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Office: HO 201

SOAN 247: Anthropology of Pacific Islands

MWF 10:00 – 10:50, HO 205, Slot B

Office Hours: Tuesday by Appointment

"Imagine yourself suddenly set down surrounded by all your gear, alone on a tropical beach close to a native village, while the launch or dinghy which has brought you sails away out of sight... Imagine further that you are a beginner, without previous experience, with nothing to guide you and no one to help you. "
(Bronislaw Malinowski, Argonauts of the Western Pacific)

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Overview:

This course offers students an ethnographic and historical appreciation of Pacific cultures, particularly those of the Eastern Pacific. Tahiti, Hawaii, Easter Island, New Zealand. The very idea of the South Pacific conjures varied impressions their peoples and cultures. Whether as island paradises or as paradises lost, the South Seas have been the setting for numerous cultured encounters since the so-called Age of European Discovery that reached its zenith in the 18th century. Whether because of persons moving on and off ships or planes or as mediated by plays, novels and films, these island groups have been a sort of fantastic playground or setting for the exploration of crises and tensions in Western culture. However, long before they were the sites of Hollywood blockbusters, ‘three hour tours’ turned sit-comic eternities, and millionaire vacation getaways, these islands were also home to many Pacific peoples, descendants of some of human history’s greatest voyagers. But who are these people? And how can we perceive and understand their lifeways, experiences, cultural systems outside the fantasy or representational constructs of the last three centuries of western engagements with the region? This course has a number of central issues that will appear across our readings. (1) the relationship between western and local/indigenous representations of cultural and personal realities and experiences from the age of European discovery forward; (2) distinct cultural traditions, social systems and lifeways in ‘Polynesia’ and elsewhere in the Pacific; (3) the historical encounter between European and Polynesian persons, institutions, technologies and moralities; and (4), the problem of transformation in tradition and the refiguring of islander cultures and identities between the late 18th and early 21st centuries. There are no special pre-requisites for this course. Students with interests in the comparative ethnography of cultures and the relationship of historical memory to transformations in cultural practice and society are particularly encouraged to attend... as are any who are simply interested in the Pacific islands.

Instructional Methods:

The format of the course will be a mixture of lectures and seminar-style discussions. Because of the compact nature of the semester schedule, it is absolutely imperative that students complete all required readings, attend classes, view films, and participate actively in class discussions. Class will consist of discussions in which we explore the texts and relevant issues in depth. This requires close readings of our texts. And it requires that you come to class with questions, opinions, and curiosity. While there will be some lecturing in each class to provide a background for the readings and to cover the main points, I look forward to engaging in thoughtful conversations about readings. While you are reading, think about how what you are reading resonates with your own experience in and with language-mediated events, moments of successful and unsuccessful communication for instance, and plan on sharing particular insights with the class.

Course Requirements:

Participation: Attendance to all classes and sections, including any films, is mandatory. Failure to attend class sessions will have a proportionately negative bearing on your grade. Students are expected to attend classes and read all assignments so as to be prepared for class discussion. Experience shows that there is a direct relation between attendance and performance in the course. To put it another way, participation is a critical component of this course. Obviously participation is only possible if you are, in fact, present. So, be there and speak up early and often!

Readings: Readings will vary in length from session to session. Also, the style of the writing will vary so please be prepared to adjust your speed of reading as necessary. Readings should be READ for the following session. Also, supplementary readings may from time to time be placed on reserve.

Screenings: Over the course of the semester we will schedule screenings of several films including *Moana: Romance of a Golden Age* (1926), *Hurricane* (1937), *Mutiny on the Bounty* (1962), *Joe vs. the Volcano* (1990), and *Whale Rider* (2002). We will work to find a maximally felicitous time for viewings and place films on reserve for any colleagues whose schedules conflict.

Writings: Students are responsible for three short essays of at least two-page 10pt single-spaced that delve into one of more topics or issues in Polynesian studies, cultures, history raised by our readings or films. These are not research papers but are, rather, true 'essays' in the sense of the original French term *essai* which means 'to try'. These essays are meant to give you the room to try out ideas, to compare new concepts with your own experiences and intuitions, and to hone your disciplinary pen and your understanding of core anthropological concepts by bringing them to bear on our freshly acquired understandings of the Pacific or Polynesia. I expect you to vet the topics of these little pieces with me. However, I will not specify the exact topics assigned. In addition to these three short, relatively informal works, students are also required to complete a formal final 'research' paper in consultation with me. This final paper is in place of a final examination and is due at the end of the exam period for our class. We will work together to find a topic that interests you, a modest and sufficient number of relevant readings, and a plan of attack on the writing. Final papers must be at least 6 pages 10pt single-spaced, not counting references, endnotes. Standard citations in APA or Chicago Style are required. The goal of this paper will be to extend the topics, issues, (hi)stories, predicaments of culture and politics, touched on in our class in new directions, different areas thus allowing us to take the frameworks and issues and push them out, further expanding our sense of an anthropology of this region.

For both the short and final papers, I will not accept late responses without an acceptable reason. I reserve the right to determine what is, after all, acceptable. Similarly, all submitted work should be crafted with writerly attention to details, and carefully edited thereafter. While we are primarily interested in your *ideas*, sloppy writing or copyediting can result in a lack of clarity which will direct affect both the expressive transmission and reception, hence evaluation of your work (i.e. your grade will suffer!).

