Department of Anthropology and Archaeology

Anthropology 490: Anthropological Theory

“I chose anthropology [as a major], since it offered the greatest opportunity to write high-minded balderdash.”
— Kurt Vonnegut

Class time and location:
Lectures: Asynchronous, Web-based course
Section A: Mondays, 3pm – 3:45pm, Synchronous Discussion
Section B: Mondays, 4pm – 4:45pm, Synchronous Discussion
Section C: Mondays, 5pm – 5:45pm, Synchronous Discussion

Instructor: Dr. Sabrina Perić
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Teaching Assistant: Matt Longstaffe, PhD Candidate
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Office hours:
TBA

Prerequisite: ANTH 203

Land Acknowledgement:
Oki, Aba-wath-tech, Tansi, Dadanast’ada, Hello! My name is Sabrina Perić, and I am a settler, living as an uninvited guest in beautiful Treaty 7. Even though we will be meeting remotely via Zoom for this fall semester, I want to acknowledge that the University of Calgary is located on the traditional territory of the people of Treaty 7. This includes the Niitsitapi (including the Siksika, Piikani and Kainai First Nations), the Tsuut’ina First Nation, and the Iyethka Nakoda (which includes the Wesley, Bearspaw and Chiniki First Nations). Calgary is situated on the confluence of the Bow and Elbow rivers, the Niitsitapi name for this place is Mohkinstsis, the Iyethka call it Wicspa Oyade, and the Tsuut’ina call this area Gutsistisi. Calgary is also home to the Metis Nation of Alberta, Region 3. I do most of my research north of 60, on the traditional territories of the Kluane First Nation and the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, along the river named Ä’ây Chù (Slims River), and the shores of the great Łù’àn Män (Kluane Lake), in the southwest Yukon. It is important for me to trace out these ties – because without them we would not be here. Universities and scholars have benefited greatly from the dispossession of Indigenous people. Territorial acknowledgement is therefore very important for me – it is not only about my accountability as a settler to ongoing processes of colonialism, but as a member of a large immigrant family. I do not want to simply take for granted where I live and where I work. Nor do I want colonial processes to continue with immigrants as key actors – as they have in the past. So I begin today by thanking the people on whose territories I continue to live and work as an uninvited guest in the sincere hope that we can go forward together in a good way: Nitsiniyi’l’aki, Isniyès, Kinanâskomitin, Siyisgaas, Shawnithan and Gunalcheesh!

Statement of Inclusion:
The topics in this class can sometimes be difficult topics – we talk about race, gender, class, our place in society, and the painful histories and ideas that anthropology has held. What makes this class work, and what makes it a place to learn together, is respect and empathy. In this class, all people, with all opinions and beliefs, are welcome. Doing anthropology today means both celebrating our diversity, but also recognizing that our different pathways are what contribute most to new ideas. Speak openly, show respect, share, be bold and be yourself.
Course Description and Objectives:
Broadly speaking, anthropology is a holistic study of all possible human lifeways. It focuses both on the variation between lifeways, but also their commonalities. In order to explain both the variations and commonalities, anthropologists have formulated theories that can be used to critically analyze observations of people in their daily lives. Though theory and ethnography are invariably separated out in anthropological writings and discussions, they are actually two sides of the same coin. Theory is used to illuminate or explain what happens in ethnography, and ethnography provides explanatory power to theory. In short, theory and ethnography, without one another, are pretty meaningless.

This course aims to introduce students to the fundamentals of anthropological theory through seven of the most important concepts in anthropology since the 19th century: race, history, society, function, structure, gender and discourse. Through lectures and discussions, we will try and understand why theory is good to think with – how different theories can give us varying insight into the same event or phenomenon, and why certain theories do a better job of explaining than others. Because we find ourselves in extraordinary times, we will spend this semester working together to understand how people are reacting to and enduring the current pandemic, and how anthropological theory can provide insights into the COVID-19 crisis.

Course Format:
The class will include both synchronous and asynchronous components. All of you will be assigned to one of 3 sections (A, B or C). You will be required to attend your designated synchronous discussion section every week. Times for the sections can be found above.

Each week, you will have 2 types of readings: anthropological theory readings, and readings about COVID-19. The asynchronous lecture videos will cover the anthropological theory readings, and the synchronous discussions will be spent on the discussion and application of the anthropological theory to the COVID-19 readings.

What do I need to prepare for the weekly synchronous discussion?
Our class will operate using ‘flipped classroom’ principles. What this means is the following: before the discussion section, you must do all of the readings for that week, and watch all of the asynchronous lecture videos. For example, for your discussion section on Monday, September 21st, you must read all of the readings and watch all of the lectures assigned for that day before the discussion section on September 21st.

