

San José State University
Anthropology Department
Anth 131, Theories of Culture, Fall 2018

Contact Information

Instructor:	John Marlovits
Office Location:	Clark 463
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Email:	John.marlovits@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	Tuesday 12-1
Class Days/Time:	Tuesday/Thursday, 10:30-11:45
Classroom:	Clark 204
Prerequisites:	Upper division standing; Anthropology 11 or Instructor's consent

Course Description

This course provides a general introduction to the history of anthropological thought since the late 19th century. The first half of the course focuses on the emergence of cultural and social anthropological approaches in the US and Great Britain as a response to theories of biological determinism. The second half of the course emphasizes the changing meanings of culture, society, and biology in the context of colonialism, the Cold War, corporate globalization, and other contemporary phenomena. We will also examine the diffusion of the culture concept—from American anthropology, across academic disciplines, and out into the general public. By the end of the course you should have a thorough understanding of the development of cultural and social anthropological thought, the most influential theoretical approaches of the 20th century, and the political and economic circumstances under which anthropological ideas emerged.

Learning Outcomes

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Articulate different theories of culture and society developed by British, French, US, and other anthropologists from the late 19th century to the present
2. Explain how historical, political and economic contexts shaped and impacted these theories
3. Trace relationships between anthropological theories and methods and relationships between anthropological theories and practices
4. Compare and contrast classic ethnographies from the past and the present
5. Analyze and discuss the relationship of anthropological knowledge and the general public
6. Conduct library research and prepare an academic term paper.

Required Texts

Thomas Hylland Erikson and Sivert Nielsen, *A History of Anthropology, Second Edition*, Pluto Press 2013

Laura Kipnis, *Against Love: A Polemic*, Vintage 2004

Hugh Raffles, *Insectopedia*, Vintage 2010

Recommended Text

Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, Hill and Wang 1972

Other Readings

Additional readings will be distributed by the instructor or will be available through the MLK Jr. Library.

Course Requirements and Assignments

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in [University Policy S12-3](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>.

Assignments for this course include the following:

4. Five unannounced weekly quizzes at the beginning of class, designed to test your familiarity with that week's course readings. These will be averaged into your grade. (Each quiz counts 3% of final grade for a total of 15%.)
5. Two mid-term exams consisting of short definitions, essays, and maps. (Each mid-term counts for 20% of final grade.)
6. One final exam, consisting of identifications/definitions, essays, and maps. (Final exam counts for 30% of final grade.) Final exam will be administered in the usual class meeting room.
7. One 10-page term paper (not including title page or bibliography), due at the last regular class meeting (before final exams). (Paper counts for 15% of final grade.) Description of term paper assignment will be distributed in class during the third week of the semester. Students must submit a typed 250-word term paper proposal to the instructor (see course schedule). Proposal is worth 10% of the assignment.

All assignments must be completed in order to pass. I will not accept late assignments nor will I administer makeup exams unless documents can be presented as evidence of illness, death in family, jury duty, etc. No assignments will be accepted via e-mail—I must receive hard copies of all assignments.

NOTE that [University policy F69-24](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F69-24.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F69-24.pdf> states that "Students should attend all meetings of their classes, not only because they are responsible for material discussed therein, but because active participation is frequently essential to insure maximum benefit for all members of the class. Attendance per se shall not be used as a criterion for grading."

Grading Information

Grading Distribution is as follows:

- 100-97 = A+
- 96-93 = A
- 92-90 = A-
- 89-87 = B+
- 86-83 = B

83-80 = B
79-77 = C+
69-67 = D+

76-73 = C
66-63 = D

72-70 = C-
Below 63 = F

Determination of Grades

Grades will be determined on the basis of points. See descriptions above for point breakdown of individual assignments.

There will be no extra credit.

LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AND WILL RECEIVE A GRADE OF ZERO. A DOCTOR'S NOTE WILL BE REQUIRED FOR LATE PAPERS TO BE CONSIDERED, AND STUDENTS REQUESTING EXTENSIONS WILL NEED TO CONTACT THE PROFESSOR IN ADVANCE OF THE DEADLINE AND PROVIDE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE EXTENSION.

PLAGIARISM WILL RESULT IN AN AUTOMATIC "F" GRADE FOR THE ENTIRE COURSE. NO EXCEPTIONS.

Final Examination

The Final examination will test students grasp of course concepts through essay and short answer questions.

[University policy S17-1](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S17-1.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S17-1.pdf>) which states that "Faculty members are required to have a culminating activity for their courses, which can include a final examination, a final research paper or project, a final creative work or performance, a final portfolio of work, or other appropriate assignment."

Classroom Protocol

Laptop computers, tablets, smartphones, etc. are not permitted during the lecture or film portions of this class unless you have a note from the Disability Resource Center justifying a need. You should write lecture notes by hand, or else make audio recordings of lectures and transcribe them after class meetings. Cell phones must be turned off during class to avoid disruption and out of sight or else the instructor will collect the device from the student until the end of class. Text messaging is strictly prohibited. Any student who allows a cell phone to ring during class, or who texts messages will be given a formal warning by the instructor. A second infraction of this rule will be promptly reported to the Office of Student Conduct with a recommendation that the student be immediately expelled from the course. Students should be aware that according to Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations, "Standards for Student Conduct," grounds for student discipline includes: "Participating in an activity that substantially and materially disrupts the normal operations of the University," {Section 41301(b)(4)} which could include use of electronic devices in classroom settings.

All assignments must be completed in order to pass. I will not accept late assignments nor will I administer makeup exams unless documents can be presented as evidence of illness, death in family, jury duty, etc. No assignments will be accepted via e-mail—I must receive hard copies of all assignments.

