

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Foundations of Social and Cultural Anthropology

ANTH 631, Fall 2014

Mondays, 5:30-8:00 pm, Anderson LL-2

David Vine: vine@american.edu; 202-885-2923

Office Hours: Hamilton 311, Mondays and Tuesdays, 1:30-3:30 pm, and by appointment

Each anthropologist must reinvent [anthropology], as a general field,
for him or herself, following personal interest and talent where best they may lead.
Dell Hymes, *Reinventing Anthropology* (1999[1969]), p. 48.

¿Antropología para qué?
[Anthropology for what? Anthropology to what end?]
Gaceta del Tecolote Maya, qtd. in Paul Farmer, *Pathologies of Power* (2005), p. 16.

This collaborative discussion-based seminar provides an overview of some of the foundational ideas, theories, methodologies, texts, authors, and histories of sociocultural anthropology. The course should offer a base upon which to build further knowledge, explore ideas, and conduct independent research during one's graduate education and beyond. The seminar aims to build our skills as thoughtful analysts, critics, and theorists of anthropological and broader social science literature as well as of our social world. Informed by a commitment to public anthropology, the course also seeks to provide a theoretical foundation for making anthropology relevant and useful outside academia. The seminar will prepare you for the spring's follow-on course "Contemporary Anthropological Theory."

Any course presenting the so-called foundations of a discipline is necessarily a partial and subjective one, specific to the person who designed it. With this in mind and building on Dell Hymes' four-decades-old entreaty above, this seminar asks each participant to engage in an ongoing process of inventing and reinventing anthropology for oneself. This should include active efforts to define anthropology, its foundations, and its purposes.

As a participatory, discussion-based seminar, the course assumes energetic and thoughtful engagement from every participant and careful attention to all assigned readings. The classroom should be a space for passionate, engaged discussion. Everyone will be encouraged and expected to express views freely and to dissent with others, including and especially me. Everyone will also be expected to respect others' right to express themselves freely. Beginning with the syllabus and throughout the semester, seminar participants will have opportunities to shape the direction of the class, choose subjects of discussion, and improve the course design through regular feedback.

We will divide the seminar into small groups, which will be expected to meet on a weekly basis (except during weeks when papers are due) to discuss the assigned readings in advance of class.

Groups will also be responsible for leading two class discussions during the semester. There will be three assigned papers due, of approximately 5-8 double-spaced pages each.

SEMINAR OBJECTIVES

By the end of the semester, my objective is that each of us will be able to:

- Work cooperatively and constructively with other seminar participants, building a rich, thoughtful, and supportive learning environment;
- Understand some of the foundational ideas, theories, methodologies, texts, authors, and histories in sociocultural anthropology (and across the social sciences and humanities);
- Feel secure in having an anthropological and academic base upon which to build further knowledge, explore new ideas, and conduct independent research in the future;
- Create a theoretical foundation for developing a personal vision for anthropology;
- Understand and articulate a personal vision for what anthropology has been, what anthropology is, and what anthropology can be;
- Analyze, critique, and theorize anthropological and other academic literature and our world in new ways;
- Think critically and in new ways about theories, ideas, and issues of broad public and academic significance;
- Speak effectively in public and communicate original ideas to others, thinking carefully about classroom pedagogy;
- Write successfully about theory;
- Self-critically reflect on the seminar and one's work in the seminar, social theory, anthropology, and one's future work in the discipline;
- Feel prepared to read and engage with contemporary anthropological and other academic literature and take the spring's course "Contemporary Anthropological Theory."

PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE

Careful and thoughtful reading and active participation in class, in addition to written assignments, are the most important elements of this course. I expect advance notice for any classes you will miss, just as I will inform you if I must miss any classes.

Because this class stresses active participation in class discussions and respect for all course participants, computers, mobile phones, and other personal electronic devices may never be used in the classroom. I generally discourage the use of e-readers, and I especially discourage their use in this course given our close reading of the texts and given that you are likely to return frequently to these texts. If you must use an e-reader for some reason, you may only do so to examine course readings and for no other purposes. If there is a good reason to make an exception to these ground rules (e.g., a learning or disability issue requires such use), please come speak to me. Thanks for your understanding and assistance.

