

**Social Theory**  
**Anthropology 304 (CRN 60049)**  
**MWF 11:30 – 12:35 (Lincoln Hall 339)**

Dr. Charles Klein  
Phone: 503.725.3316

Office Hours: 141-P, Cramer Hall, WF 10:15 – 11:15  
Email: chklein@pdx.edu

**Course Description**

This course is an overview of social theory – that is, systemized ways of explaining the social world in which we live. Over the course of the quarter, we will investigate key theoretical concepts such as kinship, society, culture, class, agency, power, gender, sexuality, post-coloniality, social change, citizenship, neoliberalism, governmentality, networks and globalization. Our readings draw from theories developed over the past 160 years, including classics works from Marx, Weber and Durkheim, selections from the ethnographic tradition, and more recent developments in gender, queer, post-colonial, and globalization studies.

Because each theory comes from a particular place and time, we will center our explorations by asking what motivated theorists to ask certain questions and for what ends they intended their work. We will then consider a number of questions, including

- How do the theorists understand the structures and processes of “societies” and social life?
- How do they explain the relationship between individual agency and society?
- How do they believe social change occurs?
- How do they position themselves in their writing?
- Which topics do they consider most important, and which do they downplay or ignore?
- How does their work fit within the intellectual landscape of their times?

Finally – and perhaps most importantly – we will explore the ways in which each theory has been or might be applied in practice. Toward this end, you will do five written assignments and two take-home exams in which you apply the concepts we are studying to contemporary issues. By the end of the course, I hope you will have developed an intellectual toolkit that you can use in your own work and life.

**Course Learning Goals**

By the end of the term, students will have developed their ability to

- Assess the strengths, limitations, and historical contexts of different theoretical approaches to social theory and research
- Assess the ethical dimensions of social science research methods and scholarly production
- Communicate critically and persuasively on contemporary social issues using multiple written and visual communication genres, including developing unique arguments with thesis statements
- Read and comprehend difficult theoretical articles in the most efficient manner possible
- Engage in dialogue with their classmates on complex and contentious issues in a respectful manner
- Efficiently conduct online research to support analytical arguments

For more information, see [The Anthropology Department’s undergraduate learning objectives](#).

## Required Readings

All class materials are available on 2DL (see below). You may either read a digital version or print a copy – that choice is yours. **Beware – if you print them all out, you may go over your printing limit for the quarter.** But it's a lot less expensive than buying books!

## Class Requirements

Students taking this course Pass/No Pass are required to earn at least the equivalent of a 'C-' to pass the class. Students intended to use this course to satisfy the anthropology departmental major or minor requirements must take the class for a grade. Student performance will be evaluated through five written assignments (40%), in-class quizzes (40%), and two exams (each 20%).

## Accommodations

Access and Inclusion for Students with Disabilities. PSU values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to fostering mutual respect and full participation for all students. My goal is to create a learning environment that is equitable, useable, inclusive, and welcoming. If any aspects of instruction or course design result in barriers to your inclusion or learning, please notify me. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides reasonable accommodations for students who encounter barriers in the learning environment. If you have, or think you may have, a disability that may affect your work in this class and feel you need accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations. The DRC is located in 116 Smith Memorial Student Union, 503-725-4150, [drc@pdx.edu](mailto:drc@pdx.edu), <http://www.pdx.edu/drc>.

If you already have accommodations, please contact me to make sure that I have received a faculty notification letter and to discuss your accommodations. Students who need accommodations for tests and quizzes should schedule their tests to overlap with the time the class is taking the test.

Please be aware that the accessible tables or chairs in the room should remain available for students who find that standard classroom seating is not useable. For information about emergency preparedness, please go to the Fire and Life Safety webpage (<http://www.pdx.edu/environmental-health-safety/fire-and-life-safety>) for information.

## Title IX Reporting Obligations

Portland State is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of prohibited discrimination and sexual harassment (sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and gender or sex-based harassment and stalking). If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, know that help and support are available. PSU has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and on-housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more. Information about PSU's support services on campus, including confidential services and reporting options, can be found on PSU's Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response website at: <http://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault/get-help> or you may call a confidential IPV Advocate at 503-725-5672.

Please be aware that all PSU faculty members and instructors **are required to report** information of an incident that may constitute prohibited discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence. This means that if you tell me about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence that may have

violated university policy or student code of conduct, I have to share the information with my supervisor or the University's Title IX Coordinator or the Office of Affirmative Action. For more information about Title IX please complete the required student module [Creating a Safe Campus](#) in your D2L.

