“Anthropology affords me intellectual satisfaction: as a form of history, linking up at opposite ends with world history and my own history, it thus reveals the rationale common to both. In proposing the study of mankind, anthropology frees me from doubt, since it examines those differences and changes in mankind which have a meaning for all men, and excludes those peculiar to a single civilization which dissolve into nothingness under the gaze of the outside observer. Lastly, it appeases that restless and destructive appetite I have already referred to, by ensuring me a virtually inexhaustible supply of material, thanks to the diversity of manners, customs and institutions. It allows me to reconcile my character with my life.” - Claude Lévi-Strauss, Tristes Tropiques

Course Description
This is a course on the history of anthropological thought from the mid-nineteenth century until the present. It explores how anthropology as a discipline has changed over time—from the construction of its subject matter to the ideas and social theory shaping its inquiry and methods. In tracing the influence of three national traditions (American, British, and French), we will map a genealogy of scholarship across individual anthropologists and schools of research. We will also tie these developments and key figures to wider historical forces (colonialism, industrialization, the rise of capitalism, world wars, nationalism, migration, etc.), examining how anthropological research and knowledge connect to the world outside academia.

Student Learning Outcomes
As a result of completing this course, students will be able to:
1. Identify the foundational schools of thought within the discipline of anthropology.
2. Explain key concepts associated with these schools of thought or theoretical models.
3. Outline the trajectory of anthropology's treatment of “culture” and “society,” as it relates to different strands of social and political theory.
4. Evaluate an abstract argument for its structure and thesis.
5. Apply the theoretical model learned to a given cultural practice or social group.
Course Requirements and Grading Criteria
Grades are based on the following components:
- Written assignments (20%)
- Participation (10%)
- Midterm exam (30%)
- Final essay (40%)

In-class written assignments: There will be several written assignments, including in-class exercises on material covered in the lecture or based on an in-class reading assignment. Please note that there will be no make-up written assignments without official documentation of an excused absence (see below). You are responsible for obtaining from your classmates all material covered during any missed classes.

Participation: The class participation grade is based not only on participation in lecture discussions but also on attendance. After three missed classes, the participation grade will be lowered a half grade with each additional absence. Excused absences require official documentation, e.g., a note from your physician. In accordance with university policy, please notify me during the first week of the semester if you will be absent from class on a day (or days) of religious observance.

Midterm exam: Covering material from the assigned reading, lectures, films, and class discussion, the midterm exam will consist of definitions, short-answer questions, and essays integrating textual analysis. As with the written assignments, you cannot make up an exam except in the case of an emergency, which, as noted above, requires official documentation.

Final essay: The final essay will be a similar to a take-home written exam, responding to a prompt (you will choose one essay question from among several posed). WID students will choose two questions and will be required to write an abstract and include a bibliography with additional sources used. Detailed instructions will be provided before the Thanksgiving break.

Course Texts


*** All other readings will be posted in weekly folders on Blackboard. They are marked in the course schedule below with a [B].
Additional Course Information

Academic Integrity: I personally support the GW Code of Academic Integrity. It states: “Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.” For the remainder of the code, see: http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html.

Support for Students outside the Classroom

Disability Support Services (DSS)
Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Marvin Center, Suite 242, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/

University Counseling Center (UCC) 202-994-5300
The University Counseling Center (UCC) offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students’ personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include:
- crisis and emergency mental health consultations
- confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals
  http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/CounselingServices/AcademicSupportServices

Course Schedule

Part One: Anthropology's origins

W 8/29 – Introduction: genealogies of thought, and how to read theory

F 8/31 – Evolutionary theory and its anthropological turn
- Charles Darwin, excerpts from Chapter IV, “Circumstances favorable to natural selection,” p. 101-109 and “Summary of the chapter,” p. 126-130 in On the Origins of Species (1859); the original text can be found at: http://darwin-online.org.uk/ [B]

W 9/5 – Victorian anthropology's object of study
F 9/7 – European fascination with the exotic other

Film: *Life and Times of Sara Baartman: “The Hottentot Venus”* (53 min).

* ALL: written exercise on reading theory

W 9/12 – The “science” of measuring and mapping difference


F 9/14 – Anthropology goes public: turn-of-the-century construction of difference


* WID students: written exercise on the archive

**Part Two: The emergence of the culture concept in American anthropology**

W 9/19 – Boas’ critique of cultural evolutionism and the question of relativism

- Rudyard Kipling, “White Man’s Burden” [B]

F 9/21 – American expansionism and the triumph of man over nature: the American Museum of Natural History


W 9/26 – Mead’s study of Samoan adolescence


F 9/28 – Mead continued

Film: *Margaret Mead: An Observer Observed* (83 min).

**Part Three: Functionalist anthropology from across the pond**

W 10/3 – Preface: Durkheim and the study of society


F 10/5 – Malinowski: Method and theory

W 10/10 – *Do ut des*: the social bonds of reciprocity
• Marcel Mauss, *The Gift*.

F 10/12 – Midterm exam

W 10/17 – Radcliffe-Brown and the concept of structure

F 10/19 – Structural functionalism: Evans-Pritchard’s segmentary lineage system

W 10/24 – EP continued
• E. E. Evans-Pritchard, “Political Organization,” in *The Nuer*. [B]

Part Four: The problem of mind and meaning
F 10/26 – Weber and the historical force of ideas
• Max Weber, *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Part I (Chapters 1-3)

  * ALL: written exercise on Weber

F 11/2 – Interpretive or symbolic anthropology

W 11/7 – Lévi-Strauss and structuralist theory
  * WID students: written exercise on *Tristes Tropiques*

F 11/9 – Lévi-Strauss continued

Part Five: A glimpse of anthropology deconstructed; critical theory applied
W 11/14 – Gender and culture examined
F 11/16 – Marx and Marxist critiques

W 11/21 – Modes of production
  • Eric Wolf, “Introduction,” p. 3-23 and “Modes of Production,” p. 73-100 in Europe and the People without History (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997). [B]

F 11/23 – Power/knowledge/subjectivity - the contributions of Michel Foucault
  • Michel Foucault, “Panopticism,” p. 206-213 in The Foucault Reader. [B]
  *ALL: in-class written exercise on Foucault

W 11/28 – No class (Thanksgiving)

F 11/30 – No class (Thanksgiving)

W 12/5 – Foucault and the concept of biopower

F 12/7 – Final reflections and review
  Final essay instructions handed out; the essay is due on the day of the final exam (TBA).