

Anthropology 131

Theories of Culture and Society

Semester: Fall 2007
Instructor: Professor R. González
Time: TTH 12:00-1:15 pm
Classroom: CL 204

Introduction

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 U.S. and England 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 the "war on terror". 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.

Required Readings

The following books are required for the course:

Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*
Zora Neale Hurston, *Tell My Horse: Voodoo and Life in Haiti and Jamaica*
E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*
Jack Weatherford, *Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World*

These may be purchased at the campus bookstore. We will use additional materials from a supplemental course reader which will be available for purchase at Maple Press (on San Carlos Street between 10th and 11th Streets) by September 4. All materials will be placed on reserve at the campus library.

Assignments and Weighting of Grades

Assignments for this course include the following:

1. Five unannounced weekly quizzes at the beginning of class, designed to test your familiarity with the course readings. The best three will be averaged into your grade. (Three best quizzes count for total of 15% of final grade.)
2. Two mid-term exams (September 27 and November 1), consisting of short definitions, essays, and maps. (Each mid-term counts for 20% of final grade.)
3. One final exam, consisting of identifications/definitions, essays, and maps. (Final exam counts for 30% of final grade.) Final exam will be administered on December 12 from 9:45 am-12:00 pm in the usual class meeting room.
4. One 10-page term paper, due the last day of class. (Paper counts for 15% of final grade.) See description of assignment below.

Term Paper

Fifteen percent of your semester grade will come from a term paper. It should be a 10-page paper, typed and double-spaced. For an A, the paper should be at least 10 pages long. Maximum length of the term paper is 25 pages. Paper is due on the last day of class (December 6).

Objective: Critically compare two ethnographies (or studies in physical anthropology or archaeology) analyzing the same topic, culture, or region. One ethnography should be written before 1970 and the other after 1970. Your analysis should include a comparison of theories, methods, use of anthropological concepts and terminology, and historical context (to name a few). For example, you might compare the book *Talea and Juquila: An Analysis of Zapotec Social Organization* (1962) by Laura Nader and *Zapotec Science: Farming and Food in the Northern Sierra of Oaxaca* (2001) by Roberto Gonzalez.

Sources: Although you can and should use class lectures and readings as source material, you must use additional sources as well. At a minimum you should include the two ethnographies that you have selected. There are a great many sources for the history of anthropology in the King Library.

Format (including Footnotes and References): You should use the American Anthropological Association's Style Guide, available online at http://www.aaanet.org/pubs/style_guide.pdf.

Plagiarism: Taking the ideas or words of another person, or copying directly from source material without giving credit is unacceptable. Although it is easy to "cut and paste" material from directly from the Internet, this is a common form of plagiarism and it will not be tolerated and will be reported immediately (see Course Policies below). If you are unsure about what constitutes plagiarism, ask the course instructor during office hours or refer to the course syllabus or the SJSU online catalog.

Department Objectives

1. Understand culture as the distinguishing phenomenon of human life and the relationship of human biology and evolution.
2. Become aware of human diversity and the ways humans have categorized diversity.
3. Become knowledgeable about significant findings in archaeology, cultural, and physical anthropology, and important issues in each sub-discipline.
4. Become knowledgeable about the history of anthropological thought and its place in modern intellectual history.
5. Comprehend migration, colonialism, and economic integration as significant phenomena shaping global society.
6. Locate and use different forms of anthropological data and literature.
7. Become aware of the importance and value of anthropological knowledge in contemporary society, and the ability to apply it to social issues.
8. Become knowledgeable about the research methods of anthropology's sub-disciplines and to apply appropriate research methods in at least one sub-discipline.
9. To present and communicate anthropological knowledge and the results of anthropological research to different audiences.
10. Become knowledgeable about political and ethical implications of social research.

Course Objectives

1. To learn about different theories of culture and society developed by British, French, and U.S. anthropologists from the late 19th century to the present.
2. To understand how historical, political and economic contexts shaped and impacted these theories.
3. To examine the relationship between anthropological theories and methods and the relationship between anthropological theories and practices.
4. To compare and contrast classic ethnographies from the past and the present.
5. To analyze and discuss the relationship of anthropological knowledge and the general public.
6. To conduct library research and prepare an academic term paper.

