

**DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY
ANTH 303 ANTHROPOLOGICAL THEORY
COURSE OUTLINE, FALL 2024**

I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. This territory is covered by the "Treaties of Peace and Friendship" which Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) Peoples first signed with the British Crown in 1725. The treaties did not deal with surrender of lands and resources but, rather, recognized Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This seminar course will give students an understanding of why and how theory is used. It will present the major trends in anthropological theory over the history of the discipline, including approaches such as historical particularism, structural functionalism, and Marxist anthropology, in classic and contemporary forms. The emphasis is on how theories and concepts are used in anthropological analysis. Students will get practice applying theories.

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Susan Vincent [contact information: telephone: 867-5281; email: svincent@stfx.ca; office: JBB 335E]

OFFICE HOURS (Sept. 4 to Dec. 6, excluding the Study Break): Mondays 1400-1600; Tuesdays 1300-1600; Wednesdays 1600-1700, or by appointment. I am also happy to respond to emails.

REQUIRED READINGS: Available on the library's electronic databases, on Kwe'/Moodle, or on the internet.

EVALUATION:

Weekly questions/reflections	10
Applying concepts exercises (two, worth 10% each):	20
Midterm test (October 8):	15
Essay (due November 19):	30
Final exam (during official exam period):	25

AS PER DEPARTMENT POLICY, STUDENTS WILL DEVELOP THE FOLLOWING SKILLS IN THIS COURSE:

- develop the critical ability to apply anthropological theory to relevant material
- identify material that is relevant as evidence in the context of the course and the discipline
- build an understanding of anthropological methods such that students can evaluate the appropriateness of different standard methods for solving problems;
- students should be able to justify the use of specific methods
- an ability to critique published research on the basis of its methodology and its analysis
- an ability to review, present and critically evaluate a range of anthropological and other information to:
 - a) frame an appropriate question for the purpose of solving a problem;
 - b) develop a clear hypothesis in response to the question;

- c) articulate a sound and advanced theoretical framework to analyse the information in support of the argument;
 - d) conduct research to generate or locate relevant information;
 - e) critically review and analyse information from multiple qualitative or quantitative data sets;
 - f) present the argument in a clear written format
- an ability to communicate information, arguments, and analyses accurately and reliably, orally and in writing to a range of audiences.

EQUITABLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Everyone learns more effectively in a respectful, safe and equitable learning environment, free from discrimination and harassment. I invite you to work with me to create a classroom space – both real and virtual – that fosters and promotes values of human dignity, equity, non-discrimination and respect for diversity.

Please feel free to talk to me or to contact the Human Rights and Equity Advisor, Megan Fogarty if you have questions or concerns about equity in the classroom or in the StFX Community in general. Megan can be contacted by email at mfogarty@stfx.ca or by telephone at 902-867-5306.

INFORMATION ABOUT REQUESTING AN ACCOMMODATION AT STFX

If you have a disability and would like to request accommodations, please contact me during the first week of the semester so that your accommodations may be provided in a timely manner. The Tramble Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) provides assistance in determining and facilitating appropriate accommodations for students with verified disabilities.

The Tramble Centre for Accessible Learning welcomes students with documented permanent disabilities and offers them a student-centred program of support. Located in Room 108 of the Angus L MacDonald Library, new and returning students meet with program staff to discuss options for support. The deadline for registering with the Centre is two weeks prior to the end of classes each semester and three business days' notice is required for booking all accommodated tests and exams. To book an appointment go to the Tramble Room website:
<https://www.mystfx.ca/accessible-learning/>