While you are reading and watching the videos: 1) take notes; 2) highlight passages you think are important, and 3) write down any questions you have about the materials. Come to discussion section with an open mind, and a willingness to listen to your peers, and to share your thoughts on the subject matter. The discussion will be student-led and instructor-guided, and is intended to be a true back and forth to help us not only get into the readings, but also understand how to apply theory to real world situations, events and practices, especially the pandemic in which we find ourselves right now.

Learning Outcomes:
This is an intensive introductory course to anthropological theory. By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Read anthropological theory critically and analytically;
- Identify different anthropological schools of thought and thematic continuities/discontinuities between them;
- Summarize critically the main anthropological theories presented both in class discussion, and also in a coherent manner in writing;
• Evaluate critically the plausibility of claims and theories proposed by scholars;
• Apply anthropological theories to better understand everyday practices, local and global events, and ethnographic evidence;
• Communicate complex anthropological theories and their application to our peers and the broader public.

Learning Technologies and Requirements:
In order to successfully engage in their learning experiences at the University of Calgary, students are required to have reliable access to the following technology.
• A computer with a supported operating system
• A current and updated web browser
• Microphone and speaker (built in or external) or headset with microphone
• Broadband internet connection
• A Webcam (built in or external)

If any of this technology is unavailable to you, or you have concerns, please email Dr. Perić as soon as possible.

Course Assignments and Assessment:
Because we find ourselves in extraordinary times, we will spend this semester working together to understand how people are reacting to and enduring the current pandemic, and how anthropological theory can provide insights into the COVID-19 crisis. In addition to doing specific COVID-19 related readings, we will be working together on creating a class website about COVID-19 and anthropological theory. All of your assignments (except your final paper) will be contributions to this class website. The website is entitled [AB]Normal: Using Anthropology to understand COVID-19, and is intended to understand what has changed about our lives, and what has stayed the same during this pandemic. How have we as Albertans responded to COVID-19? And are we the same society as we were just 6 months ago? You might think of this class’ assignments as a joint collaborative effort to understand the impacts on the pandemic on all of us.

Students are expected to each contribute 5 blog posts throughout the course of the semester. You will also complete a short Reflection on Anthropological Theory for the website, and at the end of the semester (during the last class), we will do an official public launch of our website. You will also write one Final Paper, that analyzes how your own life and daily practices have (or have not) changed during the COVID-19 pandemic, and how theory could help you

Students will be evaluated on the basis of a 100-point system:

Blog #1: Conspiracy Theory Blog Post 10%
Blog #2: AB Pandemic History Blog Post 15%
Blog #3: COVID and Race OR COVID and Class Blog Post 10%
Blog #4: Experiencing COVID in AB Interview 15%
Blog #5: COVID and Gender OR The Discourse of COVID Blog Post 10%
Reflection on Anthropological Theory for Team Page 5%
Final Paper: My New Normal in COVID-19 35%

It is not necessary for students to obtain a minimum passing grade on any or all of the particular components of the course in order to pass the course as a whole. For example, a student may fail one assignment, but still pass the course as a whole.
In the event that a student misses any course work due to illness, please contact the instructor within 24 hours or immediately.

The final mark out of 100, will then be converted to a letter grade as follows:

- 95–100    A+
- 90–94.9    A
- 85–89.9    A-
- 80–84.9    B+
- 75–79.9    B
- 71–74.9    B-
- 67–70.9    C+
- 63–66.9    C
- 59–62.9    C-
- 55–58.9    D+
- 50–54.9    D
- <50        F

Assignment details:

Please note: Full assignment descriptions as well as grading templates will be provided for each assignment well in advance of the due date on the class D2L webpage.

Blog Posts

1. Students are expected to complete 5 blog posts for our class website throughout the course of the semester.
2. Blog Posts #1, 2, 3 and 5 are expected to be about 250-500 words long and will be posted to our class website.
3. Blog Post #4 is expected to include a transcript of your interview, and a 250-500 word summary of and reflection on the interview.
4. All blog posts must incorporate at least 1-2 readings from our class reading schedule, and should be properly cited.
5. You will be provided with an online assignment description for each blog post. Make sure you read the description thoroughly and follow the instructions in the assignment description.
6. All blog posts must be posted to our website by the deadline, or you are subject to losing 15% of your grade for that assignment for each day that it is late.

Reflection on Anthropological Theory

- At the end of the semester, students will be expected to write a 150 – 200 word reflection on learning about theory.
- This reflection will accompany their photo on our “Team” page on the class website.
- You will be provided with an online assignment description for this reflection. Make sure you read the description thoroughly and follow the instructions in the assignment description.
- All reflections must be posted to our website by the deadline, or you are subject to losing 15% of your grade for that assignment for each day that it is late.

