



**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

Te Kura Mahinga Tangata

Cultural Anthropology

ANTH 410

**Current Directions in
Anthropological Thought**

Course Outline

CRN 4915: 30 POINTS: TRIM 1&2/2013

Trimester dates: 4 March - 17 November 2013

Teaching dates: 4 March- 18 October 2013

Easter break: 28 March -3 April 2013

Mid-trimester break Trimester One: 22 April – 28 April 2013

Mid-Year break: 4 – 14 July 2013

Mid-trimester break Trimester Two: 26 August – 8 September 2013

COURSE COORDINATOR: Assoc. Prof Jeff Sissons

Room 1017, Murphy Building

Tel: (04) 463 6131

Email: jeff.sissons@vuw.ac.nz

SEMINAR: FRIDAY 11-2 MY 401

ANTH 410: Current Directions in Anthropological Thought

Tri 1+2, 2013

Course Coordinator Assoc. Prof Jeff Sissons
Murphy Building, Level 10, MY1017
Tel: 463 6131
Email: jeff.sissons@vuw.ac.nz

Office Hours By appointment

Seminar Friday 11pm – 2pm MY 401

Course Prescription

The current direction in anthropological thought that will be explored in this year's course is the recent rethinking of the relationship between society and material culture. Rather than understanding material culture as products of human agency and thought the new anthropology is interested in ways in which it constructs and constrains that agency and thought. Topics to be considered will include the agency of buildings, fetishism, power and political materiality.

Course Content

One of the most exciting developments in current anthropological thought is the rediscovery of the critical potential of its long engagement with radical cultural alterity (Hage 2012). In this course we explore the potential of animism and fetishism to inform critiques of capitalist modernity. While animism refers to a relationship between people and their 'natural' environment, attributing agency to the latter, fetishism refers to a relationship between people and their material creations, again attributing agency to the latter. Both animism and fetishism can be said to 'haunt' capitalist modernity, pointing towards an alter-modernity and potentially informing a politics of radical alterity.

Learning Objectives

Students in this course will:

1. Have developed a critical, anthropological understanding of the material dimension of social life by critically engaging with recent anthropological literature on animism and fetishism.
2. Be able to relate the anthropology of material culture to broader concerns within contemporary anthropology.

Communication of Additional information

Additional information will be provided during seminars.

Seminars

This course is structured around a set of readings that will be explored during weekly student-led seminars. In addition to your own reading and reflection, the weekly seminars are the fundamental form of learning. The class will meet weekly in the first and second trimesters. The set of readings will serve as the basis for seminar discussions in the first trimester. In the second trimester each student will present a seminar on a chosen topic related to or inspired by the first trimester readings.

Course Materials

There are no set text or student notes for this course. Copies of the set of readings for the first semester will be made available on close reserve in the library (books) or from the 9th floor office (articles).

Readings (in alphabetical order):

1. Animism and General.

Bird-David, N. 1999. 'Animism Revisited: Personhood, Environment and Relational Epistemology', *Current Anthropology* 40 (51): 67-91.

Hage, G. 2012. 'Critical Anthropological Thought and the Radical political Imaginary Today', *Critique of Anthropology*, 32(3): 285-308.

Hornborg, A. 1998. 'Ecological Embeddedness and Personhood: Have We Always Been Capitalists?' *Anthropology Today*, 14(2): 3-5.

Hornborg, A. 2006. 'Animism, Fetishism and Objectivism as Strategies for Knowing (or not Knowing) the World', *Ethnos* 71(1): 21-32.

Ingold, T. 2006. 'Rethinking the Animate, Re-Animating Thought', *Ethnos*, 71(1): 9-20.

Ingold, T. 2010. 'Bringing Things to Life: Creative Entanglements in a World of Materials.' Realities working paper.

Latour, B. 1992. 'Where are the Missing Masses? The Sociology of a Few Mundane Artifacts' PDF Google Scholar.

Latour, B. 1993. *We Have Never Been Modern*.

Latour, B. 2009. 'Perspectivism: 'Type' or 'Bomb'? *Anthropology Today*, 25(2): 1-2

Latour, B. 2010. 'An Attempt at a Compositionist Manifesto', *New Literary History*, 41(3): 47-490.

Sillar, B. 2009. 'The Social Agency of Things? Animism and Materiality in the Andes', *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*, 19(3): 367-377.

