**Department of Anthropology                        Anthropology 504**

**Binghamton University-SUNY                      Current Issues and Debates in Anthropology**

**SPRING 2014                                                                                                 T & TH@ 4:25-6:25**

**Professors Randy McGuire and Josh Reno**

**Room: Science 1, Room 143**

**I. Instructors and Contact Information:**

Randy McGuire Josh Reno

Science 1, Rm. 228, 777-2100 Science 1, Rm. 237

Office hours: T 1:15-2:15, W 10-11 Office hours: W 10-12

Or by appointment     Or by appointment

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**II. Course Description:**

Current Issues and Debates in Anthropology focuses on contemporary issues in anthropology and aims to bridge and solidify the theoretical base in anthropological theory laid in ANTH 501. We have structured the course readings and topical foci to both present key theoretical exchanges and the developments of the past twenty years as well as to examine current issues and debates in anthropology. Throughout the semester we will examine how anthropologists have reframed the projects of our discipline by a critical rethinking of anthropology's relationship to its objects of research as well as by changing the objects of research. We will explore how shifting paradigms reshape the questions anthropologists define as pressing, as well as anthropology's core concepts, methodologies, and the relationships between researcher and researched. The course will cover a broad field of topics that are relevant to a four-field anthropology.  The course will not, however address subfield-specific themes but rather reflect on general issues within anthropology as a whole. We will ask the question does anthropology continue to bring a distinctive perspective to the study of the human condition and, if so, with what value and implications?

The class meets for two, 2-hour sessions per week.  One of the professors will present an introductory lecture at the Tuesday meeting. On Thursdays, it will be task of the students to discuss this same topic using the readings listed in the syllabus for that week. We expect that each of you will come to class having critically reflected upon the week's readings and prepared to share your understandings and engage with those of your classmates and professors. This course requires wakeful reading and reflection prior to class, and engaged participation once there. We expect students to attend all class meetings.

**III. Learning Objectives**

At the end of this course, you should have a sense of where contemporary four-field anthropology is heading at the moment, and you should be able to relate this knowledge to the field’s history (i.e. the subjects treated in ANTH 501).  The course will aid you in developing a professional level proficiency in critical and constructive thought and to communicate complex ideas in writing.  This course will help you to understand anthropological concepts at a professional level, and to be able to apply those in your own research. Students who complete this course will be able to:

* Identify theoretical positions and explain how they are supported in anthropological articles
* Compare and contrast different theoretical approaches to anthropology
* Define key anthropological concepts and apply them between and within cultures
* Use basic anthropological concepts to frame discussions and solve problems
* Discuss and critically assess the current state of anthropology as a discipline
* Communicate anthropological concepts in their writing
* Define and defend a thesis on the future of a four fields anthropology

**IV. Course texts:**

There are three books that you will read in their entirety for this course.  These copies will be available in the bookstore and at Mando Books.  All readings will be on reserve either in the AGO library on the second floor of Science 1 Bldg. (generally papers) or in the Library Reserve Room on the first floor of the Tower Bldg (generally books). Or they may be posted on Blackboard as pdf files. See the Course Readings section below.

Required:

* Graeber, David. 2004. *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*. Prickly Paradigm Press: Chicago.
* Fowles, Severin. 2013. *An Archaeology of Doings: Secularism and the Study of Pueblo Religion.* SAR Press: Santa Fe.
* Dural, Sadrettin, 2007.  *Protecting Çatalhöyük: Memoir of an Archaeological Site Guard.* Left Coast Press, Walnut Creek, CA
* Pedersen, David. 2013. *American Values: Migrants, Money, and Meaning in El Salvador and the United States.* University of Chicago Press: London and Chicago.

**NB.** It is absolutely mandatory to complete the assigned reading in preparation for the class for which it is assigned. Failure to do the readings will seriously compromise your ability to follow classes, much less participate in them. Moreover, it will deprive you of the pleasure of mastery that being a well-informed, thoughtful member of the seminar can generate.

**V. Assessment:**

Requirements for the course are the following:

1.     **Annotations (40%)**: Over the semester you need to write annotations (see below) of 9 the assigned readings. We will only count 8 toward the final grade, eliminating the lowest grade. Each annotation (minus the eliminated 9th) will contribute 5% for a total of 40% toward the final grade. At least 1 of these annotations must be a book length text. Each annotation must be submitted at the class for which the reading is assigned. The very short excerpts (anything less than 10 pages) cannot be used for these annotations. [We will workshop a trial annotation in our second meeting that won’t be graded and that we will go over in class]

**2a.**  **Informed Participation (10%):**Your preparation for class is essential, as is your active engagement in the class. Your informed participation will be assessed on the extent to which your participation gives evidence of your having completed the readings and taken the time to think about them with care, generating insightful questions and observations.

**2b. Discussion Board (5%):** Every week, every student will be expected to post a minimum of two comments/questions about the assigned reading twenty-four hours before the Thursday class. These need to be posted on Blackboard. Students are expected to read each others comments and are encouraged to refer to them during the course of Thursday’s seminar.

**3.**     **Final (20%):**A take-home final examination, with questions given in advance (2 questions, 4-5 double-spaced pages each question; to be assessed at 10% for each question for a total of 20% of the final grade).

