

COURSE OUTLINE

Anthropology 9200A – Theory in Sociocultural Anthropology

Fall 2018

Lectures: Friday 9:30 am–12:30 pm

Classroom: SSC-3102

Instructor: Dr. Adriana Premat

Office: SSC-3425

Office hours: By appointment

Email: apremat@uwo.ca

Credit value: 0.5 credit

Calendar Course Description:

This core graduate seminar is built around four central topics in anthropology: culture; individual and society; time, memory and the politics of the past; and space and place. It is designed not as a survey of theoretical positions on these topics, but rather as an exercise in critical reading and critical thinking about how these sets of concepts have been, and can be, used. In other words, the objective is to train you to think theoretically, rather than to teach you theories. In addition to thinking through some ways that these four themes have been used in sociocultural anthropology, and what the implications are of different approaches, we will also be considering how archaeologists use these concepts, and whether (or to what degree) we are all talking about the same thing when we engage them.

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.

Course Materials:

Registered students will be able to access course readings through OWL's Course Readings function.

Evaluation:

Your final grade will be based on the following:

- 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.

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.

Western Anthropology Reads Theory presentation (10%)

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.

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.

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.

Institutional Statements and Policies

All students should familiarize themselves with Western's current academic policies regarding accessibility, plagiarism and scholastic offences, and medical accommodation. [These policies are outlined with links to the full policies on the Anthropology website.](#)