ANTHROPOLOGY 202C | PROSEMINAR C
THE HISTORY OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL THEORY | KNOWLEDGE + BEING
SPRING 2017 | COURSE CODE 60700

Tom Boellstorff, Professor, Department of Anthropology
Meets Thursdays, noon–2:50pm, SBSG 3323
First meeting: Thursday, March 31, noon, SBSG 3200

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is the final quarter of the three-quarter proseminar sequence required for graduate students in the PhD program in the Department of Anthropology at the University of California, Irvine. This course is only open to first-year graduate students in the Ph.D. program in the Irvine Department of Anthropology who have taken Proseminar A and Proseminar B in the same academic year. There will be no exceptions to this requirement.

In this term, students will explore the history of anthropological theory and ethnographic practice with explicit reference to the discipline’s practices of knowledge formation. We will also reflect on the work of the previous two quarters through the following organizing questions: How has anthropology built its claims about culture, power, and human nature? To what effect? What can this process tell us about theory-building and the practice of research and writing in the social sciences more generally? This quarter will consider works that critically challenge the knowledge claims of the works presented in the earlier quarters, and will also consider reflexivity and debates over the status of knowledge and being in the humanities and social sciences.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and participation: This course places large demands on graduate students’ time. It is reading- and writing-intensive, and students will need to learn to skim productively. Weekly attendance is absolutely vital. The class will be run as a seminar, with occasional short introductory lectures. Your engaged participation is required. While the assigned reading will sometimes be a challenge, you should attend class and participate in class discussions regardless of how much of the reading you have finished. I will only accept absences in cases of dire emergency. The course also requires attendance at three “salons,” at locations to be announced. We will have lunch or dinner, and you will read the ethnography assigned for that salon and be prepared to discuss it.

Three short essays (2,500 words maximum each, all-inclusive) will be due via email before the listed meeting date. No late papers will be accepted. Each counts for 15% of your final grade (45% of your grade overall). Your grade will be based not just on your analysis of the readings, but how well you link your discussion to readings and themes from the previous two quarters. You may decide the week in which you submit Paper #2 and Paper #3. You are permitted (indeed encouraged, though not required) to submit one or more of your papers as a coauthored paper: in such a case each author will receive the same grade (speak with me if you want to have more than two authors).
Course meeting discussion facilitation: Each student will be responsible for helping to facilitate one course meeting during weeks 2–10. For the 2016–17 cohort, this means that five of those nine meetings will have one student presenter, and four will have two student presenters. Regardless, the discussion facilitation will involve a brief (10 minute) introduction to the authors and their intellectual biographies, and how they relate to themes from the course and also from Proseminars A and B. Course meeting discussion facilitation accounts for 10% of your final grade. In cases where there are two presenters, each receives the same grade.

Salon discussion facilitation: Teams of four students will be responsible for facilitating discussion for one salon. Facilitators should be prepared with a list of questions designed to generate discussion. Salon discussion facilitation will account for 10% of your final grade. Your salon discussion facilitation grade will be based not just on your analysis of the readings, but how well you link your discussion to readings and themes from Proseminars A and B. Each team member receives the same grade.

Take-home final examination: There will be an essay-format, take-home final examination distributed during Week 9 and due emailed to tboellst@uci.edu by 5pm on Tuesday, June 14. It will account for 35% of your final grade. You are permitted to coauthor part or all of your take-home final examination.

The overall grading is: 3 short essays 15% x 3 = 45%; In-class presentation = 10%; Salon discussion facilitation = 10%; Final examination = 35%.

COURSE READINGS: BOOKS TO GET

Below are six books you should obtain. They will also be placed on course reserves. Note: the books often exist in multiple editions. You do not need to obtain the specific edition listed here. The remaining readings for the course (books, book chapters, and articles) are listed in the course schedule during the week they are assigned. These readings are accessible online, unless marked with *, in which case they will be made available as PDF files. Additional texts are listed each week as suggested readings. You do not need to read these texts: they are there for future reference, and also might be useful for one of your essays.

For each week, readings are listed in alphabetical order by author’s last name. On the first line of a week’s schedule, you will find the recommended order for reading the texts. When we read part of a book (noted by “Read:”), other chapters of that book are suggested reading for that week.

Course Schedule

Week 1: knowledge & desire (5, 1, 2, 4, 3).


Suggested readings for Week 1:


**Week 2: imitation & the social (1, 3, 5, 2, 4).**


**Suggested readings for Week 2:**


**Week 3: cohesion & its opposite—essay #1 due (3, 1, 2, 4).**


Suggested reading for Week 3:

**Salon #1, Ruth Benedict—*Patterns of Culture.*

**Week 4: sociality & context (3, 1, 2, 4, 6, 5).**


**Week 5: sexuality (11, 2, 3, 10, 7, 4, 1, 5, 9, 6, 8).**


**Suggested readings for Week 5:**


**Week 6: canonical intersections (2, 4, 1, 5, 7, 3, 6).**


**Suggested readings for Week 8:**


**Week 7: semiotics & selfhood, part 1 (4, 6, 2, 3, 5, 1).**


**Suggested readings for Week 7:**


**Salon #2, Hortense Powdermaker—*Stranger and Friend.*

**Week 8: semiotics & selfhood, part 2 (6, 5, 1, 3, 8, 2, 7, 4).**


Week 9: political economies of difference & discipline (7, 1, 2, 3, 6, 4, 5).


Suggested readings for Week 9:


Week 10: knowing & being (5, 4, 3, 7, 6, 2, 1).

Suggested readings for Week 10:


Salon #3, Nancy Munn—*The Fame of Gawa*.

Friday, June 16, 5pm PST: take-home final due (via email)