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Reading/	Activity/what to watch for
Sept. 5	Introduction: Why theory?	What is your anthropological question and how can theory help to explore it?
Sept. 10	Is who is seen as a theorist a political issue? READ: Behar, Ruth. 1993. "Introduction : Women writing culture: another telling of the story of American anthropology." <i>Critique of Anthropology</i> 13(3): 307-325.	What kinds of people are acknowledged as having useful insights? How might this affect the way the worlds around us are understood?
Sept. 12	How does theory work? READ: Desmond, Matthew. 2006. "Becoming a firefighter." <i>Ethnography</i> 7(4): 387-421.	Submit on Kwe'/Moodle your anthropological question. Pay close attention to the definition of the concept of <i>habitus</i> and observe how elements of that definition structure the evidence to analyse it. In this class we will examine how theory is used to analyse information.
Sept. 17	Combining Western knowledge and Indigenous knowledge: Two-eyed seeing. READ: Bartlett C, Marshall M, Marshall A, Iwama M (2012) "Integrative science and Two-Eyed Seeing: enriching the discussion framework for healthy communities." In: L. Hallstrom, N. Guehlstorf and M. Parkes (eds) <i>Beyond intractability: Convergence and opportunity at the interface of environmental, health and social issues</i> . UBC Press, Vancouver. http://www.integrativescience.ca/uploads/articles/2012-Bartlett-Marshall-Iwama-Integrative-Science-Two-Eyed-Seeing-enriching-discussion-framework(authors-draft).pdf .	This is one approach to challenging the dominance of Western structures of knowledge. Is science only one way of understanding the world around us? In this reading, Bartlett et al. advocate choosing the best/most appropriate Western framework AND the best of an Indigenous framework. Note that, while both Western and Indigenous knowledge systems have general tendencies (scientific method for the West, comprehensive reciprocal models for Indigenous systems), both are multiple. We will mostly look at a range of Western frameworks in this course, but there are also a lot of different Indigenous systems.

Sept. 19	<p>Historical particularism/Boas.</p> <p>READ: entry for Boas, Franz: Sanjek, Roger. 2010. Boas, Franz. In <i>The Routledge Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology</i>, edited by Alan Barnard, and Jonathan Spencer, Taylor & Francis Group. Pp 88-91. ProQuest Ebook Central, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/stfx/detail.action?docID=465404 .</p>	<p>The key idea for historical particularism is that each society is the unique product of its past. This implies that there is no universal set of stages through which societies pass on their way to “civilization.” It also implies that, to understand some element of a society, you look to the cultural context (rather than the environment, biological imperatives or other things). In short, culture explains culture.</p>
Sept. 24	<p>Challenging Boas.</p> <p>READ: Simpson, Audra. 2018. “Chapter 7 Why White People Love Franz Boas; or, The Grammar of Indigenous Dispossession.” In Ned Blackhawk and Isaiah Lorado Wilner, eds. <i>Indigenous Visions : Rediscovering the World of Franz Boas</i>. New Haven: Yale University Press, 166-181. StFX has ebook</p>	<p>While anthropologists have tended to pride themselves on the concept of cultural relativism that Boas gave us (thus countering the idea that one society is better or more advanced than another), Simpson charges that Boas looked the other way when Indigenous societies were being despoiled of their land and forcibly “integrated” into the dominant settler society.</p>
Sept. 26	<p>Marx.</p> <p>READ: Erickson, Paul A., with Liam D. Murphy. 1998. “Marxism.” from <i>A History of Anthropological Theory</i>, Peterborough, ON.: Broadview Press, 39-44. On Moodle.</p>	<p>For Marx, the central notion is that how societies organize themselves to provide their material needs (food, shelter, etc.) is central to understanding the society. If some do the work while others get to enjoy what those people have produced, there are classes. Marxists are interested in why and how people submit to being exploited.</p>
Oct. 1	<p>Current Marxist questions and concepts.</p> <p>READ: Weiss, Hadas. 2015. “Financialization and its discontents: Israelis negotiating pensions.” <i>American Anthropologist</i> 117(3): 506-518.</p>	<p>One current form of exploitation takes place not directly through one person working for another, but through loans, interest and investments. This is called financialization. We are all implicated in it in the contemporary world.</p>

