History of Anthropological Thought

Zoom, Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:00–4:15 p.m.

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Office hours: M/W 4–5 p.m. Eastern, sign up at calendly.com/nseaver/office-hours

Course Description

This is not really an anthropology course: it is a history course taught by an anthropologist.

Our topic is the history of anthropology as an academic discipline—a diverse and always-changing project for knowing things about the world and the people in it. How we approach this topic is informed by a few goals. By the end of the course, you should:

1. Be familiar enough with major topics of anthropological concern (like gift economies or structuralism) to understand references to them in other anthropology courses and to locate unfamiliar anthropological arguments within the broader history of the discipline.
2. Be able to situate knowledge projects within particular historical, social, and cultural contexts.
3. Be able to read dense and historically distant theoretical writing both critically and generously.
4. Be able to write critically about social and cultural theory, analyzing and drawing connections between diverse ways of thinking about collective human life.

These goals require an attitude toward anthropology that is itself anthropological. Our first concern is not to evaluate, but to understand how these thoughts made sense to the people who thought them (when talking about history, we call this **historicism**, though you should recognize it from your other anthropology courses, too). We're going to locate arguments in contexts that range from colonialism writ large to the petty squabbling of professors; they include political commitments, metaphysical notions, and encounters with other disciplines. This is not always fun: we will be reading things written by straight-up racists; we will be reading people who understood themselves to be progressive, but who appear quite problematic today; we will be reading work that seems to objectify and silence people while purporting to give them a voice.

But we are not studying this history for its own sake; nor are we interested in putting ways of thinking on a timeline, so that we might banish the embarrassing ones

to the past. We are studying this history in order to make more informed critiques of it, to pinpoint where our points of agreement and disagreement are, so that we can recognize its echoes in more recent work. You can't make a good critique if you don't know what you're critiquing. Even when we think we've left this history beh ind, we often haven't; knowing it is crucial to making sense of the shape anthropological knowledge takes today. So, the reason for studying anthropology's past in its own terms is that it will help us make better arguments for our own contemporary concerns (we call this one **presentism**).

As we move through the term, we'll practice tacking back and forth between historicist and presentist approaches to the reading. All of your responses to the material—disgust, confusion, and disagreement, as well as delight, resonance, and wonder—are welcome in this course. I expect you to treat each other with respect and charity as we work through the term.

Our focus on anthropological thought makes this course a bit different from other courses you'll have taken in the anthropology department:

- The readings are primarily theory-driven, with much less of the ethnographic storytelling you might encounter in typical anthro courses. (Some people find this makes them harder; others find it easier to pick out the key points.)
- The assignments are not aimed at doing anthropological research (interviews, participant observation, etc.), but rather focused on understanding and drawing connections among readings.

Over the course of the term, we will be practicing this style of work; if you find yourself struggling, I'm always available to offer tips and to find ways to help you manage the material.

Reading Schedule

Tuesday, September 8 | **Welcome**

Thursday, September 10 | **Orientations**

Stocking, George. 1965. "On the limits of 'presentism' and 'historicism' in the historiography of the behavioral sciences." *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 1 (3): 211–218.

Haraway, Donna. 1988. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." *Feminist Studies* 14 (3): 575–599.

Part I: Culture and Society

Tuesday, September 15 | **Evolution**

Tylor, Edward B. 1871. "The Science of Culture." In *Primitive Culture*. Cambridge University Press, 1–22.

White, Leslie A. 1957. "Evolution and Diffusion." *Antiquity* 31 (124): 214–18.

Thursday, September 17 | **Particularism**

Boas, Franz. 1887. "The Study of Geography." *Science* 9 (210): 137-141.

Stocking, George. 1974. "Introduction: The Basic Assumptions of Boasian Anthropology." In *The Shaping of American Anthropology 1883–1911: A Franz Boas Reader,* edited by George Stocking, Jr. Basic Books, 1–20.

Simpson, Audra. 2018. Why White People Love Franz Boas; or, The Grammar of Indigenous Dispossession. In *Indigenous Visions*, edited by Ned Blackhawk and Isaiah Lorado Wilner. Yale University Press, 166–178.

Tuesday, September 22 | **Fieldwork** *(No meeting today, asynchronous)*

Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1922. "The Subject, Method, and Scope of this Inquiry" (selection). In *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. Routledge and Sons, 4–11.

Hurston, Zora Neale. 1935. "Introduction." In *Mules and Men*. Harper Collins, 17–23.

Powdermaker, Hortense. 1966. "First Night Alone" and "Monotony." In *Stranger and Friend: The Way of an Anthropologist*. Norton, 51–59 and 94–99.