WEEKLY CRITICAL REACTION PAPERS

Each week (except when another assignment is due), please submit a 1-2 page *maximum* double-spaced “critical reaction” paper in response to the assigned readings for the week. The critical reaction must be emailed to me by 12:00 the day of class the readings are assigned with “FOUNDATIONS” in the email subject line. In short, your reaction should offer thoughtful reflection about each of the week’s readings. In some way, you should summarize the main argument(s) of each reading (on weeks with multiple readings, you will have to be especially concise). However, go beyond summary to offer your own original thoughts about the texts. These thoughts could be a major question or query raised by the readings. They could be what Brett Williams calls a “keeper”: “A *keeper* is like a gift. It is a concept the author introduces to you, a question she or he poses...a problem so movingly invoked you want to fix it.”¹ Or your thoughts could be a critique, challenge, inspiration, uncertainty, connection, comparison, concern, application, implication, and any other original idea about the texts. In discussing the texts, I suggest combining your own words with those of assigned authors in the form of short and carefully chosen quotations.

Between summarizing the readings’ key arguments and offering your own thoughts, the reactions should help you organize your thinking and clarify the key issues you want to discuss each week. I will not grade the reactions, but thoughtful, focused papers that clearly engage with the readings will indicate effort and engagement in the course. *In your critical reactions alone, you do not need to cite quotations from assigned readings other than by indicating page number(s).*

Beyond the 2-page limit, the reaction is also an opportunity to ask any general questions about the class, anthropology, and things that are confusing in the course. You can also use it to give me feedback of any kind about the seminar, my teaching, ways I could improve the course, and general frustrations or inspiration. I also welcome emailed questions and comments (call if something is urgent) as well as anonymous questions or comments placed in my mailbox in the Department of Anthropology’s Hamilton Building.

CLASS FACILITATION

Twice during the semester, each small group will serve as facilitators for part of a day’s discussion. The aim is to 1) briefly summarize and frame the week’s readings and then 2) to stimulate conversation with one especially provocative and important question that addresses the key substance of the week’s readings and what your group thinks we should be discussing. Groups will have 10 minutes *maximum* to present material aimed at spurring constructive conversation. Every member of the group must participate in the presentation.

Begin by *briefly* summarizing the major arguments of each of the week’s readings. Next, go beyond summarizing to offer one critical question about the texts and topics at hand that provides a lively springboard for discussion and critical thinking. The question should be a major question raised by the majority of the texts assigned for that week. Think about how best to engage the class. Be thoughtful, be creative, and don’t be afraid to take risks. It may help to have

¹ Brett Williams, “ANTH 632 Contemporary Theory: Culture, Power, History,” class syllabus, American University, Washington, DC, Spring 2014, 5.

backup questions to probe and prompt deeper discussion, but *do not* read an unfocused list of questions. Remember, too, that your goal is to generate energetic conversation, not to dominate the conversation. Likewise, *do not* use your presentation merely to summarize the material, offer a perfunctory powerpoint, tell us what you liked and didn't like, or provide biographical material about authors. I highly, highly recommend practicing your presentation as a group.

Generally, groups will facilitate discussion during the second half of class. If you have any technological requirements, you must alert me before the start of class so we have enough time to set up a computer. Because this seminar stresses the importance of text, please *do not* make video part of your presentation. If you wish to share a video clip, email it to the class via Blackboard before or after class.

ASSIGNMENTS SUMMARIZED

- 1) Weekly small group meetings.
- 2) Submission of *at least 8* critical reaction papers emailed to me by 12:00 a.m. the day of class.
- 3) Informal meeting with me, due by September 15.
- 4) 2 group presentations during the course of the semester, dates to be determined.
- 5) 3 papers, with questions to be announced, due October 13, November 10, December 8, and preliminary assignments for the last paper due November 24 and December 1.

