

**ANG 6930 ANTHROPOLOGY OF HISTORY:  
HISTORICITIES AND HISTORICAL PROCESSES**

**Prof. Susan D. Gillespie**

Class Meets: Wednesday 9:00-11:30am in CBD 234

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Office Hours: Tu, Thurs 9-10 am, Wed. 1-2 pm, and by appt.

Spring 2011 (Sect. 9648)

3 Credits

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This reading-intensive seminar investigates twinned phenomena that are emerging from the “historical turn” in anthropology: greater attention to pre-modern and non-Western “historicities” and to historical processes. Historicities, also referred to as “modes of historical (or social) consciousness,” “ethno-ethnohistories,” and “ideologies of history,” are treated here as social (and hence, material, spatial, and temporal) processes by which persons draw the past into the present as a means of social reproduction. They involve the “continuous, creative bringing into being and crafting of the past in the present and of the present in respect to the past” (Lambek 2002:17), requiring “the ongoing social production of accounts of pasts and futures” (Hirsch and Stewart 2005:262). Multiple media serve as performative vehicles of historicity, including narratives, rituals, objects, images, and landscapes.

Historicities are inherently cultural and historical, and therefore vary cross-culturally and over time. They become especially salient and prone to change (or resistance to change) in the contexts of culture contact, natural disasters, and other contingent events that challenge conventional understandings. Most such studies are undertaken today in the contexts of Euro-American colonization and contemporary globalization, but historians and archaeologists are also investigating historicities in the past.

Because historicities emerge as processes in time, they are part of historical processes. Although the rubric “historical processes” is large and encompasses many different approaches, in this class we will focus on historical processes that are isomorphic with historicities; that is, social practices that relate the immediate present to the institutionalized past, with historical consequences. This has been modeled in both history and social science as the dialectical interaction of short-term event with long-term structure, and is the particular focus of theories of practice. Historical processes co-implicate structure, event, agency, sociality, subjectivity, temporality, spatiality, materiality, and contingency.

Examination of case studies (ethnography, historical ethnography, and archaeology), primarily from Oceania, Latin America, and Africa, illuminates this cross-cultural and temporal variation. Specific interpretive approaches to “structure” and “event” and to methods of narrative analysis will be introduced to elucidate how historicities and historical processes are concretized in various media.

**COURSE DESIGN:** This course is designed for graduate students in Anthropology, History, and related fields, including area studies, with a strong interest in pre-modern or non-western historical traditions—how they are produced, how they have been challenged and transformed, how they function, what media are employed in producing and relating them, and most importantly, how they are best approached and analyzed in the pursuit of anthropological goals.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES AND STUDENT GOALS:** Students should become well grounded in anthropological debates and approaches concerning the variant ways historicities have developed and have been expressed in pre-modern and non-Western societies, how they play a role in historical processes, how they provide insights into the multiple “durations” of history (the dialectic of long-term structure and short-term event), methods of narrative analysis to dissect the variations in historicities, the variety of cultural media that promulgate and concretize historicities and thus play a role in historical processes, and the engagement of agency and knowledge in the production of historicities. Students should be able to complete an original analysis on this topic related to their own research area.

**COURSE READINGS:** Readings are drawn from textbooks, book chapters, and journal articles. There are two required textbooks available for purchase at bookstores and on reserve in the library:

William H. Sewell (2005) *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation*  
Marshall Sahlins (1985) *Islands of History*

The many other assigned readings will be posted as pdf files on the e-learning site for this course (Sakai). The weekly reading assignments with a guide to what is important are also posted on the e-learning site.

**COURSE FORMAT:** This seminar combines brief introductory lectures with extensive class discussions of the readings. Because most of the readings are available as pdfs, notebook computers or similar reading devices may be used in the classroom as long as they are used *only* for the purpose of consulting the already-completed reading assignments and are not disruptive to the seminar discussion.

**CLASS PARTICIPATION:** All students are expected to intelligently discuss all the readings each week. Readings must be completed before class meets so that you have thought about and are prepared to discuss them. Notes must be taken on each reading and brought to class. In addition, *starting with the second week of class*, each student is expected to post (at least) **four specific questions** drawn from at least four different readings. They are to be posted on the e-learning discussion page for that week by **5:00 pm on Tuesday night before class**. You must read what is already posted there before uploading your questions to avoid duplication. If someone has already taken your question, compose a different one. You are expected to read *all* postings before class starts on Wednesday, and if you wish, respond to them. Discussion leaders are expected to use those questions, as well as their own, to direct discussion.

