This course reviews major intellectual currents in anthropological theory from the nineteenth century to the present with emphasis placed on application of theory and theory of application. Several themes extend throughout the course, providing material for debate and discussion. These themes will include the place of anthropology in Western intellectual history; the debated uniqueness of the anthropological enterprise; the role of theory and analysis in anthropological practice; the utility of the problematizing operation; the impact of theoretical orientation on production and product; and theorizing authorship in the roles of the outside participant-observer (as researcher or practitioner) and the insider actor-participant. Materials proceed from 19th century contributors (including Tyler, Durkheim, and Boas), exploring the cumulative nature of anthropological theory, through the 20th centuries and into the present, finding commonalities, threads, and innovations in the exercise.

Grading Requirements. Grades will be based upon performance in two areas: class oral presentations and written submissions. Each student will receive five opportunities to discuss an author and his/her contribution in oral (10%) and written (10%) form (x5 ea. = 100%). The purpose of several writing assignments is to clarify any questions you may have and provide an opportunity for improvement.

Each student is responsible for reading the literature assigned. On five occasions, the student will discuss the assigned author's contribution, and illustrate the impact of the author on subsequent scholarship. The oral presentation and discussion are supplemented with a written commentary.

The written commentary should be five double-spaced pages with in-text citations; the bibliography, which is not counted in the page length, should be in the format of the American Anthropologist.

The class discussion entails 1) articulating the main points of the assigned author and 2) demonstrating her/his/their impact on later work through specific illustration.

The role of classmates: The presenter should be able to generate class discussion; their grade will depend, in part, on the interaction they inspire and lead.
SYLLABUS*

Aug. 28, Introduction to Course Requirements; Themes.

Defining the field. What role does theory play? What are the tensions between Theory and Practice? What is the role of “problematizing”?

Sept. 4, Labor Day

Sept. 11, Theorizing Change: Nineteenth century evolutionary foundations:

Lewis Henry Morgan (1818 – 1881), American anthropologist
Karl Heinrich Marx (1818 – 1883), German philosopher,
Edward Burnett Tylor (1832 – 1917), English anthropologist

Read:
Engels, Frederich and Marx, Karl (1884) “The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State” ch 2
www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1884/origin-family/ch02b.htm

[Suggestions for influence: Eleanor Leacock, Peggy Sanday, Henrietta Moore, Julian Steward, Morton Fried, Elman Service, Jonathan Haas, Kent Flannery]

Sept. 18: Theorizing Coherence: Émile Durkheim (1858 – 1917), French sociologist

Read:
Durkheim, Emile: What Is a Social Fact? (1895)
www.cardiff.ac.uk/socsi/undergraduate/introsoc/durkheim10.html

[Suggestions for influence: Geertz, Bourdieu]

Sept. 25, Boas and Benedict: 1) Community and Identity; 2) Historic Particularism; 3) Cultural relativity; and 4) the foundations of an American, engaged anthropology

Read:
Ruth Benedict, Research on the Development of the Indian Personality (1942)
http://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C3282093#page/1/mode/1/chapter/bibliographic_entity|bibliographic_details|3282093

Oct. 2. The Construction of Gender: Margaret Mead
Read:
   Margaret Mead (1935) Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies
   And/Or, the Mead Archive: https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/mead/mead-field.html

[Suggestions for influence: Ortner, Butler]

Oct. 9, Foundations in Economic Anthropology
Read:
   Marcel Mauss: The Gift, Excerpts (1925) In McGee, Pp., 102-114

Read:
   Julian Steward: Cultural Causality and Law [Research Port]
   Marvin Harris: India’s Sacred Cattle. McGee, Pp. 204-217.

[Recommended:]
   Leslie White: Energy and the Evolution of Culture (1943). In McGee, 256+

Oct. 23, Althusser and the Marxian Legacy in Anthropology: Knowledge, Language, and the State
Read:
   Karl Marx, The German Ideology: Feuerbach (1845-6).
   www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/german-ideology/ch01b.htm
   Louis Althusser: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses

[Suggestions for influences: Louis Althusser, Stuart Hall, Theodor Adorno, Michael Silverstein, Judith Irvine]

Oct. 30, Structuralism and Post-structuralism: Of Signs and their Relationships
   Ferdinand de Saussure (1857 – 1913), Swiss linguist
   Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908-2009)
Read:
Claude Lévi-Strauss: Structural Analysis... (1963) In McGee, Pp., 347-362
Claude Levi-Strauss: The Structural Study of Myth. In Lemert, 335+

[Recommended:]

Nov. 6, Language and Culture
Read:
Bronislaw Malinowski- electronic handout
David Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf-electronic handout
Erving Goffman - electronic handout

Nov. 13, Rethinking the Role of History
Read one of:
Sidney Mintz,
Eric Wolf,
Sahlins

Nov. 20 The State, Society, and Reason - Guest speaker, Christopher Hewlett
Michel Foucault: Power as Knowledge. In Lemert, P. 318 [and electronic]

Nov. 27 Theorizing the Quotidian: Theory and Practice
Marcel Mauss (1973, orig. 1934). Techniques of the Body. Web link:

Nov. 29, American Anthropology Association Meetings.

Dec. 4 Review

Dec. 11, Last day of Class.

*This may be subject to change

Readers:

READINGS, ALPHABETICAL ORDER


http://xroads.virginia.edu/~DRBR/geertz.html


Sahlins, Marshal (2003) Stone Age Economics. [Recommended]


Edited collections:

