

Social Theory
Anthropology 304 (CRN 10046)
MWF 11:30 – 12:35 (Neuberger Hall 350)

Dr. Charles Klein
Phone: 503.725.3316

Office Hours: 141-P, Cramer Hall, MW 3:15- 4:30
Email: Charles.Klein@pdx.edu

Course Description

This course is an overview of social theory – that is, systemized ways of explaining the social world in which we live. Over the course of the quarter, we will investigate key concepts such as kinship, society, culture, class, agency, power, gender, sexuality, post-coloniality, social change, citizenship, neoliberalism, governmentality, networks and globalization. Our readings draw from theories developed over the past 160 years, including classic works from Marx, Weber and Durkheim, selections from the ethnographic tradition, and more recent developments in gender, queer, post-colonial, and globalization studies.

Because each theory comes from a particular place and time, we will center our explorations by asking what motivated theorists to ask certain questions and for what ends they intended their work. We will then consider a number of questions, including

- How do the theorists understand the structures and processes of “societies” and social life?
- How do they explain the relationship between individual agency and society?
- How do they believe social change occurs?
- How do they position themselves in their writing?
- Which topics do they consider most important, and which do they downplay or ignore?
- How does their work fit within the intellectual landscape of their times?

Finally – and perhaps most importantly – we will explore the ways in which each theory has been or might be applied in practice. Toward this end, you will do four written assignments in which you apply the concepts we are studying to contemporary issues and your own lives. By the end of the course, I hope you will have developed an intellectual toolkit that you can use in your own work and life.

Required Readings

All class materials are available on 2DL (see below). You may either read a digital version or print a copy – that choice is yours.

Class Requirements

Students taking this course Pass/No Pass are required to earn at least the equivalent of a ‘C-’ to pass the class. Students intended to use this course to satisfy the anthropology departmental major or minor requirements must take the class for a grade. Student performance will be evaluated through the four written assignments (30%), in class writing exercises (10%), and two take home exams (30% each).

Policies

It is normal to get sick, and each year flus and other illnesses spread through colleges and universities. If you feel ill (e.g. fever, sore throat, runny nose, headache, cough, aches), please stay home until you have been without fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. Please inform me of your illness. You will not be penalized for illness-related absences, and you will have the opportunity to make up missed assignments.

Late exams and assignments will lose 5 points for each day past due. Requests for deadline extensions should be made in writing ahead of the due date. All work must be completed for students to receive a passing grade. Please retain for your records a copy of all the work you submit.

Plagiarism (intellectual theft) is a very serious academic offense. You are responsible for reading and understanding the department handout on plagiarism, which is available on D2L and at www.anthropology.pdx.edu/docs/plagiarism.pdf. Please ask me if you have questions about this information. Any assignment containing plagiarized material will receive a failing grade, and cases of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Student Life.

Grading and Rewrites. If you would like to have an assignment grade reconsidered, you must submit a written re-evaluation request in an email, at least 24 hours after the graded assignment was returned. This email should state why you think your grade should be reconsidered. Any of the four assignments and the first exam may also be rewritten and resubmitted. Rewrites are due one week after the day the graded assignments/exams were returned. The new grade will be an average of the new grade and the old grade.

Students with a documented disability needing accommodations in the course should immediately inform me.

D2L (Desire to Learn)

The course syllabus, assignments and exam questions will be available on D2L. All students can access D2L with their Odin account. Use your Odin username and password to login to D2L at <https://d2l.pdx.edu>. Use of D2L will be demonstrated on the first day of class. Please feel free to contact me if you encounter difficulties in accessing this resource.

Expectations

You are responsible for reading the assigned materials before class and coming ready to discuss. **I repeat, you are expected to come to class having done the readings.** And yes, even on those days when assignments are due. I strongly advise taking a look at the terms and questions I have provided for each reading – they will be a starting point for our classroom discussions.

I know there are a lot of readings. So read strategically. Focus on key concepts and arguments, and don't get bogged in all the details unless they interest you.

This course is structured primarily around large and small group discussions, and I expect everyone to participate in classroom discussions. Yes, everyone. This doesn't just mean talking,

but also active listening. If you are on the shy side, push yourself to talk; if you are on the talky side, consciously step back and let your classmates shine. Be prepared for me to call on you or ask you to let one of your classmates speak. And don't rely on your classmates do the reading and thinking for you – this isn't fair to them and won't serve you well in the long-run.

For all assignments and exams, follow the formatting, citation, and reference guidelines posted on D2L.

Course Requirements

Assignments (30%)

There will be four required assignments: (1) a kinship chart and analysis (10/14); (2) a functional analysis of a social event (10/21) (2-3 pages, double spaced); (3) a talk-show presentation (one page, single spaced); and (4) a short grant application (one page, single spaced). Instructions for each assignment will be posted on D2L. Assignments will be evaluated on a 0-100 point scale using predefined grading matrices, which will be posted on D2L.

