New Directions in Anthropological Research
ANTH 630, Fall 2017

Seminar Director:  
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Fall Semester, 2017  
03 credits  
September 6—November 29, 2017  
Meeting days and times:  
Wednesdays: 10:00am—1:00pm  
Campus: SGW, Room H-1124

Course description from the Graduate Calendar & Dept. Website:  
ANTH 630 – This course, the content of which changes from year to year, explores emergent concepts, methods and topics in anthropology.

“Anthropology needs its own anthropology if it is to be more than a mere epiphenomenon of larger societal processes.”

Explanation

A second phase of anthropological research has continued, extended, and somewhat revised the process unleashed by the North American “decolonizing anthropology” school of the late 1960s, which was further stimulated by the “new cultural anthropology” of the 1980s, by Indigenous critiques of anthropology, and by the internal theoretical debates brought on by encounters with “globalization”. These particular new directions unfolded within North American and western European schools of anthropology.

The anthropological study of anthropology has become a research area in its own right, and one that is particularly productive for teaching us a great deal about the dominant Euro-American cultural configuration, how it was constructed, upheld, and acquired power. We are moving beyond concerns with individual “reflexivity,” and moving in the direction described by Pierre Bourdieu as “participant objectivation,” as this seminar turns our critical attention toward our own academic practice as anthropologists within specific institutional contexts and within an overarching political economy of Euro-American dominance. This seminar’s intention is to help cultivate a critical awareness of the institutional matrices in
which North American (and European) anthropologists work, and how certain concepts, theories, topics, and modes of doing research come to be taken for granted and are upheld as important, normal and conventional, at different times. It is not intended as an exercise in jettisoning anthropology, or academia, but to better understand our constraints, limits, and to hopefully broaden the horizon of what is deemed possible.

Stated simply, the objective of this seminar is to examine the social conditions of knowledge production in Anglo-American anthropology, the political economy of professionalization and institutionalization, and the historical processes through which these unfolded. We also study how certain national traditions develop and exercise hegemony on an international plane. To do this, we study a series of historical, ethnographic and sociological texts on the politics of knowledge, which we can treat as important primary documents in their own right since they have been produced by practitioners inside of the very structures they study.

Within the parameters set out above, this seminar is particularly concerned with the history of Canadian anthropology, and how Canadian anthropology has been defined. We will closely examine the political economy that produced Canadian anthropology, its limitations, and its openings toward the future.

This seminar aspires to envision different modes of anthropology, and to ask what series of transformations may get us closer to that objective. In an effort to examine anthropology as if from outside the discipline, as somewhat alienated insiders, speaking and writing of it without being compelled by a vested interest in the discipline, we are doing anthropology. More on this will follow below.

The more immediate and basic focus is in trying to appreciate and grapple with—as in a meeting of minds, a dialogue—a series of more-or-less recent texts which in their own individual ways contribute to either the anthropological study of anthropology, or that take anthropology in different directions. This takes us to our next sections.

**Some Questions to Consider**

As you do the assigned readings for this seminar, and prepare your commentaries, please consider the following core questions and tasks that can be useful in structuring our investigations:

*Tasks for reviewing readings:*
  - Whenever funding or research institutions are named that are/were directly involved in the production of Anthropology, make a note and keep a running list.
• Take notes on the relationships between states and individual anthropologists.
• Note which prominent political actors have had an impact on the discipline.

