

ANTH 5015

Anthropology: A Postgraduate Introduction

Fall 2019

Seminar time: Monday, 1830-2115hrs

Location: NAH 114

Instructor: Dr. Tung-Yi Kho, tungyikho@cuhk.edu.hk

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Office hours: NAH 411, Monday 1600-1800hrs, or by appointment

Language of instruction: English

Course Description

Anthropology - *anthro* (human) and *logia* (the study of) - refers to the study of humankind. This is an ambitiously broad, all-encompassing field. In North America, the discipline of anthropology is typically broken into the four subfields of physical or biological anthropology, archaeological anthropology, linguistic anthropology and socio-cultural anthropology. Taken together, these four subfields give anthropology a unique, “holistic” perspective on the human experience, stressing the contribution of the biological as well as the cultural – “nature” as well as “nurture” - in the formation of the human past and present.

Yet, for reasons that will be elaborated, we will primarily be examining the many themes and sub-fields of sociocultural anthropology. This course can be regarded as a general introduction to the major currents within sociocultural anthropology.

It is not unreasonable to argue that the concerns of sociocultural anthropology can be traced to the distant past, when questions concerning social life first emerged (i.e. to the Ancient Greeks in the West, or to the time of Confucius in China). But we shall begin our discussion of the story of anthropology closer to our time (i.e. the modern period), when the production of social knowledge started to take on a more systematic and disciplinary guise. So, we will begin our story of the development of anthropology when the discipline took on elements of its current disciplinary constitution in the West. In fact, it is the aim of this course *to help students see the relevance of anthropological knowledge and analysis for understanding present-day realities*.

While the analytical focus is on the present, the present inevitably calls for an appreciation of the past. Analysis in anthropology thus involves the deployment of the conceptual to reflect upon empirical phenomena unfolding across time and space, along varying scales. As we inquire how the present is connected to the past, we are also compelled to ask how the local is related to the global. The empirical in turn informs and modifies the conceptual in an ever-iterative process of knowledge-and-reality-making. In keeping with this, our discussions in this course will involve a simultaneous focus on:

- i. Major anthropological concerns
- ii. The contemporary human predicament and how we got here.

Required Texts

Tsing, Anna. 2015. *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Han, Clara. 2012. *Life in Debt: Times of Care and Violence in Neoliberal Chile*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Evaluation

Paper 1: 1500-word review of either texts. 25 %. **Due: October 14.**

Paper 2: 1500-word review of any particular week's theme. 25%. **Due: November 25.**

Paper 3: 2500-word essay/proposal focussing on an intended research area of one's interest. 50%. **Due: December 2.**

Students may have already existing interests; if not they can select from any one of the week's topics. The *purpose* of this exercise is to give the student the experience of conceiving of a research project, build a case for it, then demonstrating how they will go about it. In this process, they will tell *what* the project is, *why* it is important in view of existing research, then *how* they will accomplish it.

Learning outcomes:

Upon completing this course, students should be able to:

- competently demonstrate what anthropology is;
- apply anthropological concepts in the analysis of current social realities; and
- understand the strengths and limits of anthropological methods and analysis.

Grade Descriptors

Grades will be issued as follows for the assessment of this course:

A: Exceptional performance demonstrated on all learning outcomes

A-: Very good performance demonstrated on almost all learning outcomes

B: Competence demonstrated on all learning outcomes. This includes good performances in some areas, which offset weaker performances in others.

C: Satisfactory performance demonstrated on most learning outcomes.

D: Barely satisfactory performance demonstrated on majority of learning outcomes.

F: Unsatisfactory performance on most learning outcomes, or failure to meet assessment requirements.

Assessment policies:

Late submission: will suffer a fraction of a grade per day. Hence, an A will become an A-.

Academic honesty: you are required to cite properly (guidelines: <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/ant/tstyle.doc>).

Also, students are required to upload every piece of work to VeriGuide for plagiarism check and then sign their receipts sent by the system and submit with their assignments. VeriGuide: https://veriguide1.cse.cuhk.edu.hk/portal/plagiarism_detection/about.jsp

Seminar and Reading Schedule

Week 1 (September 2): INTRODUCTION

The nature of the course, what to expect from the course, assessment requirements etc.

