

ANTY 500: CONTEMPORARY ANTHROPOLOGICAL THOUGHT

1. PROFESSOR

- Dr. Anna Marie Prentiss
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2. COURSE DESCRIPTION

ANTY 500, Contemporary Anthropological Thought, is a required seminar for all new graduate students. The goal of the course is to provide with a broad introduction to the major theoretical frameworks important in today's anthropology. Given that class membership spans all sub-disciplines (biological, socio-cultural, linguistic, and archaeological anthropology), readings and discussions will consider models inclusive of evolution, ecology, and multiple social theoretical paradigms. Students will gain experience reading and discussing anthropological theory. They will also engage in writing assignments to sharpen skills in anthropological scholarship.

3. TEXT/READINGS:

Required Texts (on reserve at Mansfield Library):

Arthur, Kathryn Weedman. 2018. *The Lives of Stone Tools: Crafting the Status, Skill, and Identity of Flintknappers*. University of Arizona Press, Tucson.

Bettinger, Robert L. 2015. *Orderly Anarchy: Sociopolitical Evolution in Aboriginal California*. University of California Press, Berkeley.

Candea, Matei. 2018. *Schools and Styles of Anthropological Theory*. Routledge, London.

Jordan, Peter. 2015. *Technology as Human Social Tradition: Cultural Transmission among Hunter-Gatherers*. University of California Press, Berkeley.

Kohler, Timothy A. and Michael E. Smith. 2018. *Ten Thousand years of Inequality: The Archaeology of Wealth Differences*. University of Arizona Press, Tucson.

Oliver, Jeff. 2010. *Landscapes and Social Transformations on the Northwest Coast: Colonial Encounters in the Fraser Valley*. University of Arizona Press, Tucson.

Prentiss, Anna Marie. 2019. *Handbook of Evolutionary Research in Archaeology*.

Springer, New York.

Stanish, Charles. 2017. *The Evolution of Human Co-operation: Ritual and Social Complexity in Stateless Societies*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Additional Reading:

Bettinger, Robert L., Raven Garvey, and Shannon Tushingham. 2015. *Hunter-Gatherers: Archaeological and Evolutionary Theory*. Springer, New York.

4. SEMINAR EXPECTATIONS AND GRADE DETERMINATION:

Graduate seminars facilitate individual learning by virtue of student reading, class participation, and writing assignments. ANTY 500 is organized around three parts. First, students will consider a series of theoretical paradigms (e.g. structuralism, human behavioral ecology, and political economy) and approaches (e.g. foraging theory or socioecology as part of human behavioral ecology) grouped together as macro-topics. Second, we will analyze six books with diverse theoretical content. Third, students will present for class discussion a set of micro-topics stemming from earlier considerations of macro-topics.

Part I - Macro-Topics. All students will read all assigned readings. Each student will also sign-up (sign-up sheet on the professor's office door) for one macro-topic to be presented in class. The Macro-Topic will also be the subject of the first writing assignment. Students will briefly review the intellectual history of each topic (Where did this paradigm or approach come from?), consider its theoretical view (What is culture? How is it created, shared, and/or transmitted?), and ask how this view impacts the anthropological research process (Can cultural phenomena be objectively measured? Is there a reflexive element? What sub-discipline is most appropriate?). The writing assignment will be no more than 2000 words (excluding references cited) and will be double spaced at 12 point font. Please provide a hard copy. Research for the paper should go well beyond the assigned class reading and consequently, the references cited section should adequately reflect the published record of research and discussions associated with that framework. Macro-topic presentations will be about 25 minutes in length.

Part II – Six Books. It is important to be able to recognize the impact of theory in anthropological research and writing. Towards that end the course will provide students the opportunity to consider relationships between theory and research. In order to facilitate this, all students will read all books and be prepared for discussion. The class will also be divided into three groups. Members of each group will sign up (sign-up sheet on the professor's door) for chapters to be presented in class for discussion. Group membership only refers to responsibility for book chapter presentation. It does not formally require students act as a group (unless students within each group prefer to organize towards this end). Presentations will introduce chapter content, theoretical

focus, and implications. The student may agree or disagree with aspects of the presented research. However, it is important to be able to justify those agreements and disagreements. It is not enough to be agreeable or disagreeable. Book chapter presentations will be about 25 minutes in length.

