

ANTH 647: Theories of Culture

Tuesday and Thursday 3:30pm to 4:45pm, Neff Hall 209 (CRN 11917)

Professor: Dr. Sarah Taylor  
E-mail: sarah.r.taylor@wichita.edu  
Phone: (316) 978-7194  
Office: Neff Hall 217

**Course Description:**

This course is a detailed investigation into the theoretical underpinnings of cultural anthropology. We will look at culture from a wide spectrum of theoretical lenses. This course goes beyond an introductory course, exploring at a deeper level the development of anthropological thinking and the writing of ethnography over the past 100 years.

**Required Texts:**

R. Jon McGee and Richard L. Warms

2012 A History of Anthropological Theory, 5<sup>th</sup> edition. McGraw Hill.

*Abbreviated as M&W in the syllabus .*

Karen Sykes

2005 Arguing with Anthropology: An Introduction to Critical Theories of the Gift.

Routledge ISBN: 978-0415254441 *Abbreviated as AWA in the syllabus .*

**Office Hours:**

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 12:30pm to 3:00pm and by appointment.

**Grading:**

Exams	175 points x2	350 points
Summaries	20 points x10	200 points
Participation	4 points x 25	100 points
Paper		350 points
<b>Total</b>		<b>1000 points</b>

Grade Scale:	
1000-930 = A	769-730 = C
929-900 = A-	729-700 = C-
899-870 = B+	699-670 = D+
869-830 = B	669-630 = D
829-800 = B-	629-600 = D-
799-770 = C+	599-0 = F

*Points earned determine final letter grades. You can access all grades on Blackboard throughout the semester. Your total points should not be a finals week surprise!*

**1. Exams (350 points):**

There will be **two equally weighted exams** during the term. The midterm exam will expect you to have a solid foundation of knowledge about “classical” paradigms of cultural anthropology, whereas the final will require your understand of recent trends in theory. Both exams will be taken online, and you will have a variety of questions to answer with essay responses. **It is expected that no make-up exams will have to be given.** However, if there should arise some

unusual circumstance which requires you to miss an exam, you are required to let me know of the situation as soon as possible, and to provide a written and verifiable excuse. **Make up exams will be in essay form.** Missing the deadline for submitting the exam is akin to missing the class in which the exam takes place, and is not a valid excuse. Late exams will not be graded.

### ***2. Reading Summaries (200 points):***

You will write a brief summary or synopsis of the week's original sources (not the Sykes chapters) and bring it to class each Thursday in hard copy. Aim for about a paragraph on each reading. Your summaries will identify the main points of the readings, point out problems you see with the research (evidence, logic, etc...), and will include at least one paragraph of synthesis that ties the readings together. The grading of these summaries is a pass/fail, as they are largely used for me to gauge how well you understand the readings. If you are not doing what I consider an adequate job, I will call the problem to your attention, as these will indicate how well you may do on the exams. You may keep your summaries with you during class as aids for discussion. I will collect them at the end of class. **Summaries will not be accepted after the class for which the readings are assigned or via email at any time.** Each summary is worth 20 points. There are twelve opportunities to submit summaries; however, you are expected to submit 10 (you can miss two without influencing your grade).

### ***3. Participation (100 points):***

Your participation grade is broken down into attendance points for each class. We will meet 28 times throughout the semester, and each class is worth 4 points. You can miss up to three classes before your grade is affected. This class will consist of both lecture and discussions. Generally, I will spend the beginning of class lecturing on the week's topic to give us an introduction and overview. The latter part of class will be spent discussing the readings. The class as a whole is expected to participate in this discussion. The assigned readings must be completed before class. If it seems that the group is having difficulty engaging a particular topic, I will give a pop quiz at my discretion. Your grade on a pop quiz will be your attendance score for the day. Should you miss a class, you will be responsible for the material covered. Please note that you do not begin the class with 100 participation points...you must earn them.

### ***4. Paper (350 points):***

This assignment consists of two parts; a review of one of your peers' drafts and your final draft that incorporates changes suggested by your reviewer. You will choose one ethnographer who has been writing in the last 40 years and write a 10-12 page paper that discusses the author's theoretical approach and how this influenced the way that they approached their study of a cultural phenomenon. You will need to situate them historically and discuss how they fit into the trajectory of anthropological theory, as you understand it. The paper will be in large part on book-length ethnographies, and will be supported by ancillary articles written by the same ethnographer. You will receive 150 points for a thorough and thoughtful review of a peer's paper and 200 points for your final draft. I will provide additional details in the second and third weeks of the semester.