WRITING REQUIREMENTS

All written assignments must be double spaced, 12-pt. font, with 1-inch margins on all sides, and comply with generally accepted rules of writing, style, and proper academic citation. For guidance, see the American Anthropological Association style guide:

(http://www.aaanet.org/pubs/style_guide.htm); the *Chicago Manual of Style* (<http://library.osu.edu/sites/guides/chicagogd.php>); and the *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing* (<http://thewritesource.com/mla.htm>).

All writing assignments must be turned in on paper (i.e., *not electronically*) at the beginning of the class on which they are due, *unless indicated otherwise*. If there is a legitimate reason why you must turn in a paper late, you should contact me *more than 24 hours* before the due date to explain the problem and make other arrangements. For help with your writing beyond the classroom, visit the Writing Center, Bender Library Commons (885-2991 for appointments), the Academic Support Center Writing Lab, or feel free to see me.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

By registering for this class and at the university, you have acknowledged your awareness of the Academic Integrity Code (<http://www.american.edu/academics/integrity/code.htm> or see the "Student Handbook and Planner"). You are responsible for familiarizing yourself and complying with all its standards of academic conduct, including those related to plagiarism. I take plagiarism and academic dishonesty very seriously, and I am required to report cases to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, whose policy is to fail students for the course. Please read

the university's Academic Integrity Code closely, and be sure to ask me if you have any questions.²

Special Note: In addition to plagiarizing others, it is possible to plagiarize oneself when using your own previously written material without proper citation. To avoid self-plagiarism and related academic dishonesty, you must cite all material that you have written for any purposes other than this class. If you want to use material written for another class in this course, you must ask for advance permission to do so.

MY RESPONSIBILITIES

I pledge to the best of my ability to make this as enriching and exciting an academic experience as possible for everyone; to come prepared to lead engaging class sessions; to create a safe and nurturing academic environment in the classroom that encourages the free exchange of ideas; to remain open to—and encourage—all dissent, critique, suggestions about the class, and other feedback; to adapt the course as appropriate in response to feedback; to meet personally with course participants during my office hours and at other times by appointment to discuss any aspect of the course; to read carefully and return all written assignments in a timely fashion; and to be fair in my evaluation and grading.

PRIMARY TEXTS

All these texts should be available in the campus bookstore, on 2-hour reserve in the library, and at inexpensive prices when purchased (often used) online. All other required readings will be available on Blackboard, on 2-hour reserve in the library, on the internet, or in class.

Erickson, Paul A., and Liam D. Murphy. *Readings for a History of Anthropological Theory*, 3rd edition. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010. [4th edition is in the bookstore; be careful with pagination.]

Forgacs, David, ed. *The Antonio Gramsci Reader*. New York: New York University Press, 2000.

Foucault, Michel. *The Foucault Reader*. Edited by Paul Rabinow. New York: Pantheon, 1984.

Marx, Karl. *Selected Writings*. Edited by Lawrence H. Simon. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 1994.

Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Translated by Talcott Parsons. New York: Dover Publications, 2003. [Or other edition.]

Note: The following book is recommended for this class and your graduate education but is not required. The page numbers below refer to the original edition, but a later edition should be on sale in the bookstore. Any edition will be fine, but pay attention to pagination differences.

² Michael Manson, Academic Affairs Administrator, College of Arts and Sciences, American University, Washington, DC, email communications, January 8, 2008, January 8, 2009.

Lemert, Charles, ed. *Social Theory: The Multicultural and Classic Readings*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993.

Also useful for additional history about anthropology and key figures in the discipline:

Erickson, Paul A., and Liam D. Murphy. *A History of Anthropological Theory*, 4th edition. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013. [Or other edition.]

CLASS SCHEDULE

All assignments and readings are due on the date indicated. I have listed text in the suggested reading order.

