ANTH 602: Theory I
Fall 2020

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Zoom office hours: Thursday 1 p.m-2 p.m. and by appointment

Description
The aim of this course is to read a series of texts in the history of anthropological theory that continue to inform the discipline and to consider their concepts, arguments, and form. By the end of the semester, students should know the main arguments and concepts in the assigned texts and should be able to draw connections between these texts and contemporary concerns in the discipline including their own emerging projects. The texts have been selected to introduce students to several traditions of anthropology but the collection is neither exhaustive nor does it constitute a canon. Instead, the course offers one route through the discipline. While the course is not organized historically, we will consider the contexts and conditions in which assigned text were written and circulated and when and how they became important to anthropology.

Reading
Readings on the course outline are divided into three categories, as follows.

Readings marked ** in the course outline are required. The reading is significant and demanding; if you find that circumstances make it impossible to complete the reading please be in touch. We will spend time talking about how to approach difficult, and long, texts.

The further reading section of the syllabus lists two types of texts. Readings marked * are strongly suggested. Other readings listed as further reading are texts that give further intellectual and/or historical contexts, texts that highlight where a particular concept has traveled traveled in the discipline, texts that constitute debates about another text or argument. You are You are always encouraged to read more but I do not expect that you will be able to read everything in this section of the course outline. It is intended to give you some ideas, for now and now and going forward.

In addition to readings, I have made an effort, where possible, to include secondary material in the form of lectures or radio/television programs freely available online. I have listed these with the required readings as I think they provide very helpful introductions to the material. I have posted many of these readings as PDFs; if you use your own copy, please be sure that the pagination is the same as the text on the syllabus.

Note on language: A significant number of the assigned texts were originally written in a language other than English; if you read the language in which the text was originally published, you are welcome to read in that language and to bring questions of translation into discussions.
Assignments and Evaluation

Reflections. Each week, students will write 2-3 reflections on the readings, to be posted to the discussion board on MyCourses. The reflection posts should not be summaries. They can include questions, analyses, difficult passages, and responses to other posts. Students should be sure that some of their posts are substantive, in terms of quantity and quality, as they constitute a substantial part of class discussion.

Portfolios. Instead of papers, the written work for this course will be a portfolio, due December 14, which will include the following components:

1. Reflection papers. In addition to their regular reflections, students will submit weekly reflection papers (500-1000 word). These posts are not summaries but are argumentative, analytical pieces of writing usually focused on part of the text/s assigned that week. The posts will usually focus on several passages from the primary text/s and may raise questions; offer interpretations; consider the explicit and implicit assumptions of the argument and their consequences; analyze and identify weaknesses in an argument and propose counter-arguments. They can link the texts to previous readings and discussions. Posts may draw on the student’s shorter reflections as well as on contributions other students have made on the discussion board, as long as these are properly cited.

Reflection posts are due before class every week except the first and last weeks of class. The papers must be posted on MyCourses in the Reflection Papers folder by Saturday prior to the seminar no later than 11:59 Montreal time. Students will receive half points for on-time completion and half points for content. Late posts will not receive points for on-time completion. At the end of the semester, students will collate ten of their responses, unedited, into the portfolio.

2. Optional developments. You may, if you wish, develop specific questions, interpretations, or evaluations of a single reading or across several.

3. Introduction. The portfolio should begin with an introduction (1000 words) that draws out themes, connections, and problematics in and between the papers. The idea is not to present the papers as a coherent whole but instead to think about what the collection of work shows about the changing and sometimes contradictory concerns of anthropology. The introduction should not be a summary of what follows but instead an analysis of the collection of papers.

4. Conclusion. The portfolio should end with a conclusion (500 words) that addresses the question: what theory of society undergirds your research? To answer the question, reflect on your PhD proposal in its most current form, and consider which of the arguments, concepts and approaches that we have studied together form the basis of and/or clarify your understanding of your own object of analysis.

Grading: Reflections (20%)
Portfolio: 80% (10 papers, 6% each; Introduction 15%; Conclusion 5%)

Other Class Policies

I seek to make the learning environment inclusive and respectful for all participants. Thus, violent or harmful language on discussion boards, in chats, or in discussions as well as in user names or visual backgrounds may be cause for disciplinary action.

If you experience barriers to learning in this course do not hesitate to discuss them with me or with the Office for Students with Disabilities: [https://www.mcgill.ca/osd/](https://www.mcgill.ca/osd/)

Accommodations are possible for students who experience barriers to learning—including disabilities or medical conditions but also inadequate internet access or living situations that make participation in live discussions difficult or impossible. Students who need accommodations should contact me at the beginning of the semester or as soon as a barrier arises.

If you have an ongoing mental health concern or one that arises during the semester and that interferes with your coursework, contact me as soon as you are able. You should also contact Counseling and Psychological Services ([http://www.mcgill.ca/counselling/home](http://www.mcgill.ca/counselling/home)) for a preliminary appointment.