### **Academic Integrity**

Students are responsible for knowing and following the Student Code of Conduct [http://webs.wichita.edu/inaudit/ch8\\_05.htm](http://webs.wichita.edu/inaudit/ch8_05.htm) and the Student Academic Honesty policy [http://webs.wichita.edu/inaudit/ch2\\_17.htm](http://webs.wichita.edu/inaudit/ch2_17.htm).

If you keep up with the reading, pay attention and take notes during lectures, and study before the exams, there is no reason you should not succeed in this class. In other words, there is no reason to cheat. This class is designed for students to work on their own and to follow a code of ethics that holds you, the student, personally accountable. If I observe any collusion between students, **both parties fail the assignment!** Similarly, plagiarism is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. Instances of cheating and plagiarism are immediately reported to the Dean of Judicial Affairs. Please take the class seriously, do your work honestly, and we will all enjoy a rewarding semester.

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### Class policies and etiquette:

- Handouts for each PowerPoint presentation will be posted on Blackboard. These are meant to supplement your notes. They cannot make up for being in class. Some films are available online, while others can be found in the library. All information covered in the texts, all PDFs of readings on BB, and material from films and lectures presented in class are fair game for the exams. I encourage you to contact other students via the discussion forum in BB to ask questions on any material you miss.
- I will respond to all emails as quickly as possible, however it will take up to 24 hours. Any message received after 5:00pm will not be read until the following day. Similarly, emails received on weekends will not be read until the following Monday. If you need immediate assistance, you can contact me during office hours. At this time, I will be available on Blackboard IM, via email, or via phone, and I will respond to your question right away. If you feel that you need an immediate response from me, calling my office is the best way to reach me.
- As a student in this course, you are responsible for your own learning. Below, you will find a quick guide to how to ask for help with course materials and other technical problems. Just as it is my responsibility to provide the materials, information, and feedback to teach you, it is your responsibility to access the information, process the feedback, and be aware of what this course requires.
- This class will emphasize discussion, participation, and sharing of different perspectives. While dissent from the prevailing notions presented in the readings and class discussions is accepted (and even encouraged!), it must be expressed in a manner respectful to the authors we are reading and to other members of the class.
- This class runs from 3:30pm to 4:45pm. This means that I am entitled to use the entire class time to present information; it is therefore unacceptable for students to interrupt the lecture and discussion by shuffling papers, packing book bags, and other similarly disruptive activities associated with the end of class.
- Lastly, your success in this class is my main objective for the semester. Should you experience unexpected academic, personal, or work related issues that affect your participation in the class please contact me right away. I will not always be able to accommodate you; however the earlier you discuss the situation with me the more likely it is that I will be able to assist.

<i><b>If your problem is related to...</b></i>	<i><b>Then...</b></i>
Understanding course content, requirements, or due dates	Post in "Ask a Question" forum for any questions about assignments, due dates, or materials for the course.
Personal matters	Contact me. Please note that the ONLY personal problems or inquiries that are not appropriate to post publicly are to be sent to me, such as disability accommodations or extenuating personal situations that will affect your ability to succeed in the course (death in family, serious illness, etc.). All non-personal questions about the course should be posted in the "Ask a Question" Forum.
Connecting to the internet, such as problems with logging into your ISP (Internet Service Provider), connecting to websites, launching web browser software	Contact your ISP
Connecting to the WSU Blackboard website, accessing your course(s), submission of assignments or file attachments in course	The Help Desk Call them 24/7 at (316) 978-HELP
Please note...if you get an error message you need to take a "screen shot" and you MUST contact the help desk.	Screen Shot: For Mac Users hold Command + Shift + 3 For Windows Users either use the PrtScn/SysRq or Alt + PrtScrn/SysRq
You are unexpectedly logged out of Blackboard during an exam	Return to Blackboard immediately, directly via <a href="http://blackboard.wichita.edu">http://blackboard.wichita.edu</a> to resume the exam. It is advisable to ALWAYS log in via this website in order to avoid being automatically logged out every 20 minutes when you access Blackboard through MyWSU.