Oct. 3	<p>Interpretive versus Marxist theory: The Balinese Cockfight READ: Geertz, Clifford. 2005. "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight." <i>Daedalus</i>. 134(4): 56- 86. READ: Roseberry, William. 1982. "Balinese Cockfights and the Seduction of Anthropology." <i>Social Research</i>. 49(4): 1013-1028.</p>	<p>While Geertz reads the action as though it were a work of literature (that is, he <u>interprets it</u>), Roseberry looks for the structures of inequality and exploitation that underpin the both the raid and gambling system in general (i.e., pays attention to Marxist questions) .</p>
Oct. 8	MIDTERM TEST	
Oct. 10	<p>Intersections READ: Sacks, Karen Brodtkin. 1989. "Toward a Unified Theory of Class, Race, and Gender." <i>American Ethnologist</i> 16(3) : 534-50</p>	<p>Sacks presents an early intersectional Marxist framework. She points out that what kind of work people do depends on their identity (gender, "race," etc.). Thus, systems of exploitation take advantage of cultural systems of inequality.</p>
Oct. 22	<p>Foucault READ: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michel_Foucault</p>	<p>Foucault was interested in how people came to think of themselves as selves or subjects. He argued that this changed over time, as the knowledge system changed. For example, when a society identifies people on the basis of sexuality, people think of themselves in terms of their sexuality. For Foucault, this places them in power systems, in which they subject themselves to the norms of their identity, although he also was interested in how they resisted this.</p>
Oct. 24	<p>Applying Foucault and adding Mbembe. READ: Rouse, Carolyn M. 2021 "Necropolitics Versus Biopolitics: Spatialization, White Privilege, and Visibility during a Pandemic." <i>Cultural Anthropology</i> 36(3): 360-367. Watch for how Rouse applies Foucault's concept of biopolitics, in conjunction with Achille Mbembe's concept (derived from Foucault) of necropolitics.</p>	<p>Biopolitics is a concept that focuses on how we think of ourselves as biological beings and engage in normative actions as a result – like using hand sanitizer. For Foucault, this is a political action. Necropolitics thinks about how social organization and identity place some people in more vulnerable circumstances than others, exposing them to higher risk of death.</p>

Oct. 29	Feminist anthropology READ: Mahmud, Lilith. 2021. "Feminism in the House of Anthropology." <i>Annual Review of Anthropology</i> 50: 345-361.	This is a survey article that discusses a range of approaches in feminist anthropology. Can an approach that critically examines the difference gender makes also promote understanding how other identity categories have political consequences?
Oct. 31	Bourdieu/practice theory. READ: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierre_Bourdieu	Bourdieu was interested in how normative behaviour was linked to material circumstances, cultural context, and identity. Such behaviour patterns (but does not determine) what choices people make about food, education, jobs, etc. The Desmond article at the beginning of the course uses Bourdieu's concept of habitus.
Nov. 5	Applying Bourdieu. READ: Bourdieu, Pierre. 2004. "The peasant and his body." <i>Ethnography</i> . 5(4): 579-599.	This is another example. See how Bourdieu describes the bodily habitus of male French peasants, both as arising from their lives and as they exaggerate it to protect themselves emotionally.
Nov. 7	The meaning of material culture. READ: Miller, Daniel. 1993. "Artefacts and the meaning of things." In Tim Ingold, ed. <i>Companion Encyclopedia of Anthropology</i> , Milton Park: Routledge, 396- 419. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/stfx/detail.action?docID=169490 .	Miller challenges the idea that society has become meaningless as we engage in more consumption. Rather, he argues that we need to understand what that consumption and what those things mean to us and how they link us to others.
Nov. 12	Functionalism and structural functionalism: Durkheim/Radcliffe-Brown READ: Nisbet, Robert A. 1974. Excerpt from <i>The Sociology of Emile Durkheim</i> . New York: Oxford University Press, 30-37. On Moodle. Updated application of a Durkheimian concept. READ: Ratuszniak, Adrienne. 2017. "Neo-tribe Sociality in a Neoliberal World: A Case Study of Shambhala Music Festival." <i>Journal of Undergraduate Ethnography</i> 7(2): 54-73.	The central idea of functionalism is that any institution or normative practice in a society exists because it is useful to the ongoing existence of the society. The structural-functionalist version in anthropology is slightly more specific in saying that the most important reason anything exists is to keep patterned systems of social relations (like kinship systems) intact. Both tend to focus on continuity rather than change. Ratuszniak uses an updated formulation that picks up on Durkheim's belief that humans are fundamentally social beings. How does that happen in a society in which interactions are fleeting, rather than everyday meetings with the same people?

