

ANTH 2110  
Fall 2024  
Lecture: Thursday 10:30 AM– 12:15 PM

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Tutorials: Thursday 12:30 – 1:15 PM, 1:30 – 2:15 PM

**TA:** TBD

## **History of Anthropological Theory**

How do Anthropologist's see, interpret, discuss, and understand the world they study? Designed as 'a history' we will chronologically trace the main concepts, ideas, and explanations that have influenced, made, and sometimes challenged the discipline. While this course does not aim to be all-encompassing, it will offer a basic understanding of the most common abstractions of reality, which we call theory. Such a history of anthropological theory has to start and end somewhere: We will move from the classic social theory to theories of practice. Yet, such an order does not imply a teleology, a necessary or even logical progression of one idea replacing another, or a latter system of thought being better than its predecessor. Instead, we will try to follow the debates – some settled, some open – that are the foundation of Anthropological knowledge production! While some foundational theories might be problematic today, other "old" ideas remain or have become relevant again to explore today's issues and events of social order, transformations, and struggles.

### **Learning Objectives:**

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- have a solid grasp of anthropological and social theory, from the 19th century to the 1980s
- be able to apply this theory in a full way to understand practical events and issues.

### **Course Format:**

This course is conducted in lecture and tutorial format. The lecture will introduce the required readings and discuss key passages, but it will not give a detailed summary of the readings. It is therefore essential that you do the required readings before class and come prepared. The lecture will be interactive with more room for your questions and discussion. The tutorial is an extension of the lecture based on the student's needs and interests.

Physical presence in all lectures and tutorials is a basic requirement for this course. Excused absences are generally only permitted with a medical doctor's note or in case of a personal emergency. If you have to miss class, please e-mail me beforehand. It is your responsibility to obtain notes from your fellow students about the missed sessions. There will be no transcript or recording of the lecture or tutorial provided afterwards, so please take notes.

### **Readings:**

#### **All readings will be made available as PDFs on Blackboard.**

The readings are divided into two categories:

- 1.) We will use readers that explain and situate the theories of these weeks. These readings will be marked **black** and are required each week for everyone.
- 2.) Short excerpts of original theory texts (with complementary commentary). These readings are marked **grey** and you are required to do at least one per week.

### **Requirements and Assessment:**

The following are the required assignments that will be graded:

**Participation + Response Paper (20%):** Participation includes doing the readings (as required, see below), coming to all the lectures and tutorials, asking questions, joining in on class-discussion or posting on the discussion board (on blackboard).

**Response Paper:** You have to write a short response to one of the original texts (less than 500 words). The response paper has to be posted to the blackboard forum (under 'Response Paper') the day before the lecture in which we discuss the text (for example: Response to Durkheim, post before lecture on September 18). The response paper should address: What do you think we can learn from the author? How could this theory help explain a contemporary issue (give an example)? Also, quote one sentence from the text and say why you think it is important. **The response paper has to be submitted latest on October 30<sup>th</sup> via blackboard in the tutorial section!!**

**2x Take-Home-Exams (40% each):** The take-home exams will require you to use at least two of the original texts (marked in grey syllabus) to write a paper (1000 - 1500 words) in response to a given question. **The exams are due on November 13 and**

**December 12.** The questions will be posted on blackboard in week 10 and week 13 of the class.

Submit your Take-Home-Exams as a word-document to blackboard (under assignments) and also submit the signed veriguide report with.

**VeriGuide requirements:** Students are required by university policy to submit all exam papers to VeriGuide ([https://academic.veriguide.org/academic/login\\_CUHK.jspx](https://academic.veriguide.org/academic/login_CUHK.jspx)). A take-home-exam assignment without a signed declaration from VeriGuide will not be graded.

**Grade Descriptors (Course Specific Descriptor):**

**A:** Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.

(The work has creatively synthesized course materials and key ideas in an original way. The argument is logical and cohesive, the discussion is well-organized, and the writing is clear. The work goes beyond merely summarizing key ideas. The work clearly differentiates between the position of the author versus the position(s) the author wishes to challenge. Concrete evidence corresponds to statements and claims).

**A-:** Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.

(The work synthesizes course materials and key ideas in an original way, but there are areas for improvement).