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**Course Schedule:**

***Week 1: August 19-21 ~ Introduction***

T Syllabus review, class structure

Th Introducing Anthropological Theory ~ AWA Chapter 1

***Week 2: August 26-28 ~ Evolutionism***

T M&W, Pages 6-73

Th Discussion

***Week 3: September 2-4 ~ Social Thought***

T M&W, Pages 74-110

Th AWA Chapter 2

***Week 4: September 9-11 ~ Historical Particularism***

T M&W, Pages 112-149

Th Discussion

***Week 5: September 16-18 ~ Functionalism and Culture & Personality***

T M&W, Pages 150-194 and 195-217

Th AWA Chapter 3

***Week 6: September 23-25 ~ Neoevolutionism and Cultural Ecology***

T M&W, Pages 220-258

Th AWA Chapter 4

***Week 7: September 30-October 2 ~ Materialism***

T M&W, Pages 259-319

Th No Class ~ Midterm Exam

***Week 8: October 7-9 ~ Structuralism and Cognitive Anthropology***

T M&W, Pages 320-343 and 344-367

Th Discussion

***Week 9: October 14-16 ~ Sociobiology and more Marxism***

T No Class (Fall Break!)

Th M&W, Pages 370-395 and AWA Chapter 5

***Week 10: October 21-23 ~ Interpretive Anthropology***

T M&W, Pages 438-487

Th Discussion

***Week 11: October 28-30 ~ Feminist Anthropology***

T M&W, Pages 396-437

Th AWA Chapter 6 ~ Paper Draft DUE

***Week 12: November 4-6 ~ Early Postmodernism***

T M&W, Pages 488-519

Th AWA Chapter 7

***Week 13: November 11-13 ~ Postmodernism***

T M&W, Pages 520-564

Th AWA Chapter 8

***Week 14: November 18-20 ~ Agency***

T M&W, Pages 565-615

Th AWA Chapter 9 ~ Peer Reviews DUE

**Week 15: November 25-27 ~ Transnationalism**

T AWA Chapter 10

Th No Class (Thanksgiving!)

**Week 16: December 2-4 ~ Conclusions**

T AWA Chapters 11 and 12

Th No Class (American Anthro Meeting)

**Week 17: December 7-13**

Final Exam and Paper both DUE by **Friday December 12 at 11:59pm**

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**University Policies**

***Inclusive Excellence***

Wichita State University is committed to achieving “Inclusive Excellence” and institutional strength through curricula, co-curricula, and other practices, which promote and encourage the intermingling of its students, faculty, and staff from different backgrounds, in a challenging intellectual and multicultural climate that is marked by respect and appreciation for the spectrum of human diversity. The University is also committed to an “all-inclusive” diversity and does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, disability, religion, national origin, or military status.

***Disabilities***

If you have a physical, psychiatric/emotional, or learning disability that may impact on your ability to carry out assigned course work, I encourage you to contact the Office of Disability Services (DS). The office is located in Grace Wilkie Annex, room 150, (316) 978-3309 (voice/tty). DS will review your concerns and determine, with you, what academic accommodations are necessary and appropriate for you. All information and documentation of your disability is confidential and will not be released by DS without your written permission.

***Counseling & Testing***

The WSU Counseling & Testing Center provides professional counseling services to students, faculty and staff; administers tests and offers test preparation workshops; and presents programs on topics promoting personal and professional growth. Services are low cost and confidential. They are located in room 320 of Grace Wilkie Hall, and their phone number is (316) 978-3440. The Counseling & Testing Center is open on all days that the University is officially open. If you have a mental health emergency during the times that the Counseling & Testing Center is not open, please call COMCARE Crisis Services at (316) 660-7500.

***Copyright Notice***

Course materials prepared by the instructor, together with the content of all lectures presented by the instructor, are the property of the instructor. Video and audio recording of lectures and review sessions without the consent of the instructor is prohibited. Unless explicit permission is obtained from the instructor, recordings of lectures may not be modified and must not be

transferred or transmitted to any other person, whether or not that individual is enrolled in the course.

***Definition of a Credit Hour***

3 credit hour class: Success in this 3 credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction and preparation/studying or course related activities for a total of 135 hours.