Course Description

This course on the history of anthropological theory could also be considered a course on the anthropology of anthropological theory. It is both a course on the intellectual history of anthropology as a discipline and a course in which we subject the discipline of anthropology to the kind of analysis and interpretation anthropologists usually engage in while studying other cultures in other parts of the world. Instead of analyzing myths and rituals from other cultures, in this course we analyze the texts anthropologists themselves write to see what we can learn from them about the different perspectives anthropologists and members of Western European cultures more generally have adopted in their study of what have been variously referred to as "savage," "primitive," "tribal," "kinship-based," "non-literate," and "Third World" societies. Instead of asking what the work of Margaret Mead or Evans-Pritchard, for example, can tell us about the Samoans or the Nuer, we ask what it can tell us about American or British anthropology. By adopting a self-reflexive or critical stance we set the discipline of anthropology in its historical and cultural context. In that way we can better understand the different theoretical approaches that have dominated anthropology over the past century. Among the important approaches and topics we consider are: cultural evolutionism, historical particularism, British structural-functionalism, psychological anthropology, recent developments in the areas of ethnographic writing, anthropology as cultural critique, postmodernism, feminism, and globalization theory.

Required Books

Boas, Race, Language, and Culture
Benedict, Patterns of Culture
Radcliffe-Brown, Structure and Function in Primitive Society
Said, Orientalism
Behar and Gordon, Women Writing Culture
Appadurai, Modernity at Large

Reserve Readings (all required books)

Tylor, Primitive Culture, Part I: The Origins of Culture
Lessa & Vogt, Reader in Comparative Religion
Lavenda & Schultz, Core Concepts in Cultural Anthropology
Frazer, The Golden Bough
Lewis, "The Question of Orientalism"
Said and Lewis, "Orientalism: An Exchange"
Clifford, "Introduction: Partial Truths" in Writing Culture
Clifford, "On Ethnographic Authority" in The Predicament of Culture
**Reserve Readings** (cont.)

Marcus and Cushman, "Ethnographies as Texts" in Siegel, Annual Review of Anthropology, 1982

Geertz, Works and Lives

Gordon, "Writing Culture, Writing Feminisms" in Inscriptions

Morales, "Concepts of Pollution" in Getting Home Alive

Senior theses by Amatruda, Noone, Poore and others are available in Pettengill 171

**Topics and Readings**

Sept. 8 Organization of the Course
   The Anthropology of Anthropology

1. **Evolutionism and the Use of the Comparative Method**


   Sept. 15 Tylor, "Animism" in Lessa and Vogt, pp. 9-19
   Frazer, "Sympathetic Magic:" in Lessa and Vogt, pp. 415-430 or 300-315 (pages may differ in some editions)

2. **Senior Thesis Workshop: Part 1**

   Sept. 20 Session with Social Science Reference Librarian Laura Juraska on improving Senior Thesis research skills (in Library)

   Sept. 22 Reading will include a variety of prospectuses, grant proposals, senior theses, and articles from various anthropology journals

3. **A Critique of Evolutionism and the Comparative Method: Historical Particularism and the Concepts of Culture and Race**

   Sept. 27 In-class video: Franz Boas (1858-1942)

   Sept. 29 Boas, *Race, Language, and Culture*
   "The Aims of Ethnology" (1888), pp. 626-638
   "The Limitations of the Comparative Method of Anthropology" (1896), pp. 270-280
   "The Methods of Ethnology" (1920), pp. 281-289
   "Some Problems of Methodology in the Social Sciences" (1930), pp. 260-269
   "The Aims of Anthropological Research" (1932), pp. 243-259
Oct. 4  **Rough Draft of Senior Thesis Prospectus due at 2:30 p.m.**

Oct. 4  Boas, *Race, Language, and Culture*
"Review of William Z. Ripley, 'The Races of Europe'" (1899), pp. 155-159
"New Evidence in Regard to the Instability of Human Types" (1916), pp. 76-81
"Race and Progress" (1931), pp. 3-17

4. **Senior Thesis Workshop: Part 2**

Oct. 6, 11  We will read and critique rough drafts of students' prospectuses.