**B:** Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.

(The work demonstrates a solid grasp of course materials and key ideas. There are areas for improvement with respect to building a cohesive argument, organizing the discussion, communicating clearly, and/or identifying relevant evidence. There is some confusion over what position the author has taken versus the position(s) the author wishes to challenge).

**C:** Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.

(The work shows some effort, but course materials have not been sufficiently engaged

or the paper fails to directly address the prompt. The argument and the writing is not clear).

**D:** Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes.

(The work shows little effort to engage course materials. There are major problems with clarity of argument and writing).

**F:** Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.

(The work has failed respond to the assignment prompt).

### **Policies and Support:**

- **Technology Use:** Please be respectful and do not distract yourself and your fellow students. Students are only allowed to use their tablets or laptops in class to take notes. Please do not use your devices for non-class related activities. Mobile phones must be turned on silent (not vibrate).
- **Educational Technology:** This class relies on the use of Blackboard. All required class readings, the out-of-class assignment submissions, as well as announcements will be done through it. Note that it uses the email address assigned to you by the University, so it is your responsibility to have an electronic mail forwarded to your main email address.
- **Respectful Conduct and Discussion Rules:** We will discuss many interesting and important topics. While I encourage thoughtful, engaged, and controversial discussion, I expect you to be polite and respectful of your classmates' opinions, limit your statements to academic (not emotional) arguments, and not use offensive language or judgmental statements. Please give each other time to talk, do not interrupt, and most importantly listen to each other.
- **Late Submission:** Late submission will suffer a fraction of a grade per day. For example, an A will become an A-.
- **Academic Honesty and Plagiarism:** Academic honesty is crucial and plagiarism is a serious offense. The university has recently updated its policies on Academic Integrity and the penalties for plagiarism and cheating:

[http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng.htm\\_files %282013-](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng.htm_files%282013-)

[14%29/p06.htm](#). You are required to cite properly (guidelines: <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/ant/tstyle.doc> and [http://www.ilc.cuhk.edu.hk/english/resource/referencing\\_avoidingplagiarism1.pdf](http://www.ilc.cuhk.edu.hk/english/resource/referencing_avoidingplagiarism1.pdf)) to avoid plagiarism. Any use of AI-based writing programs (such as ChatGPT) is not allowed and is considered plagiarism. Please do not hesitate to talk to me and ask questions about this.

- **Independent Learning Center:** If you need help with communication and learning skills, the University has a great resource for you. You can schedule a consultation or attend workshops on various strategies for improving learning outcomes <https://www.ilc.cuhk.edu.hk/EN/mission.aspx>
- **Special Accommodation:** If you need special accommodations or classroom modifications, you need to notify both me and the University's Wellness and Counseling Center (<https://www2.osa.cuhk.edu.hk/disability/en-GB>) no later than the third week of class.

## Course Schedule

### Week 1 (Sep 5): Why Theory?

Introduction. No readings.

### Week 2 (Sep 12): Marx and Weber – Historical Materialism vs. Meaningful Action

Turner, Beeghley, and Powers, "The Sociology of Karl Marx," in *The Emergence of Sociological Theory* (7<sup>th</sup> Edition). Read pp. 113 - 133.

Karl Marx, "History," in *The German Ideology: Part I*, pp. 155-175 (1845-46).

Turner, Beeghley, and Powers, "The Sociology of Max Weber," in *The Emergence of Sociological Theory* (7<sup>th</sup> Edition). Read pp. 161 – 166, 180 - 195.

Max Weber, "Asceticism and the Spirit of Capitalism," in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905).

### Week 3 (Sep 19): Durkheim and Mauss – Social Cohesion and Integration

Moore, Jerry D.: "Émile Durkheim: The Organic Society," in *Visions of Culture – An Introduction to Anthropological Theory* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition)..

Émile Durkheim, Introduction to *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, in *Readings for a History of Anthropological Theory* (1915).

Eriksen, Thomas Hylland: “Reciprocity,” in *What is Anthropology?* (2004).

Marcel Mauss, excerpts from *The Gift*, in *Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History* (1925).