Thursday, September 24 | **Function**

Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1944/1960. "Function Defined." In *A Scientific Theory of Culture and other Essays.* University of North Carolina Press, 155–157.

Radcliffe-Brown, A.R. 1935. "On the Concept of Function in Social Science." *American Anthropologist* 37 (3): 394–402.

Radcliffe-Brown, A.R. 1940. "On Social Structure." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 70 (1): 1–12.

Durkheim, Émile. 1893. "The Increasing Preponderance of Organic Solidarity and its Consequences (cont.)." In *The Division of Labor in Society*. 126–148.

Tuesday, September 29 | **Personality**

Mead, Margaret. 1935. "The Standardization of Sex-Temperament" and "Conclusion." In *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*. Morrow Quill Paperbacks, 279–289 and 310–322.

Thursday, October 1 | **Free Day**

This day intentionally left blank, to absorb unforeseen emergencies. (By default, it will be an optional discussion time to talk about the papers or reflect on Part I.)

Paper 1 is due at 11:59 pm on Sunday, October 4.

Part II: Knowing and Relating

Tuesday, October 6 | **Conflict**

Radcliffe-Brown, A.R. 1929/1958. "Historical and Functional Interpretations of Culture in Relation to the Practical Application of Anthropology to the Control of Native Peoples." In *Method in Social Anthropology, Selected Essays by A.R. Radcliffe-Brown*, edited by M.N. Srinivas. University of Chicago Press, 39–41.

Gluckman, Max. 1955. "The Peace in the Feud." *Past & Present* 8: 1–14.

James, Wendy. 1973. "The Anthropologist as Reluctant Imperialist" (selection). In *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*, edited by Talal Asad. Humanities Press, 41–50.

Thursday, October 8 | **Language**

Sapir, Edward. 1927/1949. "The Unconscious Patterning of Behavior in Society." In *Selected Writings of Edward Sapir in Language, Culture and Personality*, edited by D. G. Mandelbaum. University of California Press, 544–559.

Lee, Dorothy. 1950. "Lineal and Nonlineal Codifications of Reality." *ETC: A Review of General Semantics* 8(1): 13–26.

Tuesday, October 13 | **Rationality**

Evans-Pritchard, E.E. 1937/1976. "The Notion of Witchcraft Explains Unfortunate Events." In *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande (Abridged).* Clarendon, 18–32.

Horton, Robin. 1967. "African Traditional Thought and Western Science: Part I." *Africa* 37 (1): 50–71.

Thursday, October 15 | **Exchange**

Mauss, Marcel. [1925] 1990. "Introduction" and "The Exchange of Gifts and the Obligation to Reciprocate (Polynesia)." In *The Gift.* Routledge, 1–23.

Stewart, Georgina. 2017. "The 'Hau' of Research: Mauss Meets Kaupapa Māori." *Journal of World Philosophies* 2 (1).

Tuesday, October 20 | **Materialism**

White, Leslie. 1943. "Energy and The Evolution of Culture." *American Anthropologist* 45(3): 335–356.

Sahlins, Marshall. 1972. "The Original Affluent Society" (excerpts). In *Stone Age Economics*. Aldine-Atherton.

Thursday, October 22 | **Science**

Black, Mary. 1963. "On Formal Ethnographic Procedures." *American Anthropologist* 65(6): 1347–1351.

Sturtevant, William. 1964. "Studies in Ethnoscience." *American Anthropologist* 66(3): 99–131.

Tuesday, October 27 | **Structure**

Leach, Edmund. 1973. "Structuralism in Social Anthropology." In *Structuralism: An Introduction*, edited by David Robey. Clarendon, 37–56.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1963. "The Bear and the Barber." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 93(1): 1-11.

Thursday, October 29 | **Free Day**

This day intentionally left blank, to absorb unforeseen emergencies. (By default, it will be an optional discussion time to talk about the papers or reflect on Part II.)

Paper 2 is due at 11:59 pm on Sunday, November 1.

Part III: Understanding and Representing

Tuesday, November 3 | **Kinship**

Rubin, Gayle. 1975/2011. "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex." In *Deviations: A Gayle Rubin Reader*. Duke University Press, 33–65 (but you can skip the sections on psychoanalysis from 47–58).

Schneider, David. 1969/1977. "Kinship, Nationality, and Religion in American Culture: Toward a Definition of Kinship." In *Symbolic Anthropology*, edited by Janet Dolgin, David Kemnitzer, and David Schneider. Columbia University Press, 63–71.