Nov. 14	<p>Structural-functionalism.</p> <p>READ: Radcliffe-Brown, A.R. 1940. "On social structure." <i>The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland</i>, 70(1): 1-12.</p>	See above for structural-functionalism.
Nov. 19	<p>ESSAY DUE! Performance and culture.</p> <p>READ: Goffman, Erving. 1959. "The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life". Pp. 17-25. From <i>The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life</i> (New York: The Overlook Press, 1959) :</p> <p>http://crossculturalleadership.yolasite.com/resources/Goffman%20%281959%29%20Presentation%20of%20Self%20in%20Everyday%20Life.pdf</p> <p>READ: Dashiell, Steven. 2021. "'I'm All I Wanna Be'—Video Self Presentation in the Age of COVID-19." UMBC Faculty Collection. https://laptrinhx.com/news/i-m-all-i-wanna-be-video-self-presentation-in-the-age-of-covid-19-JA9B5Na/</p>	Goffman's approach is frequently called symbolic interactionism – what are the symbolic meanings that people try to control when they meet others? He explored how one presents oneself in social situations as performance. How do we try to project positive images of ourselves? How do we try to prevent others from knowing stigmatizing things about us?
Nov. 21, 26	<p>Cultural ecology.</p> <p>READ: http://anthrotheory.pbworks.com/w/page/29532593/Cultural%20Ecology</p> <p>Also read this to see how people evaluate how theories (including cultural ecology) relate to empirical evidence: Roosevelt, Anna C. 1999. "The development of prehistoric complex societies: Amazonia, a tropical forest." <i>Archeological papers of the American Anthropological association</i> 9(1): 13-33.</p>	This is a materialist theory from the mid-20th century that has also been influential in archaeology. Cultural ecology examined the conjunction between the natural environment, the technical form of production, and the political system, arguing that there would be some synergy among them. Look at how Roosevelt tries to see how the environment, the production system and the type of political organization do or don't match what had been proposed for this area.

Nov. 28	<p>Challenging Western theory.</p> <p>READ: De la Cadena, Marisol, et al. 2015. "Anthropology and STS: Generative interfaces, multiple locations." <i>HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory</i> 5(1): 437-475. Graze through these discussions to see how the authors propose new ways of studying science and technology.</p>	<p>We return to Indigenous ways of knowing with this reading. These authors want to establish Indigenous ways of knowing as legitimate in their own right, not necessarily to be used alongside Western science, as Two-Eyed Seeing proposes. Rather, here, one way of understanding the world may be difficult or impossible for someone from another society to grasp.</p>
Dec. 3	<p>Weber.</p> <p>READ: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Max_Weber</p> <p>Applying (and modifying) Weber. READ: Yoo, Wonji. 2021. "Neither laziness nor workaholism: The Protestant ethic and economic prosperity among young urban Christians in contemporary China." <i>Social Compass</i> 68(3): 447-463</p>	<p>Weber was interested in the social significance of action and being. This, he thought, had social and historical consequences. This approach is interested in material circumstances, but not as foundational (as the Marxists believe). Rather, Weber was interested in the cultural meanings and possibilities associated with material circumstances.</p>
Dec. 5	Course conclusion	

DESCRIPTION OF TESTS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

Weekly questions/reflections (10%, due on Fridays by 3 pm):

Each week you will submit in Kwe'/Moodle a brief statement of what you have learned and/or what you have questions about. This is a record for yourself and helps me know where you are in your learning process. Due: Sept. 13, 20, 27, Oct. 4, 11, 25, Nov. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29.

Applying concepts (20%, 10 marks each):

See separate assignment sheet and example.

Midterm test, Oct. 8 (15%):

This will be composed of questions that ask you to explain a selection of anthropological concepts that we have studied.

Essay, due November 19 (35%): The paper should be 10 to 12 pages in length (double-spaced, one inch margins on all sides; 10 or 12 characters per inch; indent the first line of paragraphs rather than leaving extra spaces between paragraphs). The paper should be about 2500-3000 words (include a word count on the title page, as generated by your word processing program).

Some rules:

- 1) Use the style described outlined on the Anthropology "Writing and Citing" tab of the library's web site (http://stfx.libguides.com/ld.php?content_id=3538355).
- 2) Abide by the StFX Academic Integrity Policy, which is described in 3.8 of the Academic Calendar.
- 3) **You are permitted no more than THREE direct quotations from your sources, and none of these three quotations may be more than 30 words in length. For all other references to content from your sources you must paraphrase. Note that proper referencing is essential: improperly referenced papers are unlikely to receive a passing grade.**

Topic: You can choose your own topic, but it **MUST BE APPROVED BY ME BEFORE OCTOBER 3**. Otherwise, address the following question.

Choose a concept from an anthropological theory we examine in the course and explore how this concept is applied in at least four ethnographic works published since 2000. Your argument will be based on a critical appreciation of this framework. Thus, if you were to choose Bourdieu's habitus, you might look at articles in the journal *Ethnography*, especially between 2000 and 2008, choosing some of the articles that use this concept. Your goal is to see how the concept is used to analyse the material in the ethnographic works you choose and to decide how useful it is in providing insights.

