COURSE SYLLABUS
THE HISTORY OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL THEORY

070:505        Prof. Fran Mascia-Lees
Spring 2008

REQUIRED TEXTS

McGee, R. Jon and Richard Warms

Barth, Fredrik, Andre Gingrich, Robert Parkin, and Sydel Silverman.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course examines key ideas, thinkers, and theoretical movements in British, American, French, and German anthropology from the late 19th century to the present. It takes as its starting point the conviction that ideas are manifested by human actors within ever-broadening circles of context (Stocking 1992:115). Thus it places major theorists and their foundational texts within a number of historical frameworks: a history of ideas, a school of thought, and/or a national tradition as well as within contemporaneous political and cultural currents. Our goal, following Richard Handler, is to discover “why at certain moments, in certain contexts, one interpretation is seen as unimpeachable and superb in comparison to others which are dismissed or highly questioned” (p. 457). The readings for this course include not only primary sources but also secondary sources that will help us approach this question and give us a sense of a historical moment’s “structure of feeling.”

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Each class period will be divided into the following segments:

- Presentation and discussion of reading critiques (2:15-3:30pm)
- Break (3:30-3:45pm)
- In-class writing time in which you revise, expand, comment on, rethink, or expand your ideas based on the discussion in the previous segment (3:45-4:15pm)
- Discussion of your revised ideas (4:15-5:15pm).

Reading Critiques  
60% of grade
You are required to prepare a 2-3 page reading critique almost weekly, which you will present to the class. You will be given about 10 minutes within which to both present your ideas and facilitate a short discussion (you should be aiming for something like a five minute presentation and five minute discussion). Your reading reports may be presented from notes or you are free to read what you have written. You may depend entirely on class readings for your presentation or you may seek additional information from outside sources, as long as it is clear from where you are taking others’ ideas. Your report should be clear and structured and include several questions that an article has raised for you and which you would like the class to discuss. I am not looking for any
particular form and you are free to adopt any style that enables you to best represent your ideas. However, when presenting a primary source, you should try to identify and explicate the author’s central problem(s), concepts, analytical categories (we will keep a running list of these) and/or generalizing assumptions and their relationship to the questions addressed. When discussing a secondary source, the objective is to summarize the article and its central argument, making connections between the context being elucidated and some of the ideas from the primary sources, asking with whom or what a particular author is engaged. Although this course is not organized around a linear timeline, it does tend to cover older works at the beginning of the course and more recent ones toward the end. As we move further along in the semester, I have assigned fewer secondary articles since what is being written by contemporary authors will necessarily be a part of the context we will have explicated throughout the course. For these, more emphasis should be placed on your own ability to use ideas from the course to contextualize and analyze authors’ arguments. Your reports will not be collected, but will be graded based on your presentation of them in class and on your refinement of them during in-class writing time (see below).

In-Class Writing and Class Discussion  30% of grade
During the second half of each class period, you will be given time in class to write as a means of moving your thinking forward. In other words, you will be asked to revise, expand, comment on, rethink, or expand your ideas based on the discussion in the first part of each class period. These are wide open and may focus on one particular idea or may synthesize a number of ideas. You should feel free to write in response to any of the questions a presenter has laid out for the class, including responding to the ones you have posed in your own reading report. You will also be expected to engage fully in each class discussion, demonstrating your knowledge of, and critical thinking about, all the articles assigned for any particular day. This grade will also be based on how carefully you listen and therefore respond to others’ ideas. If you do not have a chance to present your reflexive analysis in class, you must turn your in-class writing into me at the end of the period.

Final Paper and Presentation  10% of grade
Your final paper will be a 5-6 page analysis of a major concept proposed by one of the authors studied (e.g., psychic unity, superorganic, unconscious, disenchantment, culture area, habitus, etc.) Your analysis should be evaluative and should dissect and critique the selected concept, outlining its genesis, meaning, changing uses, merits, limitations, and status/importance/significance in contemporary anthropology. Your final presentation should present 1) an overview of your analysis and 2) a reflection on the impact that tracing the genealogy of this term has had on your understanding of the history of anthropological theory.

