ANG 6930 (Section 3439): Theoretical Foundations of Anthropology and 20th Century Social Thought

Spring 2011

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Seminar meets: W: 9:35-12:35 @ CBD 316

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 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. It reflects on anthropological work but focuses mainly on the larger intellectual context within which anthropological questions has been formulated.

We begin by reviewing the classics – the work of Marx, Durkheim and Weber – and their core investigations around questions of ‘modernity’, ‘capitalism,’ ‘industrialization,’ ‘division of labor,’ ‘individualization,’ and ‘rationalization’. We ask what is ‘progress,’ ‘freedom’, ‘equality,’ and ‘humanism’.

Contemporary “politics of” anthropology reflect Critical Theory approaches, and Postmodern, “Foucauldian” emphases on power and representation, held together by the bottom-up approaches that have always defined anthropology. We explore the contours of these theories and ideas as they reflect anthropological thinking on power, knowledge and contemporary societies.

Finally we conclude with some recent anthropological elaborations on method.
Books:


Format and Assignments:

This seminar is based on student presentations of the select material and small 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.
Each student will be presenting a reading each class session, or a short summary of the particular theoretical school within which these works have occurred. In addition students are expected to prepare short commentaries on the readings each week, which serve as a starting point for discussion. These readings are 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 5: Introduction

Week 2, Jan 12: the classicists: Karl Marx

Karl Marx: extracts from “Capital” and “The German Ideology” (From: Lawrence H. Simon (Ed.) 1994. Karl Marx, Selected Writings Hackett Publishing Company)

Karl Marx: “The communist manifesto”

OR:


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).

Week 3, Jan 19: the classicist: Emile Durkheim


Week 4, Jan 26: the classicist: Max Weber


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.”

Positioning the Classics:


**Week 5, Feb 2: Autonomy of Culture**


Weber “Religious Rejections of the World and their Directions”

Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*

**Week 6, Feb 9: Structure, Agency and the Space of Ideology**


*Note*: The Introductory essay by Hoare and Smith is of value.

**Week 7, Feb 16: Critical theory (the Frankfurt School of Social Theory)**


Note: Some writings of Adorno on the web:


**Week 8: Feb 23: The Archaeology of Seeing: Michel Foucault**


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


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

**Week 9: March 2: Commodification, Embeddedness and Forms of Capital**

**Paper outline due!!**


**Additional readings:**


Spring Brake: March 5-12

Week 10: March 16: Class, style and value


Week 11, March 23: Modern Culture and Society (Cultural Studies)


Additional readings:
  E.P Thompson the making of the English working class
  Paul Willis “Leaning to Labour”

Week 12, March 30: Postmodernity and poststructuralism


**Week 13, April 6: Understanding the Scientific Process**


**Week 14: April 13 Gender, Science and Bodily Reproduction**


**Additional readings:**

Judith Butler Gender Trouble (1990), See also: http://www.theory.org.uk/ctr-butl.htm

**Week 15: April 20 – End of Classes**