Part III – Micro-Topics. For the final assignment and associated presentation, students will develop their own research stemming directly from their previously chosen macro-topic. The intent is to provide the opportunity to dive into a theoretical framework at greater depth and to consider a particular discussion, debate, or empirical research topic relevant to that theoretical paradigm or approach. The topic should be approved by the professor and the subsequent paper will be presented in 12 point font, double spaced, and with a maximum of 3000 words (excluding references cited). Please provide a hard copy. Literature research should be adequate to cover the primary published literature as relevant to the greater theoretical context and the particular discussion. Class presentation should be about 25 minutes in length and should include a PowerPoint show.

Writing is very important in graduate school and in the professional world. If you have challenges with the structure of your writing I strongly recommend you visit the UM Writing Center for help. It will make a difference to your grade in this course and your future in anthropology.

Grades will be determined on the basis of total points achieved:

Assignments (Macro [200 points] and Micro [300 points])	500 Points
Seminar Participation (four presentations plus general engagement)	100 Points
Total	600 Points

Students with 90% (540 points) or more will receive an "A," etc. Deadlines are extended only in cases of illness (with a doctor's note) or an emergency. The professor retains the option to use + and – grades when final scores are close (within a point on a 0-100 scale) to an up or down transition.

5. READING LIST AND SCHEDULE

AUGUST 28

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

PART I: MACRO-TOPICS

SEPTEMBER 4

MACRO-TOPICS I:

FUNCTIONALISM/STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALISM/NEO-FUNCTIONALISM

Read: Candea: Chapter 1 (Severed Roots... by M. Candea);

Recommended: Bettinger et al. (Chapters 1-3).

SOCIAL EVOLUTION (SOCIAL DARWINISM)/NEO-EVOLUTION/PROCESSUAL
ARCHAEOLOGY

Read: Candea: Chapter 1 (Severed Roots... by M. Candea);

Recommended: Bettinger et al. (Chapters 1-3).

MICROEVOLUTION I: CULTURAL TRANSMISSION THEORY

Read: Prentiss: Chapter 1 (Introduction by A.M. Prentiss pp. 1-5), Chapter 2
(Introduction to Cultural Microevolutionary Research in Anthropology... by M.J. Walsh,
A.M. Prentiss, and F. Riede), and Chapter 3 (Cultural Transmission and Innovation in
Archaeology by M.J. Walsh, F. Riede, and S. O'Neill)

MICROEVOLUTION II: SELECTIONISM

Read: Prentiss: Chapter 1 (Introduction by A.M. Prentiss pp. 1-5), Chapter 4 (Natural
Selection, Material Culture, and Archaeology by N. Goodale). Recommended Reading:
Chapter 5 (Analyzing Cultural Frequency Data... by A. Kandler and E. Crema)

MACROEVOLUTION AND FITNESS LANDSCAPES

Read: Prentiss: Chapter 1 (Introduction by A.M. Prentiss pp. 5-9), Chapter 6 (Cultural
Macroevolution by A.M. Prentiss and C. Laue), and Chapter 7 (Landscape Revolutions
for Cultural Evolution... by C. Laue and A.H. Wright).

MACROEVOLUTION AND SOCIO-POLITICAL CHANGE

Read Prentiss: Chapter 1: (Introduction by A.M. Prentiss pp. 5-9), Chapter 6 (Cultural
Macroevolution by A.M. Prentiss and C. Laue) and Chapter 10 (Cultural Macroevolution
and Social Change by C.S. Spencer)

SEPTEMBER 11

MACRO-TOPICS II:

FORAGING THEORY

Read: Prentiss: Chapter 11 (Human Ecology by A.M. Prentiss pp. 217-220), Chapter 12
(Human Behavioral Ecology and Zooarchaeology by L. Nagaoka), Chapter 13 (Human
Behavioral Ecology and Plant Resources...by K. Gremillion). Recommended Reading:

Chapter 15 (Human Behavioral Ecology and Technological Decision-Making by N.M. Herzog and N. Goodale)

SOCIOECOLOGY

Read: Prentiss: Chapter 11 (Human Ecology by A.M. Prentiss pp. 220-222), Chapter 14 (Costly Signaling Theory... by C.P. Quinn).

DEMOGRAPHIC ECOLOGY

Read: Prentiss: Chapter 11 (Human Ecology by A.M. Prentiss pp. 222-223), Chapter 16 (Demography, Environment, and Human Behavior by C. Puleston and B. Winterhalder).

NICHE CONSTRUCTION THEORY

Read: Prentiss: Chapter 11 (Human Ecology by A.M. Prentiss pp. 223-224), Chapter 17 (Niche Construction Theory and Human Bio-Cultural Evolution by F. Riede).

