

ANTHROPOLOGY 3350F-001
Society and Culture I: Historical Perspectives
Department of Anthropology
Brief Course Outline
Fall 2021

Version date: July 7, 2021

Class day/time: Asynchronous online activities plus one hour of synchronous discussion on Tuesdays 7:00-8:00 pm

Instructor: Kim Clark

Office: SSC 3412

Office hours: By appointment (remote or in-person)

Email: akc@uwo.ca

Course Teaching Assistant: see OWL course site in early September

Credit Value: 0.5

Requisites:

Antirequisites: the former Anthropology 3301E.

Prerequisites: Registration in third or fourth year in any Anthropology module

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Description:

In this course we will explore the history of some important anthropological theories about social organization, analyzing how anthropological concepts and categories have been constructed and reconstructed over time. We will do so by examining the work and lives of some foundational figures in anthropology from the late-19th to mid-20th centuries and pose questions about how they came to know what they thought they knew. We will read examples of their original (primary) work, in order to understand how particular kinds of anthropological questions or perspectives emerged out of the intersection of specific life circumstances and interests, intellectual networks and formation of schools of thought, and particular ethnographic circumstances in specific political and historical contexts. The intention is not to try to cover all major figures – many are left out! – but rather to turn an anthropological eye on anthropology itself, exploring both a series of anthropological concepts and the social processes through which anthropological perspectives are actively produced.

Some of the questions that guide this course are: How did the scholars studied understand what constitutes “society,” and how it relates to “culture”? How did they conceptualize the causes of social or cultural patterning? What were the implicit or explicit boundaries of their units of study? And ultimately, what did they consider to be the proper scope of anthropology?

At the end of this course, you will have a deeper knowledge of where anthropology came from and how some of its central questions evolved over time. While much of the subject matter is drawn from sociocultural anthropology, many of the concepts we will examine also orient research and thinking in the other subfields of anthropology.

A full course schedule including a week-by-week breakdown of topics and assigned readings will be posted on the OWL course site before the beginning of the term.

Note: this course has been designed with flexibility and accessibility in mind. Please let me know if there are additional ways to make the course more accessible to you.

Learning Outcomes:

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

- Interpret how anthropological knowledge is produced through the intersection of: particular historical moments and political contexts; personal histories and intellectual networks; and an engagement with the situations and people anthropologists encounter during their research.
- Appreciate the limits of anthropological knowledge by exploring how scholars came to know what they thought they knew, constrained (as we all are) by the conditions in which they were working.
- Analyze the underlying assumptions of anthropological writings and effectively communicate that analysis both orally (through participation in regular class discussions) and in written assignments.
- Work collaboratively with peers to develop shared understandings of class readings and to contribute to regular brief oral presentations on those themes.

Course Materials:

All of the readings for this course can be found in digital format through the "Course Readings" features in the course OWL site, at no cost to students.

Weekly Work Rhythm:

Lessons will be posted on OWL on Thursday each week. Students should do the following activities in order:

1. Read the assigned readings, using the posted discussion questions to identify the most important points and guide your notes. You do not have to wait for the Thursday posting of quizzes and lesson material to begin reading if you prefer to start on Wednesday.
2. Complete the brief online quiz (5 true or false questions) assessing your understanding of the readings. Quizzes are available from Thursday and are due on Tuesday at noon. Once you start the quiz, you will have 10 minutes to complete it.
3. Once you have completed the quiz (as early as Thursday, or up to noon on Tuesday), you can proceed to do the week's learning activities on OWL. These will include a series of brief recorded PowerPoint lectures and often also some short film clips or other materials. Note that the asynchronous learning activities will address the broader context in which the scholarly work was produced; the readings themselves will be discussed in the synchronous sessions.
4. Log in to class via Zoom on Tuesday at 7:00 pm to participate in discussion activities. Students will be divided into discussion groups at the beginning of the term, and every week each group will be assigned one of the pre-circulated discussion questions. After a short break-out room session, all discussion groups will come back together to go through the discussion questions and have a broader conversation about the readings and weekly topic. Students can choose to participate with their cameras and microphones on or off, including by using the chat feature.

