

Key Concepts in Ethnology
Department of Anthropology
Lakehead University
ANTH-2515
Winter 2017

Instructor: Frederico Oliveira, PhD
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Dates of Appointments: January 9th to April 7th, 2017
Classes Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays: 1:00 pm to 2:30pm (RB-3026)
Office: Braun Building (2001C)
Office Hours: Wed: 1-5pm (or by appointment)

Course Description and Objectives:

The understanding and explanation of cultural diversity worldwide is the focus of study of sociocultural anthropologists. The meaning and purposes underlying the study of different cultures has changed considerably since the origins of the discipline from the end of the 19th century until the current days. Economic interests, political agendas, ethics and intellectual commitments have informed distinct views of the so-called “object” of study in anthropology; “the Other” and how it should be approached and described. This course is intended to present the development of anthropology, its theories and core concepts that inform anthropological research since the early moments of the discipline until the present. The progress of the readings and discussions is organized in two units: 1) Classical authors, schools of thought and the history of the discipline; 2) Recent and controversial debates, including periods of transition, internal crisis and moments of theoretical and practical significance regarding the essential relationship between anthropology and cultural diversity. The successful students are expected in the end of the course to be able to:

- a) Examine some of the broader questions underlying the main theories, schools of thought and intellectual debates;
- b) Understand how anthropologists elaborate research questions and approach their data;
- c) Be familiar with scientific papers and their structural organization;
- d) Develop, at least from the introductory level, the capacity to critically look and think anthropologically about social phenomena;
- e) Enhance their abilities to critically think, read, propose research questions and write in ways appropriate to the discipline.

The course is organized around lectures and class discussions. We will go through some of the conceptual ideas about a particular topic in the initial sessions of each week and then broader discussions will be proposed to expand such concepts or theoretical debates in the second session. Discussions will form an important part of the learning process and will revolve around current and controversial issues in anthropology. Student attendance and participation is essential.

These are some of the debates and concepts that will be addressed during the course:

- Ethnocentrism and cultural relativism
- Structure and history
- Classification and Cognition (Rationalism vs. Empiricism)
- Is Language the essence of culture?
- Are humans worlds culturally constructed?
- What is myth?
- Qualitative and quantitative research
- Universalism vs. Particularism
- Individual and society: where is the agency?
- Limitations of the comparative method
- Anthropology as science or literature?
- Alterity and the self
- Ethnography and theory
- Ethnographic authority and post-modernism
- Human rights and anthropological relativism
- Primitivism and the search for authenticity of the exotic Other

Course Readings:

Moore, Jerry D.

2012 Visions of Culture: An Introduction to Anthropological Theories and Theorists.
Plymouth: Altamira Press.

In addition there are a number of articles and book chapters that are required reading and are listed below for each week. All are available electronically at the course website.

Course Requirements and Grading:

Graded assignments include the following:

Class Participation
5% of course grade

Questions about the reading material
20% of course grade

Seminar Facilitation
20% of course grade

Mid-Term in Class Essay
25% of course grade

Final Paper
30% of course grade

Class Participation: Reading (sometimes a lot) and attendance are critical to achieve a satisfactory grade and learning objectives in this course. Students are required to critically read all assigned materials prior to class and participate actively (in your own way) in class discussions and assignments.

Questions about the reading material: Throughout the semester, every week (each second section), students are expected to hand in the answers to specific questions about the reading material. The questions will be sent to the students one week in advance. In order to achieve a satisfactory grade on this assignment you are expected to elaborate your answers demonstrating the basic understanding of important concepts and showing capacity of critical thinking. You are allowed to miss two dates to deliver your answers. For each other date you miss, you will be penalized in 5 points.

Seminar Facilitation: On the same second section of each week 3 or 4 students will be responsible to facilitate a brief debate. These students will be pre-selected in the previous week and asked to expand three questions of the reading material to their classmates. You will be given about 10-15 minutes within which to both present your ideas and facilitate a short discussion (you should be aiming for something like a ten minute presentation and five minute discussion). You may use your answers as a guide or you are free to read what you have written. You may depend entirely on class readings for your presentation or you may look for additional information from external sources, as long as it is clear from where you are taking others' ideas. Initiative and creativity are important qualities that will be valued for this assignment. Each student is required to participate at least 2 times in the seminar facilitations during the semester. More details will be provided for this assignment.