Grading policy:

The final grade for the course will be based on weekly attendance and participation, the reflective essays submitted weekly, the midterm and final. Grades will be weighted as follows:

-- Participation	10%
-- Short essays	45%
-- Final paper	45%

Academic Honesty:

All forms of academic dishonesty, viz. cheating, plagiarism, forgery and the like are strictly *taboo*, will have a, doubt me not, deleterious effect on your grade, and will be referred to the appropriate member of the administration. For more information, please consult the student handbook.

Readings:

This course is designed to meet three hours a week. Required readings are indicated. Please be familiar with required readings by the session indicated. Recommended readings are intended to provide further depth and guidance to students interested in pursuing particular issues in more detail and are available on request. The following key texts are available for purchase at the Bookstore:

Required:

- Reference Map of Oceania: The Pacific Islands of Micronesia, Polynesia, Melanesia (Map). James A. Bier. University of Hawaii Press. ISBN-13: 978-0824816872
- On the Road of the Winds: An Archaeological History of the Pacific Islands before Human Contact. Kirch, Patrick Vinton. 2000. University of California Press. ISBN-13: 978-0520234611
- Oceania: An Introduction to the Cultures and Identities of Pacific Islanders. Strathern, Stewart, Carucci, Poyer, Feinberg and Macpherson editors. ISBN-13: 978-0890894446
- The Journals of Captain Cook. James Cook. Penguin. ISBN-13: 978-0140436471.
- How Natives Think About Captain Cook For Instance. Marshall Sahlins. University of Chicago Press. ISBN-13: 978-0226733692
- Kingship and Sacrifice. Valerio Valeri. University of Chicago Press. ISBN-13: 978-0226845609
- The Meaning of Whitemen: Race and Modernity in the Orokaiwa Cultural World. Ira Bashkow. University of Chicago Press.

- *Supplementary and required essays will be placed on reserve throughout the course or, if available, listed through on our our online resource providers.*

SPRING 2010 SEMESTER SCHEDULE:

CULTURES OF THE PACIFIC

- 1.13 Introducing Oceania
- 1.15 Reading: JoCC, First Voyage
- 1.18 Reading: JoCC, Second Voyage
- 1.20 Reading: JoCC, Third Voyage
- 1.22 Reading: European Vision and the South Pacific (Smith)
- 1.25 Reading: OtRotW, Introduction
- 1.27 Reading: OtRotW, Discovering the Oceanic Past
- 1.29 Reading: OtRotW, The Pacific Islands as Human Environment
- 2.1 Reading: OtRotW, Sahul and the Prehistory of Melanesia; Lapita and the Austroneisan Expansion
- 2.3 Reading: OtRotW, The Prehistory of “New” Melanesia
- 2.5 Reading: OtRotW, Micronesia: In the “Sea of Little Islands”
- 2.8 Reading: OtRotW, Polynesia: Origins and Dispersals; The Polynesian Chiefdoms
- 2.10 Reading: OtRotW, Big Structures and Large Processes
- 2.12 Reading: OaIttCaIoPI, pp. 1-46 (The South-West Pacific)
- 2.15 Reading: OaIttCaIoPI, pp. 47-87 (New Guinea)
- 2.17 Reading: OaIttCaIoPI, pp. 183-214 (The West-Central Pacific)
- 2.19 Reading: OaIttCaIoPI, pp. 215-250 (The Winds of Change)
- 2.22 Reading: OaIttCaIoPI, pp. 101-130 (The Eastern Pacific)
- 2.24 Reading: OaIttCaIoPI, pp. 130-164 (Contemporary Issues)
- 2.26 Reading: FIELD MUSEUM
- 3.1 Reading: Heterotopic Dissonance in the Museum Representation of Pacific Islands Cultures (Kahn)
- 3.3 Reading: KaS, Summary of Hawaiian Theology
- 3.5 Reading: KaS, The Elements of Sacrifice
- 3.8 MID-SEMESTER BREAK
- 3.10 MID-SEMESTER BREAK
- 3.12 MID-SEMESTER BREAK
- 3.15 Reading: KaS, Gods and Humans
- 3.17 Reading: KaS, The Hierarchy of Sacrifices
- 3.19 Reading: KaS, Sacrifice and Kingship
- 3.22 Reading: KaS, The Hierarhcy of Temples
- 3.24 Reading: KaS, The Makihiki Festival
- 3.26 Reading: KaS, The Luakini Temple Ritual
- 3.29 Reading: HNTaCCfl, Introduction
- 3.31 Reading: HNTaCCfl, Captain Cook at Hawaii
- 4.2 Reading: HNTaCCfl, Cook After Death
- 4.5 Reading: HNTaCCfl, Historical Fiction, Makeshift Ethnography
- 4.7 Reading: HNTaCCfl, Rationalities: How “Natives” Think
- 4.9 Reading: HNTaCCfl, Epilogue: Historiography, or Symbolic Violence
- 4.12 Reading: TMoW, The Cultural Construction of Whitemen
- 4.14 Reading: TMoW, Cultural World, Postcolonial Situation
- 4.16 Reading: TMoW, The Lightness of Whitemen
- 4.19 Reading: TMoW, The Bodies of Whitemen
- 4.21 Reading: TMoW, The Foods of Whitemen
- 4.23 Reading: TMoW, Conclusion, Whitemen Beyond
- 4.26 Reading: Our Sea of Islands (Hau’ofa); Imagining Oceania: Indigenous and Foreign Representations of a Sea of Islands (Jolly)

Disclaimer

The syllabus is subject to change at the instructor’s discretion, and additional short essays may be added to enhance any particular session.