Final Paper
• At the end of the semester, students will be expected to write a final paper on the topic: “My New Normal in COVID-19”.
• The paper should be 1500 – 1750 words long, 12 pt font, double spaced with normal margins.
• You will be provided with an online assignment description for the final paper. Make sure you read the description thoroughly and follow the instructions in the assignment description.
• You must follow the instructions and upload the final paper to our class’s D2L Dropbox by the deadline, or you are subject to losing 15% of your grade for the paper for each day that it is late.

Required books for purchase: NONE! YAY!

NOTE: All class readings, including a detailed reading schedule will be available on our D2L webpage.

Week I. September 14 - Introduction to Theory

Anthropological Theory Readings:


Covid-19 Application Readings:


Week II. September 21 - Race, Biology and the Study of Difference

Anthropological Theory Readings:


**Covid-19 Application Readings:**


### Week III. September 28 - The Logics of History and their Consequences

**Anthropological Theory Readings:**


**Covid-19 Application Readings:**


Optional, but recommended:

[Smallpox oral histories](http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/morgan_lewis_henry/ancient_society/ancient_society.pdf), Global Health Chronicles, created by the David J. Sencer CDC Museum at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Emory Center for Digital Scholarship
Week IV. October 5 - What is ‘society’? The Collective

Anthropological Theory Readings:


Covid-19 Application Readings:

1) Hi’ilei Julia Kawehipuaakahapulani Hobart, Tamara Knese; Radical Care: Survival Strategies for Uncertain Times. Social Text 1 March 2020; 38 (1 (142)): 1–16. [https://read.dukeupress.edu/social-text/article/38/1%20(142)/1/160171/Radical-CareSurvival-Strategies-for-Uncertain]


Optional, but recommended:


Week V. October 19 - What is ‘society’? Structure

Anthropological Theory Readings:

1) Marx, Karl. (1978) Selections from The German Ideology. (open online source) Please read Part A only. [Marx - German Ideology excerpt.pdf]


3) Excerpts from Metropolis (1927) dir. Fritz Lang

Covid-19 Application Readings:


Optional, but recommended:

Foster, Jason and Marco Luciano. In the Shadows: Living and Working without Status in Alberta. Edmonton: Parkland Institute, 2020. [https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/parklandinstitute/pages/1792/attachments/original/1588012847/inthestadows.pdf?1588012847](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/parklandinstitute/pages/1792/attachments/original/1588012847/inthestadows.pdf?1588012847)

**Week VI. October 26 - What is ‘society’? More than Human**

**Anthropological Theory Readings:**


**Covid-19 Application Readings:**


**Week VII. November 2 – What is Society? An Organism. Functionalism in Anthropology**

**Anthropological Theory Readings:**


**Covid-19 Application Readings:**


Week VIII: November 16 – Structuralism

Anthropological Theory Readings:


Covid-19 Application Readings:


Week IX: November 23 - The ‘structure’ of gender

Anthropological Theory Readings:


Covid-19 Application Readings:


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**Week X: November 30 - Post-structure and Post-structuralism**

**Anthropological Theory Readings:**


**Covid-19 Application Readings:**


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**Week XI: December 7 – Wrap-Up and Website Launch**

**SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION**

**Principles of Conduct:** The University Calendar includes a statement on the principles of conduct expected of all members of the university community (including students, faculty, administrators, any category of staff, practicum supervisors, and volunteers), whether on or off university property. This statement applies in all situations where members of the university community are acting in their university capacities. All members of the university community have a responsibility to familiarize themselves with the principles of conduct statement, which is available at: [www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html](http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html).

**Plagiarism, Cheating, and Student Misconduct:** The University of Calgary is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect.

Academic dishonesty is not an acceptable activity at the University of Calgary, and students are **strongly advised** to read the Student Misconduct section in the University Calendar at: [www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-](http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-).
Often, students are unaware of what constitutes academic dishonesty or plagiarism. The most common are (1) presenting another student’s work as your own, (2) presenting an author’s work or ideas as your own without adequate citation, and (3) using work completed for another course. Such activities will not be tolerated in this course, and students suspected of academic misconduct will be dealt with according to the procedures outlined in the calendar at: https://ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-academic-misconduct-procedure.pdf


Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy: Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation in Alberta disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, such as outside an instructor’s office, the department office, etc. Term assignments will be returned to students individually, during class or during the instructor’s office hours; if students are unable to pick up their assignments from the instructor, they must provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.

