ANTH 400A
HISTORY OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL THEORY

Instructor: Dr. Daromir Rudnyckyj

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course aims to strengthen understanding of contemporary anthropological thought and practice by drawing attention to the historical processes, events, and individuals that have shaped anthropological knowledge. We will track key developments in the history of anthropological theory from the late 18th century to the 1970s. Among the key themes and concepts that we will consider are progressive developmentalism, evolution, society, culture, capitalism, and class. Readings, lectures, and discussion will focus on changing definitions of anthropology's subjects, objects, and methods across several prominent schools of thought, including but not limited to British social anthropology, French structuralism, and American symbolic anthropology. How have these and other trends in anthropological theory conceived of the notions of culture, society, and the subject? How have they helped us think about meaning, practice, and power? The objective of this class is to provide students with an overview of the history of anthropological theory and the ability to identify the problems and innovations in the development of anthropological thought.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- Working knowledge of key vocabulary, ideas, assumptions and individuals in the history of anthropology through to the 1970s
- Comprehension of how knowledge production is shaped by social, political, and economic contexts
- Understanding the relationship between contemporary anthropology and earlier approaches
- Describing and analyzing anthropological theories, concepts and their implications
- Initiating and engaging in productive discussions of topical material
- The ability to analyze texts through both expository writing and oral presentation