5. **Patterns of Culture and the Origin of the Culture and Personality School**

Oct. 13  Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (1934), Chapters I-IV

Oct. 18  Benedict, Chapters VI-VIII (Omit V)

6. **British Social Anthropology: Structural — Functionalism**


Oct. 27  Radcliffe-Brown, Chapters VIII, IX, and X

7. **Anthropology and the Other: The Politics of Representation**

Nov. 1  Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 1-49
In-class video: *On Orientalism*

Nov. 3  Said, pp. 49-73, 92-110

Nov. 8  Said, pp. 284-328
Lewis, "The Question of Orientalism"
Said and Lewis, "Orientalism: An Exchange"

8. **Writing Ethnography: Postmodernism in Anthropology**

Nov. 10  Marcus and Cushman, "Ethnographies as Texts"
Clifford, "On Ethnographic Authority," in *Predicament of Culture*
Clifford, "Introduction: Partial Truths," in *Writing Culture*

Nov. 15  Geertz, *Works and Lives*, Chapters 1, 4 and 6

9. **A Feminist Critique**

Nov. 17  Gordon, "Writing Culture, Writing Feminisms" in *Inscriptions*, 1988
Behar, "Introduction," in *Women Writing Culture*, pp. 1-29
Nov. 29  Behar, "Writing in My Father’s Name," in Women Writing Culture, pp. 65-82
Lutz, "The Gender of Theory," in Women Writing Culture, pp. 249-266
Moralis, "Concepts of Pollution" in Getting Home Alive

10. Globalization Theory
Dec. 1  Appadurai, Modernity at Large, Chapters 1 and 2
Dec. 6  Appadurai, Chapter 3
Dec. 8  Discussion

Course Requirements
1. Class attendance and participation in class discussion. Regular and valuable contribution to
class discussion will raise a student's grade. Poor attendance will lower it.

2. For every class students will prepare three questions or topics for discussion raised by the
readings. The questions should be typed and will be handed in after class.

3. Thesis prospectus and critiques of other students' prospectuses.

4. Two short papers (5 pages) analyzing the assigned readings. The first paper should deal
with the work of Boas, Radcliffe-Brown, or Benedict; the second with the work of Said,
Geertz, Clifford, Marcus and Cushman, Behar (Gordon, Lutz), or Appadurai.

5. One long paper (10-15 pages) on a topic of your choice.

6. Take-home final exam.

Grading
Grades will be calculated as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Long paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two short papers</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation, written questions, thesis prospectus, exercises and peer response forms</td>
<td>25%</td>
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Schedule of Due Dates

Short papers are due at the beginning of class on the day the material analyzed is scheduled to be discussed.

Oct. 4    Senior Thesis Prospectus
Dec. 8    Long Paper
Dec. 13   Take-home final examination (to be handed out on Dec. 8)

(Late papers and exams will be graded down unless an extension has been granted.)

Papers

The long paper should be approximately 10-15 pages long. It should focus on one anthropological school, the work of one anthropologist, an important work of one anthropologist, or one concept that has been central to the history of anthropology. You are encouraged to choose a school, an anthropologist, a work, or a concept that we have not dealt with in class, such as French Structuralism (Durkheim or Levi Strauss), cultural ecology (Steward or Harris), interpretive anthropology (Geertz, Turner, or Douglas), medical anthropology (Kleinman), race (Montague), or post-processual archaeology (Hodder). You should deal with your topic as we deal with the class readings. Treat the text as a document from another culture. Ask what we can learn from the text about the culture of the anthropologist who wrote the text. Do not focus on the ethnographic content of the work. In other words, if you were to write about Margaret Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa*, you would not be concerned with Samoan culture, but with American cultural anthropology or with psychological anthropology as practiced by Mead. You should examine the perspective or the paradigm of the anthropologist you write about. What, for example, does Mead take for granted? What are her assumptions? What are her questions? What are her methods? What for Mead constitutes an explanation?

The short papers should be approximately 5 pages long. They should focus on one idea, concept, term, or issue from the readings. They should deal with some of the same topics as the long paper, but in a much more restricted and focused manner. Make sure you do not just summarize the reading, but make a point, say something interesting, or offer an interpretation or analysis of some specific aspect of the readings. For example, you might analyze Tylor’s concept of culture or progress or Boas’ use of the term culture or his thoughts about anthropology as a science.

All students are responsible for reading and understanding the

**Bates College Statement on Academic Honesty.**