Vivieros de Castro, E. 1998. 'Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism', *JRAI* 4(3): 469-488.

2. Fetishism

Boer, R. 2010. 'The Hideous Pagan Idol: Marx, Fetishism and Graven Images', *Critique: J. of Socialist Theory*, 38(1): 93-116.

Ellen, R. 1988. 'Fetishism', *Man (NS)*, 23(2): 213-235.

Gell, A, 1998. *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*. Oxford, Clarendon.

Goldman, M. 2009. 'An Afro-Brazilian Theory of the Creative Process: An Essay in Anthropological Symmetrization', *Social Analysis* 53(2): 108-129.

Graeber, D. 2005. 'Fetishism as Social Creativity, or Fetishes are Gods in the Process of Construction', *Anthropological Theory*, 5(4): 407-438.

Hornborg, A. 2001. 'Symbolic Technologies: Machines and the Marxian Notion of Fetishism', *Anthropological Theory*, 1(4): 473-496

MacGaffey, W. 1994. 'Objects and the Idea of Fetish', *RES* 25: 123-131.

Marx, K. 'Section 4: 'The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret thereof' in *Capital*, Volume 1, Chapter 1.

Pietz, W. 1985-1988. 'The Problem of the Fetish' Parts I, II and III. *RES* 9, 13, 16.

Pool, R. 1990. 'Fetishism Deconstructed', *Etnofoor*, 3(1): 114-127.

Silva, S. 2013. 'Reification and Fetishism: Processes of Transformation', *Theory Culture and Society* 30(1): 79-98.

Expected Workload

In accordance with guidelines from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, the average workload per week is 10 hours for a 30-point course.

Class Representative

A class representative will be elected in the first class. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students. The Class representative's name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class.

Assessment

There will be two essays and a number of seminar presentations.

First Essay

Word count: 3,000 to 3,500 words

Due: 31 May

Grade Value: 50%

Second Essay

Word count: 5000 words

Due: 18 October

Grade value: 50%

The topic for the first essay will be handed out in class. The second essay will be on a topic agreed upon between the student and course coordinator.

Mandatory Course Requirements

To meet mandatory course requirements students must:

- attend and actively participate in all scheduled seminar discussions unless unable to attend through illness or an unforeseen emergency
- lead seminar discussions and present a topic seminar
- Submit essays by the due date

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism>

Course Withdrawal

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds>

Where to Find More Detailed Information

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study. Find out how academic progress is monitored and how enrolment can be restricted at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress.

Most statutes and policies are available at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy, except qualification statutes, which are available via the *Calendar* webpage at: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar (See Section C).

Other useful information for students may be found at the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic), at:

www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic.

Information for Māori Students: www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/slss/infofor/maoristudents or www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/tpa/index

Information for Pasifika students: www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/slss/infofor/pasifikastudents or www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/tpa/index

Other Contact Information

Head of School:	Dr Allison Kirkman, MY1013 Tel: 463 5676 E-m: allison.kirkman@vuw.ac.nz
International Student Liaison:	Dr Hal Levine MY1023 Tel: 463 6132 E-m: hal.levine@vuw.ac.nz
Maori and Pacific Student Liaison:	Dr Trevor Bradley, MY1101 Tel: 463 5432 E-m: trevor.bradley@vuw.ac.nz
Students with Disabilities Liaison:	Dr Russil Durrant, MY1120 Tel: 463 9980 E-m: russil.durrant@vuw.ac.nz
School Manager:	Carol Hogan, MY918 Tel: 463 6546 E-m: carol.hogan@vuw.ac.nz
School Administrators:	Suzanne Weaver, Alison Melling, Helen Beaglehole MY921, Tel: 463 5317; 463 5258; 463 5677 E-m: sacs@vuw.ac.nz

Office use only

Date Received:

(Date Stamp)

School of Social and Cultural Studies

Te Kura Mahinga Tangata

CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

CRIMINOLOGY

SOCIOLOGY & SOCIAL POLICY

Assignment Cover Sheet

(please write legibly)

Full Name: _____
(Last name) (First name)

Student ID: _____ Course (eg ANTH101): _____

Tutorial Day: _____ Tutorial Time: _____

Tutor (if applicable): _____

Assignment Due Date: _____

CERTIFICATION OF AUTHENTICITY

I certify that this paper submitted for assessment is the result of my own work, except where otherwise acknowledged

Signed: _____ Date: _____