

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY & ARCHAEOLOGY

ANTHROPOLOGY 490-01 Anthropological Theory

Mondays Wednesdays Fridays 11:00 – 11:50

Location: SS 109

Pre-requisite: ANTH 203

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Saulesh Yessenova

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TEACHING ASSISTANT: Arafat Mamyrbekov

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: Anthropologists study everything from lemurs to australopithecines to Wall Street bankers. What are the conceptual threads that hold these interests together? How have anthropologists developed the shared (and disputed) understandings that undergird our discipline? In this course, we review major works of anthropological theory that have influenced anthropology over the past two centuries. By the end, you will be conversant in major concepts and paradigms of anthropological theory and prepared to pursue guided scholarly research in anthropology.

COURSE FORMAT: The course will include lectures, lecture notes, films, readings, and written assignments.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: By the end of this course, learners will be able to (a) articulate theoretical paradigms in clear language; (b) identify key figures in the development of anthropological thought; (c) discuss anthropological concepts with sophistication and precision; and (d) apply anthropological theories to contemporary issues.

REQUIRED TEXT: A. Lynn Bolles, Ruth Gomberg-Muñoz, Bernard C. Perley and Keri Vacanti Brondo (2022) *Anthropological Theory for the Twenty-First Century: A Critical Approach*. University of Toronto Press, 472 Pages. Print and electronic versions of this textbook are available at the university bookstore and other vendors. On the course outline, this required text is indicated as *AT*.

REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY: a computer with a word processor and access to the Internet.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

***Annotated bibliography* | 20% | Due Monday, 3 October before midnight.**

An annotated bibliography is a compilation of brief descriptions of scholarly works that can be used for future reference. Each student should write annotations in their own words for 4 course readings (100-150 words each). Further details will be provided closer to the date of the assignment.

***The Unessay* | 40% | Due Monday, 21 November before midnight.**

Rather than writing a typical paper, you can choose to do an *Unessay*: a creative project that allows you to engage the course material in any way you want. Want to sing a song about anthropological theory? Go for it. Want to paint the difference between islands in a far sea and a sea of islands? Do it. Want to write about a poem about why you love DuBois? I want to read that poem. The rule is that you must engage effectively with course material. Everything else is up to you. Or you can always choose to do a paper. Further details will be provided closer to the date of the assignment.

***The Theory Paper* | 40% | Due Wednesday, 7 December**

The purpose of this assignment is for you to demonstrate mastery of two theoretical paradigms in anthropology by applying them to a contemporary cultural phenomenon. Further details will be provided closer to the date of the assignment.

EVALUATION: Assignments will include take home writing and research exercises. Further details on course assignments are outlined below and additional information will be provided at the time assignments are given. All course work will be graded on a 100-point system. At the end of the course, the total number of marks will be converted to the official university letter grade system according to the following equivalences:

A+	95 – 100%	B	75 – 79.9%	C-	59 – 62.9%
A	90 – 94.9%	B-	71 – 74.9%	D+	55 – 58.9%
A-	85 – 89.9%	C+	67 – 70.9%	D	50 – 54.9%
B+	80– 84.9%	C	63 – 66.9%	F	< 50%

Students do not need to pass each individual course component in order to pass the course as a whole.

For grade reappraisal policy, please follow these links:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i-2.html> and
<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i-3.html>

SKIPPED ASSESEMENTS: Students will not be automatically failed if they skip one or more assessment. But a skipped assessment will certainly be reflected on the final grade. Students may be granted extensions for submission of take-home assignments based on their special requests. Students may choose to provide supporting documentation. This documentation depends on the reason noted in their personal statement/explanation provided to explain their situation. This could be medical certificate/documentation, references, police reports, invitation letter, etc. The decision to provide supporting documentation that best suits the situation is at the discretion of the student. Students cannot be required to provide specific supporting documentation, such as a medical note.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: My name is Saulesh Yessenova, and I am a settler, living as an uninvited guest on the traditional territory of the people of Treaty 7. This land, belonging to the Niitsitapi (including the Siksika, Piikani and Kainai First Nations), the Tsuut’ina First Nation, and the Iyethka Nakoda (which includes the Wesley, Bearspaw and Chiniki First Nations), also hosts the University of Calgary. Calgary is situated on the confluence of the Bow and Elbow rivers, the Niitsitapi name for this place is Mohkinstsis, the Iyethka call it Wicispa Oyade, and the Tsuut’ina call this area Gutsistsi. Calgary is also home to the Metis Nation of Alberta, Region 3. It is important to acknowledge that Canadian universities and scholars have benefited greatly from the dispossession of Indigenous people. Land acknowledgement is about my accountability as an individual, an immigrant, and a professional to ongoing processes of colonialism.

