



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES

CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

ANTH 410

Current Directions in Anthropological Thought

30 POINTS

TRIMESTERS 1 & 2, 2016

Key dates

Trimester dates: 29 February to 13 November 2016

Teaching dates: 29 February to 16 October 2016

Easter break: 24–30 March 2016

Mid-trimester break: 25 April to 1 May 2016

Mid-year break: 30 June to 8 July 2016

Mid-trimester break 2/3: 22 August to 4 September 2016

Study period: 17–20 October 2016

Examination/Assessment Period: 21 October to 12 November 2016

Note: students who enrol in courses with examinations must be able to attend an examination at the University at any time during the scheduled examination period.

Withdrawal dates: Refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds.

If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test in the last three weeks of teaching, or an examination, it may instead be possible to apply for an aegrotat (refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats).

Class times and locations

Seminars Friday 10:00 - 11:50am Murphy MY107

Names and contact details

Course Coordinator Associate Professor Jeff Sissons
MY1017, level 10 Murphy Building
E-mail: jeff.sissons@vuw.ac.nz
Tel: (04) 463 6131

Office Hours By appointment

Communication of additional information

Additional information will be communicated in lectures and on Blackboard. You will automatically receive all Blackboard announcements as an email sent to your @myvuw.ac.nz email address. If you are not going to use this Victoria email address set up for you, we strongly encourage you to set a forward from the Victoria email system to the email address you do use.

Prescription

This course examines contemporary issues in anthropological theory. Focusing on cutting-edge ideas in the discipline, it explores historical, ethnographic and philosophical contexts of their development.

Course content

Beyond the Ontological Turn

In retrospect, the recent ontological turn may well appear as a brief moment of idealist madness in anthropology – a more extreme version of cultural essentialism devoid of any elaborated theory of power. Nonetheless, its call to take seriously animism and the agency of things (fetishism) did challenge anthropologists to reflect more deeply upon their naturalist and humanist assumptions. In this course we consider the writings of proponents and critics of the ontological turn.

Course learning objectives (CLOs)

Students who pass this course should be able to:

1. Demonstrate a critical understanding of contemporary directions in anthropological thought that have been inspired by the writings of proponents and critics of the ontological turn.
2. Show that they have developed their own theoretical position vis-a-vis the ontological turn.

Teaching format

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, 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.

Mandatory course requirements

In addition to achieving an overall pass mark of 50%, students must:

- Attend all scheduled seminar discussions unless unable to attend through illness or an unforeseen emergency,
- lead seminar discussions and present a topic seminar to develop their competencies in both course learning objectives, and
- complete and submit essays by the due date to demonstrate their competence in both course learning objectives

Any student who is concerned that they have been (or might be) unable to meet any of the MCRs because of exceptional personal circumstances, should contact the course coordinator as soon as possible.

Workload

In accordance with guidelines from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, the average workload for a 30-point course per week is 10 hours, or 300 hours across two trimesters. As a guideline, this could break down as follows:

Attending Seminars	3 hours/week
Reading for Seminars	3 hours/week
Reading for and writing assignments	4 hours/week

Assessment

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

Assessment item	Word length	CLOs	% of final grade	Due date
Essay One	3,000-3,500	1, 2	50%	17 June 2016
Essay Two	4,000	1, 2	50%	14 October 2016

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

Please note: Marks for Honours level assignments and final course grades are not finalised until the completion of honours moderation. Honours grades gained in individual courses remain provisional until the overall final classification made at the Honours moderation meeting.

Submission and return of work

Assignments must be placed in the assignment box on level 9, Murphy Building, to the side of the lifts. The Assignment Box is cleared at 4pm on the due date, all work is date-stamped, its receipt recorded, and then handed on to the appropriate markers. Every effort will be made to return marked assignments within three weeks of the due date. Marked assignments not collected in lectures or tutorials can be collected at the Murphy 9th floor reception desk, between **11:00am and 3:00pm only from Monday to Friday**.

Extensions and penalties

Extensions

If you wish to seek an extension please contact the Course Coordinator **before** the due date of the assessment item. The granting of extensions is at the discretion of the Course Coordinator.

Penalties

Penalties will apply for lateness in presenting assignments. Unless an extension has been approved beforehand or a medical certificate is later presented 5% will be deducted from the marks for each day that the assignment is late (counting that piece of work as 100%).

Set texts

There is no set text or book of student notes for this course. All readings will be placed on Blackboard by the Course Coordinator.

Recommended reading

Bessire, and Bond, 2014. 'Ontological Anthropology and the Deferral of Critique', *American Ethnologist*, 41(3): 440-456

Kohn, E. 2015. 'Anthropology of Ontologies', *Annual Review of Anthropology* 44: 311-327

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

Class representative

The class representative provides a useful way to communicate feedback to the teaching staff during the course. A class representative will be selected at the first lecture of the course.

Student feedback

Student feedback from the last time this course was taught was overwhelmingly positive. There was a suggestion that more material on the history of anthropological ideas be included, and this has been incorporated in 2016.

Student feedback on University courses may be found at www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php

Other important information

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism
- Academic Progress: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin
- Grades: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades
- Special passes: refer to the *Assessment Handbook*, at www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy
- Student support: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support
- Students with disabilities: www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability
- Student Charter: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter
- Subject Librarians: <http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library-v2/find-your-subject-librarian>
- Terms and conditions: www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract
- Turnitin: www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin
- University structure: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure
- Victoria graduate profile: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile
- VUWSA: www.vuwsa.org.nz

School Contact Information

Head of School: Prof Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich, MY1019
Phone: 463 6528, Email: brigitte.bonisch-brednich@vuw.ac.nz

International Student Liaison: Dr Hal Levine, MY1023
Phone: 463 6132, Email: hal.levine@vuw.ac.nz

Māori and Pacific Student Liaison: Dr Trevor Bradley, MY1101
Phone: 463 5432, Email: trevor.bradley@vuw.ac.nz

Students with Disabilities Liaison: Dr Sarah Wright, MY1115
Phone: 463 5874, Email: sarah.wright@vuw.ac.nz

School Manager: La'Chelle Pretorius, MY918
Phone: 463 6546, Email: lachelle.pretorius@vuw.ac.nz

School Administrators: Suzanne Weaver, Heather Day, Gill Blomgren, MY921,
Phone: 463 5317; 463 5258; 463 5677, Email:
sacs@vuw.ac.nz

School of Social and Cultural Studies: www.victoria.ac.nz/sacs