Human subjects: This course will contain research with human subjects, specifically for the Interview Blog Post. All ethics approval for the CFREB will have been obtained for this assignment in advance of the assignment. All students will have to follow the instructions for that assignment carefully in order to ensure compliance with our CFREB approval.

Guidelines for Zoom Sessions: Zoom is a video conferencing program that will allow us to meet at specific times for a “live” video conference, so that we can have the opportunity to meet each other virtually and discuss relevant course topics as a learning community.

To help ensure Zoom sessions are private, do not share Zoom link or password with others, or on any social media platforms. Zoom links and passwords are only intended for students registered in the course. Zoom recordings and materials presented in Zoom, including any teaching materials, must not be shared, distributed or published with the instructor’s permission.

The use of video conferencing programs relies on participants to act ethically, honestly and with integrity; and in accordance with the principles of fairness, good faith and respect (as per the Code of Conduct). When entering Zoom or other video conferencing sessions (such as MS Teams), you play a role in helping create an effective, safe and respectful learning environment. Please be mindful of how your behavior in these sessions may affect others. Participants are required to use names officially associated with their UCID (legal or preferred names listed in the Student Centre) when engaging in these activities. Instructors/moderators can remove those whose names do not appear on class rosters. Non-compliance may be investigated under relevant University of Calgary conduct policies (e.g. Student Non Academic Misconduct Policy). If participants have difficulties complying with this requirement, they should email the instructor of the class explaining why, so the instructor may consider whether to grant an exception, and on what terms. For more information on how to get the most out of your Zoom sessions visit: https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/guidelines-for-zoom/.

If you are unable to attend a Zoom session, please contact your instructor to arrange an alternative activity for the missed session (e.g., to review a recorded session). Please be prepared, as best as you are able, to join class in a quiet space that will allow you to be fully present and engaged in Zoom sessions. Students will be advised by their instructor when they are expected to turn on their webcam (for group work, presentations, etc.).
The instructor may record online Zoom class sessions for the purposes of supporting student learning in this class – such as making the recording available for review of the session or for students who miss a session. Students will be advised before the instructor initiates a recording of a Zoom session. These recordings will be used to support student learning only and will not be shared or used for any other purpose.

**Posting of Grades and Picking-up of Assignments:** Graded assignments will be returned by the instructor or teaching electronically through the course D2L webpage. Grades and assignments will not be available at the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology’s main office.

**Academic Accommodations:** It is the student’s responsibility to request academic accommodations, according to the university policies and procedures listed in the University Calendar. The student accommodation policy can be found at: [https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.pdf](https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.pdf)

Students needing an accommodation because of a disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: [www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf](www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf).

Students needing an accommodation based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need, preferably in writing to their instructor or the Department Head (email: pcdawson@ucalgary.ca).

**Copyright Legislation:** All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright [https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright-policy.pdf](https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright-policy.pdf) and requirements of the copyright act ([https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html](https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html)) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorised sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplines under the Non-Academic Misconduct Act.

**Wellness and Mental Health Resources:** The University of Calgary recognizes the pivotal role that student mental health plays in physical health, social connectedness, and academic success and aspires to create a caring and supportive campus community where individuals can freely talk about mental health and receive supports when needed. We encourage you to explore the mental health resources available throughout the university community, such as counselling, self-help resources, peer support, or skills-building available through the SU Wellness Centre (Room 370, MacEwan Student Centre, [https://www.ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/services/mental-health-services](https://www.ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/services/mental-health-services)) and the Campus Mental Health Strategy website ([http://www.ucalgary.ca/mentalhealth/](http://www.ucalgary.ca/mentalhealth/)).

*Students requiring assistance are encouraged to email the Student at Risk line if they or others appear to need wellness assistance: sar@ucalgary.ca. For more immediate response, please call: 403-210-9355 and select option #2.*

**Contact Information for Student and Faculty Representation**
- Student Union VP Academic 403-220-3911, suvpaca@ucalgary.ca
- Students Union Representatives for the Faculty of Arts – 403-220-3913, arts1@su.ucalgary.ca, arts2@su.ucalgary.ca, arts3@su.ucalgary.ca, arts4@su.ucalgary.ca
- Student Ombuds Office information can be found at: [www.ucalgary.ca/ombuds/](www.ucalgary.ca/ombuds/)
Campus Safewalk: Campus Security, in partnership with the Students’ Union, provides the Safewalk service, 24 hours a day, to any location on Campus, including the LRT station, parking lots, bus zones, and university residences. Contact Campus Security at 220-5333 or use a help phone, and Safewalkers or a Campus Security officer will accompany you to your campus destination.