

**Department of Sociology
Faculty of Social Sciences
South Asian University - New Delhi**

Anthropology: Theory and Ethnographic Approaches
(Compulsory Course for MA)

Total Credits: 4

Objectives of the Course

The course is designed to present various theoretical developments or debates within anthropology. It aims to provide an intensive introduction to some of the most important theoretical perspectives and to show the ways in which they have been used in explaining social and cultural processes among particular peoples. Utilizing a number of ethnographic studies, both 'classic' and recent, it focuses on the intimate link between theory and ethnography- and attempts to elucidate the distinctive character of anthropology. Critically, this course will attempt to situate Socio-Cultural Anthropology in the context of the larger MA programme in Sociology, as a discipline that addresses the question of Human Beings in a world marked by diversity. Theoretical approaches are seen in the context of anthropological field research and the various genres of ethnographic writing. The challenges of understanding some specific ethnographic cases have been influential both in and beyond the discipline.

The aim of this course is thus to enable students: (a) to understand, evaluate, and engage with contemporary debates in anthropological theory; (b) to approach substantive questions of ethnographic interpretation in a theoretically informed manner and (c) situate Anthropology in terms of intellectual debates on otherness, diversity and area studies. Above all, having explored a variety of ethnographies, students should have a clear understanding of the anthropological 'mode of thought' and its intrinsic connection with the methodological challenges embedded in ethnographic enquiry.

Unit-1: Introducing Anthropology

This unit will introduce students to the larger project of Social Anthropology. The unit will situate the discipline first in the context of cultural contact and the notion of otherness and secondly in its troubled location in colonialism. This unit will also introduce students to Ethnography as an integral part of the anthropological enterprise and as a mode of looking at the world.

Carrithers, Michael. 1990. Why Humans have cultures? *Man*, New Series, Vol. 25, No. 2 pp. 189-206

Ingold, Tim. 2011 *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*. London: Routledge

Hart, Keith. 2010. Kant's relevance for anthropology today. *The memory bank* December 17 <http://thememorybank.co.uk/2010/12/17/kants-relevance-for-anthropology-today/>

Fabian, Johannes. 1983. *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its object*. New York: Columbia University Press

Nader, Laura. 2011. Ethnography as Theory. *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 1 (1): 211-219

Marriott, Mckim. 2010. The Feast of Love. in Mines, Diane and Sarah Lamb (eds.) *Everyday life in South Asia* Bloomington: Indiana University Press

Uberoi, Patricia, Nandini Sundar and Satish Deshpande (eds.) *Anthropology in the East: Founders of Indian Sociology and Anthropology*. New Delhi: Permanent Black

Srinivas, M.N. and M.N. Panini. 1973. The Development of Sociology and Social Anthropology. *Sociological Bulletin* 22(2): 179-215. Also available in the Oxford Srinivas reader in the library

Srinivas, M.N. 1997. Practicing Social Anthropology in India. *Annual Reviews in Anthropology* 26:1-24

Asad, Talal (ed.). 1973. *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*. New York: Prometheus books

Unit-2: Classical Approaches in Anthropology: Functionalism, Structural-Functionalism and Cultural Difference.

This unit mainly focuses on the development Anthropology from the British tradition locating its roots in functionalism and structural-functionalism. The unit will also introduce the emphasis on cultural difference that emerged from North American scholarship

Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1960. *A Scientific Theory of Culture: and other essays*. New York: Galaxy

Malinowski, Bronislaw .1961. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific: an account of native enterprise and adventure in the archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea* . New York: E. P Dutton

Radcliffe-Brown, Alan. 1940. On Social Structure. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*. 70(1):1-12

Radcliffe-Brown, Alan. 1940. On Joking Relationships. *Africa* 13(3)195-210

Evans-Pritchard, Edward. 1967. *The Nuer: a description of the modes of livelihood and political institutions of a Nilotic people*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Boas, Franz. 1937. The Diffusion of Cultural Traits. *Social Research* 4(3): 286-295

- Boas, Franz. 1889. On Alternating Sounds. *American Anthropologist* 2(1): 47-54
- Boas, Franz. 1920. The Social Organisation of the Kwakiutl . *American Anthropologist* 22(2): 111-126
- Mead, Margaret. 1928. *Coming of Age in Samoa*. New York: William Morrow and Co.
- Stocking, George. 1966. Franz Boas on the Culture Concept in Historical Perspective. *American Anthropologist* 68(4): 867-882

Unit 3: Structuralist Approaches in Anthropology

This unit highlights the development of Anthropology from the French Tradition particularly with the emphasis of structuralism, which in turn came as a response to Functionalist and Structural-Functionalist approaches.