STATEMENT OF INCLUSION: The topics in this class can sometimes be difficult topics – we talk about race, gender, class, our place in society, and the painful histories and ideas that anthropology and other disciplines in the Euro-American academia have held. These topics are discussed based on a common believe that we as a society or the world can never move forward in a good way without critical review and understanding of the past. This course, just like many other courses in our faculty, is part of liberal arts that has historically encouraged critical and creative thinking as well as tolerance and mutual respect among students and professors.

INSTRUCTOR’S OFFICE HOURS: Instructor will not hold regular office hours. However, students are more than welcome to request individual zoom sessions and face to face appointments by email.

EMAILING TO INSTRUCTOR: Students are welcome to forward their questions and comments to the instructor’s email indicated at the top of this document.

WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM: Writing skills are not exclusive to English courses and, in fact, should cross all disciplines. The University supports the belief that throughout their university careers, students should be taught how to write well so that when they graduate their writing abilities will be far above the minimal standards required at entrance. Consistent with this belief, students are expected

to do a substantial amount of writing in their university courses and, where appropriate, instructors can and may use writing and the grading thereof as a factor in the evaluation of student work. The services provided by the Writing Centre in the Effective Writing Office can be utilized by all undergraduate and graduate students who feel they require further assistance.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS: Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit <https://live-ucalgary.ucalgary.ca/student-services/access>. Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor or the Department Head. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/accommodation-students-disabilities-procedure>.

ACADMIC INTEGRITY POLICY: Academic integrity is the foundation of the development and acquisition of knowledge and is based on values of honesty, trust, responsibility, and respect. We expect members of our community to act with integrity. The University Calendar includes a statement on the principles of conduct expected of all members of the university community (including students, faculty, administrators, any category of staff, practicum supervisors, and volunteers), whether on or off university property. This statement applies in all situations where members of the university community are acting in their university capacities. All members of the university community have a responsibility to familiarize themselves with the principles of conduct statement, which is available at: www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT: The University of Calgary is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Academic dishonesty is not an acceptable activity at the University of Calgary, and students are **strongly advised** to read the Student Misconduct section in the University Calendar at: www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-3.html. Often, students are unaware of what constitutes academic dishonesty or plagiarism. The most common are (1) presenting another student's work as your own, (2) presenting an author's work or ideas as your own without adequate citation, and (3) using work completed for another course. Such activities will not be tolerated in this course, and students suspected of academic misconduct will be dealt with according to the procedures outlined in the calendar at: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/student-academic-misconduct-procedure>

For students wishing to know more about what constitutes plagiarism and how to properly cite the work of others, the Department of Geography recommends that they attend Academic Integrity workshops offered through the Student Success Centre: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/learning/academic-integrity>

INSTRUCTOR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY: Course materials created by professor(s) (including course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the professor(s). These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the professor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing. Information on Instructor Intellectual Property can be found at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/intellectual-property-policy>

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT: Student information will be collected in accordance with typical (or usual) classroom practice. Students' assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty. Private information related to the individual student is treated with the utmost regard by the faculty at the University of Calgary.