Week 2 (September 9): CULTURE and HUMANITY

Topics: The Physical, Life, and the Human Sciences; Distinctiveness of Human Sciences; Cultural products vs. Cultural process; The Culture-Scale Approach

Readings:

Goodman, Mary Ellen. 1967. "The Nature of Culture." In *The Individual and Culture*. Homewood: The Dorsey Press.

It is also recommended that students begin reading either texts (Tsing 2015 and Han 2012), which set the contexts for our discussion about contemporary realities. A book review of either book is due: October 14.

Week 3 (September 16): BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY / COMPARATIVE ZOOLOGY

Topic: What differentiates us from our primate cousins? Or, what makes us human?

Readings:

Tomasello, Michael. 2009. *Why We Cooperate*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Week 4 (September 23): ECOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Readings:

Barnes, Jessica and Michael Dove. 2015. *Climate Cultures: Anthropological Perspectives on Climate Change*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Hansen, M.H, Li, H. and Svarverud, R. 2018. "Ecological civilization: Interpreting the Chinese past, projecting the global future." *Global Environment Change* 53: 195-203.

Ellen, Roy. 1986. "What Black Elk Left Unsaid: On the Illusory Images of Green Primitivism." *Anthropology Today* 2(6): 8-12.

Harris, Marvin. 1966. "The Cultural Ecology of India's Sacred Cattle." *Current Anthropology* 33(1): 51-66.

Tsing, Anna. 2015. *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Week 5 (September 30): POLITICAL and ECONOMIC ANTHROPOLOGY

Readings:

Sahlins, Marshall. 2013 [1972]. "The Original Affluent Society". In Marshall Sahlins, ed., *Stone Age Economics*, pp. 1-37. London: Routledge.

Lionel, Robbins. 1932. *An Essay on The Nature and Significance of Economic Science*. London: Macmillan. Read Introduction and Chapter 1 as a basis of comparison with contents of Sahlins's article.

Mauss, Marcel. 2001 [1924]. *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*. New York: Routledge.

Week 6 (October 7): NO CLASS – Chung Yeung Festival

Week 7 (October 14): GENDER and PATRIARCHY

Readings:

Ortner, Sherry B. 1972. "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?" *Feminist Studies* 1(2): 5-31.

Salleh, Ariel. 2019. "Ecofeminist Sociology as a New Class Analysis". *Global Dialogue* 9(1): 35-37.

Recommended readings:

Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 2012 [1983]. *The Managed Heart*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Smith, Sharon. 1997. "Engels and the Origin of Women's Oppression." *International Socialist Review* 2. (At https://www.isreview.org/issues/02/engles_family.shtml)

Abu-Lughod, Lila. 2013. *Do Muslim Women need Saving?*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

N.B.: Paper 1 - your book review - is due today!

Week 8 (October 21): THE MODERN WORLD-SYSTEM, Part I: PAX-BRITANNICA and MERCANTILISM

Topics: The Modern World-system; the Enlightenment; Modernity and the Scientific Revolution; Industrialisation; Nationalism; Capitalism; Socialism; The Cold-War; The West and the Rest; the North and the South; Developmentalism

Readings:

Wolf, Eric. 1982. *Europe and the People Without History*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Chapters 1-4 and 8-10.

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. 2002. "North Atlantic Universals: Analytical Fictions, 1492-1945." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 101(4): 839-858.

Week 9 (October 28): THE MODERN WORLD-SYSTEM, Part II: PAX-AMERICANA and FORDISM

Topics: Fordism; Vietnam War and the U.S. Civil Rights Movements; OPEC oil crisis; Collapse of Gold Standard; Keynesianism in West; East Asian miracle; Fall of Berlin Wall in 1989; End of History; Neo-liberal Washington Consensus; Major multi-lateral institutions embrace Washington Consensus in 1990s; TINA

Readings:

Kapferer, Bruce. 2005. "New formations of power, the oligarchic-corporate state, and anthropological ideological discourse." *Anthropological Theory* 5(3): 285-299.

Wedel, Janine. 2009. *Shadow Elite: How the World's New Power Brokers Undermine Democracy, Government, and the Free Market*. New York: Basic Books. Preface and Chapter 1.