Some of our basic questions (in no particular order):
• Who has been served the most by an institutionalized Anthropology in Western universities? In other words, who needs anthropologists the most?
• What are the material conditions that influence the production of Anthropology?
• What constitutes “an anthropological question”? In other words, which questions are asked, when and where, and who gets to ask them?
• Is Anthropology ever really separate from politics?
• When did ethnography become important for Anthropology, and why? Were Anthropologists the ones who conceived of, or innovated, ethnography?
• Does the practice of Anthropology help to reproduce centre-periphery relationships? Can it/has it changed such relations in terms of the production of academic knowledge?
• Is American Anthropology hegemonic, and if so, what accounts for this hegemony? What sustains it?
• From where does “world anthropologies” come from, and which institutions, individuals and funding agencies are prominent within it? Where were those individuals trained in Anthropology?
• With reference to the origins of institutional Anthropology and its relation to colonial regimes, what were the motivations and conditions of disciplinary knowledge production?
• To what extent was/is Anthropology a part of colonial governance and administration? Reversing the question: to what extent were colonial governance and administration implicated in the production of Anthropology?
• What are some of the specifically colonial foundations and origins of our practices? (That is, rooted in conditions of colonization and colonial governance.)
• Was Anthropology simply constrained by colonialism, or did colonialism lie much deeper within Anthropology?
• In which ways and to what extent is the production of knowledge in Anthropology shaped, or motivated, constrained, and determined by the structures of the university and the funding of research?
• To what extent does institutional Anthropology’s practice resemble or parallel the foreign policies of its home states?
• What constitutes “Canadian anthropology”?
• Was there a Canadian anthropological “tradition”? What has become of it?
• What are the future prospects for a Canadian anthropology?

Specifically with reference to the assigned readings for the Fall semester of 2017, with its
focus on Canadian Anthropology, please consider the following questions.

**On Canadian Anthropology:**
- Why do we have, or need, an institutionalized Anthropology in Canada?
- How are we to define “Canadian Anthropology”?
- When speaking of individuals, how do we know when one is a “Canadian anthropologist”?
- Is there a Canadian Anthropology or is it just Anthropology in Canada?
- If it is “Anthropology in Canada,” then from where has it been imported?
- If what we are doing in Canada is primarily US Anthropology, then what are the consequences of our importation?
- How have we implemented US Anthropology in Canada?
- Does challenging US hegemony imply nationalism and, if so, is that a problem?
- Is US imperialism active in academia?
- Is there a Canadian epistemology? How might answers to the latter question relate to answers to “What does it mean to be Canadian?”
- Is there a perceptible outline of a “Canadian school of thought” in Anthropology?
- Are there particular topics which appear to interest Canadian anthropologists, that is, where such topics are the repeated focus of investigation by many if not most anthropologists in Canada?
- If there is value in maintaining or developing a Canadian Anthropology, then what practical steps can we take?

**On the constitution of Anthropology:**
- What is an anthropological problem?
- What is an anthropological question?
- What makes a research method, or theory, anthropological?
- Is Anthropology akin to a “universal science” that is relevant regardless of national boundaries, and that transcends national origins?

**Our Work**

**DISCUSSION**

**Seminar participation**, which counts for 40% of the final grade, involves participants coming prepared to lead discussions (more on this below). Lectures by the seminar director, if any, will be informal and limited—the onus will thus be on the seminar participants to develop their individual agendas for discussion, to establish and raise what they think are the key
questions and problems, and to contribute their spoken commentaries on the assigned readings. The seminar director will also pose questions and raise issues that ensure that analyses and commentaries satisfy the objectives of the seminar.

**Discussants** will lead each session, and these will be assigned in advance (see the **scheduling sheets** on the course website, under “Syllabus” in the menu). This is valued as part of the seminar participation grade. Typically, when a student is assigned a specific reading, he/she will be responsible for leading discussion on that reading. This is done by preparing a brief, spoken review, highlighting the key arguments and concerns of the reading, and then adding preliminary thoughts and raising questions about the written work, addressing these to the rest of the class. The benefit of this approach is that it helps you to prepare for writing an essay, focusing your thoughts, and gathering insights from colleagues or comments you wish to address in the essay. Having done this, it becomes much easier to produce your written essay.

More than two absences from class, will result in a deduction of 25% from the final course grade. Absence from a session in which one is performing the role of discussant will also result in a 25% deduction from the final course grade. Behaviour that disrupts the seminar or is abusive toward others will result in a grade of zero for seminar participation.

**Readings**, as assigned, are clearly a core feature of this seminar, the basis for both our discussions in the seminar, and for the three comprehensive essays.
Three essays, together counting for 60% of the final grade, consist of analysis of groups of readings covered within a specific period. The seminar director will assign a core question in advance of the essay due date. Essays are to be submitted by email to maximilian.forte@concordia.ca, on the dates below, by 6:00pm (18h00). Acknowledgments of receipt will only be sent out no sooner than 12 hours after the deadline passes.