Notes for where to find texts

B=Book

BBc=Blackboard "Course Reserves"

BBo=Blackboard "Other Readings"

If you cannot find a reading on Blackboard or if a link does not work, 1) look again on Blackboard (perhaps looking for the title or an editor's name or looking in another folder); 2) use your research skills to try to find the text elsewhere; and 3) email the reading or a link to the rest of the class if you find it and let me know immediately if you cannot.

August 25: Introductions and Welcome

Hymes, Dell. "The Use of Anthropology: Critical, Personal, Political." In *Reinventing Anthropology*, ed. Dell Hymes, 3-79. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. 1999[1969]. BBo [Never fear: almost 20 pp. are references and notes.]

September 1: NO CLASS—LABOR DAY

September 8: Race and the Beginnings of Anthropology

DeLoria, Vine, Jr. *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969, 78-100. BBo

Asad, Talal. "Introduction." In *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*, ed. Talal Asad, 9-19. London: Ithaca Press, 1973. BBc

Darwin, Tylor, Morgan, Spencer in Erickson and Murphy, chapters 5, 2-4. B

DuBois, W.E.B., in Lemert, 177-186. B/BBo/BBc

DuBois, W.E.B. *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study*. Boston: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1899, iii-17 [and review the organization of the rest of the book from the table of contents] BBo

Cooper, Anna Julia, in Lemert, 193-199. B/BBo/BBc

Proctor, Robert. "From Anthropologie to Rassenkunde in the German Anthropological Tradition." In *Bones, Bodies, Behavior: Essays on Biological Anthropology*, ed. George Stocking, 138-179. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988. BBo

Orwell, George. "Politics and the English Language," 1946. BBo

September 15: Karl Marx (and Friedrich Engels)
INFORMAL MEETING WITH ME DUE BY THIS DATE

Lemert, 1-24. B/BBo/BBc

"Preface," "Introduction," and "Overview" in Erickson and Murphy, xiii-xv, 3-21. B

Lamphere, Louise in Erickson and Murphy, 253-254. B

Lemert, 35. B/BBo/BBc

Marx, Karl, "Introduction" [Lawrence H. Simon], "The Communist Manifesto," "Theses on Feuerbach," "The German Ideology, Part I (selections)," "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte (selections)," "Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*," ix-xxxviii, 157-187, 98-101, 102-213. B

September 22: Capitalism and Capital

Engels, Friedrich, selections from chapters 3-4 in *Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844* [1845]. BBo. [Optional: Read all of chapters 3-4, available at <http://homepages.udayton.edu/~jsantamarina1/Engels.html>.]

Engels, Friedrich, in Lemert, 74-77. B/BBo/BBc

Marx, Karl, selections from *Capital*, Vol. I, 214-300. B

September 29: Marx continued and Max Weber

Weber, Max, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. B

Class begins in Ward 203 with a department-wide conversation about developing good research questions for one's research.

October 4-5: Public Anthropology Conference

Please attend at least one session (although note that Oct. 4 is, unfortunately, a Jewish holiday).

October 6: Weber

Weber, Max, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. B

Weber, in Lemert, 109, 114-136. B/BBo/BBc

October 13:

Weber, in Lemert, 109, 114-136. B/BBo/BBc

**October 20: Cultural Relativism and the Emergence of U.S. Anthropology
1st PAPER DUE**

“Overview” and Boas in Erickson and Murphy, 105-122. B

Boas in Bohannan and Glazer, 81-93. BBo

Boas, Franz. “Race and Progress.” *Science*, July 3, 1931, 1-8. BBo

Hurston, Zora Neal. Excerpt from *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Read and/or listen at <http://zoranealehurston.com/books/their-eyes-were-watching-god>.

Hurston, Zora Neal. Excerpt from *Mules and Men*. Read and/or listen at <http://zoranealehurston.com/books/mules-and-men>.