You are required to use ethnographic works, so please make sure you get these approved by me.

Objectives: This assignment builds critical reading, analytical and writing skills. The main objective is to give you experience with applying and critically evaluating theoretical concepts and frameworks. You will be marked on whether you have presented a clear, appropriate essay that presents and supports an argument about the material, following the guidelines. You should demonstrate good knowledge and critical analytical skills that show you understand and can apply anthropological theory.

Note that for students who submit their papers on time, I have a revise and resubmit policy: you may rewrite your paper, taking into account the comments I made on your first version, with a view to improving the paper. The revised version would be due one week after the end of classes.

Exam, see official schedule (30 %):

For one part of the exam, you will answer questions that ask you to explain anthropological concepts we have studied, as on the midterm. For the other part, by the time the exam starts, you will have uploaded on Moodle an essay in which you answer the following question:

At the beginning of the course, you identified your anthropological question. Compare and contrast three theorists we have studied with respect to how well they answer this question. Did one of them make you sharpen it or change it? Or provide insights into how to answer it? Do not simply describe the theories. You must show how each would approach your question and explain the benefits and shortcomings of each. Your answer should be between 1000 and 2000 words. You may NOT use the theorist on whom you wrote your essay for the course. Remember to cite sources appropriately and to paraphrase material in your own words rather than using quotations.

RE CLASS CONDUCT: the following rules have been designed to ensure fairness to all students, to facilitate your academic success, and to allow me to fulfill my responsibilities.

1. Assignment dates are fixed and cannot be changed.
2. All assignments must be submitted **ON KWE'/MOODLE**.
3. Written assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day specified. **I WILL NOT ACCEPT LATE PAPERS.** If you have a legitimate reason for missing an assignment or test, inform me **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**, preferably ahead of time. I do not accept papers after I have returned those already submitted; in this situation you may be given an alternate assignment. Papers handed in after the last day of the term in which they are due will receive a mark of zero.
4. You are required to keep a copy of assignments when you hand them in. Keep the returned marked assignment until the end of the course.
5. This course is designed to promote your learning and intellectual development and to help you reach the course learning outcomes. **PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING WILL NOT BE TOLERATED:** Suspected cases of plagiarism will be reported to the appropriate authorities and proven cases will result in a mark of zero for the assignment. See the University's policy on plagiarism and cheating (see <https://www.mystfx.ca/registrars-office/academic-integrity>). **Not intending to plagiarise is not a legitimate excuse.** Know what is included in the definition and ensure that the paper you submit meets acceptable academic standards according to the policy. When in doubt, consult with me.
The use of generative AI tools in this course is prohibited. The use of these tools in any form of academic work for this course will be considered a violation of academic integrity.
6. You are expected to attend all classes and are responsible for all in-class discussion and assigned material. **IF YOU MISS THREE CLASSES OR MORE, WHETHER FOR ILLNESS OR FOR ANY OTHER REASON, YOUR ABILITY TO PASS WILL BE SEVERELY COMPROMISED.** Inform me or the if you must miss

classes. If you must miss a test or exam, inform Dr. Cathy MacDonald's office at ada@stfx.ca or Rita Myatt at rmyatt@stfx.ca.

7. **Technology in the Classroom Policy:** The use of electronic devices in in class for purposes not related to the course distracts from the learning of the student using them as well as other students and inhibits the instructor's teaching; it is therefore prohibited.
8. **Class Materials Copyright Notification:** Course materials designed for use in this course at StFX University are the property of the instructor, unless otherwise stated by the instructor. Copying this material for distribution, online posting, or selling of this material to third parties without permission is subject to Canadian Copyright Law and is strictly prohibited.
9. Students may drop a course online in Banner, on or before the relevant deadline. See the calendar of events in the StFX Academic Calendar for the drop-date
10. Students are responsible for understanding and adhering to the requirements of this course as well as the academic regulations outlined in Chapter 3 of the Academic Calendar. I am responsible for maintaining the academic standards of St Francis Xavier University as well as of my discipline as I transmit knowledge about the course subject to the students and foster the development of critical academic reading, researching, analytical and writing skills. I will endeavour to do this in a way that recognizes that students have other demands on their time, and within the constraints presented by my other teaching, administrative and research duties. I will return marked assignments as quickly as I can and am delighted to meet with students to discuss the course.