Grading Distribution

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|-----|---|----|----|----------|---|----|----|
| 100 | - | 97 | A+ | 79 | - | 77 | C+ |
| 96 | - | 93 | A | 76 | - | 73 | C |
| 92 | - | 90 | A- | 72 | - | 70 | C- |
| 89 | - | 87 | B+ | 69 | - | 67 | D+ |
| 86 | - | 83 | B | 66 | - | 63 | D |
| 83 | - | 80 | B- | Below 63 | | | F |

Course Policies

All assignments must be completed in order to pass. No late assignments will be accepted unless student presents documentary 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. No makeup exams will be given unless student presents documentary evidence of illness, death in family, jury duty, etc. Cell phones must be turned off during class to avoid disruption. Any student who allows a cell phone to ring during class will first be given a warning. A second infraction of this rule will be promptly reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs. Laptop computers are not permitted in class unless you have a note from the Disability Resource Center. You should write lecture notes by hand, or else make audio recordings of lectures and transcribe them after class.

Plagiarism, cheating, and academic dishonesty will be reported to the University. Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at SJSU, and the University's Academic Integrity Policy requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the Office of Judicial Affairs. The University's academic integrity policy can be found at <http://www2.sjsu.edu/senate/S04-12.pdf>.

Disabled students with special needs should make arrangements with me as soon as possible. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. SJSU Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities register with DRC (Disability Resource Center) to establish a record of their disability.

Exam Dates

Midterm Exam 1 will be conducted on September 27. Midterm Exam 2 will be conducted on November 1. Final Exam will be conducted on Wednesday, December 12 from 9:45 am-12:00 pm.

Office Hours

Office hours are held Tuesday and Thursday from 1:30-2:30 pm and Thursdays from 4:30-7:30 pm in CL402G. I may be reached by telephone at 924-5715.

Course Readings and Topics

- Week 1 **Introduction**
Aug. 23 Eric Wolf, "American Anthropologists and American Society" (handout)
- Week 2 **Evolutionary Approaches in the Victorian Era**
Aug. 28- Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (Chapters 1-4)
Aug. 30
- Week 3 **Franz Boas and the Modern Culture Concept**
Sept. 4- Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (Chapters 5-7)
Sept. 6 FILM: "The Shackles of Tradition: Franz Boas"
- Week 4 **Culture and Personality**
Sept. 11- *Ruth Benedict, "The Chrysanthemum and the Sword" (excerpts)
Sept. 13 FILM: "Margaret Mead: Taking Note"
- Week 5 **Structural Functionalism**
Sept. 18- E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic* (Chapters 1-5)
Sept. 20
- Week 6 **Cultural Ecology and Cultural Materialism**
Sept. 25- E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic* (Chapters 5-10)
Sept. 27 *Marvin Harris, "India's Sacred Cow"

MIDTERM EXAM—SEPTEMBER 27

- Week 7 **Colonial Critiques**
Oct. 2- E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic* (Chapters 11-13)
Oct. 4 *Vine Deloria, "Anthropologists and Other Friends"
- Week 8 **Feminist Influences and the Anthropology of Gender**
Oct. 9- *Marjorie Shostak, "Nisa" (excerpts)
Oct. 11 FILM: "Small Happiness"
- Week 9 **Political Economy**
Oct. 16- *Sidney Mintz, "Pleasure, Profit, and Satiation"
Oct. 18
- Week 10 **Interpretive and Post-Structural Anthropology**
Oct. 23- Zora Neale Hurston, *Tell My Horse* (Chapters 1-9)
Oct. 25 FILM: "Zora Is My Name!"
- Week 11 **Experimenting with Ethnography**
Oct. 30- Zora Neale Hurston, *Tell My Horse* (Chapters 10-18)
Nov. 1

MIDTERM EXAM—NOVEMBER 1

- Week 12 **Overview of Theoretical Approaches to Archaeology**
Nov. 6- Jack Weatherford, *Genghis Khan* (Introduction and Chapters 1-3)
Nov. 8 ADDITIONAL READINGS TO BE ANNOUNCED

Week 13 Towards an Anthropology of Globalization
Nov. 13- Jack Weatherford, *Genghis Khan* (Chapters 4-7)
Nov. 15

Week 14 Anthropology and the Modern World
Nov. 20 Jack Weatherford, *Genghis Khan* (Chapters 8-10 and Epilogue)

THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY—NOVEMBER 22 - 25

Week 15 Anthropologists and War
Nov. 27- *Anna Simons and Catherine Lutz, (Transcript of NPR debate)
Nov. 29 *Roberto Gonzalez, "Towards Mercenary Anthropology?"
 *Laura Nader, "The Phantom Factor: Anthropology and the Cold War"

Week 16 The Future of Anthropology
Dec. 4- *Roberto Gonzalez, "Anthropologists in the Public Sphere"
Dec. 6 *David Graeber, "The New Anarchists"

TERM PAPER DUE DECEMBER 6

FINAL EXAM—WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12 (9:45 am-12:00 pm)

*Articles marked with an asterisk can be found in the supplemental course reader.