- Levi-Strauss, Claude. 1963. *Structural Analysis in Anthropology* Cambridge: Cambridge University.
- Levi-Strauss, Claude. 1973. *Tristes Tropiques*. New York: Anthem Press
- Levi-Strauss, Claude. 1955. The structural study of Myth. *Journal of American Folklore* 68(270): 428-444
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude; Peter Brooks (tr.) (2008) [1997]. "The Culinary Triangle". In Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik. *Food and Culture: A Reader* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge. pp. 36–43
- Needham, Rodney. 1967. Right and Left in Nyroro Classification. *Africa* 37 (4):425-452
- Dumont, Louis. 1980. *Homo Hierarchicus: the caste system and its implications*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press

Unit 4: Interpretive and Symbolic Approaches in Anthropology-

This unit concentrates first on the development of Anthropology from the American tradition of Cultural Anthropology after the Second World War and then addresses the study of societies and cultures from the standpoint of symbols and questions of meaning and interpretation.

- Geertz, Clifford. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books.
- Geertz, Clifford. 1980. Blurred Genres: The reconfiguration of Social Thought. *The American Scholar* 49(2): 165-179
- Singer, Milton. 1980. Signs of the Self: An exploration in Semiotic Anthropology *American Anthropologist* 82(3): 485-507
- Douglas, Mary. 1966. *Purity and danger*. London: Routledge

Douglas, Mary. 1957. Animals in Lele Religious Symbolism. *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 27(1): 46-58

Turner, Victor. 1969. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press

Unit 5: Revisiting Anthropology: The work of Marxist and Feminist Anthropologies.

This unit addresses two important programmes that aimed to revitalize and situate the discipline with emergent issues: Marxism and Feminism. Marxist and Feminist anthropologists were critical in bringing the discipline into contact with themes connected to power, history and political economy, complicating older thematic interests such as kinship and social structure and setting the stage for later debates. The reading will introduce students to issues and debates that Marxist and Feminist Anthropologists brought to the table.

Bloch, Maurice. 1985. *Marxism and Anthropology*. New York: Oxford University Press

Hart, Keith. 2009. Marxism and Economic Anthropology
<http://thememorybank.co.uk/2009/01/08/marxism-and-economic-anthropology/>

Meillassoux, Claude. 1981. *Maidens, Meals and Money: Capitalism and the domestic economy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Nash, June. 1979. *We eat the Mines and the Mines eat us: Dependency and Exploitation in Bolivian Tin Mines*. New York: Columbia University Press

Mintz, Sidney. 1985. *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* New York: Penguin

O'Laughlin, Bridget. 1975. Marxist Approaches in Anthropology. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 4:341-370

Rosaldo, Michelle .1980. The Use and Abuse of Anthropology: Reflections on Feminism and Cross-Cultural Understanding. *Signs* 5 (3): 389-417.

Ortner, Sherri. 1973. Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture from Rosaldo, M. & Lamphere, L. (Eds.), *Woman, Culture and Society* pp.67-87, Stanford University Press

Visweswaran, Kamala. 1994. *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press

Unit 6: The Post-Modern Turn in Anthropology

This unit mainly covers the modernist and post-modernist cultural and ethnographic critiques in Anthropology and offers students an exposure to new avenues of engagement in the discipline. The Post-Modern turn in Anthropology was significant moment in the history

of the discipline whereby Anthropologists began to cast a critical eye to their own discipline and the knowledge produced in their work.

Clifford, James and George Marcus. 1986. *Writing Culture: the Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Marcus, George and Michael Fischer. 1986. *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Science*. Chicago: University of Chicago press.

Ortner, Sherry. 1984. Theory in Anthropology since the Sixties. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. 26(1):126-66.

Wolf, Margery. 1992. *A Tale thrice told: feminism, post-modernism and ethnographic responsibility*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press

Abu-Lughod, Lila .1988. *Veiled sentiments: Honour and poetry in a Bedouin Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press

Todd, Zoe. 2018. The Decolonial Turn 2.0: The reckoning *Anthrodendum*
<https://anthrodendum.org/2018/06/15/the-decolonial-turn-2-0-the-reckoning/>