

ANTH 549: CULTURE & CAPITALISM, FALL 2014

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 9:30-11:30am, or by appointment

Class Time: Tuesdays, 1:15-4:15pm
Location: Room 302, Ruth Adams, Douglass Campus

This seminar explores historical and contemporary efforts to investigate, analyze and understand the complicated relationship between “culture” and “capitalism.” Is there a difference between emphasizing the cultural dimensions of capitalism instead of the political-economic facets of culture? Can we reconcile the two? If so, how do we account for the temporal and spatial dimensions of the relationship in a manner sensitive to the simultaneity of structure and process, difference and similarity, continuity and change, conformity and contestation? In what ways can ethnographic research and writing illuminate the local and translocal mediations of the relationship?

After a substantial theoretical review of relevant theories of culture and capitalism, we will explore these issues through critical readings of contemporary ethnographies. Topics we will examine include commodification, modernity & postmodernity, colonialism and postcoloniality, production & reproduction, consumption, alienation, marginality, and social difference (class, race, ethnicity, gender). Moving beyond empirical details, we shall examine each text for the theoretical perspectives it uses and the manner in which it relates local conditions to translocal contexts. We will also explore how we as anthropologists might study, analyze and write about similar processes and practices within frameworks that contain both the “local” and the “global,” structures and practices, culture and political economy.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: This seminar is designed to have the character of an intensive reading group. Principal emphasis will be given to detailed discussion of the texts and you should therefore come to class having read the materials and prepared to share your insights, questions, and concerns.

1) *Weekly commentaries:* All seminar participants are required to post a commentary of 1-2 pages on the course Sakai site (the class discussion section) about the week’s readings by the Monday afternoon (4:00 pm at the latest) before the Tuesday seminar meeting. This format will allow me (and the facilitators) to direct the discussion around issues you raise and to identify common issues of confusion or concern. These commentaries will not be graded individually but will be considered in arriving at your cumulative grade at the end of the semester. *You must post a total of 10 commentaries by the end of the term.*

2) *Facilitators*: For the bulk of the course, seminar participants will assist me in facilitating discussion of each text. You should therefore be prepared to serve at least once during the semester as a facilitator, both introducing and summarizing discussion of the required text.

3) *Critical Essay*: All seminar participants must write a critical essay of NO MORE THAN 25 double-spaced pages of text (not including endnotes and bibliography). The essay should develop themes related to seminar readings and discussion through critical reviews and/or comparisons of materials read for class, using additional materials where desired. Seminar participants will make short oral presentations based on work *in progress*, which means that completed research papers are not necessary to make a presentation. In the past, students have found these presentations very useful in helping them formulate and focus their papers and projects. The first draft of the essay is due in class and by email (as a MS Word document) on **November 4th**, the final draft is due by 10am on **December 12th**. No late papers will be accepted, except under the most extenuating circumstances.

Grades will be based on preparation for, and participation in, the seminar as well as timely completion of written course requirements. The essay will count for approximately 60% of your grade, with the remaining 40% determined by regular submission of your critical reviews, and your contribution to seminar discussion, both as a facilitator and a regular participant.

REQUIRED TEXTS (Available from Rutgers Bookstores; on reserve at Douglass Library) (please make sure that you have the correct translations & versions of Gramsci and Marx):

- Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. (available as e-book through RU libraries)
- Benson, Peter. 2011. *Tobacco Capitalism: Growers, Migrant Workers, and the Changing Face of a Global Industry*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Ferguson, James. 1999. *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt*. Berkeley: University of California.
- Gramsci, Antonio. 1971. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. (Hoare & Smith transl. & ed.). New York: International Publishers.
- Harvey, David. 1991. *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Ho, Karen. 2009. *Liquidated: An Ethnography of Wall Street*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Hodgson, Dorothy L. 2001. *Once Intrepid Warriors: Gender, Ethnicity and the Cultural Politics of Maasai Development*. Bloomington: Indiana.
- Lenin, V.I. 1969 [1916]. *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. New York: International Publishers
- Li, Tania. 2014. *Land's End: Capitalist Relations on an Indigenous Frontier*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press (available August 2014)
- Marx, Karl. 1992 [1867]. *Capital, Volume One (Fowkes translation)*. New York: Penguin Classics.
- Taussig, Michael. 2010 [1980] . *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America*. Chapel Hill: University Of North Carolina Press.
- West, Paige. 2012. *From Modern Production to Imagined Primitive: The Social World of Coffee from Papua New Guinea*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Williams, Raymond. 1977. *Marxism and Literature*. New York: Oxford University Press.