Week 10 (November 4): THE MODERN WORLD-SYSTEM, PART II: NEO-LIBERALISM and FINANCIALIZATION

Readings:

Graeber, David. 2011. *Debt: The First 5000 Years*. Brooklyn, NY: Melville House. Chapters 1,2, 8, 11, and 12.

Ho, Karen. 2018. "Markets, myths, and misrecognitions: Economic populism in the age of financialization and hyperinequality". *Economic Anthropology* 5(1): 148-150.

Han, Clara. 2012. *Life in Debt: Times of Care and Violence in Neoliberal Chile*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Week 11 (November 11): THE MODERN WORLD-SYSTEM, PART III: 21st C PAX-SINICA?

Readings:

Harrell, Steven. 2001. "The Anthropology of Reform and the Reform of Anthropology: Anthropological Narratives of Recovery and Progress in China." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 30(1): 139-161.

Pieke, Frank. 2014. "Anthropology, China, and the Chinese Century." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 43: 123-138.

Week 12 (November 18): KNOWLEDGE-MAKING and DECOLONIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Topic: The HAU Debacle: Crisis in Anthropological and Knowledge-making

Readings:

Graeber, David. n.d. "HAU Apology." At <https://davidgraeber.industries/sundries/hau-apology>

Neveling, Patrick. 2018 "HAU and the Latest Stage of Capitalism." At <https://www.focaalblog.com/2018/06/22/patrick-neveling-hau-and-the-latest-stage-of-capitalism/>

Cullen Dunn, Elizabeth. 2018 "The Problem with Assholes." At <http://publicanthropologist.cmi.no/2018/06/20/the-problem-with-assholes/>

Kapferer, Bruce. 2018. "The Hau complicity: An event in the crisis of anthropology." At <https://www.focaalblog.com/2018/07/09/bruce-kapferer-the-hau-complicity-an-event-in-the-crisis-of-anthropology/>

Mahi Tahi. 2018. "An Open Letter to the HAU Journal's Board of Trustees." At <https://www.asaanz.org/blog/2018/6/18/an-open-letter-to-the-hau-journals-board-of-trustees>

Mahi Tahi. 2018. "A response, and a second Open Letter to the HAU Journal's Board of Trustees." At <https://www.asaanz.org/blog/2018/6/21/a-response-and-second-open-letter-to-the-hau-journals-board-of-trustees>

Davidov, Veronica. 2019. "Theory Isn't What It Used to Be." At <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/theory-isnt-what-it-used-to-be>

Week 13 (November 25): RITUAL and RELIGION / MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Readings:

Puett, Michael. 2015. "Ritual and Ritual Obligations: Perspectives on Normativity from Classical China." *Journal of Value of Inquiry* 49(4): 543-550.

Chau, Adam Yuet. 2008. "The Sensorial Production of the Social." *Ethnos* 73(4): 485-504.

Kho, Tung-Yi. 2019. "The Good Life in Contemporary China" *Science, Religion and Culture* 6(1): 110-121.

Kleinman, Arthur. 1973. "Medicine's Symbolic Reality." *Inquiry* 16(2): 206-213.

Kleinman Arthur & Peter Benson. 2006. "Anthropology in the Clinic: The Problem of Cultural Competency and How to Fix It". *PLoS Med* 3(10): e294.

N.B.: Paper 2 is due today, November 25!

Week 14 (Make-up class): ETHNOGRAPHY

Date: December 2 or 3, to be confirmed

Readings:

Aull Davies, Charlotte. 2008. *Reflexive Ethnography. A Guide to Researching Selves and Others*. London: Routledge.

Sluka, S. Jeffrey and Robben, Antonius C. G. M. 2012. "Fieldwork in Cultural Anthropology: An Introduction". In Antonius C. G. M. Robben and Jeffrey S. Sluka, eds., *Ethnographic Fieldwork: An Anthropological Reader*, pp. 1-28. Malden, Oxford and Victoria: Blackwell.

Han, Clara. 2012. *Life in Debt: Times of Care and Violence in Neoliberal Chile*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Tsing, Anna. 2015. *The Mushroom at the End of the World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.