Essay due dates, broad topic areas, lengths, and grade proportions:

1. Thursday, October 5, 2017
   Imperialism and Anthropology
   [covering Sessions 1-4]
   Maximum length: 1,500 words. Worth 20% of the final grade.

2. Thursday, October 19, 2017
   Globalization and Academic Imperialism
   [covering Sessions 5 & 6]
   Maximum length: 750 words. Worth 10% of the final grade.

3. Thursday, November 30, 2017
   On Canadian Anthropology
   [covering Sessions 7-12]
   Maximum length: 2,500 words. Worth 30% of the final grade.

At least one week before each date, the seminar director will circulate the core question to be addressed in your essay. The main material to be addressed by each essay is indicated above. However, students may feel free to draw on works already covered in the seminar—if needed—of course this pertains only to the second and third essays. In addition, students may also feel free to draw on optional readings listed in the syllabus or in the course bibliography. Drawing on works studied in other classes should be avoided.
Grades

Grades for this course are assigned using the following scheme, adapted from the Graduate Calendar and in line with Departmental policy:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>LETTER &amp; GPA EQUIVALENT PERCENT</th>
<th>QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+ = 4.3</td>
<td>95-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A = 4.0</td>
<td>Excellent work of an advanced quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A- = 3.7</td>
<td>85-87.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+ = 3.3</td>
<td>Excellent work, with some room to improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+ = 3.3</td>
<td>80-84.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B = 3.0</td>
<td>Very good, demonstrates insight and ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B- = 2.7</td>
<td>73-79.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C = 2</td>
<td>Good, requires further improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail = 0</td>
<td>70-72.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>and Fail/Absent = 0 0-50</td>
<td>Meets minimum expectations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unacceptable quality/ non-submission/ late</td>
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<td>Absent/ non-submission/ late</td>
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Students should note and understand that grades in the “A” range are not guaranteed, and course work that does the bare minimum that is expected for a graduate course will receive a “C.”

Students can expect to receive a grade (marked out of 10 points), for each item that they post. That grade, along with any qualitative feedback, will be sent directly to the student by email, along with comments on the student’s role as discussant. Grades are final and are not subject to negotiation.
Required Readings

This year’s required text is available in the Concordia Bookstore, and it is also available on the Course Reserve for ANTH 630 in the Webster Library.

In addition to the required text, we will also be reading a number of journal articles (see the list below). We will be reading most of the listed journal articles before we get to our book.

Schedule of Meetings and Readings

Session 1: Introduction
Wednesday, September 6, 2017

- Overview of the seminar goals
- Introduction to Canadian Anthropology and the question of cultural/academic imperialism

Colonialism and Anthropology

Session 2: Imperialism—History, Practice, Analysis
Wednesday, September 13, 2017

Session 3: Imperialism and Anthropology, Part 1
Wednesday, September 20, 2017

Session 4: Imperialism and Anthropology, Part 2
Wednesday, September 27, 2017

Session 5: Globalization and Academic Imperialism—A Debate
Wednesday, October 4, 2017


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**Session 6: Globalization, Academic Imperialism, and Canadianization**

**Wednesday, October 11, 2017**


Session 7: Anthropology in Canada  
Wednesday, October 18, 2017


Optional/Recommended/Background:


Session 8: Canadian Anthropologists  
Wednesday, October 25, 2017


Optional/Recommended/Background:


Session 9: Placing Canadian Anthropology

Wednesday, November 1, 2017


Optional/Recommended/Background:

Session 10: The Institutions of Canadian Anthropology

Wednesday, November 8, 2017

Harrison & Regna Darnell, (Eds.), *Historicizing Canadian Anthropology* (pp. 157-172). Vancouver: UBC Press.


Optional/Recommended/Background:


**Session 11: The Contexts and Contours of Canadian Anthropology**

**Wednesday, November 15, 2017**


Optional/Recommended/Background:

Session 12: What is Canadian Anthropology?
Wednesday, November 22, 2017

Optional/Recommended/Background: