explanation

Harris, O.J.T. and Cipolla, C.N. "Ch1: An introduction to contemporary archaeological theory: confronting dualisms", and "Ch2: Beyond paradigms: a potted history of archaeological thought". In *Archaeological Theory in the New Millenium: Introducing Current Perspectives* (2017): 1-34.

Fogelin, Lars. "Inference to the best explanation: A common and effective form of Archaeological Reasoning" *American Antiquity* 72.4 (2007): 603-625.

Either:

Brück, Joanna. "Experiencing the past? The development of a phenomenological archaeology in British prehistory" *Archaeological Dialogues* 12.1 (2005): 45-72

Or:

Ingold, Tim. "Culture on the Ground. The World Perceived through the Feet" *Journal of Material Culture* 9.3 (2004):315-340.

Week 5 – Friday, February 11 (whole class in Zoom)

Project Brainstorming I (introduced above and to be discussed further in class)

500-word project description must be circulated to your group prior to class.

Week 6 – Friday, February 18 (Group A with Jay in Zoom, Group B with Andrew in Zoom)

500-word discussion of readings due before class.

Group A (Jay) Topic and Readings: Entanglement with Things

Hodder, Ian. "The entanglements of humans and things: A long-term view." *New Literary History* 45.1 (2014): 19–36.

Ingold, Tim. "Toward an ecology of materials." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 41 (2012): 427–442.

Harris, O.J.T. and Cipolla, C.N. "Ch6: Things make people? Considering materiality, phenomenology, experience and entanglement" *In Archaeological Theory in the New Millenium: Introducing Current Perspectives* (2017): 87-107.

Group B (Andrew) Topic and Readings: Entanglement with Others

Hamilakis, Yannis, and Nick J. Overton. "A multi-species archaeology." *Archaeological Dialogues* 20.2 (2013): 159-173.

Amit, Vered, et al. Introduction to *Thinking through Sociality: The Importance of Mid-level Concepts*. Vered Amit ed. Berghan Books, 2015.

Additional reading(s) TBA

READING WEEK February 19-27

Week 7 – Friday, March 4 (Group A with Andrew in Zoom, Group B with Jay in Zoom)

500-word discussion of readings due before class.

Group A (Andrew) Topic and Readings: Entanglement with Others

Hamilakis, Yannis, and Nick J. Overton. "A multi-species archaeology." *Archaeological Dialogues* 20.2 (2013): 159-173.

Amit, Vered, et al. Introduction to *Thinking through Sociality: The Importance of Mid-level Concepts*. Vered Amit ed. Berghan Books, 2015.

Additional reading(s) TBA

Group B (Jay) Topic and Readings: Entanglement with Things

Hodder, Ian. "The entanglements of humans and things: A long-term view." *New Literary History* 45.1 (2014): 19–36.

Ingold, Tim. "Toward an ecology of materials." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 41 (2012): 427–442.

Harris, O.J.T. and Cipolla, C.N. "Ch6: Things make people? Considering materiality, phenomenology, experience and entanglement" In *Archaeological Theory in the New Millenium: Introducing Current Perspectives* (2017): 87-107.

Week 8 – Friday, March 11 (whole class meets in Zoom)

Project Brainstorming II – Paper outlines

First draft of paper outlines must be circulated to your group before class.

Week 9 – Friday, March 18 (whole class meets Zoom)

Scope of Anthropology according to Andrew and Jay. Readings to be announced.

500-word discussion of readings due before class.

Week 10 – Friday, March 25 (whole class meets Zoom)

Western Anthropology Reads Theory – Presentations and Voting.

Week 11 – Friday, April 1 (whole class meets, Zoom)

Final Readings (Based on class vote on Western Anthropology Reads Theory candidates presented on March 26)

500-word discussion of readings due before class.

Week 12 – Friday, April 8 (whole class meets, Zoom)

Topics TBA

Final papers due before April 23 (TBC)