**Discussion Leaders:** Starting week 3, individual students will be assigned to lead the discussion of a specific reading for most of the following weeks. Half of the class will be given these assignments per week, so each student will be called upon for this role every other class meeting.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:** Because the course is designed entirely around in-class discussions of the readings, missing class will prove detrimental to your understanding of that material as well as to the other students' understandings, because your contribution will be lost. More than one absence and frequent tardiness will be noted and result in a drop in the final letter grade. Failure to be prepared for the discussion or to participate in discussion is not much different from being absent.

**RESEARCH PAPER:** Each student will pursue an *original* analysis of a body of data using one or more of the discussed theoretical and methodological perspectives. Paper topics must be pre-approved by mid-semester. A professional quality powerpoint oral presentation (15-20 minutes) is required, together with the final paper. The paper should be in the format of a publishable article (c. 8000 words of text) for a journal such as *American Anthropologist* or a grant submission (e.g., to NSF, NEH) for students who do not have sufficient data to write a definitive analysis. The expectation is that the paper will be the basis of a MA thesis or dissertation, a conference presentation, or a published article.

**FINAL GRADE:** Class participation (individual participation in general discussion, discussion leader role every other week, and posting of discussion questions each week) constitutes 50% of the grade (100 out of 200 points). The research paper (40%) plus the oral presentation (10%) make up the other 50% (100 points). If you don't participate in class discussion, you cannot earn higher than a B. Any grade adjustments must be made by the due date of the final paper; the gradebook is "closed" at that time.

Letter grades are assigned at the end of the semester, based on a total of 200 points; see the grading scale on the next page. See University policy: <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
180-200	176-179	170-175	160-169	156-159	150-155	140-149	136-139	130-135	120-129	116-119	115 or lower
4.00	3.67	3.33	3.00	2.67	2.33	2.00	1.67	1.33	1.00	.67	0.00

Federal privacy regulations prohibit the release of scores and grades over the phone or by email.

***Please fill out and turn in the survey form (on E-Learning) by the second week of class.***

**COPYRIGHT INFORMATION:** The contents of the syllabus, readings guides, and unpublished materials for this course are copyrighted, intended for the private use of students registered in ANG 6930 (Section 9648). They may not legally be reproduced or used for other purposes.

**ACCEPTANCE OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** By remaining registered in this class, you agree to accept the course requirements and expectations as stated in this syllabus. These are in addition to other general University requirements and codes of conduct as stated in official documents.

The following information is included to conform with University Policy:

1) Students seeking modification of due dates for assignments and exams for religious reasons (e.g., holiday observance) should feel free to contact the Professor and request this modification. 2) Students seeking any classroom accommodation to facilitate their education must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the Professor when requesting accommodation. 3) The University reminds every student of the implied pledge of Academic Honesty: on any work submitted for credit the student has neither received nor given unauthorized aid. This refers to cheating and plagiarism. Students should consult the Student Guide at [www.dso.ufl.edu/stg/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/stg/) for information.

**SCHEDULE OF TOPICS**  
(Tentative - Subject to Change)

See the e-learning site weekly reading assignments

DATE	TOPIC
Jan. 5	1. Anthropology and History
Jan. 12	2. Time and Temporality
Jan. 19	3. Historicities, Ethno-ethnohistories, Modes of Historical Consciousness, Part I
Jan. 26	4. Historicities, Part II (case studies)
Feb. 2	5. Structure and Structuralism
Feb. 9	6. Structure and Event: Historical Processes
Feb. 16	7. Myth and History as Modes of Historical Consciousness
Feb. 23	8. History in Signs, Objects, Landscapes <i>deadline to approve research paper topic</i>
Mar. 2	9. Historicity in Narratives
Mar. 9	<i>spring break</i>
Mar. 16	10. Syntagmatic/Paradigmatic Analysis
Mar. 23	11. Narrative Analysis Case Study
Mar. 30	no class: individual meetings with instructor
Apr. 6	no class: individual meetings with instructor
Apr. 13	presentations
Apr. 20	presentations
Apr. 27	final paper due/gradebook is closed