### **Policies**

It is normal to get sick, and flus and other illnesses spread through colleges and universities each year. If you feel ill (e.g. fever, sore throat, runny nose, headache, cough, aches), please stay home until you have been without fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. Please inform me of your illness. You will not be penalized for illness-related absences.

**Late exams and assignments will lose 5 points for each day past due. Requests for deadline extensions should be made in writing ahead of the due date. All work must be completed for students to receive a passing grade. Please keep a copy of all assignments and exams for your records.**

*Plagiarism* (intellectual theft) is a very serious academic offense. You are responsible for reading and understanding the department handout on plagiarism, which is available on D2L and at [www.anthropology.pdx.edu/docs/plagiarism.pdf](http://www.anthropology.pdx.edu/docs/plagiarism.pdf). Please ask me if you have questions about this information. Any assignment containing plagiarized material will receive a failing grade, and cases of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Student Life.

*Grading and Rewrites.* If you would like to have a grade reconsidered, you must submit a written re-evaluation request in an email, at least 24 hours after the graded assignment was returned. This email should state why you think your grade should be reconsidered. The first five assignments and Exam 1 may also be rewritten and resubmitted. Rewrites are due one week after the day the graded assignments/exams were returned. The new grade will be the higher of the two scores. Simply turning in a rewrite will not result in a higher score – be sure to respond to my comments and suggestions!

Students with a documented disability needing accommodations in the course should immediately inform me.

### **D2L (Desire to Learn)**

The course syllabus, assignments and exam questions will be available on D2L. All students can access D2L with their Odin account. Use your Odin username and password to login to D2L at <https://d2l.pdx.edu>. Please feel free to contact me if you encounter difficulties in accessing course materials on D2L.

### **Expectations**

You are responsible for reading the assigned materials before class and coming ready to discuss. **I repeat, you are expected to come to class having done the readings.** And yes, even on those days when assignments are due.

I strongly advise taking a look at the terms and questions I have provided for each reading – they will be a starting point for our classroom discussions. You will also be quizzed on the readings – so yet another incentive to come to class prepared. **You might even have a quiz the day an assignment is due!**

I know there are a lot of readings. So plan ahead and read strategically. Focus on key concepts and arguments, and don't get bogged in all the details unless they interest you.

Our in-class activities will include interactive large group discussions, small group discussions, and assorted exercises/activities, and I expect everyone to participate in these activities. **Yes, everyone.** This doesn't just mean talking, but also active listening. If you are on the shy side, push yourself to talk; if you

are on the talky side, consciously step back and let your classmates shine. Be prepared for me to call on you or ask you to let one of your classmates speak. **And don't rely on your classmates do the reading and thinking for you – this isn't fair to them and won't serve you well in the long run.**

For all assignments and exams, follow the formatting, citation, and reference guidelines posted on 2DL.

## **Course Requirements**

### Assignments (40%)

There will be five required assignments: (1) kinship charts and one-page, single-spaced analysis; (2) functional analysis (3 pages double-spaced), (3) talk-show presentation (one page, single-spaced); (4) grant application (one page, single-spaced), and (5) story in graphic novel format (18-24 frames). Instructions and grading matrices for each assignment are available on D2L. Assignments will be evaluated on a 0-100 point scale.

### Quizzes (20%)

We will have eight pop quizzes over the course of quarter. Each quiz is worth 4 points, and you will be able to drop your two lowest scores. **There are no make-ups for missed quizzes.** If for some reason you are not in class the day of a quiz and you want to make up the points, you can do an extra credit assignment that will not count in your limit of five extra credit points (see below).

### Exam 1 (20%)

For your first exam you will write 3 pages, double-spaced pages in 11 or 12 font with 1" margins. The exam is due on Wednesday, May 2nd **at the beginning of class.** Only hard copies will be accepted. The exam will be evaluated on a 0-100 scale using a predefined grading matrix.

### Exam 2 (20%)

Same format as Exam 1, and due on Wednesday, June 13 at 12 noon in the Anthropology Department office (141 Cramer Hall)

### Extra Credit

Extra credit can be earned in two ways.

- (1) Attend pre-approved lectures, events or service projects and write a 1 page, single-spaced reflection paper relating the event to theoretical concepts covered in class.
- (2) Read an additional chapter or another article by one of the theorists in our syllabus and write a 1 page, single-spaced reflection on what you learned.

