

## **ANTH 480: Global Social Theory**

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CW 324; TTh 4:25-5:50

### Course Overview

'Anthropological theory' refers to two things. On the first level, it is theory *of* the other; that is, it is theorizations by anthropologists about the people, places and things they study, primarily for the edification of other anthropologists. Secondly, it is also theory *from* the other; that is, it is theory produced by those in colonial and postcolonial situations to account for the ways that their people, places, and things have been changed by the imperial and industrial encounters of the high and late colonial phases (ca. 1600-1950 CE). This course is intended to introduce students to these two bodies of literature, their assumptions, overlaps and tensions. The readings and lectures span continents, and draw together disparate strains of social theory to think about the current condition of anthropology, as well as the futures that anthropology is confronting and producing through the collaborative fusions and postcolonial challenges of producing social theory in a multi-cultural world.

This course is ostensibly organized around divisions – between men and women, between colonizer and colonized, between North and South, between modern and traditional, between anthropologist and interlocutor. It is non-linear in its presentation, moving between present and past, past and present, and between multiple contemporary points from around the globe. Rather than approach this course as if there is an agreed upon canon of social theory, the design of this course embraces polyphony and conversation; there is no one history or survey of social theory, but many simultaneous, often contradictory and mutually-oblivious conversations. The arrangement of readings is meant to replicate this, staging conversations between anthropologists and non-anthropologists, from one continent to another, between parts of the Global South (Africa-Latin America; South Asia-Australia) and between the Global South and the North Atlantic (Africa-Europe; USA-Latin America).

Students will prepare weekly reading guides and complete a research paper based upon the identification of a problem in social theory. Upon completion of the course, students should have a robust understanding of contemporary theoretical concerns in cultural anthropology and related fields, including but not limited to: indigenouness and cosmopolitanism, race and ethnicity, tradition and custom, modernity and postmodernity, globalization and economic forms, and the category of the human.

## Learning Outcomes

Students in C courses will

1. Demonstrate understanding of course content through formal academic writing;
2. Construct effective prose that demonstrates critical thinking and advances sound conclusions, appropriate to the course and discipline; and
3. Demonstrate the ability to revise and improve their writing in both form and content.

Students in O courses will demonstrate

1. Proficiency in oral presentations.
2. The ability to improve oral presentations in response to critiques.
3. Skill in listening to and critiquing oral presentations.

Students in G courses will

1. Demonstrate knowledge of how two or more distinctive world regions have influenced and interacted with one another and how such interactions have been informed by their respective cultures or civilizations.

Reading List:

Books are available at the campus bookstore. All other readings will be made available through myCourses.

- Cesaire, Aime. *Discourse on Colonialism*. Translated by Joan Pinkham. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000.
- Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality*. R. Hurley, transl. Volume 1. New York: Vintage, 1990 [1976].
- Memmi, Albert. *Racism*. Translated by Steve Martinot. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.
- Povinelli, Elizabeth. *The Empire of Love: Toward a Theory of Intimacy, Genealogy, and Carnality*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.
- Santos, Boaventura. *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide*. New York: Routledge, 2016.
- Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London: Zed Books, 2012.
- Stoler, Ann Laura. *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's *History of Sexuality* and the Colonial Order of Things*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995.
- TallBear, Kim. *Native American DNA: Tribal Belonging and the False Promise of Genetic Science*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2013.
- Taussig, Michael. *Beauty and the Beast*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012.
- Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. *Global Transformations: Anthropology and the Modern World*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

## Grading & Assignments:

Reading Guides (30%) – Students are required to complete at least 2 reading guides each week during weeks 2-14, and a total of 30 reading guides over the course of the semester (there are more readings [39] than required Reading Guides, so students have some latitude in which readings they submit Reading Guides for). Reading Guides must be turned in to the instructor at the beginning of class in which the reading is discussed. Late Reading Guides will not be accepted for credit. Reading Guides cannot be submitted for readings during the first week of class. The Reading Guide is included as Appendix A.

