

CULTURE THEORY—SPRING 2007

ANTH 141 (01) F 9:00-11:45; Mendocino Hall 4008

Instructor: Dr. Castaneda (tac@csus.edu); **Webpage:** www.csus.edu/indiv/c/castaneda

Office: MND 4028; **Phone** 278-6067 **Office Hrs:** W 10-11:30 (Office); 1:30-3:00 (Museum)

“He [father] doesn’t want me to cheek the teachers, but he wouldn’t want me to be a wanker, sitting there working, you know...My old man called me an ear’ole once, in the second years, playing football and comin’ to the school. It upset me it did, I was surprised (...) I’d like to be like him, you know, he can’t stand no bull, it anybody tries it on him, he hates it. It’s the same with me, I think I’m gonna be little and fat like him, I’d love to be like him, he’s a great bloke.”

–Spansky (*Learning to Labor*)

Required Texts:

Henare, Amiria J.

2005 *Museums, Anthropology, and Imperial Exchange*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Moore, Henrietta L. and Todd Sanders

2006 *Anthropology in Theory: Issues in Epistemology*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt

2004 *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*. Princeton University Press.

Ulin, Robert C.

2001 *Understanding Cultures: Perspectives in Anthropology and Social Theory*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Willis, Paul

1981 *Learning to Labor*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Catalog Description ANTH141. *Culture Theory*. Exploration of the concepts, dimensions and dynamics of culture theory, viewing culture as an adaptive, comparative, cognitive, structural and symbolic system. **Prerequisite:** ANTH 002, ANTH 104.

LOCUS*— I will use LOCUS (<http://locus.csus.edu/locus2005/index.php>), an electronic resource created and maintained by the Sacramento State Library, to help manage this course. For instance, I will use it to deliver the details of various assignments (e.g. final paper), to post announcements, and to make group member emails available to your peers. **You will need to login using your saclink username and password. After this, you will need to enroll in the class** using (again) your saclink account and the password for our course: _____.

Course Objectives This course provides an introduction to the contemporary cross-currents of culture theory and anthropological thought, as they both *engage with* and *depart from* the discipline’s late 19th and early 20th century intellectual foundations. In particular, students will be challenged to 1) grapple with changing conceptions of “culture” as a principle object of anthropological inquiry 2) critically analyze the relationship between theory-building and the sociopolitical context in which it takes place and 3) explore the interplay of method and theory as embodied in ethnographic fieldwork and texts.

Organization of Course This course follows a seminar format and has a limited enrollment in order to accommodate the rigorous schedule of reading, writing, and discussion. In addition to the more abstract and difficult readings (original theoretical works, both historic and contemporary), three contemporary ethnographies will help to demonstrate the relationship between sociocultural

theory and the production of anthropological knowledge. All of this material is intellectually challenging. Allow ten-twelve hours of reading per seminar session. Bring the relevant books to class, as each class period is likely to involve not only lecture and discussion, but also a writing exercise that may allow you to consult your text. This writing period will likely occur at the start of the seminar period's second half—thus, it would follow after the planned break that will occur around 10:15-10:30.

Course Requirements & Evaluation *Attendance* is required and will be taken each Friday. Each time you miss more than 3 (cumulative) hours of class (for whatever reason—excused or not) your final course average will drop 7 points. Your *class participation* should reflect your best understanding, demonstrate critical thinking, and offer analytic contributions to our discussion. I reserve the right to lower your grade if you do not participate in a productive fashion; if you make substantial and superior contributions to class discussion, your grade will be enhanced accordingly. *Readings* are to be completed (in full) before the day they are scheduled for discussion. If you fall behind in the readings, you will be in trouble, so try to remember that it is more important to gain a general sense of the argument being made and/or the evidence being presented, than to approach the material as if you must read and understand every single word and passage in order to achieve any synthesis. Each seminar, you will turn in a paper that responds to the readings scheduled for that day. I will provide instructions for the format or genre of these response papers. They will vary, but will never be more than 2 typed pages or 3 handwritten single-spaced pages, and may occasionally be lists of questions or comments. All *assignments* must be completed according to instructions (these will typically be posted to LOCUS as “announcements”) Please note that late papers will be penalized* *Evaluation*—your course grade is based upon the following calculations:

