

Anthropology 198 / Spring '08
FOUNDATIONS OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL THOUGHT
Wednesday, 3:30-6:00; HAH 202

Prof. Catherine Allen
2110 G St., NW, Room 101
kitallen@gwu.edu; 202-994-7545

This seminar-style class will introduce you to theories underlying thought and research in anthropology. We'll trace the historical development of anthropology as a field of study and explore the works of major theorists. Our goal is to prepare you to understand and evaluate anthropological research and writing, and to provide you with a basis for interpreting data within a theoretical framework.

TEXTS:

- *Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History* (third edition), edited by R. Jon McGee & Richard L. Warms
- *Five Key concepts in Anthropological Thinking*, by Richard J. Perry
- *Myth and Meaning: Cracking the Code of Culture* by Claude Lévi-Strauss
- *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in Anthropology* (3rd edition) edited by Kirk M. Endicott & Robert L. Welsch
- A few additional readings will be posted on Blackboard

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

A. Attendance and participation

Because this is a seminar-style class that depends in large part on your participation, it's especially important that you attend every class and arrive on time. Leaving class early is not acceptable. Cell phones and laptop computers should be turned off.

B. Reading Assignments

You're expected to keep up with the schedule of reading assignments and come to class prepared to discuss them. There are some heavy reading assignments so it's a good idea to plan ahead. Don't try to leave assignments until the last minute!

C. Quizzes

There will be a quiz (short answer; identifications) on Feb. 6 and two short quizzes (identifications) on March 12 and April 23

D. Trading Cards: This is a fun assignment modeled after the set of theory cards for cultural studies published by Altamira Press. More details in class.

E. In-class Discussants Beginning with Part II of the course ("Conversations with the Ancestors") each class will be led by a small group of two-three students. These students will also lead the On-line Discussion (below) for that week.

continued on reverse

F. **Weekly On-line Discussions** Each Thursday I'll post questions related to the next week's reading assignments. You are to post at least two entries: (1) a response to one of the questions (posted by midnight Sunday night); (2) a reply to another student's entry preferably to a different question (posted by midnight Tuesday). The students assigned to those readings (see above) will lead off the discussion and incorporate it into their class presentations. I'll check the entries but I won't grade them until the end of the semester when you submit what you consider to be your best 5 entries.

G. **WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:** This course is Writing Intensive, so you'll have a series of writing assignments of different kinds.

(1) Critical essay:

Choose one of the issues in *Taking Sides* and write a 5-8 page essay in which you evaluate the opposing positions. (Use the criteria suggested on pp.xxiv-xxv of the introduction, paying especial attention to how the authors reach conclusions from their data.) You'll turn in a working draft which will be **peer reviewed**,* and a finished essay before the end of the semester (dates indicated on the schedule below).

(2) Review article on a major work in anthropology:

Choose one of the "classic" anthropological works to read in its entirety. You'll write a 10-12 page paper based on this book in which you:

- Review the book's argument and relationship of theory to data (again, the criteria suggested on pp.xxiv-xxv of *Taking Sides* will be helpful);
- Place the author in his/her intellectual and historical context; who or what influenced the ideas put forth in the book?
- Assess the book's influence (in anthropology or in other areas).

You'll turn in a working draft which will be **peer reviewed**.* The finished paper will be due May 3 (tentative; firm date TBA).

(3) Online Discussion Entries:

You'll select five entries from the online discussion (described below) and submit them to me the last day of class (April 26).

CALCULATION OF GRADES:

10%	Participation & attendance
15%	Quizzes [Quiz1=7%; Quiz2=4%; Quiz3=4%]
5%	Trading Cards [3% each]
10%	In-class Presentation
15%	Critical Essay
25%	Review Article
<u>20%</u>	<u>On-line Discussion [12 points for weekly participation; 8 points for five best entries]</u>
100%	TOTAL

*Although **Peer Reviews** do not count a percentage of your grade, they are **required** (because you owe this to your fellow students). Failure to do the peer review will lower your final grade by half a letter.