COPYRIGHT LEGISLATION: All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (<https://ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-material-protected-copyright-policy>) and requirements of the copyright act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks, etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

SUPPORTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING, SUCCESS, AND SAFETY: Please visit the Registrar's website at: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for additional important information on the following:

- Wellness and Mental Health Resources
- Student Success Centre
- Student Ombuds Office
- Student Union (SU) Information
- Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points
- Safewalk

IMPORTANT DATES

The last day to drop this course with no "W" notation and **still receive a tuition fee refund** is **Thursday, September 15th, 2022**. Last day add/swap a course is **Friday, September 16th, 2022**. The last day to withdraw from this course is **Wednesday, December 7th, 2022**.

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-schedule.html#fall2017>

WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF TOPICS & REQUIRED READINGS

WEEK 1 | Wednesday, 7 September | Friday, 9 September

Introduction to the course: What is anthropological theory?

We kick off the course with a consideration of what we mean by anthropology and by theory. What is anthropology as a way of understanding the world? What distinguishes anthropology from other worldviews, including those of other social sciences? What about theory? What is theory and how does it help to shape anthropological thought? We will discuss annotated bibliographies and how to write them. Finally, we will touch upon the topic of the future anthropological theory.

Readings: Introduction, pp. 1 – 4; and Section fourteen, pp. 391 – 426 in *AT*.

WEEK 2 | Monday, 12 September | 14 Wednesday | 16 Friday.

Roots of Social Difference and Inequality

We live in a world characterized by vast inequalities, both among places and within them. Why do some people have seemingly limitless access to wealth and resources while others live in impoverished conditions and struggle to survive? How might different explanations for inequality serve different interests? This week, we tackle early anthropological theories about human sameness, difference, and inequality.

Readings: Section one, pp. 5 – 36 in *AT*.

WEEK 3 | Monday, 19 September | 21 September | 23 September.

On Methods of Fieldwork

Very few of the theories put forward by social evolutionists were derived from robust, empirical research. This section's authors introduce calls for methodological rigor in anthropological knowledge production. An emphasis on fieldwork methods flips the direction of anthropological theorizing from deductive to inductive and demands that all claims about human societies be supported by cross-cultural evidence.

On Hidden Logics of Culture

Some cultural patterns seem too common or complicated to be explained by historical particularism, diffusion, or coincidence. We explore theories of hidden cultural logics: invisible yet prevalent human tendencies that drive cultural patterns.

Readings: Section two, pp. 37 – 60 and Section three – pp. 61 – 71 (3.1 and 3.2) in *AT*.

WEEK 4 | Monday, 26 September | Wednesday, 28 September | **Friday, 30 September – National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, NO CLASS**

On History and Power

Centuries of colonialism present a challenge to analyses of communities as bounded cultural places. This section's readings delve into relationships of power and history as they manifest in "local" cultures. In particular, these theorists call attention to how long-standing involvements in highly unequal global relationships have shaped culture in profound and historically specific ways: from racist and patriarchal structures (DuBois and Stoler), to repeated intercultural contacts (Wolf and Ortíz), to unequal vulnerability, impoverishment, and early death (Farmer).

Readings: Section four, pp. 87 – 112 in *AT*.

WEEK 5 | Monday, 3 October | Wednesday, 5 October | Friday, 7 October.

Annotated Bibliography is due on Monday, 3 October before midnight.

On Writing Cultures

Just as some anthropologists began attending carefully to issues of power and history, others embarked on anthropological approaches that centered on personal, embedded, and phenomenological experiences in the field. By the latter half of the 20th century, postmodernism – an artistic and academic pursuit that challenged universalizing and positivist discourses associated with modernism – had become an important and controversial strain of anthropological research. In particular, these theorists called attention to partiality and subjectivity in research endeavors and to ethnographic writing as art instead of science.

Readings: Section five, pp. 113 – 146 in *AT*.

WEEK 6 | Monday, 10 October – Thanksgiving Day, NO CLASS | Wednesday, 12 October | Friday 14 October.

On Colonialism and Anthropological "Others"

Anthropology emerged as a discipline in centers of imperial power and, intentionally or not, aided in colonial governance across the Western Hemisphere, Asia, and Africa. Theories of scientific racism were deployed as ideological justification for violent campaigns of dispossession and subjugation. Even anti-racist anthropologists associated with Boas tended to characterize Indigenous people as disappearing cultural remnants rather than as modern agents of resistance and survival. The theorists in this section demand that anthropology acknowledge and reckon with this colonialist legacy.