- 70 % = Written assignments (whether reaction papers, notes, abstracts, in-class response papers, discussion comments/questions, etc.). The general rubric that I will use to score these for both effort and substantive quality will be uploaded to LOCUS (penalty for late assignments).
- 20 % = class attendance and participation (each student will serve as a designated respondent for 2 seminars)
- 10 % = facilitation (students will facilitate class discussion for one set of readings, in pairs)

**NOTE: Missed in-class assignments cannot be made up. In rare circumstances, I may allow you to complete an alternative project. In any case, you may not turn any assignments in to the Anthropology Office; they must be delivered to me in person either in class or during my regularly scheduled office hours.*

Grading Scale—A=90-100%; B=80-89%; C=70-79%; D=60-69%; F=59% or below.

Cell Phones & Pagers—please turn these off (*unless* you have an emergency and bring this to my attention before class begins). **Laptops**—you are welcome to use your laptop *before* class begins and during breaks, but not when class is in session.

Academic Dishonesty—cheating on examinations and/or plagiarism will result in an F on the plagiarized assignment and permanent dismissal from class. See the University's official policy: <http://www.csus.edu/admbus/umannual/UMA00150.htm>. Provision of this URL serves as formal notice that you will be fully sanctioned for committing plagiarism in ANY of its many forms, as explicated on the University Library home page: <http://library.csus.edu> (see link on lower left hand corner).

Course Schedule *

Week 1—February 2: Course Orientation

Week 2—February 9 : Culture and Behavior

Reading:

Moore & Sanders (*hereafter MS*): 1 (Boas), 2 (Kroeber), 3 (Bateson), 4 (Durkheim).

Week 3—February 16: Society: Domains of Inquiry

Reading:

MS: 8 (Malinowski) 11 (Radcliffe-Brown) 13 (Levi-Strauss)

Ulin: Chpt. 2, “Anthropological Ancestors & Interpretation Theory”

Week 4—February 23: Society: Objects and Methods

Reading:

MS: 14 (Beattie) 21 (Geertz) 23 (Keesing); Willis: pp. 1-51

Week 5—March 2: Coherence and Contingency

Reading:

Willis: pp. 52-116; MS: 33 (Weber) 37 (Bourdieu)

Week 6—March 9: Cultural Forms and Social Reproduction

Reading:

Willis: pp. 119-221; Ulin: Chpt. 7

Suggested Reading: Ulin Chpt. 6

Week 7—March 16: Modernism and Postmodernism in Anthropology

Reading:

MS: 41 (Moore) 42 (Thornton) 43 (Abu-Lughod) 54 (Latour)

Ulin: Chpt. 8

Week 8—March 23: Museums, Anthropology, & Imperial Exchange

Reading:

Henare: Chpts. 1-4

Week 9—March 30: Spring Break

Week 10—April 6: Museums and Social Theory in Scotland & New Zealand

Reading:

Henare: Chpts. 5-7

Week 11—April 13: No class

Southwestern Anthropological Association Annual Meeting—Holiday Inn, Capitol Plaza

Week 12—April 20: An Epistemology of Things

Reading:

Henare: Chpts. 8-9

Humanities Interdisciplinary Conference on Campus: “Artful Strategies & Necessary Risks”

Week 13—April 27: Bounded Cultures, Bounded Selves?

Reading:

MS 55 (Gupta & Ferguson) 56 (Marcus) 57 (Appadurai); Ulin: Chpt. 9

Week 14—May 4: Friction—An Ethnography of Global Connections

Reading:

Tsing: Chpts. 1-4

Week 15—May 11: Theorizing the Local & the Global

Reading:

Tsing: Chpt. 4-6

Week 16—May 18: Futures—Theoretical and Otherwise

Reading:

Tsing: Chpt. 7 & Coda; MS: 45 (Weber) 46 (Scheper-Hughes) 47 (D’Andrade) 48 (Spiro)

*Course schedule is subject to change. Check LOCUS weekly for updates.