Email Etiquette

Please write "Anth 108" followed by the subject of your email in the Subject line of your email. I will respond to your email as quickly as possible, however students should expect to wait at 24-hours for a response – and should not expect text messaging-like access via email. (I'm often in

class, remember.) Students should also begin emails with appropriate formality, e.g., “Dear/Hi Professor Marlovits,” and should conclude with a salutation and their name (at least for the first in a string of emails).

I will not answer questions over email that can be answered by reading the syllabus. I will not answer questions over email about missed lectures – students are required to come to lecture, and if they can’t make it, ask a classmate to share notes. Substantial questions cannot be answered over email and students should come to my office hours instead. I cannot answer email queries about papers, such as: “I don’t know what to write about for the paper, can you help me?” The answer is that I can help you, but you must come to office hours, and you also must do more than say “I don’t know” and begin to formulate at least a vague attempt at a topic. I do not accept electronic papers, and will not edit or grade rough drafts via email. If you would like me to look at a rough draft, you must come to office hours or set up an appointment with me.

University Policies (Required)

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs’ [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

Readings and assignment dates may change with fair warning.

Anthropology 131 / Theories of Culture, Fall 2018, Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	8/21 8/23	Starting in the Middle: Reading Ethnography Hugh Raffles, <i>Insectopedia</i> Clifford Geertz, “Thick Description”
2	8/28 8/30	Ethnographic Writing and/as Embedded Theory Hugh Raffles, <i>Insectopedia</i> Recommended: John Law, “The Explanatory Burden: An Essay on Hugh Raffles’ <i>Insectopedia</i> ,” <i>Cultural Anthropology</i> 26:3
3	9/4 9/6	Kinky Empiricism, Alterity, Otherness Hugh Raffles, <i>Insectopedia</i> Recommended: Danilyn Rutherford, “Kinky Empiricism,” <i>Cultural Anthropology</i> Judith Jack Halberstam, “Low Theory”
4	9/11 9/13	Founding Figures in Anthropology and Sociology Erikson and Nielsen, chapters 1 & 2 Take-Home Midterm #1 Due

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
5	9/18 9/20	National Traditions in Anthropology: Structure, Function, Historical Particularism, Culture, and Society Erikson and Nielsen, chapters 3-5
6	9/25 9/27	Symbols and Power Erikson and Nielsen, chapters 6 & 7
7	10/2 10/4	Power, the Modern World, and Critical Anthropology Erikson and Nielsen, chapters 8 & 9
8	10/9 10/11	The Literary Turn: Power, Ideology, Narrative, Subjectivity 10/9 Roland Barthes, excerpts from <i>Mythologies</i> John Berger, chapter 3 in <i>Ways of Seeing</i> 10/11: Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author" in <i>Image, Music, Text</i> Stuart Hall, "Ideology and Ideological Struggle" in <i>Cultural Studies 1983: A Theoretical History</i>
9	10/16 10/18	Reading Culture: Marx, Freud, Narrative Incoherence, and Social Change Laura Kipnis, <i>Against Love: A Polemic</i> (full book)
10	10/23 10/25	Poststructuralist Anthropology: Power/Knowledge, Representation, Discourse, the Death of the Subject 10/23 Michel Foucault, excerpts from <i>Discipline and Punish</i> Anne Fausto-Sterling, "The Five Sexes Revisited" 10/25 James Clifford, "On Ethnographic Authority" in <i>The Predicament of Culture</i> Recommended: Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective" Take-Home Midterm #2 Due
11	10/30 11/1	Orientalism, Essentialism Edward Said, Introduction to <i>Orientalism</i> Roberto Gonzalez, "The Arab Mind and Abu Graib" and "Counterinsurgency in the Colonies"
12	11/6 11/8	State, Nation, Hegemony 11/6 Antonio Gramsci, "Intellectuals and Hegemony" in <i>Prison Notebooks</i> Benedict Anderson, "Cultural Roots" in <i>Imagined Communities</i> 11/8 Arjun Appadurai, <i>Fear of Small Numbers: an Essay on the Geography of Anger</i> pp. 1-48
13	11/13 11/15	Gender, Sexuality, Kinship Collier and Yanagiasako, "Theory in Anthropology Since Feminist Practice" Judith Jack Halberstam, "Gaga Relations" in <i>Gaga Feminism</i> Judith Halberstam, Introduction to <i>In a Queer Time and Place: Queer Temporalities and Postmodern Geographies</i>

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
		Laura Kipnis, "Envy" in <i>The Female Thing</i>
14	11/20 no class 11/22	<p>Things, Ontology, Materiality, Non-Human Actants Keith Murphy, chapter 1 & 2 in <i>Swedish Design: An Ethnography</i> Stuart Hall, "Rethinking Base and Superstructure," in <i>Cultural Studies 1983</i>.</p> <p>Recommended: Jane Bennett, <i>Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things</i></p>
15	11/27 11/29	<p>Global Flows Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, Introduction to <i>Culture, Power, Place</i> Anna Tsing, "Frontiers of Capitalism" in <i>Friction</i></p> <p>Recommended: Krista Comer, "The Politics of Play: Tourism, Ecofeminism, and Surfari in Mexico" in <i>Surfer Girls in the New World Order</i></p>
16	12/4 12/6	<p>Science and Technology Studies, Posthumanism Donna Haraway, excerpts from <i>When Species Meet</i></p> <p>Term Paper Due</p>
Final Exam	12/12	Clark 204 Wednesday December 12 th , 9:45-12