**Foundations of Anthropological Thought
SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

PART I: OVERVIEW OF HISTORY AND KEY IDEAS

- Jan. 16** Introduction to the course
- Jan. 23** Evolution and Culture
Five Key Ideas: Chapters 1-3
- Jan. 30** Structure, Function, Relativism
Five Key Ideas: Chapters 4-7
☞ Theory trading cards
- Feb. 6** ☹ Quiz
♪ Film: *Ishi in Two Worlds*
☛ Review article topic due

PART II: CONVERSATIONS WITH THE ANCESTORS

You should read the introductory pages for each section in *Anthropological Theory* as we come to it.

- Feb. 13** The Nineteenth Century: Structure and Progress
a) Darwin & Wallace, *Theory* ch.1
(Recommended: Spencer, *Theory* ch.2)
b) Tylor, *Theory* ch.3
Morgan, *Theory* ch.4
☛ First draft of Critical Essay due.
- Feb. 20** The "American School": from Culture to cultures
a) Boas, *Theory* ch.10
Kroeber, *Theory* ch.11 (Recommended: Radin, *Theory* ch.12)
b) *Taking Sides*, Issue 1: Is Race a Useful Concept for Anthropologists?
☛ Peer Review of Critical Essay due.
- Feb. 27** The "American School": Culture and Personality
a) Film: *Margaret Mead: An Observer Observed*
b) Benedict, *Theory* ch.18
Mead, *Theory* ch.19
Bateson, on Blackboard
- March 5** The "French (and then British) School": Society Is a Thing-in-itself
a) Durkheim, *Theory* Chapters 6-7
b) Radcliffe-Brown, *Theory* ch.14
☛ Review article progress report (by e-mail or individual conference)

- March 12** Structure, Function and Reciprocity
a) Mauss, *Theory* ch.8
Malinowski, *Theory* ch.13
b) Evans-Pritchard, *Theory* ch.15 (Recomm: Gluckman, *Theory* ch.16)
Short quiz
☛ Final Critical Essay due by e-mail, Friday March 14 by 5 pm.

[March 19 SPRING BREAK]

PART III: TOWARD THE NEW MILLENNIUM

Please read all the introductory sections in Part Three of *Theory*. We don't have time to read and discuss all the selections, but they're all recommended.

- March 26** Structure and Meaning
Levi-Strauss, *Myth and Meaning* (all)
Douglas, on Blackboard
- April 3** Cultural Ecology and Neo-evolutionary Theory
Ⓐ Steward, on Blackboard
White, *Theory* ch.20
b) Leacock, *Theory* ch.36
Bourgeois, *Theory* ch.25
- April 10** Science or Interpretation?
a) *Taking Sides*, Issue 9 (Geertz vs. Harris)
How Does Ritual Mean?
b) Rappaport, *Theory* ch.24
Turner, *Theory* ch.39
- April 17** Post-Structuralism
a) Foucault, on Blackboard
Ⓟ Bourdieu, on Blackboard
- April 23** The Post-Modern Turn
Ⓐ Rosaldo, *Theory* ch.41
Short quiz Catch-up, Review
☞ Theory trading cards: The Next Generation

DUE DATES FOR ANTHROPOLOGY 198W
Spring 2008

If any of these dates are changed, the change will be posted on the Announcements page on Blackboard.

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| Jan 30 | Trading Card due |
| Feb 6 | Quiz
Review article topic due |
| Feb 13 | Draft of Critical Essay due |
| Feb 20 | Peer Review of Critical Essay due |
| Mar 5 | Review Article progress report |
| Mar 12 | Quiz |
| Mar 14 (Fri) | Final Critical Essay due |
| Mar 28 (Fri) | Review article draft due |
| April 10 | Review article peer review due |
| April 23 | Quiz
Trading Card due |
| April 25(Fri) | Five Best Posts due |
| May 4 | Final Review Article due |