In-Class Writing Exercises (10%)

We will have seven in-class writing exercises over the course of quarter. Each exercise is worth 2 points, for a maximum of 10 points. This means you can miss two in-class writing exercises without impacting your grade. There are no make-ups or late submissions for in-class writing. If for some reason you are not in class the day of an assignment and want to make up the points, you can do an extra credit assignment (see below).

Exam 1 (30%)

This take home exam will focus on the readings from the first half of the course and will be due Wednesday, October 30th at the beginning of class. I will post the exam questions on Wednesday, October 23rd. You will write 5 pages total, double spaced in 11 or 12 font. Only hard copies will be accepted. The exam will be evaluated on a 0-100 scale using a predefined grading matrix which will be posted on D2L.

Exam 2 (30%)

This take home exam will focus on the readings from the second half of the course and will be due Wednesday, December 12 at 12 noon. I will post the Exam 2 questions on Saturday, November 30. You will write 5 pages, double spaced in 11 or 12 font. Only hard copies will be accepted. The exam will be evaluated on a 0-100 scale using a predefined grading matrix which will be posted on D2L.

Extra Credit

Extra credit can be earned by attending and summarizing pre-approved lectures, events or service projects and writing a 1 page long, single spaced reflection paper related the event to specific topics covered in class. Each extra credit report may earn up to 1 point. You can do up to 5 extra credit papers, potentially earning a maximum of 5 extra credit points or 5% of the course grade.

Course Outline

Part 1. Theory—What's the Point?

September 30: Course Overview

October 2: Introduction to Social Theory 1

Nancy Scheper-Hughes

1993

Introduction: Tropical Sadness. Death without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil. Pp. 1-30. Berkeley: University of California Press.

October 4: Introduction to Social Theory II

Boas, Franz

1887 [1974]

A Year among the Eskimos and The Principles of Ethnological Classification. In G. Stocking, ed., *The Shaping of American Anthropology 1883-1911: A Franz Boas Reader*. Pp. 44-55; 61-67. New York: Basic Books.

Durkheim, Emile

1897

Preface. Anomic Suicide: Parts I-III. Suicide. Pp. 35-39; 241-258.

Part 2. Kinship and "The Family"

October 7: Kinship Theory

Stone, Linda

1997

Gender, Reproduction, and Kinship. *Kinship and Gender: An Introduction*. Pp. 1-19. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

October 9: Kinship – Ethnographic Examples

Video: Taboo: Blood Bonds (2004, 47 minutes)

October 11: The Family and the State

Rouse, Carolyn

2004

"If she's a vegetable, we'll be her garden": Embodiment, transcendence, and citations of competing cultural metaphors in the case of a dying child. *American Ethnologist*, 31(4), 514-529.

Part 3. Systems in Motion (Functionalism, Structural-Functionalism and Ecological Approaches)

October 14: Putting the Pieces Together, Take 1

Malinowski, Bronislaw

1922

Introduction: The Subject, Method and Scope of This Inquiry. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. Pp. 1-25; 81-99. New York: E.P. Dutton & Co: Prospect Heights.

Assignment # 1 Due

October 16: Putting the Pieces Together, Take 2

Evans-Pritchard, E.E.

1940

Introduction and Time and Space: I-III. The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People. Pp. 1-15, 94-117. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

October 18: Putting the Pieces Together, Take 3

Rappaport, Roy A.

2008 [1967]

Ritual Regulation of Environmental Relations among a New Guinea People. Environmental Anthropology: A Historical Reader. M.R. Dove and C. Carpenter (eds). Pp. 254-264. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Part 4. Work, Class and the Economy

October 21: It's the Economy, Stupid?

Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels

1972 [1848]

Manifesto of the Communist Party, I and II. E. Kamenka, ed. The Portable Karl Marx, Pp. 203-228. New York and London: Penguin Books.

Assignment #2 Due

October 23: Capitalism Within

Weber, Max

2002 [1904-5]

Asceticism and the Spirit of Capitalism. The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. Pp. 102-125. Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Co.

October 25: Hegemony and Counterculture

Hebdige, Dick

1979

Chapters One and Four. Subculture: The Meaning of Style. Pp. 16-20, 46-70 Methuen & Company.

October 28: Review

Part 5. Social Change/Positions of Power

October 30: Thinking about Social Change

Video: Arab spring (Tahrir 2011: The Good, the Bad, the Politicians; Tahrir Liberation Square; <http://news.linktv.org/videos/images-of-a-revolution-the-arab-spring-on-film>)

Exam 1 due beginning of class

November 1: Reproducing Inequality

Bourgois, Philippe

2003 [1995] School Days – Learning to Be a Better Criminal. In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio, 2nd Edition. Pp. 174-205. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

November 4: Discourse, Power & The Body

Foucault, Michel

1977 The Body of the Condemned. Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison. Pp. 3-31.

November 6: Situated Knowledge

Haraway, Donna.

1991 Situated Knowledge: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspectives. Pp. 183-201. Simians, Cyborbs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature. New York: Routledge Press.