Mead in Erickson and Murphy, chapter 13. B

Optional: Boas, Franz. “Scientists as Spies.” In *Anthropologists in the Public Sphere*, ed. Roberto J. González, 23-25. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004. BBo

Mead, Margaret. “War Is Only an Invention—Not a Biological Necessity.” In González, 26-33. BBo

October 27: The French Tradition: Durkheim and Mauss

Durkheim in Erickson and Murphy, chapter 7. B

Durkheim in Bohannan and Glazer, 229-253. BBo

Durkheim in Lemert, 77-108. B/BBc

Mauss in Bohannan and Glazer, pp. 264-271. BBo

November 3: Functionalism, Structuralism, and Structural-Functionalism

Malinowski in Erickson and Murphy, chapter 19. B

Malinowski in Bohannan and Glazer, 272-293. BBo

Levi-Strauss in Erickson and Murphy, chapter 15. B

Levi-Strauss in Lemert, 334-339. B/BBo/BBc

Leach in Erickson and Murphy, chapter 16. B

Radcliffe-Brown, Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, and Gluckman in Erickson and Murphy, chapters 18, 20-21. B

Gilman, Charlotte Perkins, in Lemert, 186-193. B/BBo/BBc

November 10: Antonio Gramsci

2nd PAPER DUE

Forgacs, pp. 10-25, 53-59, 70-72, 189-221 [key section], 246-262, 275-296, 300-349, 360-362, 420-31. BBc

November 17: Foucault

Foucault, 3-30, 121-272, 333-339. B

Optional: pp. 31-100, 291-332. B

November 24: Urban Anthropology and the “Culture of Poverty” Debates

FINAL PAPER 250-WORD MAXIMUM ABSTRACT DUE

Liebow, Elliot. “Introduction,” “Men and Jobs,” and “Conclusion” in *Tally’s Corner: A Study of Negro[sic] Streetcorner Men*, 2nd ed. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003, 1-46, 135-150. BBo

Lewis, Oscar. “The Culture of Poverty.” *Scientific American* 215, no. 4 (1966): 19-25. BBc

Gwaltney, John Langston. *Drylongso: A Self-Portrait of Black America*. New York: New Press, 1993, xix-9. BBc

Leacock, Eleanor. “Introduction.” In *The Culture of Poverty: A Critique*, ed. Eleanor Leacock, 9-37. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971. BBc

Optional: Liebow, “Appendix.” Pp. 151-166. BBo [The book is short, it’s a classic, and it’s about DC, so I recommend reading it all.]

Kelley, Robin D.G. “Looking for the ‘Real’ Nigga: Social Scientists Construct the Ghetto.” In *Yo’ Mama’s Dysfunktional: Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban America*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1998, 15-42. BBc

December 1: Geertz and Symbolic/Interpretive Anthropology
FINAL PAPER 1-2 PP. OUTLINE DUE

Geertz in Erickson and Murphy, chapter 26. B

Geertz, Clifford. “Deep Play: Notes from a Balinese Cockfight.” In *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 412-454. New York: Basic Books, 1973. BBo

Myerhoff, Barbara. *Number Our Days*. New York: Touchstone, 1980, 1-19. BB0

December 3-7: American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, 2660 Woodley Road NW, Washington, DC 20008

Please attend at least one session.

December 8: Final Class Session: Reinventing Anthropology?
FINAL PAPER DUE

Hymes, Dell. “The Use of Anthropology: Critical, Personal, Political.” In *Reinventing Anthropology*, ed. Dell Hymes, 3-79. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. 1999[1969]. BBo

And read at least one of the following:

Nader, Laura, “Up the Anthropologist—Perspectives Gained from Studying Up,” in Hymes, 284-311. BBo

Gough, Kathleen. “New Proposals for Anthropologists,” *Current Anthropology* 9, no. 5 (1968): 403-407. BBo

Caulfield, Mina Davis, “Culture and Imperialism: Proposing a New Dialectic,” in Hymes, 182-212. BBo

EVALUATION (AND, UNFORTUNATELY, GRADING)

I expect your full participation in all aspects of class sessions and the completion of all assignments. My evaluation and (what I hope you will find to be) constructive feedback on your

work will primarily come in the form of written comments returned to you on your assignments. Although I wish all our classes could be pass/fail, AU requires me to assign final grades. I will do so primarily based on seminar participation (50%) and the quality of and energy devoted to the three major written assignments (10%, 15%, 25%). Improvement over the course of the semester and effort will also be factored into my evaluation in addition to the prior elements. I will also consider a formal self-assessment that you will complete to review your participation and work in the course.