Mid-Term in Class Essay: Students will be given a list of essay questions in the day of the test. Normally, you will have a list of 3-4 questions and you have to choose two of them to elaborate your answers in class. There will be a handout explaining in details this assignment and providing general tips of the questions that will be given and the expected format of the essays.

Final Project: For this assignment, students will be given a list of themes to choose from in order to elaborate their final projects about a topic in anthropological theory. Each student should prepare an oral presentation to be given on March 29th or 31st. You should also organize a written paper to be delivered until April 8th. The Final Paper follows the format of a research paper. This assignment allows students to develop an in depth reflection of a course topic that interests them. Students are supposed to select a subject suggested by the instructor or they may also come up with a topic and discuss with the instructor. Required length: 2000-3000 words or 5-8 pages, excluding bibliography. There will be a handout explaining the details of this assignment.

Policies and Procedures:

Attendance:

Students are expected to attend all classes, and actively participate in discussions in order to earn a satisfactory grade.

Grading Policy:

Assignments will be evaluated primarily on the basis of a student's understanding of the material presented in the course. Other factors that figure in evaluation of assignments include creative and critical insight, and writing (clarity, coherence, and organization).

General Course Policies:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity.

1. Avoid disrupting class by arriving late, leaving early, and/or allowing your cell phone to sound in class. Repeated disruptions will result first in a warning and then in a 5% penalty to the student's final grade. If the student's behaviour is disturbing the learning environment of the class he/she will be asked to leave. If you have to leave early inform the instructor in the beginning of the class.
2. It is expected that students will be respectful of their fellow students, their instructor, and cultures and traditions which are not their own.
3. Plagiarism consists of passing off as one's own the ideas, words, writings, etc., that belong to someone else. In accordance with this definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you should have the permission of that person. This is serious issue. Violation of the university's policy will result in a grade penalty or failure of the course. This type of violation will stay in your academic record.
4. Assignments must be delivered in on time as hard copies (email attachments will not be accepted). Late-assignments must be handed under the door of instructor's office (BB 2001C). Students should make sure that late submissions are signed and dated by staff or security.
5. The final date to drop the course is March 10th, 2017.
6. Students are responsible for taking their own lecture notes. Course outline, journal articles and book chapters will be posted online on Desire2Learn at least one week prior to the due date. All the course readings aside from the textbook will be provided as scanned PDF documents, posted on Desire2Learn.
7. The main communication tool between the instructor and students is Lakehead University's e-mail account. Students are asked to check regularly (including before the class) their LakeheadU e-mail account and Desire2Learn for unforeseen changes to the class due to weather conditions or other reasons. As a general rule, student questions sent 24 hours prior to an assignment or test will not be replied. Students can reasonably expect a response in 1-2 days. Grades are supposed to be returned to the students at the maximum period of two weeks after the assignment is delivered.
8. Students are welcome to schedule personal appointments to discuss any topic related to their academic progress or course content.
9. This syllabus is subject to minor changes during the course of the semester.

Course Schedule

UNIT 1: History of Anthropology

Week 1:

(Jan-10)

(Jan-12)

Introduction to the Course / Film Exhibition

Week 2:

Social Evolutionism and the Concept of Culture in North America

(Jan-17)

- "Edward Tylor: The Evolution of Culture" (Chapter 1, Moore)
- "Lewis Henry Morgan: The Evolution of Society" (Chapter 2, Moore).

(Jan-19)

- "Franz Boas: Culture in Context" (Chapter 3, Moore)
- Franz Boas: "Limitations of the Comparative Method" (from Science Magazine).

Week 3:

Structural Functionalism (British School)

(Jan-24)

- "Bronislaw Malinowski: The Functions of Culture" (Chapter 10, Moore)
- Malinowski: "Argonauts of the Western Pacific" (Introduction)

(Jan-26)

- Evans-Pritchard: "Witchcraft is an Organic and Hereditary Phenomenon" (from Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande).

