

Department of Anthropology

ANTHRO 3350F-200: Society and Culture I – Historical Perspectives

BRIEF COURSE OUTLINE

Fall 2025

Date: June 13, 2025

Instructor and course information:

Instructor: Dr. Kim Clark

Method of delivery: blended with asynchronous online activities and an 80-minute scheduled class session each week that may be attended in person or on Zoom.

Credit value: 0.5

Antirequisites: the former Anthropology 3301E.

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

Please ensure you have the correct requisites by checking [the Academic Calendar](#).

Course Description:

For anthropologists, context is crucial for understanding social and cultural practices, whether we are studying artifacts from past human activities found in association with other forms of evidence, or more current cultural practices embedded in a social context. In this course, we turn an anthropological gaze on anthropology itself, exploring both a series of anthropological concepts and the social processes through which anthropological perspectives were actively produced, highlighting the importance of context.

This course provides us with an opportunity to ask questions like: What are the origins of our discipline? Who created it and why? Where (and when) were they from? How did they define what constitutes anthropological knowledge? How did they come to “know” what they (thought they) knew?

These broad questions will shape how we 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. We will read examples of their original 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 their political and historical contexts.

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 how did all of this relate to important political and social issues of the day?

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. Many of the concepts we will examine shaped research and thinking across the subfields of anthropology.

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

Course Materials:

There is no textbook for this course. All of the readings can be found in digital format through the "Course Readings" tool on the course Brightspace site, at no cost to students.

Evaluation:

Weekly Activities – 40% of your final grade

Quizzes – 15%

12 brief weekly quizzes to assess reading comprehension, to be completed on OWL Brightspace before our Thursday discussion session. Top 10 marks counted at 1.5% each.

Brief OWL Activities – 7.5%

12 very brief exercises that will engage you with the weekly topic in a non-graded format. You will earn 0.75% (three quarters of a point) towards your final grade for each exercise you complete, up to 10 of them.

Discussion Participation – 17.5%

More information will be available at the start of the course about how the weekly one-hour discussion of the readings will operate.

Writing Assignments (two short essays and one final take-home exam) – 60% of your final grade

Two writing assignments – 35%

There will be two essays of about 1500 words each. Your writing assignment that earns the higher grade will be worth 20% and the one with the lower grade will be worth 15%.

One final take-home essay exam – 25%

The final take-home exam will be due at a time determined by the Registrar's Office during the December exam period.

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