I will ultimately assign grades in accordance with the following distributions and AU guidelines:

- A: Superior, original, thoughtful work in completion of all course requirements;
- B: Very good work in completion of course requirements;
- C: Satisfactory work in completion of course requirements;
- D: Unsatisfactory or incomplete work in course requirements and/or a failure to meet minimum attendance requirements;
- F: Failure to meet minimum course standards for assignments, participation, attendance.³

If you have concerns or questions about grading, please come speak with me.

LEARNING AND LIFE RESOURCES

If you encounter any difficulty this semester for any reason that affects your participation in the course, please don't hesitate to speak with me. In addition to the department's assistance, the university offers a variety of learning and life resources. See:

<https://my.american.edu/content.cfm?load=includes/help.cfm> or the following:

Academic Support Center: 885-3360, MGC 243, www.american.edu/ocl/asc.

Counseling Center: 885-3500, MGC 214, www.american.edu/ocl/counseling.

Disability Support Services: 885-3315 (V/TDD), MGC 206, www.american.edu/ocl/dss.

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please notify me in a timely manner with a letter from the Academic Support Center or Disability Support Services so that we can address your needs.

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender & Ally Resource Center: 885-3347, MGC 201, www.american.edu/ocl/glbta.

International Student and Scholar Services: 885-3340/50, Butler 410, www.american.edu/ocl/iss.

Judicial Affairs and Mediation Services: 885-3328, Butler 408, www.american.edu/ocl/jams.

Multicultural Affairs: 885-3651, MGC 204, www.american.edu/ocl/oma.

³ See "Guideline of a General Education Syllabus," online document, available at <http://www.american.edu/academics/gened/faculty.htm>.

New Student Programs: 885-3303/74, Butler 407, www.american.edu/ocl/orientation.

Student Health Center: 885-3380, McCabe Hall 1st Floor, www.american.edu/healthcenter.

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR ACADEMIC READING

In my opinion, detailed note taking and underlining or highlighting are essential to reading academic texts. Another useful way to ensure that you read carefully and are well prepared for class (and for academia generally) is to answer most or all of the following questions for each assigned text. I strongly suggest writing out the answers and any other thoughts inspired by a reading. These notes will later help you write papers, prepare for exams, and employ your readings in future classes and in other academic work.

Suggested Questions to Ask of Each Reading

- 1) What is(are) the main argument(s) or thesis(es) of the work? What was the author's goal or aim in writing? What was the author trying to accomplish?
- 2) What evidence does the author provide to support the main argument? What research methods did the author employ to collect evidence? What key authors or theories does the author build upon, advance, and/or critique?
- 3) Are you convinced by the author's argument? Why or why not? How is the text helpful? What, if anything, is missing from the analysis, discussion, or the presentation of data? How is the text weak or problematic? How could it be strengthened or improved (perhaps linked to the work of others)? Don't just critique! Think critically about how an analysis can be usefully improved and built upon.
- 4) What is the significance of the text—both for academic thought and the larger world? How might it help us understand related issues and phenomena?
- 5) What questions does the reading raise for you? What other thoughts, ideas, or inspiration? What parallels do you draw with other ideas or writing? Where does the work take your mind? Write down any notes, thoughts, and even glimmers of ideas, no matter where they might take you. They will likely be helpful later.

And keep the notes! They will be incredibly helpful for future papers, other classes, comprehensive exams, dissertations and theses, and teaching (I still use my notes from college).

Many also find that maintaining an organized bibliography using Endnote or another computer software program greatly assists future research and writing.