EVOLUTIONARY COGNITIVE ARCHAEOLOGY

Read: Prentiss: Chapter 18 (A Brief Overview of Evolutionary Cognitive Archaeology by M.A. Abramiuk); Recommended Reading: Chapter 19 (Embedded Cognition...by D. Garofoli) and Chapter 20 (Evolution and the Origins of Visual Art by L.M. Straffon).

COGNITIVE ANTHROPOLOGY

Read: Candea: Chapter 7 (Cognitive Anthropology as Epistemological Critique by R.D.G. Irvine)

SEPTEMBER 18

MACRO-TOPICS III:

STRUCTURALISM

Read: Candea: Chapter 2 (Structuralism by R. Stasch).

MARXISM/POLITICAL ECONOMY

Read: Candea: Chapter 3 (Marxism and neo-Marxism by C. Humphrey).

PRACTICE THEORY

Read: Candea: Chapter 4 (From Transactionalism to Practice Theory by D. Sneath).

HISTORICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Read: Candea: Chapter 5 (Anthropology and History by S. Bayly).

INTERPRETIVE ANTHROPOLOGY

Read: Candea: Chapter 8 (Interpretive Cultural Anthropology... by J. Laidlaw).

CRITICAL THEORY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

Read: Candea: Chapter 9 (The Frankfurt School...by C. Lynteris).

SEPTEMBER 25

MACRO-TOPICS IV:

PHENOMENOLOGY

Read: Candea: Chapter 11 (From the 'body' to 'embodiment.' With help from Phenomenology by M. McDonald).

FEMINIST ANTHROPOLOGY

Read: Candea: Chapter 12 (Feminist Anthropology and the Question of Gender by J. Johnson).

ACTOR NETWORK THEORY

Read Candea: Chapter 13 (No Actor, No Network, No Theory: Bruno LaTour's Anthropology of the Moderns by M. Candea).

ONTOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

Read Candea: Chapter 14 (The Ontological Turn: School or Style by P. Heywood).

ANTHROPOLOGY OF PERSONHOOD

Read: Candea: Chapter 15 (Persons and Partible Persons...M. Strathern).

PART II: SIX BOOKS

OCTOBER 2

CULTURAL TRANSMISSION AMONG NORTHERN HUNTER-GATHERER PEOPLES (GROUP 1)

Read: Jordan, Peter. 2015. *Technology as Human Social Tradition: Cultural Transmission among Hunter-Gatherers*. University of California Press, Berkeley.

OCTOBER 9

LONG TERM INDIGENOUS HISTORY OF CALIFORNIA (GROUP 2)

Read: Bettinger, Robert L. 2015. *Orderly Anarchy: Sociopolitical Evolution in Aboriginal California*. University of California Press, Berkeley.

Assignment Due: Macro-Topic paper

OCTOBER 16

EVOLUTION OF COOPERATION (GROUP 3)

Read: Stanish, Charles. 2017. *The Evolution of Human Co-operation: Ritual and Social Complexity in Stateless Societies*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

OCTOBER 23

ANCIENT HISTORY OF WEALTH-BASED INEQUALITY (GROUP 1)

Read: Kohler, Timothy A. and Michael E. Smith. 2018. *Ten Thousand years of Inequality: The Archaeology of Wealth Differences*. University of Arizona Press, Tucson.

OCTOBER 30

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES AND COLONIALISM IN SOUTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA (GROUP 2)

Read: Oliver, Jeff. 2010. *Landscapes and Social Transformations on the Northwest Coast: Colonial Encounters in the Fraser Valley*. University of Arizona Press, Tucson.

NOVEMBER 6

IDENTITY AND STATUS AMONG INDIGENOUS STONE WORKERS IN ETHIOPIA (GROUP 3)

Read: Arthur, Kathryn Weedman. 2018. *The Lives of Stone Tools: Crafting the Status, Skill, and Identity of Flintknappers*. University of Arizona Press, Tucson.

PART III: MICRO-TOPIC PRESENTATIONS

NOVEMBER 13

MICRO-TOPIC PRESENTATIONS

NOVEMBER 20

MICRO-TOPIC PRESENTATIONS

DECEMBER 4

MICRO-TOPIC PRESENTATIONS

Assignment Due December 9: Micro-topic Paper

DECEMBER 11

OPEN OFFICE HOURS 2:00-4:00 PM

Available for one on one discussions of class-related affairs