

## **Contemporary Theory in Anthropology**

Sociology and Anthropology 870

Section: D100

Term: 2007 Fall

Instructor: Dr. S. Pigg

Email: pigg@sfu.ca

Office: AQ 5074

Discussion Topics: The challenge for anthropology is that its truth claims must be based on the changing nature of others' imaginations... (Moore and Sanders, *Anthropology in Theory*)

In this seminar we will explore conceptual practices in anthropology as these have developed in a dialectical relationship with the everyday social worlds of people around the world. This is not a course that traces key thinkers and successive schools of thought as they have taken shape over the past century; rather, the course moves backward and forward among writings from different eras in order to explore the contemporary relevance of varied approaches to the task of ethnographic representation and theoretical modeling. The seminar is divided into two modules and within each we will discuss a range of texts that each speak in different ways to core conceptual matters. The first module focuses on a classic domain posited by anthropological discourse: witchcraft. In comparing numerous theoretical approaches to the explanation of witchcraft we will also be addressing the potentials and limits of the very notion of cross-cultural research in colonial and postcolonial contexts. The second module centers on a case study: the applied anthropology of British anthropologists of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute in Central Africa in the 1930s and 1940s. As a telling moment in the anthropology of social change, modernization, and decolonization, this case study takes us into questions surrounding the politics of theory and research. In providing a tour of a landscape of ideas, the course emphasizes close attention to the implications of various practices of particularization and generalization in anthropology. This course is required for anthropology graduate students and will be of interest to others interested in ethnography, cross-cultural or post-colonial analysis, and representation and explanation in qualitative research.

Grading: Grading and Assignments:

To be announced in the first class.

All the assignments in this course must be completed for a final grade to be assigned. The Department of Sociology and Anthropology follows SFU policy in relation to grading practices, grade appeals (Policy T 20.01) and academic dishonesty and misconduct procedures (Policy T 10.03). It is the responsibility of students to inform themselves of the content of these policies (available on the SFU website under Administration, SFU Policies & Procedures).

Required Texts: Favret-Saada, Jeanne. *Deadly Words: Witchcraft in the Bocage*. Cambridge University Press, [1977] 1981.

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Ashforth, Adam. Witchcraft Violence and Democracy in South Africa. University of Chicago Press.

Schumaker, Lyn

Recommended Texts: None

Materials/Supplies: None

Prerequisite/Corequisite: None

Notes: All students are expected to read and understand SFU's policies with regard to academic dishonesty (T 10.02 and T 10.03). These policies are available at the following web addresses: <http://www.sfu.ca/policies/teaching/t10-02.htm> and <http://www.sfu.ca/policies/teaching/t10-03.htm>

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