Oral Presentations (2 @ 10%) – Students will initially present on their identified paper topic (see below) and the resources they intend to draw on to address the topic. These presentations will be short (2 written pages, ~5 minutes), and students will receive written feedback from the instructor and peers. During the last week of class, students will give longer presentations (4-5 written pages, ~10 minutes) summarizing the argument of their final paper, the evidence that they have drawn upon, and the conclusions they have reached. Again, students will receive written feedback from the instructor and peers. In both cases, students will be graded on their effectiveness in communicating their ideas, the coherence of the presentation, and their ability to engage the audience. Presentations cannot be rescheduled; if you miss your presentation, you will receive a failing grade in the course.

## 15-Page Final Paper, broken into these components (50% total):

*Identify a Theoretical Problem* (5%) – Based on the readings during the first month of class, identify a theoretical problem that has been addressed by theorists from different geographic and historical backgrounds. This might be a theoretical problem apparent in politics, media, literature, history, etc. It should be a real thing, i.e. not something only in fiction, and there should be enough material about it to base a paper on it. In 300 words, what is the problem, and how has social theory been used to discuss it? That is, who is the problem a problem for and what will understanding it solve? How does the problem relate to the course content?

*Identify Resources* (5%) – What kinds of research are you going to conduct to explore the history and actual or potential ramifications of the problem you have identified? *Who* has talked about the idea and *how* have they talked about it? You'll need to identify the resources that will lead to the successful completion of your research project: which course materials can you draw on? are there books and academic journals you can consult? archives that you can access? In 300 words, you'll need to discuss your proposed methods in completing your research project's data collection, what secondary and primary sources you can consult, and how these sources will inform your research.

*Thesis & Argumentation* (5%) – In a paragraph (~200 words), make an interpretive argument about your research findings. Are you making an historical argument? an ethnographic one? a cross-cultural one? How does the argument relate to the resources you will be drawing upon to make your argument? In another paragraph, discuss the contrary positions to your argument; that is, argue against yourself. What are the weaknesses in your argument? How might other people read the same evidence differently than you propose to? How have other people argued about similar evidence in the past?

*First Five Pages* (5%) – Write the first five pages of your research paper (~1500 words). In these pages, you should have a compelling introduction (provide a description of the concept and its powers), as well as the statement of your thesis, and a discussion of your research methods. In addition, you should provide a map of your paper – what are the sections and how are they organized? how does each section relate to your argument? Discuss each section in a paragraph or more. What do you imagine your conclusion discussing?

*Rough Draft* (5%) – Building on your First Five Pages, you will complete a full rough draft of your paper. Each section needs to be fully written, including the presentation of evidence, your discussion and interpretation of the evidence, and an articulation of how the evidence relates to your overall argument and fits into the structure of the paper. You will also complete a draft of your conclusion, in which you will discuss the implications for the problem that you have identified. Each section should be at least five pages long, and the conclusion should be at least two pages long. The Rough Draft will be read and commented upon by the instructor.

*Final Rough Draft* (5%) – The Final Rough Draft must incorporate the comments of the instructor from your Rough Draft, and represents the final version of your paper. The paper should be complete for all intents and purposes, including a completed introduction, sections, and conclusion, and full citations and bibliography.

*Peer Reviews* (2 @ 5% each) – First read this, on the ‘elements of productive peer review’: <http://bit.ly/2htngrT>. You will be randomly assigned two papers to read, and you are required to turn in a peer review for two of your peers. Each peer review should be 500-700 words long, and discuss the author’s argument, use of evidence, persuasiveness, and coherence. Additionally, you may choose to identify issues in your peers’ writing style. Late peer reviews will not be accepted for credit, but must be turned in to receive a grade for your final paper.

*Final Paper & Response to Peer Reviews* (10%) – In no less than 300 words, you should prepare a document that outlines how you have chosen to address (or not address) each of the concerns raised by the peer reviewers. You may either complete this in one or two documents. Your Final Paper should incorporate these changes as well, and you should address how you have included the critiques into your paper.