Readings: Section six, pp. 147 – 174 in *AT*.

WEEK 7 | Monday, 17 October | Wednesday, 19 October | Friday, 21 October.

On Anthropology and Gender

Women had played an important role in anthropological knowledge production since the 1920s with Caroline Bond Day and Margaret Mead, yet most anthropological research still centered on the experiences of men, who were often unproblematically taken as representative of entire communities. It was not until the 1970s that anthropologists began seriously theorizing gender in relation to culture. This week, we follow the development of anthropological theorizations of gender as they become increasingly complex, multifaceted, and robust.

Readings: Section seven, pp. 176 – 202 in *AT*.

WEEK 8 | Monday, 24 October | Wednesday, 26 October | Friday, 28 October.

On Queering Knowledge Production

While theories of gender had delinked biological sex from gender expression, the advent of queer theory troubled categories related to sex, gender, identity, and desire altogether. This week, we explore queer theoretical explorations of power and sexuality, transgender classifications, and racialized sexual identities.

Readings: Section eight, pp. 302 -- 232 in *AT*.

WEEK 9 | Monday, 31 October | Wednesday, 2 November | Friday, 4 November.

On Social Position and Ethnographic Authority

Earlier writings demonstrated the potential of “insider” knowledge to enrich anthropological theories and called attention to the highly unequal landscapes in which anthropologists work. The essays in this section build on those insights to emphasize ethnographers’ responsibility to move beyond acknowledging inequities and do something about them. But what? There is no simple answer, but as a collection, this section advances an imperative for moral, political, reflexive, and engaged anthropology that unveils systems of domination and oppression and integrates multiple ways of knowing and representation.

Readings: Section nine, pp. 233 – 264 in *AT*.

WEEK 10 | Monday, 7 November | Wednesday, 9 November | Friday, 11 November

TERM BREAK NO CLASSES THIS WEEK

WEEK 11 | Monday, November 14th | Wednesday, 16 November | Friday, 18 November.

On Globalization

Since the theoretical interventions of Boas, anthropology had been concerned with understanding “local” cultures. But what is local about globalized culture and vice versa? The pieces in this section examine facets of globalization, including theorizations of place, space, citizenship, and gender. These insights compel anthropologists to consider the dynamic interactions of globalized and localized practices and their implications for anthropological fieldwork.

Readings: Section ten, pp. 265 – 296 in *AT*.

WEEK 12 | **Monday, 21 November** | Wednesday, 23 November | and Friday, 25 November.

Unessay is due Monday, 21 November before midnight.

On (Post) Human Ecologies

As devastating effects of climate change are ubiquitously yet unevenly felt across the world, anthropological insights into human interactions with environments, or human ecologies, are increasingly important. The readings in this section span several decades and illustrate the conceptual development of environmental anthropology over time.

Readings: Section eleven, pp. 297 – 328 in *AT*.

WEEK 13 | Monday, 28 November | Wednesday, 30 November | Friday, 2 December.

On State Power and Violence

State societies are highly unequal by definition, and they are also typically unstable (consider that most nation-states don't last more than a few centuries). How, then, do nation-state leaders mobilize state apparatuses (military, police, governance institutions) to maintain power and hegemony? This week, we examine the role of legalized violence in maintaining state power. The scholars in this section consider how categorical inequalities are maintained through force.

Readings: Section twelve, pp. 329 – 358 in *AT*.

WEEK 14 | Monday, 5 December | Wednesday, 7 December.

Collective Agency and Resistance

Highly unequal and repressive exercises of state violence beget myriad forms of community resistance. The essays in this section explore the ways in which people carve out autonomy, well-being, and organizing power to contest and transform their vulnerabilities. Far from treating marginalized people as mere victims, these pieces demonstrate how everyday agency shapes the world in big and small ways.

Readings: Section thirteen, pp. 359 – 390 in *AT*.