COURSE OUTLINE

NOTE: SAKAI denotes articles available from the course Sakai site
RB denotes a required book to be purchase or read on reserve

PART I: THEORIES OF CULTURE & CAPITALISM

Week 1: Introduction (2 Sept)

Week 2: Key Concepts (9 Sept)

Karl Marx, *Capital, Vol I* (selections) [RB]

Week 3: Historical Perspectives: From Modernity to Postmodernity (16 Sept)

E.P. Thompson, 1968 [1963]. *The Making of the English Working Class*. New York: Penguin Books. (Preface, Chapters 6,7) [SAKAI]

Karl Marx, "The Working Day", from *Capital* (skim Chapter 10) [RB]

David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* [RB]

Week 4: Global Perspectives: Imperialism & Development (23 Sept)

V.I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. [RB]

June Nash, 1981. "Ethnographic Aspects of the World Capitalist System." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 10: 393-423. [SAKAI]

Peter Worsley, 1984. "Prolegomena." From *The Three Worlds: Culture and World Development*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pps. 1-60. [SAKAI]

Frederick Cooper. 1981. Africa and the World Economy. *African Studies Review* 24(2/3): 1-86. [SAKAI]

Marshall Sahlins. 1994. "Cosmologies of Capitalism: The Trans-Pacific Sector of 'The World System'." In Nicholas Dirks, Geoff Eley, and Sherry Ortner, eds. *Culture/Power/History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. [SAKAI]

Week 5: Culture & Power: Ideology & Hegemony (30 Sept)

Louis Althusser. 1971 [1969/1970]. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses." In *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. (Ben Brewster, trans.) New York: Monthly Review Press, pps. 127-186. [SAKAI]

Antonio Gramsci, *The Prison Notebooks* (selections) [RB].

Raymond Williams, *Marxism & Literature* (Introduction, Parts I & II) [RB]

Paul Willis. 1977. *Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids get Working Class Jobs*. New York: Columbia University Press (chs. 5-9) [SAKAI]

Week 6: Modernity & Transnationalism (7 Oct)

Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large* [RB]

Roger Rouse, 1995. "Thinking Through Transnationalism." *Public Culture* 7:353-402. [SAKAI]

Bruce Knauft, 2002. "Critically Modern: An Introduction." *Critically Modern: Alternatives, Alterities, Anthropologies*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pps. 1-54. [SAKAI]

PART II: ETHNOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVES

Week 7: Commodities (14 Oct)

Michael Taussig, *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism* [RB]

Week 8: Colonial Legacies (21 Oct)

Dorothy Hodgson, *Once Intrepid Warriors* [RB]

Week 9: Modernity & Experience (28 Oct)

James Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity* [RB]

Week 10: Privatization and the Rise of Inequality (Nov 4) [1st draft of Essay due]

Tania Li, *Land's End: Capitalist Relations on an Indigenous Frontier* [RB]

Special Guest: Tania Li, Professor of Anthropology and Canada Research Chair in the Political-Economy and Culture of Asia, Toronto University
(Professor Li will be giving a lecture at 5pm this afternoon as well)

Week 11: Circuits of Production and Consumption (11 Nov)

Paige West, *From Modern Production to Imagined Primitive* [RB]

Week 12: Agrarian Transition in the US (18 Nov)

Peter Benson, *Tobacco Capitalism: Growers, Migrant Workers and the Changing Face of a Global Industry* [RB]

*** NOTE: NO CLASS ON NOV 25th (Thursday classes held on Tuesday because of Thanksgiving)***

Week 13: Working on Wall Street (2 Dec)

Karen Ho, *Liquidated: An Ethnography of Wall Street* [RB]

Week 14: Presentations & Conclusion (9 Dec)