**4.**     **Advanced Seminar Proposal (25%):**Advanced seminars are intensive symposia that bring together 10 to 12 participants for 5 to 7 days to focus on a specific issue or topic.  The Wenner-Gren Foundation and the School for Advanced Research offer the most well known advanced seminars in anthropology.  You will prepare a proposal for an advanced seminar on one of the topics that we cover this term.

**Annotation Template:** Each annotation should be 3-4 double-spaced pages in length.

1.     What three quotes capture the critical import of the text?

2.     What is the main argument of the text?

3.     Describe at least three ways that the main argument is supported.

4.     Describe the main literatures that the text draws on and contributes to.

5.     Describe at least three of the text’s themes or questions that are of significance to our understanding of contemporary anthropology.

6.     Explain how the book or essay could inform your research (as you imagine it), and/or how it shifts your understanding of the analytic possibilities of the discipline.

**VI. Academic Honesty and Professional Expectations**

All students are expected to comply with the Binghamton University Academic Honesty Code.  (http://www2.binghamton.edu/grad-school/faculty-and-staff/policy/academic-honesty-policy.html).  If you violate this code you will receive an F in the course and be subject to disciplinary actions as provided in the code and implemented in the Graduate School.  We expect all students to comport themselves in a professional manner in this class and exhibit respect for both the instructors and their fellow students at all times.  During class students are not allowed to use cell phones or other personal electronic devices in any way.  In class, students may take notes on a portable computer but no other use of a portable computer is allowed.

**Course Schedule: Required Readings, Lecture Schedule, and Lecture and Discussion Themes:**

**JANUARY**

**Week 1: 28.  The most scientific of the humanities & the most humanist of the sciences. [McGuire & Reno]**

Read: Vital Topics Forum: What is Science in Anthropology? *American Anthropologist.* 114(4):593-597 (2012).

**30.  The Status of Anthropology. [McGuire & Reno]**

Read: Goodman (2013), Black (2013), Kahn (2013), Gomberg-Muñoz (2013), Muehlebach (2013), Van Arsdale (2013) [Knauft (2006), “Anthropology in the Middle”.  Prepare a trial annotation of this article to workshop in class.]

                                                                      **FEBRUARY**

**Week 2: 4 & 6.**  **Epistemological Dilemmas. [Reno]**

Read: Stoler (2002), Keane (2003), Graeber (2006), Congram and Steadman (2008), Dawdy (2010)

**Week 3: 11 & 13.  Reflexivity and Positionality. [McGuire]**

Read: Dural (2007 *Protecting Çatalhöyük*), Salzman (2002), Jacobs-Huey (2002)

**Week 4: 18 & 20**. **Culture, Cultural Relativism, and Human Rights [McGuire]**

Read: Leatherman and Goodman (2005), Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson (2006), Cowan (2006), Goodale (2006), Brown (2008), Shell-Duncan (2008), AAA Statement on Human Rights 1947, AAA Statement on Human Rights 1999, UN Declaration of Human Rights.

**Week 5: 25 & 287 Activism [McGuire]**

Read: *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*, McGuire (2013), De León (2012), Vogt (2013)

**MARCH**

**Week 6: 4 & 6.  Religion and Secularism [Reno]**

Read:  *An Archaeology of Doings*

**Week 7: 11 & 13.  Race [McGuire]**

Read: Reardon & TallBear (2012), Hartigan (2013), Gravelee (2013), Palmié (2007), Silverstein (2007), AAA Race Project <http://www.aaanet.org/resources/A-Public-Education-Program.cfm>

**Week 8: 18 & 20.  Gender, Reproductive Technologies and the New Kinship [Reno]**

Read: Helmreich (2003), Franklin (2005), Carsten (2007), Feeley-Harnik (2007), Tsing (2012)

**Week 9: 25 & 27**. **Evolution [Rolf Quam]**

Read: Boesch (2003), Laland and Brown (2006), Mercader et al (2007), Hill et al (2011), Marks (2003)

Tattersall?

**APRIL**

**Week 10: 1 & 3. Meaning, Matter and Ontology [Reno]**

Read: Miller (2008), Ingold (2011), Urban (2011), Reno (2012), Viveiros de Castro (2012)

**Week 11: 8 & 10. Histories and Political Economy [McGuire]**

Read: Morehart (2012), Lancaster (2003 Ch 23), Durrenberger (2007), Voss (2007), Constable (2009), González-Ruibal (2008)

**PASSOVER, EASTER RECESS – April 12 to APRIL 21**

**Week 12: 22 & 24.  Globalization and Transnationalism [Reno]**

 Read: *American Values*

**Week 13: 4/29 & 5/1.  Indigeneity [McGuire]**

Read: Kuper (2003), Atalay (2007), Murray (2011), Pálsson (2008), Clifford 2011, Stern 2011, UN Declaration of Ingenious Rights

**4/29  ADVANCED SEMINAR PROPOSAL DUE**

**MAY**

**Week 14:** **6 & 8.** **Contemporary Practice [Reno and McGuire]**

Read: Kelty, Fischer, et al (2008),  Rabinow and Marcus (2008),  Sandlin & Bey (2007), Lambert (2009), Brondo and Bennett (2012)

**14        TAKE-HOME FINAL DUE**