ANG 6286: SOCIAL THEORY and contemporary ethnography

Spring 2015

Prof. Maria Stoilkova

Anthropology Department
3345 Turlington Hall
stoilkov@anthro.ufl.edu

Seminar meets: Tuesdays 9-11 @ TUR 2341

Office Hrs: to be announced in class @ Turlington 3345 (also by appointment)

Course description:

This seminar seeks to chart some of the many theoretical interfaces between anthropology and the philosophical traditions of social and political sciences of the 20th century. We follow some of the most influential theoretical debates of the last two centuries and how they have informed (but also have been influenced) by anthropological thought and theory. The main goal in this tracing of links is to underscore the difference ethnographic methods and engagements bring to evidence-making and to social theorizing.

We want to understand the various theoretical frameworks that inform the ways anthropologists engage, think and write about social experience, subjectivity, and politics today.

What are the concepts that anthropologists use to approach contemporary lives caught in embattled geopolitics and in novel economic, technoscientific and legal constellations? How can we analytically highlight both larger social processes and human singularities? How theoretically generative is ethnographic fieldwork?

The seminar partially relies on (or can be used as a complement to) other courses in political anthropology and economic anthropology offered in the UF Anthropology Department. The content of this seminar will be creatively engaged depending on the theoretical grounding of students (i.e. we will not read everything listed in the syllabus).
**Format and Assignments:**

This seminar is based on student presentations of the select material and research they prepare for each author, to intellectually contextualize author’s work. The list of authors is selected loosely, while the agenda of the course will be determined based on students’ interests and needs (note that there are more readings assigned than we will be able to cover in class!!!).

The seminar aims to help students navigate through the various theoretical debates in social sciences of the last two centuries and help them systematize their theoretical knowledge of anthropology and understand the creative analytics of ethnography.

Students are expected to prepare short commentaries on the readings each week, which serve as a starting point for discussion. Readings will be made available to everyone prior to class meetings. We will also try to set up a webpage with various resources and student commentaries on the readings. By the middle of the semester students are expected to have conceptualized a topic for their final research paper and turn in a short description or an outline of their paper topic of choice.

Materials will be made available electronically or through photo copies prior to class meetings. Students are responsible for gathering the material if they do not own the applicable books.

Students pursue their own areas of interest, and at the end of the class are expected to write an analytical paper on topics of their choice as related to the class material (up to 15 pages long double-spaced).
Week 1 Jan 6: *introduction*

Week 2 Jan 13: *having an idea in anthropology*


Week 3 Jan 20: *cultural analysis and the contemporary*


And/Or Rabinow, Paul Designs on the contemporary

Week 4 Jan 27: *fieldwork today and ethnography*

Carlo Caduff, 1999 “Ethnographies of Science: Conversation with the Authors and Commentary” In Cultural Anthropology @ http://culanth.org/articles/127-ethnographies-of-science-conversation-with-the

Feldman Greg “Engaged Anthropology” and “If Ethnography is More than Participant Observation, then Relations are More than Connections: The Case for Nonlocal Ethnography in a World of Apparatuses.” Anthropological Theory 11(4): 375-395

Allen Chun's "From Text to Context: How Anthropology Makes Its Subjects" (2008),


Further readings:


Weeks 5-7: rehashing the classics: society, culture, modernity

Feb 3 Emile Durkheim: the collective and the individual


Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of Religious Life
1) http://www.archive.org/stream/elementaryformso00durk#page/48/mode/2up

2) http://durkheim.uchicago.edu/Summaries/forms.html (provides a summary of the book)

Feb 10 Karl Marx: historical materialism / alienated labor / history / commodity fetishism
Selections from Marx Engels Reader (Tucker, editor)

Society and Economy in History (pp.136-142).
Theses on Feuerbach (pp.143-145).
The German Ideology, Part I. ( up to "The Real Basis of Ideology", (pp. 146-176).
The Communist Manifesto.

Selections from Capital, Volume 1, especially 1.1.


Further readings:

Part 2. The Juggernaut of Capitalist Modernity (pp. 75-100).
Part 3. Marx’s Labor Theory of Value (pp. 101-30)
Part 4. From Manufacture to Modern Industry (pp. 131-52).

Feb 17 Max Weber: rationalization and modernity
Weber “Religious Rejections of the World and their Directions” (Pdf file available)


Chapter X (read only pp. 253, 262-64) in “Meaning of Discipline.”
Chapter XI (pp. 267-301). “Social Psychology of the World Religions .”
Chapter XII (pp. 302-322). “Protestant Sects and the Spirit of Capitalism.”
Chapter XIII (pp. 323-362). “Religious Rejections of the World and Their Directions.”
Chapter VII (pp. 180-195). “Class, Status, and Party.”
Chapter IX (pp. 245-252). “Sociology of Charismatic Authority.”
**Further Readings: positioning the classics:**


**Week 8 Feb 24: culture, agency, and ideology**


Louis Althusser. “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses: Notes Toward an Investigation”


**Spring Break: March 2-7**

**Week 9 March 10: the Foucauldian subject of power and discourse**


Foucault, “Truth and Power” and “Two Lectures” In: Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977 131


Rabinow, P and Rose, N 2006. “Biopower Today” Biosocieties 1 195-217

Zamora, Daniel, 2014 “Can We Criticize Foucault?”
https://www.jacobinmag.com/2014/12/foucault-interview/

Baca, George 2005. “Legends of Fordism”. In: Critical Interventions Vol. 6

Web resources:
http://www9.georgetown.edu/faculty/irvinem/CCTP748/Foucault-Outline.html


Midterm due!!!!

Week 10 March 17: problematizing economics...


Week 11 March 24: problematizing politics ...

Spencer, Jonathan. “Locating the Political.” In Anthropology, Politics and the State.


Suggested


**Week 12 March 31: Bourdieu: negotiating agency and structure in practice**

Bourdieu, Pierre. "The social space and the genesis of groups" "Time Perspectives of the Kabyle" An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology, excerpts.


**Week 13 April 7: Embodiment**


**Further readings:**


http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=flz6shD3g2s

http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/bourdieu.htm

Sociology is a Martial Art:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_V_X52VQcA8

**Week 14 April 14: writing and becoming**


**Week 15 April 21: Understanding the Scientific Process**