Please let me and the other students know your preferred pronoun.

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures see [www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/) for more information).

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l’honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site [www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/))

Conformément à la Charte des droits de l’étudiant de l’Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être note.

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the instructor’s or the university’s control, the content and/or evaluation methods for this course may change.
Weekly Schedule

Week 1
September 14 France and New France: Ethnography in the 17th and 18th Centuries

**Before beginning these readings, please listen to the introductory podcast on the MyCourses site.

  Introduction
  1635. Jean de Brébeuf on the Hurons pp. 37-69

  Introduction, focus on xv-xxi
  Supplément au Voyages de Bougainville. 31-75.

**https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/diderot/

Further Reading

  Chapter 1: Doux Commerce, Douce Colonisation: Consensual Colonialism in Diderot's Thought.


Toscano, A. By Contraries Execute All things: Figures of the Savage in European Philosophy. Radical Philosophy 2.04, spring 2019,
  https://www.radicalphilosophy.com/article/by-contraries-execute-all-things

  https://www.franceculture.fr/emissions/les-nouveaux-chemins-de-la-connaissance/diderot-15-la-biographie-et-la-vie-de-diderot
Week 2
September 21 Civilization and Social Evolution

  Chapter XXI: General Summary and Conclusion

https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/979778324
  Preface
  Part I, Chapter 1. Ethnical Periods
  Part II, Chapter I. Organization of Society Upon the Basis of Sex
  Chapter V. the Iroquois Confederacy

  Preface; Chapter 1: The Science of Culture.

Further Reading


Week 3
September 28 Marx, Part 1

Yom Kippur-no Zoom session

  Part I

  Introduction
Watch: David Harvey’s lecture on the *Grundrisse* (Introduction)
http://davidharvey.org/2020/01/reading-marxs-grundrisse/

Further Reading


Week 4
October 5 Marx, Part 2

   Part I, Chapter I. The Commodity.

**Watch: David Harvey’s introduction to *Capital* (Chapter 1)

October 12: Thanksgiving Break

Week 5
October 19 *Making Society*

   Introduction to the 1984 edition, Coser
   Introduction to this edition, Lukes
   Preface to the First Edition (1893)
   Introduction
   Book I, Chapter I. The Method of Determining This Function
      Chapter II. Mechanical Solidarity, or Solidarity by Similarities
      Chapter III. Solidarity Arising from the Division of Labor, or Organic Solidarity
   Book III, Chapter I. The Anomic Division of Labor
   Conclusion

   Introduction to this edition, Lukes
   Chapter I. What is a Social Fact?
   Chapter II. Rules for the Observation of Social Facts
   Chapter V. Rules for the Explanation of Social Facts
Further Reading


https://www.franceculture.fr/emissions/avoir-raison-avec-emile-durkheim

**Week 6**

October 26 *Individual and Society*


Further Reading


Latour on Tarde http://www.bruno-latour.fr/taxonomy/term/17.html


**Week 7**

November 2 *Exchange*

Part II: Essay on the Gift.

Further Reading


**Week 8**
November 9
  - Introduction, 1-8 (xxxiii-lvii)
  - Volume 1, Part 1, Chapter I. Basic Sociological Terms
  - Volume 2, Chapter X. Domination and Legitimacy
  - Chapter XI. Bureaucracy
  - Chapter XIV. Charisma and its Transformations

Further Reading:

**Week 9**
November 16  *Society as Repression*


Further Reading
  - Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
  - Psychoanalysis and Its History

**Week 10**
November 23 *Participant Observation*

- Part I. Becoming Indian


Forward
Introduction
I, III, IV, V, VI, XII, XVII, XXVII


Further Reading


**Week 11**
November 30 *Structure and Function*

https://archive.org/details/nuerdescriptiono00evan/page/n7

Introductory
I. Interest in Cattle
III. Time and Space
IV. The Political System
V. The Lineage System
VI. Age-Set System, Part V

   Introduction
   IX: On the concept of Function in Social Science
   X: On Social Structure.

Further Reading


Week 12
December 3 (Thursday) From Volksgeist to Culture

**Stocking. Boas and the History of the Culture Concept.

**Bunzl. Boas and Humboldtian Tradition.

   The Aims of Anthropological Research (1932)
   Some Problems of Methodology in the Social Sciences (1930)
   Limitations of the Comparative Method of Anthropology (1896)
   The Methods of Ethnology (1920)

Further Reading:

https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/herder/
https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/herder/supplement.html#HerRolBir

Week 13
December 7 Culture in American Anthropology

   Reviews of King in TLS, NYRB, Nation. PDF

**Hurston, Zora Neale. Mules and Men.
Preface by Franz Boas
Part 1. Folk Tales

Chapter 1. The Science of Custom
Chapter 8. The Individual and the Pattern of Culture