#### **Week 4 (Sep 26): Tylor and Morgan – Early Anthropology and the Study of Difference**

Moore, “Edward Tylor: The Evolution of Culture,” in *Visions of Culture*.

Sir Edward Burnett Tylor, “The Science of Culture,” in *Readings for a History of Anthropological Theory* (1871).

Moore, “Lewis Henry Morgan: The Evolution of Society,” in *Visions of Culture*.

Lewis Henry Morgan, “Ethnical Periods,” in *Readings for a History of Anthropological Theory* (1877).

#### **Week 5 (Oct 3): Boas and Mead – American Cultural Anthropology I**

Moore, “Franz Boas: Culture in Context,” in *Visions of Culture*.

Franz Boas, “The Methods of Ethnology,” in *Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History* (1920).

Moore, “Margaret Mead: The Individual and Culture,” in *Visions of Culture*

Margaret Mead, Introduction to *Coming of Age in Samoa*, in *Readings for a History of Anthropological Theory* (1928)

#### **Week 6 (Oct 10): Benedict and Sapir – American Cultural Anthropology II**

Moore, “Ruth Benedict: Patterns of Culture,” in *Visions of Culture*

Ruth Benedict, “The Individual and the Pattern of Culture,” in *Readings for a History of Anthropological Theory* (1934).

Moore, “Edward Sapir: Culture, Language, and the Individual,” in *Visions of Culture*

Edward Sapir, *Why Cultural Anthropology Needs the Psychiatrist* (1938).

#### **Week 7 (Oct 17): Malinowski – British Social Anthropology I**

Moore, “Bronislaw Malinowski: The Functions of Culture,” in *Visions of Culture*.

Malinowski, Bronislaw, *A Scientific Theory of Culture*, (1960), Selections.

## **Week 8 (Oct 24): Radcliffe-Brown and Evans-Pritchard – British Social Anthropology II**

Moore, “A. R. Radcliffe-Brown: The Structures of Society,” in *Visions of Culture*.

A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, “On Joking Relationships,” in *Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History* (1940).

Moore, “E. E. Evans-Pritchard: Social Anthropology, Social History,” in *Visions of Culture*.

E. E. Evans-Pritchard, “The Notion of Witchcraft explains Unfortunate Events,” in *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande* (1976 abridged edition [1937]).

## **Week 9 (Oct 31): Turner and Douglas – Symbolic Anthropology**

Moore, “Victor Turner: Symbols, Pilgrims, and Drama,” in *Visions of Culture*.

Victor Turner, “Symbols in Ndembu Ritual,” in *Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History* (1967).

Moore, “Mary Douglas: Symbols and Structures, Pollution and Purity,” in *Visions of Culture*.

Mary Douglas, “Secular Defilement,” in *Purity and Danger* (1966).

## **Week 10 (Nov 7): Interpretative Anthropology**

Moore, “Clifford Geertz: An Interpretive Anthropology,” in *Visions of Culture*.

Clifford Geertz. Thick Description Towards an Interpretive Theory of Culture. In *Readings for a History of Anthropological Theory* (1973).

+++ Posting of questions for take-home-exam (due on Nov 13<sup>th</sup> by midnight) +++

**+++ Week 11 (Nov 14): No Class because of Congregation +++**

## **Week 12 (Nov 21): Bourdieu - Theories of Practice**

Moore, “Pierre Bourdieu: An Anthropology of Practice,” in *Visions of Culture*.

Pierre Bourdieu, “Structures, Habitus, Practices,” in *Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History* (1972).

**Week 13 (Nov 28): Foucault – Knowledge and Power**

Michel Foucault, “Docile Bodies” in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975)

+++ Posting of questions for take-home-exam (due on Dec 12th by midnight) +++

**Week 14 (Dec 3 – Make up class, Tuesday from 10:30 – 12:15 pm, no tutorial):  
Ontological Turn**

Moore, “Bruno Latour: The Creation of Knowledge,” in *Visions of Culture*.

Bruno Latour, “Introduction”. In *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (2005).

Moore, “Tim Ingold: Anthropology beyond Humanity,” in *Visions of Culture*.

Tim Ingold, “Knowing from the Inside [Selection,” in *Making: Anthropology, archaeology, art and architecture* (2013).