November 8: Contested Bodies

Corrêa, Sonia & Rosalind Petchesky

2007 [1994] Reproductive and Sexual Rights: A Feminist Perspective. Culture, Society and Sexuality: A Reader (2nd Edition). Pp. 298-315.

November 13: (Trans)Gender

Kulick, Don & Charles Klein

2003 Making a Scene: The Politics of Shame among Brazilian Travesti Prostitutes. Recognition Struggles and Social Movements. Pp. 215-238. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bornstein, Kate

1994 Naming All the Parts. Gender Outlaw: Men, Women and the Rest of Us. Pp. 21-40. New York: Vintage Books.

Assignment #3 Due

November 15: Orientalism

Said, Edward

1978. Latent and Manifest Orientalism. Orientalism. Pp. 201-225.

November 18: Post-Colonial Ethnography

Comaroff, Jean and John

2003 Ethnography on an Awkward Scale: Postcolonial Anthropology and the Violence of Abstraction. *Ethnography* 4(2):147-179.

Part 6. Globalization, Neoliberalism and Citizenship in the Information Age

November 20: Citizenship

Holston, James & Arjun Appadurai

1996. Cities and Citizenship. *Public Culture* 8:187-204.

Ong, Aiwaha

2007 Neoliberalism as a mobile technology. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 32(1): 3-8.

November 22: Bogatá: Building a Sustainable City

Assignment #4 Due

November 25: Neoliberal Governmentality I

Ferguson, James and Akhil Gupta

2001 Spatializing States: Toward an Ethnography of Neoliberal Governmentality. *American Ethnologist* 29(4):981-1002.

November 27: Neoliberal Governmentality II

Ecks, Steven

2010 Near-liberalism: Global Corporate Citizens and Pharmaceutical Marketing in India, pp. 144-163. *Asian Biotech: Ethics and Communities of Fate*. Aihwa Ong & Nancy N. Chen (eds). Durham: Duke University Press.

ABC Nightline [video]

2012. Apple/FoxConn Factory in China.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hLuPtMvwwA0> (15 minutes)

December 2: Transnational Ethnography

Appadurai, Arjun

1991 Global Ethnospaces: Notes and Queries for a Transnational Anthropology. *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present* (Richard Fox, ed). Pp. 191-210. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.

December 4: Virtual Worlds

Jones, Gerard & Mark Badget.

2010 Networked! Carabella on the Run. See also www.privacy.activism.org

Video: Networked Society, On the Brink (20 minutes)

December 6: Review for Exam 2

Exam 2 Due at Noon, Wednesday, December 11

Deliver to instructor's box, Anthropology Department, 141 Cramer Hall

Course Timeline

| Week | Day | Date | Month | Readings to be discussed, assignments due |
|-----------|-----|------|-------|--|
| 1 | M | 30 | Sept | Syllabus, introductions, theory overview, D2L |
| | W | 2 | Oct | Read: Scheper-Hughes |
| | F | 4 | Oct | Read: Boas, Durkheim |
| 2 | M | 7 | Oct | Read: Stone |
| | W | 9 | Oct | Video: Blood Bonds |
| | F | 11 | Oct | Read: Rouse |
| 3 | M | 14 | Oct | Read: Malinowski, Assignment #1 |
| | W | 16 | Oct | Read: Evans-Pritchard |
| | F | 18 | Oct | Read: Rappaport |
| 4 | M | 21 | Oct | Read: Marx, Assignment #2 |
| | W | 23 | Oct | Read: Weber |
| | F | 25 | Oct | Read: Hebdige |
| 5 | M | 28 | Oct | No readings. Exam 1 Review |
| | W | 30 | Oct | Exam 1 due ; Video: Arab Spring |
| | F | 1 | Nov | Read: Bourgois |
| 6 | M | 4 | Nov | Read: Foucault |
| | W | 6 | Nov | Read: Haraway |
| | F | 8 | Nov | Read: Corrêa/Petchesky |
| 7 | M | 11 | Nov | HOLIDAY |
| | W | 13 | Nov | Read: Bornstein, Kulick/Klein, Assignment #3 |
| | F | 15 | Nov | Read: Said |
| 8 | M | 18 | Nov | Read: Comaroff & Comaroff |
| | W | 20 | Nov | Read: Holston/Appadurai, Ong |
| | F | 22 | Nov | Video: Bogatá – Building a Sustainable City, Assignment #4 |
| 9 | M | 25 | Nov | Read: Ferguson & Gupta, Video: Apple/FoxConn China |
| | W | 27 | Nov | Read: Ecks |
| | F | 29 | Nov | THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY |
| 10 | M | 2 | Dec | Read: Appadurai |
| | W | 4 | Dec | Read: Jones and Badgett |
| | F | 6 | Dec | Review for Exam 2 |
| 11 | M | 9 | Dec | |
| | W | 11 | Dec | Exam 2 due, Noon, December 11 Anthropology Department, 141 Cramer Hall |