Each extra credit report may earn up to 1 point. You can do up to 5 extra credit papers, potentially earning a maximum of 5 extra credit points or 5% of the course grade.

## **Course Outline**

### **Part 1. Theory—What's the Point?**

Mon, April 2: Course Overview

Wed, April 4: Introduction to Social Theory 1

Nancy Scheper-Hughes

1993

Introduction: Tropical Sadness. Death without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil. Pp. 1-30. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Fri, April 6: Introduction to Social Theory II

Boas, Franz

1887 [1974] A Year among the Eskimos and The Principals of Ethnological Classification. In G. Stocking, ed., The Shaping of American Anthropology 1883-1911: A Franz Boas Reader. Pp. 44-55; 61-67. New York: Basic Books.

Durkheim, Emile

1897 Preface. Anomic Suicide: Parts I-III. Suicide. Pp. 35-39; 241-258.

## **Part 2. Kinship and “The Family”**

Mon, April 9: Kinship Theory

Stone, Linda

1997 Gender, Reproduction, and Kinship. Kinship and Gender: An Introduction. Pp. 1-19. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

Wed, April 11: Kinship – Ethnographic Examples

Video: Taboo: Excerpts from Blood Bonds (2004, 47 minutes)

Friday, April 13: The Family and the State

Rouse, Carolyn

2004 "If she's a vegetable, we'll be her garden": Embodiment, transcendence, and citations of competing cultural metaphors in the case of a dying child. *American Ethnologist*, 31(4), 514-529.

## **Part 3. Systems in Motion (Functionalism, Structural-Functionalism and Ecological Approaches)**

Mon, April 16: Putting the Pieces Together, Take 1

Malinowski, Bronislaw

1922 Introduction: The Subject, Method and Scope of This Inquiry. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. Pp. 1-25; 81-99. New York: E.P. Dutton & Co: Prospect Heights.

### **Assignment # 1 Due**

Wed, April 18: Putting the Pieces Together, Take 2

Evans-Pritchard, E.E.

1940 Introduction and Time and Space: I-III. *The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People*. Pp. 1-15, 94-117. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Fri, April 20: Putting the Pieces Together, Take 3

Rappaport, Roy A.

2008 [1967] Ritual Regulation of Environmental Relations among a New Guinea People. *Environmental Anthropology: A Historical Reader*. M.R. Dove and C. Carpenter (eds). Pp. 254-264. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

## **Part 4. Work, Class and the Economy**

Mon, April 23: It's the Economy, Stupid?

Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels

1972 [1848] *Manifesto of the Communist Party, I and II*. E. Kamenka, ed. The Portable Karl Marx, Pp. 203-228. New York and London: Penguin Books.

### **Assignment #2 Due**

Wed, April 25: Capitalism Within

Weber, Max

2002 [1904-5] Asceticism and the Spirit of Capitalism. The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. Pp. 102-125. Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Co.

Fri, April 27: Hegemony and Finance Capitalism

Ho, Karen

2015 Finance. In *A Companion to Moral Anthropology*, Didier Fassin, 413-431. Oxford: Willey Blackwell.

Mon, April 30: Review for Exam 1

**Part 5. On The Edge**

Wed, May 2: Thinking about Social Change

Video: Stay Woke: The Black Lives Matter Movement

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eloYtKOqxeU&t=24s> Black Lives Matter

**Exam 1 due beginning of class**

Fri, May 4: Representation and Storytelling

Behar, Ruth

2003 Ethnography and the Book that was Lost. *Ethnography* 4(1): 15–39.

bell hooks video

**Part 6. Positions of Power I**

Mon, May 7: Reproducing Inequality

Bourgois, Philippe

2003 [1995] School Days – Learning to Be a Better Criminal. In *Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Pp. 174-205. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bourgois video

Wed, May 9: Discourse, Power & The Body

Foucault, Michel

1977 The Body of the Condemned. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Pp. 3-31.

**Part 7. Positions of Power II**

Fri, May 11: Situated Knowledge

Haraway, Donna

1991 Situated Knowledge: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspectives. Pp. 183-201. *Simians, Cyborbs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge Press.

Mon, May 14: Structural Violence

Farmer, Paul

2004 Anthropology of Structural Violence and Comments. *Current Anthropology*, 45(3): 305-325.

Wed, May 16: Queer Theories

Mitchell, Gregory C.