Week 4:

Sociological Foundations of Anthropology (French School)

(Jan-31)

- Émile Durkheim: "The Organic Society" (Chapter 4, Moore)
- Marcel Mauss: "Elemental Categories, Total Facts" (Chapter 9, Moore)

(Feb-2)

Marcel Mauss: "The Gift" (Introductory and Chapter 1)

Week 5:

French Structuralism

(Feb-7)

- Claude Lévi-Strauss: "Structuralism" (Moore, Chapter 17)
- Claude Lévi-Strauss: "Introduction: History and Anthropology" (from Structural Anthropology, Vol.1)

(Feb-9)

- Claude Lévi-Strauss: "The Effectiveness of Symbols" (from Structural Anthropology, Vol.1)
- Claude Lévi-Strauss: "Four Winnebago Myths: A Structural Sketch" (from Structural Anthropology, Vol.2)

Week 6: **Interpretivism and Symbolic Anthropology**

(Feb-14) - Clifford Geertz: "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture" (Chapter 19, Moore).

- Victor Turner: "Symbols, Pilgrims and Drama" (Chapter 18, Moore)

(Feb-16) - Clifford Geertz: "Deep Play: notes on a Balinese cockfight" (from Daedalus Journal).

Week 7:

(No Class: Family Day & Study Week, Feb 20-24)

UNIT 2: Current Issues in Anthropology

Week 8: **Anthropology of Science**

(Feb-28) **** Mid-Term in Class Essay ****

(Mar-2) Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar. 1979. *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press (Introduction and Chapter 1)

Week 9: **Kinship, Alterity and the Boundaries of Difference**

(Mar-7) Janet Carsten. (2000). "Knowing Where You've Come from: Ruptures and continuities of Time and Kinship in Narratives of Adoption Reunions". In: *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 6(4): 687-703.

Morgan Clarke. (2007). "Closeness in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Debating Kinship and Biomedicine in Lebanon and the Middle East". In: *Anthropological Quarterly*, 8(2): 379-402.

(Mar-9) Verena Stolcke. (1995). Talking Culture: New Boundaries, New Rhetoric of Exclusion in Europe. *Current Anthropology*, 36(1): 1-24.

Week 10: **The Crisis of Representation and Hybrid Identities**

(Mar-14) James Clifford: "On Ethnographic Authority"

Edward Said. (1989). "Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors." In: *Critical Inquiry*, 15(2): 205-25.

(Mar-16) Wayne Warry. (2007) *Ending Denial: Understanding Aboriginal Issues* (Introduction and Chapter 6). Toronto: Broadview Press.

Week 11: Human Rights and Cultural Relativism

(Mar-21) Jack Donnely. (1984). "Cultural Relativism and Human Rights". In: *Human Rights Quarterly*, 6(4): 400-419.

Betina Shell-Duncan. (2008). "From Health to Human Rights: Female Genital Cutting and the Politics of Intervention". In: *American Anthropology*, 110 (2): 225-236.

(Mar-23) Hugh Gusterson. (1996). *Nuclear Rites: A Weapons Laboratory at the End of Cold War* (Chapter 5: Bodies and Machines). Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Week 12: Gender

(Mar-28) Jill Fisher. (2011). *Gender and the Science of Difference: Cultural Politics of Contemporary Science and Medicine (Studies in Modern Science, Technology, and the Environment)* (Chapter 1: Gendering Science: Contextualizing Historical and Contemporary Pursuits of Difference; Chapter 2: Gender Differences are not Hardwired. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

(Mar-30) Jill Fisher. (2011). Chapter 10: Facial Feminization and Theory of Facial Sex Difference). New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

Week 13: ** Final Project Presentations **

(Apr-4)

(Apr-6)

Desire2Learn

The course uses Desire2Learn for its course website. To access the course website, or any other Desire2Learn-based course website, go to the LU portal login page at <https://lakeheadu.desire2learn.com/> and log in using your LU username and password. Once you have logged in to the portal, look for the **mycourselink** module, where you'll find the link to our course website along with the link to all other Desire2Learn-based courses you are registered.

Accessibility Needs

Lakehead University is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Student Accessibility Services as soon as possible.