Evaluation:

Quizzes – 15%

12 brief weekly quizzes, to be completed on OWL before viewing the lecture materials, due no later than Tuesdays at noon – top 10 marks counted at 1.5% each.

Each week there will be a short quiz made up of 5 true or false questions to verify your comprehension of the readings assigned for that week. This is meant to be an incentive for you to keep up with the readings, since you will learn much more from this course if you do so. This will also train you to read more actively, since the quizzes (combined with the discussion questions, see next item) will assess whether you have understood the main points of the readings. No make-up quizzes will be offered, however at the end of the course the lowest two quiz marks will be dropped.

Discussion Participation – 15%

Discussion questions on the readings will be posted at the beginning of the course, and students should do the readings with the discussion questions in mind, making some notes for each answer. The discussion questions are designed to guide you in identifying the most important points in the readings, and to provide the opportunity to begin to explore the authors' underlying assumptions.

Students will be divided into discussion groups in the first week of the course, and the groups will be reconfigured halfway through the term. Each student should come to the synchronous class session prepared to discuss any/all of the discussion questions. At the beginning of the Tuesday session, each discussion group will be assigned one of the questions, at random, to present to the remainder of the class. Following a 15-minute break-out group session where each discussion group will prepare their answer, the class will reconvene to discuss together the assigned questions and any other issues related to the week's topic that students wish to raise.

Discussion participation will be assessed halfway through the term, and again at the end of the course. Part of your discussion grade will be assigned by the members of your group at the end of each six weeks, and part of it will be based on your self-assessment of your contributions to the group. I may adjust grades if necessary to ensure consistency across groups. (Additional guidance will be posted on OWL about how to evaluate discussion group members, and how to be a productive member of a group.) Discussion participation will make up 7.5% percent of the grade for each six weeks, totaling 15% across the course.

Writing Assignments (three short essays and one final take-home exam) – 70%

You are expected to write three analytical essays of 1250-1500 words each during the term. These will involve analyzing the readings and comparing two or three of the authors studied to answer a specific question. There will be a variety of opportunities to respond to essay prompts throughout the term, and students must choose three of these, based on their own schedules and interests. There is also a final take-home essay exam that all students must complete and submit, which will require you to write a synthetic response that encompasses material from across the course.

Starting a few weeks into the course an essay prompt will be posted each week on Wednesday, and if students chose to write a response, it will be due the following week on Friday (for instance, a response to a prompt posted on Wednesday, October 13 will be due on Friday, October 22). Late papers will be accepted without penalty for 48 hours, up to Sunday night. After that, no further late papers will be accepted (since students have the freedom to opt not to answer these prompts). At least one of your papers should be submitted before Reading Week (so that we can provide feedback to you before the drop deadline, as per university rules) and at least one should be after Reading Week, to ensure student engagement with both earlier and later materials in the course. However, students will have considerable choice about when they submit assignments.

The three papers and the take-home exam will together be worth 70% of your grade. The exact weighting of each one will be determined by how well you do on each assignment, hence it will be finalized at the end of the term: your writing assignment with the highest grade will be worth 25%, the next highest will be worth 20%, then 15%, then 10%. This is meant to ease the pressure on students as any given assignment is potentially low stakes.

All written work will 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 (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Course Specific Statements and Policies

As an essay-designated course, all three writing assignments and the final take-home exam in this course must be submitted and three of these assignments must receive passing grades in order to pass this course.

Statement on Seeking Special Accommodations:

No accommodations will be granted retroactively more than 10 days after an assignment's due date. Please see your academic counsellor immediately if you will be seeking accommodations based on medical or compassionate grounds.

Statement on Plagiarism:

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing. It is also a scholastic offence to submit the same work for credit in more than one course. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence.

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 in Western's academic policies by clicking on this link: [Western's academic policies](#)

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