Policies:

**No exceptions to policies will be made for students who add the class late.**

**There is no extra credit available.**

**No late work will be accepted for credit.**

**Students taking the course Pass/Fail must earn a C to receive a Pass.**

Workload: This course is a 4-credit course, which means that in addition to the scheduled lectures, students are expected to do at least 9.5 hours of course-related work each week during the semester. This includes things like: completing assigned readings, participating in lab sessions, studying for tests and examinations, preparing written assignments, completing internship or clinical placement requirements, and other tasks that must be completed to earn credit in the course.<sup>1</sup> I assume that undergraduate students can read 1 page of academic writing in 3 minutes; 100 pages of reading should require about 300 minutes, or 5 hours. You may need to read some of the texts more than once to fully understand them. In most cases, you should expect to be reading about 125-200 pages per week (approximately 6 hours) in addition to other course requirements.

Disability-related Equal Access Accommodations: Students wishing to request academic accommodations to insure their equitable access and participation in this course should notify the instructor as soon as they are aware of their need for such arrangements. Authorizations from Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) are generally required. We encourage you to contact SSD at 607-777-2686 to schedule an appointment with the Director or Learning Disabilities Specialist. The SSD website ([www.binghamton.edu/ssd](http://www.binghamton.edu/ssd)) includes information regarding their Disability Documentation Guidelines. The office is located in UU-119.

Academic Integrity – Academic misconduct of any sort will not be tolerated. Evidence of academic misconduct – which is not limited to plagiarism and cheating – will result in an immediate failing grade in the course and actions as dictated by university policy regarding academic integrity for undergraduate students.<sup>2</sup>

Contacting Me: I only check my email between 9-11 AM on weekday mornings and during my office hours. I will always respond to emails within 24 hours, except for emails received on Fridays, which will be responded to on the following Monday. If you

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.binghamton.edu/academics/provost/documents/syllabus-credit-hours-0314.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.binghamton.edu:8080/exist9/rest/Bulletin2014-15/xq/2\\_academic\\_policies\\_and\\_procedures\\_all\\_students.xq?\\_xsl=/db/Bulletin2014-15/xsl/MasterCompose.xsl](http://www.binghamton.edu:8080/exist9/rest/Bulletin2014-15/xq/2_academic_policies_and_procedures_all_students.xq?_xsl=/db/Bulletin2014-15/xsl/MasterCompose.xsl)

plan to stop by my office hours, please contact me ahead of time, either by email (mwolfmey@binghamton.edu) or in person before or after class.

Correspondence with instructor: Only correspondence that follows professional conventions of correspondence will be replied to by me. For example, your email should begin 'Dear Professor Wolf-Meyer,...' and end with your signature. Beginning an email without a salutation, a 'Hey' or other informal forms of address will ensure your email will not be responded to. If the answer to your question is clearly stated in the syllabus or assignment guidelines, instructors may not respond to your email.

Style Matters: All written work should be double-spaced, 12 point font, in Times New Roman, with 1 inch margins on all sides, and page numbers. Citation should look like this: (Author Year: Page), e.g. (Wolf-Meyer 2009: 408). Failure to meet these standards will result in a reduced grade.

Letters of Recommendation: Before you ask me for a letter of recommendation, read this: <http://bit.ly/2nwbeNG>. My policy is to not provide students with a letter of recommendation before they complete a course with me. I also generally do not provide letters for students who have taken only one course from me (for reasons detailed in that link).

## **Week 1: What's at Stake in Social Theory?**

1.22.2019

Introduction to the Course; Syllabus overview

1.24.2019

Cesaire, Aime

2000 *Discourse on Colonialism*. Translated by Joan Pinkham. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Hobsbawm, Eric

1962 *The Age of Revolution: 1789-1848*. New York: Vintage. [Selections]

Wolf, Eric R.