2015. "Godfather Gringos: Sexual Tourism, Queer Kinship, and Families of the Future." in *Tourist Attractions: Performing Race and Masculinity in Brazil's Sexual Economy*. Pp. 119-114. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Butler and Bornstein videos

**Assignment #3 Due**

**Positions of Power III**

Fri, May 18: Orientalism

Said, Edward

1978. Latent and Manifest Orientalism. *Orientalism*. Pp. 201-225.

Said video

Mon, May 21: Post-Colonial Ethnography

Comaroff, Jean and John

2003 Ethnography on an Awkward Scale: Postcolonial Anthropology and the Violence of Abstraction. *Ethnography* 4(2):147-179.

**Part 9. Globalization, Neoliberalism and Citizenship in the Information Age**

Wed, May 23: Neoliberalism

Ong, Aihwa

2007 Neoliberalism as a mobile technology. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 32(1): 3-8.

Ferguson, James

2010 The Uses of Neoliberalism. *Antipode*, 41:166-184.

Fri, May 25: Consumers in a Global Economy

Han, Clara

2011 Symptoms of Another Life: Time, Possibility, and Domestic Relations in Chile's Credit Economy. *Cultural Anthropology*, 26 (1): 7-32.

**Mon, May 28: Holiday**

Wed, May 30: Governmentality

Ferguson, James and Akhil Gupta

2001 Spatializing States: Toward an Ethnography of Neoliberal Governmentality. *American Ethnologist* 29(4):981-1002.

Fri, June 1: Globalization

**Assignment #4 Due**

Appadurai, Arjun

1991 Global Ethnospaces: Notes and Queries for a Transnational Anthropology. *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*

(Richard Fox, ed). Pp. 191-210. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.

**Part 10. Thinking About Anthropology Today**

Mon, June 4:

Biehl, João and Peter Locke

2017 Introduction: Ethnographic Sensorium. In *Unfinished: The Anthropology of Becoming*. Durham & London: Duke University Press. Pp. 1-38.

Tsing, Anna

2015 Preface (ix-xv) and Introduction, 1-14. In *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*. Princeton, Princeton University Press.

Wed, June 6: Graphic Novel (Assignment 5) Work Day

Fri, June 8: Review or Reading Day

**Assignment #5 Due**

**Finals Week: Wednesday, June 13**

**Exam 2 Due on Wednesday, June 13 at Noon, 141 Cramer Hall**



### Course Timeline

Week	Day	Date	Month	Readings to be discussed, assignments due
<b>1</b>	M	2	April	Syllabus, introductions, theory overview, D2L
	W	4	April	Read: Scheper-Hughes
	F	6	April	Read: Boas, Durkheim
<b>2</b>	M	9	April	Read: Stone
	W	11	April	Video: Blood Bonds
	F	13	April	Read: Rouse
<b>3</b>	M	16	April	Read: Malinowski, <b>Assignment #1</b>
	W	18	April	Read: Evans-Pritchard
	F	20	April	Read: Rappaport
<b>4</b>	M	23	April	Read: Marx, <b>Assignment #2</b>
	W	25	April	Read: Weber
	F	27	April	Read: Ho
<b>5</b>	M	30	April	No readings. Exam 1 Review
	W	2	May	<b>Exam 1</b> ; Video: Stay Woke – Black Lives Matter
	F	4	May	Read: Behar; bell hooks video
<b>6</b>	M	7	May	Read: Bourgeois; Bourgeois video
	W	9	May	Read: Foucault
	F	11	May	Read: Haraway
<b>7</b>	M	14	May	Read: Farmer
	W	16	May	Read: Mitchell; Butler & Bornstein videos <b>Assignment #3</b>
	F	18	May	Read: Said; Said video
<b>8</b>	M	21	May	Read: Comaroff & Comaroff
	W	23	May	Read: Ong & Ferguson
	F	25	May	Read: Han
<b>9</b>	M	28	May	<b>MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY</b>
	W	30	May	Read: Ferguson & Gupta; Neumann video
	F	1	June	Read: Appadurai; Nair video; <b>Assignment #4</b>
<b>10</b>	M	4	June	Read: Biehl & Locke; Tsing
	W	6	June	Graphic Novel Work Day
	F	8	June	<b>Assignment #5; Review or Reading Day</b>
<b>11</b>	W	13	June	<b>Exam 2, Noon</b> Anthropology Department, 141 Cramer Hall