ATTENDENCE AND LATE WORK POLICY
Students are required to attend all class meetings (only one absence is allowable, and this only with a legitimate excuse such as serious illness). Please let me know as far ahead of time as possible if you will not be able to attend class. If you miss more than one class, you will jeopardize your standing in the course and may be asked to withdraw from it. I do not accept late work.
I. SETTING THE SCENE

Jan. 23 Course Requirements and Parameters

Jan. 30 British and US Victorian Anthropology
- Excerpt from *The Descent of Man* by Charles Darwin (posted on Sakai, hereafter, “posted”)
- “The Social Organism” by Herbert Spencer in McGee and Warms (hereafter, M&W)
- “The Science of Culture” by E.B. Tylor (M&W)
- “Ethnical Periods” by Lewis Henry Morgan (M&W)
- “The Idea of Civilization Before the Crystal Palace (1750-1850)” by George Stocking (posted)
- “Roots of Anti-modernism: the Crisis of Cultural Authority in the late Nineteenth Century” by Jackson Lears (posted)
- “Preconceptual Metaphors” by Henrietta Moore (posted)

Of interest: “A Prospective Retrospective” by George Stocking (posted)

II. THEORIZING MODERNITY: FROM MORAL PHILOSOPHY TO SOCIAL SCIENCE

Feb. 6 The Crisis of Modernity: Foundations of Social Theory in Germany
- Excerpt from *Dialectic of History* by G.W.F. Hegel, access at http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/hegel-summary.html
- “Feuerbach: Opposition of the Materialist and Idealist Outlook” by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (M&W)
- “The Return of Totemism in Childhood” by S. Freud (M&W)
- Excerpt from *Civilization and its Discontents* by S. Freud (posted)
- “On Protestantism and Capitalism,” excerpt from *The Protestant Ethic* by Max Weber (posted)
- “The German Speaking Countries” by A. Gingrich, in *One Discipline, Four Ways*

Feb. 13 Holding it all Together: Foundations of Social Theory in France
- Excerpt from *A General View of Positivism* by Auguste Comte, access at http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/comte-positivism.html
- “What is a Social Fact?” by Émile Durkheim (M&W)
- “The Cosmological System of Totemism and the Idea of Class” by Émile Durkheim (M&W)
- “Elementary Forms of the Religious Life” by Émile Durkheim (posted)
- “The Gift” by Marcel Mauss (M&W)
- “The French Speaking Countries” by Robert Parkin, in *One Discipline, Four Ways, 157-207 only*
- “The Primitive Self” by Marie-Denise Shelton (posted)
III. EARLY 20TH CENTURY ANGLO-AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGY: VANISHING PASTS AND ENDURING PRESENTS

Feb. 20 German Idealism: the Invention of U.S. Cultural Anthropology and German Racial Science
- “The Methods of Ethnology” by Franz Boas (M&W)
- “Psychological Types in the Cultures of the Southwest” by Ruth Benedict (M&W)
- “The Concept of Culture in Science” by Alfred Kroeber (posted)
- “The United States” by Sydel Silverman in One Discipline, Four Ways, all
- “Anthropology in Germany before the Second World War: The Kaiser Wilhelm Institute” by Gretchen Schafft (posted)

Feb. 27 The Development of British Social Anthropology and the Post-Colonial Critique
- “The Essentials of the Kula” by B. Malinowski (M&W)
- “The Nuer of the Southern Sudan” by E.E. Evans-Pritchard (M&W)
- “The Mother’s Brother in South Africa” by A.R. Radcliffe-Brown (M&W)
- “On Ethnographic Self-Fashioning: Conrad and Malinowski” by James Clifford (posted)
- “Introduction” from Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter by Talal Asad (posted)
- “Imperialist Nostalgia” by Renato Rosaldo (posted)
- “Putting Hierarchy in its Place” by Arjun Appadurai (posted)

IV. THE SEMIOTIC TURN

Mar. 5 Modernist Anthropology: Structuralism
- Excerpts from A Course in General Linguistics by Ferdinand de Saussure (posted)
- “Structural Analysis in Linguistics and in Anthropology” by Claude Levi-Strauss (M&W)
- “The Structural Study of Myth” by Claude Levi-Strauss (posted)
- “External Boundaries” by Mary Douglas (M&W)
- “On Ethnographic Surrealism” by James Clifford (posted)
- “Triangulating the Surrealist Fetish” (posted)
- “The French Speaking Countries” by Robert Parkin, in One Discipline, Four Ways, 207-end

Mar. 12 Symbolic and Interpretive Anthropology: From Structure to Meaning/From Structure to Process
- “Symbols in Ndembu Ritual” by Victor Turner (M&W)
- “Betwixt and Between” by Victor Turner (posted)
- “Deep Play: Notes on a Balinese Cock Fight” by Clifford Geertz (M&W)
- “Thick Description” by Clifford Geertz (posted)
- “Hermes Dilemma” by Vincent Crapanzano (posted)
- “The Touch of the Real” by Stephen Greenblatt (posted)