1982 *Europe and the People without History*. Berkeley: University of California Press. [Selections]

### Part One: Theorizing the Global

## **Week 2: Emerging Postmodernity**

1.29.2019

Harvey, David

1990 *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. Malden, MA: Blackwell. [Selections]

Jameson, Fredric

1984 *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. *New Left Review* 146:53-92.

1.31.2019

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph

2003 *Global Transformations: Anthropology and the Modern World*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. **Introduction, Chapters 1-2**

### **Week 3: Capital and Its Concepts**

2.5.2019

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph

2003 *Global Transformations: Anthropology and the Modern World*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. **Chapters 3-6**

2.7.2019

Marx, Karl

1990 [1976] *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. B. Fowkes, transl. Volume 1. New York: Penguin. [Selections]

Marx, Karl

1992 [1975] *Early Writings*. R. Livingstone and G. Benton, transl. New York: Penguin. [Selections]

Sahlins, Marshall

1976 *Culture and Practical Reason*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [Selections]

### **Week 4: Transaction, Relation, Tension**

2.12.2019

*Identify a Theoretical Problem Due*

Bourdieu, Pierre

1991 [1982] *Language and Symbolic Power*. G. Raymond and M. Adamson, transl. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. [Selections]

Liu, Lydia H.

2004 *The Clash of Empires: The Invention of China in Modern World Making*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. [Selections]

Mauss, Marcel

2000 [1950] *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*. W.D. Halls, transl. New York: W. W. Norton. [Selections]

2.14.2019

Chakrabarty, Dipesh

2000 *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. [Selections]

Mignolo, Walter

2011 *Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options*. Durham: Duke University Press. [Selections]

### **Week 5: Decomposing Hegemony, Part 1**

2.19.2019

Santos, Boaventura.

2016 *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide*. New York: Routledge. **Pages viii-xi, 2-114**

2.21.2019

Santos, Boaventura.

2016 *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide*. New York: Routledge, 2016. **Pages 118-135, 188-240**

### **Week 6: Decomposing Hegemony, Part 2**

2.26.2019

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London: Zed Books, 2012. **Chapters 1-4**

2.28.2019

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London: Zed Books, 2012. **Chapters 5-7**

### Part Two: Subjectivity and Its Discontents

### **Week 7: Race, Racism, and Racial Knowledge**

3.5.2019

*Identify Resources Due*

TallBear, Kim

2013 *Native American DNA: Tribal Belonging and the False Promise of Genetic Science*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press. **Introduction, Chapters 1 & 4**

3.7.2019

Memmi, Albert

2000 *Racism*. Translated by Steve Martinot. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press. **Pages 3-165**

## **Week 8: The Foundations of Subjectivity**

3.12.2019

*Thesis & Outline Due*

Student Presentations

3.14.2019

Lacan, Jacques

2002 [1966] The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function, as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience *In Ecrits: A Selection*. Pp. 3-9. New York: W. W. Norton.

Butler, Judith

1999 [1990] *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge. [Selections]

## **Week 9: Spring Break**

**No Classes 3.16-3.24**

## **Week 10: Disciplining the Subject**

3.26.2019

Foucault, Michel

1998 [1982] Technologies of the Self. *In Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*. P. Rabinow, ed. Pp. 223-252. *Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954-1984, Vol. 1*. New York: New Press.

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2000 [1982] The Subject and Power. *In Power*. J.D. Faubion, ed. Pp. 326-348. *Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954-1984, Vol. 3*. New York: New Press.

3.28.2019

*First Five Pages Due*

Foucault, Michel

1995 [1975] *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. A. Sheridan, transl. New York: Vintage. [Selections]

## **Week 11: Subjectivity and Power**

4.2.2019

Foucault, Michel

1990 [1976] *The History of Sexuality*. R. Hurley, transl. Volume 1. New York: Vintage.

4.4.2019

Berlant, Lauren

2011 *Cruel Optimism*. Durham: Duke University Press. [Selections]

Deleuze, Gilles

1995 [1990] *Negotiations*. M. Joughin, transl. New York: Columbia University Press.  
[Selections]

Mbembe, Achille

2003 *Necropolitics*. *Public Culture* 15(1):11-40.

Nader, Laura

1997 *Controlling Processes: Tracing the Dynamic Components of Power*. *Current Anthropology* 38(5):711-738.

### Part 3: Revisiting the Colony

#### **Week 12: Dialectical Subjectivity**

4.9.2019

Bhabha, Homi

1984 *Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse*. *October* (28):125-133.

Caillois, Roger

1984 *Mimicry and Legendary Psychesthenia*. *October* 31:17-32.

Fanon, Franz

2008 [1952] *Black Skin, White Masks*. R. Philcox, transl. New York: Grove Press.  
[Selections]

4.11.2019

Buck-Morss, Susan

2000 *Hegel and Haiti*. *Critical Inquiry* 26(4):821-865.

#### **Week 13: Disfiguring Subjectivity**

4.16.2019

*Rough Draft Due*

In-Class Paper Workshop (Bring a Paper Copy of your Paper)

4.18.2019

Taussig, Michael

2012 *Beauty and the Beast*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

#### **Week 14: Revisiting the Colonial Subject**

4.23.2019

Stoler, Ann Laura

1995 Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's *History of Sexuality* and the Colonial Order of Things. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. **Preface, Chapters 1-3**

4.25.2019

Stoler, Ann Laura

1995 Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's *History of Sexuality* and the Colonial Order of Things. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. **Chapters 4-6, Epilogue**

#### **Week 15: The Future of Social Theory (?)**

4.30.2019

*Final Rough Draft Due*

Povinelli, Elizabeth

2006 The Empire of Love: Toward a Theory of Intimacy, Genealogy, and Carnality. Durham: Duke University Press. **Introduction, Chapters 1-2**

5.2.2019

Fassin, Didier

2013 On Resentment and *Ressentiment*: The Politics and Ethics of Moral Emotions. *Current Anthropology* 54(3):249-267.

Povinelli, Elizabeth

2006 The Empire of Love: Toward a Theory of Intimacy, Genealogy, and Carnality. Durham: Duke University Press. **Chapter 3**

Robbins, Joel

2013 Beyond the Suffering Subject: Toward an Anthropology of the Good. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 19(3):447-462.

#### **Week 16: Final Presentations**

5.7.2019

*Peer Reviews Due*

Student Presentations

5.9.2019

Student Presentations

#### **Final Exam Week**

Final paper due on final exam date, to be determined in February

## **Appendix A: Reading Guide for Non-Fiction**

*For each reading, you will need to fill out this form. Bring copies of each reading guide to class to receive credit and ensure that you understand each reading.*

1. Who is the author? What kind of disciplinary background are they coming from (e.g. anthropology, history, sociology, medicine)?
2. Who is the piece written for? How can you infer the audience?
3. What is the main argument and goal of the writing? -- to verify something? or challenge a theoretical claim? In other words, if you had to explain it in class, how would you summarize it?
4. Identify the author's thesis.
5. What are the key concepts used? Are concepts challenged or invented?
6. Who are the texts' friends and enemies? How are citations used?
7. What is the article, book, or chapters about, empirically? In other words, what is being studied as the object? Where are the events and people geographically situated? What is the scale of analysis? (e.g. nation, region, city, institution, person?) When did the study take place?
8. What methods were used in collecting data? (ethnography, interviews, statistics, textual analysis, archival research?) Does the data look at what people do, say, or think? How was the data analyzed? What assumptions -- of the author or his or her society -- shaped the inquiry? What core values are assumed? What data would strengthen the text?
9. Discuss a passage (citing page number) that inspired you or frustrated you. Then type out a paragraph or two (160-300 words) discussing that passage (citing page number) and describing how it resonated or clashed with other course content (which might be a discussion, a film, or another text).
10. If you take one thing away from the text, what would it be? In other words, if you're telling a friend about this article, what's the one nugget you would share to make start a conversation?