V. THE POWER TURN

Mar. 26 Some Legacies of Marx
- “The Concept and Method of Cultural Ecology” by Julian Steward (posted)
- “Energy and the Evolution of Culture” by Leslie White (M&W) [you might find it interesting to take a look at this too: “The Cold War context of the FBI’s Investigation of Leslie White” at http://www.anthrosource.net/doi/abs/10.1525/aa.2001.103.1.164]
- “Ritual Regulation of Environmental Relations among a New Guinea People” by Ray Rappaport (M&W)
- “Introduction” to *Europe and the People Without History* by Eric Wolf (posted)
- “Structures and the Habitus” by Pierre Bourdieu (posted)
- “Utility and the Cultural Order” by Marshall Sahlins (posted)
- “Theory in Anthropology Since the Sixties” by Sherry Ortner (posted)

Recommended: “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” by Walter Benjamin

April 2 Feminist Anthropology
- “Introduction” to *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* by Margaret Mead (M&W)
- “Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?” by Sherry Ortner (M&W)
- “The Traffic in Women: Notes on the ‘Political Economy’ of Sex” by Gayle Rubin (posted)
- “Can there be a Feminist Ethnography?” by Judith Stacey (posted)
- “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses” by Chandra Mohanty (posted)
- “Toward a Unified Theory of Class, Race and Gender” by Karen Sacks (posted)
- “The Gender of Theory” by Catherine Lutz (posted)

April 7 Professor Micaela diLeonardo Lecture: 4:30pm (required)
“Great Big Legs and Jughead’s Hat: History, Politics, and New Haven Urban Imaginaries.”
Recommended reading: “Introduction” to *Anthropology at the Crossroads of Knowledge* by Micaela diLeonardo (posted) and “Hidden in Plain Sight” and “Anthropology and American Morality Plays” by Micaela di Leonardo, *Exotics at Home: Anthropologists, Others, American Modernity* (posted)

April 9   **Breaking it all Apart: Critiquing Humanism, Rethinking Modernity, and Theorizing Postmodernity**
- excerpt from *The Genealogy of Morals* by F. Nietzsche (posted)
- excerpts from *Discipline and Punish* by Michel Foucault (posted)
- excerpts from *History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1 by Michel Foucault (posted)
- “Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism” by Fredric Jameson (posted)
- “Time-Space Compression and the Postmodern Condition,” excerpt from *The Condition of Postmodernity* by David Harvey (posted)
- “Here and Now” from *Modernity at Large* by Arjun Appadurai (posted)
- “Introduction” to *Modernity and its Malcontents: Ritual and Power in Postcolonial Africa* by Joan and Jean Comaroff (posted)

April 16   **The “Writing Culture” Critique**
- “A Crisis of Representation in the Human Sciences” by G. Marcus and M. Fischer (posted)
- “Introduction: Partial Truths” by James Clifford (posted)
- “Ethnographies as Texts” by George Marcus and Dick Cushman (posted)
- “The Erosion of Classic Norms” by Renato Rosaldo (posted)
- “The Postmodernist Turn in Anthropology: Cautions from a Feminist Perspective” by Fan Mascia-Lees, Pat Sharpe, and Colleen Cohen (posted)
- “Writing Against Culture” by Lila Abu-Lughod (posted)
- “Culture, Power, and Text: Anthropology and Literature Confront Each ‘Other’” by Fran Mascia-Lees and Pat Sharpe (posted)

VI.   **THEORIZING THE CONTEMPORARY MOMENT**

April 23   **State, Globality, and Neoliberalism**
- “Difference and Disjuncture in the Global Economic System” by Arjun Appadurai (posted)
- “Beyond ‘Culture’: Space, Identity and the Politics of Difference” by Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (posted)
- “Cultures of Circulation: the Imaginations of Modernity” by Benjamin Lee and Edward LiPuma.
- “Stuck in the Middle with You: Rethinking Anthropology’s Spatial Geophysics” by F. Mascia-Lees, J. Himpele, and P. Sharpe (posted)
- “Beyond Human Rights” and “What is a Camp?” by G. Agamben (posted)
- “State of Exception as a Paradigm of Government” by G. Agamben (posted)
- “Introduction: Neoliberalism by Exception, Exception as Neoliberalism” by Aiwha Ong (posted)

April 30   **Paper Presentations and Conclusions**