Thursday, November 5 | **Symbols**

Turner, Victor. 1964/1967. "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites de Passage." In *The Forest of Symbols*. Cornell University Press, 93–111.

Douglas, Mary. 1966/1984. "Introduction" and "Secular Defilement." In *Purity and Danger.* Routledge, 1–6, 30–41.

Tuesday, November 10 | *No class (Tufts Wednesday)*

Thursday, November 12 | **Interpretation**

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture." In *The Interpretation of Cultures.* Basic Books, 3–30.

Ortner, Sherry. 1973. "On Key Symbols." *American Anthropologist* 75 (5): 1338–1346.

Tuesday, November 17 | **Representation**

Pratt, Mary Louise. 1986. "Fieldwork in Common Places." In *Writing Culture*, edited by James Clifford and George Marcus. University of California Press, 27–50.

Clifford, James. 1988. "On Ethnographic Authority." *Representations* 2: 118–146.

Thursday, November 19 | **Under-representation**

Abu-Lughod, Lila. 1991. "Writing Against Culture." In *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*, edited by Richard G. Fox. School of American Research Press, 137–162.

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. 1991. "Anthropology and the Savage Slot: The Poetics and Politics of Otherness." In *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*, edited by Richard G. Fox. School of American Research Press, 17–44.

Tuesday, November 24 | **Free Day**

This day intentionally left blank, to absorb unforeseen emergencies. (By default, it will be an optional discussion time to talk about the papers or reflect on Part III.)

Paper 3 is due at 11:59 pm on Wednesday, November 25.

Part IV: Up and Out

Thursday, November 26 | *No class (Thanksgiving)*

Tuesday, December 1 | **Sites**

Marcus, George. 1995. "Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24: 95–117.

Gershon, Ilana. 2019. "Porous Social Orders." *American Ethnologist* 46 (4): 404–16.

Thursday, December 3 | **Positions**

Narayan, Kirin. 1993. "How Native is a 'Native' Anthropologist?" *American Anthropologist* 95(3): 671–686.

Tsing, Anna. 1993. "Opening" (selection). In *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen.* Princeton University Press, 5–22.

Tuesday, December 8 | **Expertise**

Forsythe, Diana. 1999. "Ethics and Politics of Studying up in Technoscience." *Anthropology of Work Review* 20(1): 6–11.

Restrepo, Eduardo and Arturo Escobar. 2005. "'Other Anthropologies and Anthropology Otherwise': Steps to a World Anthropologies Framework." *Critique of Anthropology* 25(2): 99–129.

Thursday, December 10 | **The Ethnographic Present**

Jobson, Ryan Cecil. 2020. "The Case for Letting Anthropology Burn: Sociocultural Anthropology in 2019." *American Anthropologist* 122 (2): 259–71.

For our last day, we'll also read a piece published in the last year. A survey with a list of choices is on Canvas; vote there to decide!

Paper 4 is due at 11:59 pm on Sunday, December 22.

Accessibility

If you need accommodation as a result of a documented disability, you should register with the Disability Services Office at the beginning of the semester. You can find out how to do so here: http://students.tufts.edu/student-accessibility-services.

Your success in this class is important to me. If there are *any* circumstances that may affect your performance, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can work together to adapt assignments to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. These may be personal, health-related, family-related issues, or other concerns. The sooner I know about any issues, the earlier we can discuss possible adjustments or alternative arrangements as needed for assignments or classes. Any such discussion will remain confidential. Even if you do not have a documented disability, remember that other support services are available to all students. Your advising dean can also help you find the assistance you require: https://students.tufts.edu/academic-advice-and-support/academic-advising/meet-your-advising-team.

We're pursuing this work under extraordinary circumstances. I've changed many things about this course in recognition of the fact that we are all under increased stress; that some of us may encounter unexpected illness or caretaking responsibilities during the term; that online courses cannot entirely replicate the in-person experience, and that there has not been enough time to put this course online in an ideal way (which takes months of continuous work). I've done my best to re-design this course to be as engaging and useful as possible, given the circumstances; I appreciate your patience as we encounter the inevitable hiccups and mistakes that will arrive during the term. The major changes:

- I have set up deadlines to be as flexible as possible. (If you run into challenges, you should always feel free to email me, and we can usually work something out.)
- I've reduced the overall amount of work I expect, cutting down on the quantity of readings especially.
- I've restructured the course grading and assignments to add more flexibility.

I do not expect this course to be the most important thing in your life this term. I am committed to supporting students who want to dive deep into the material, as well as those who may find themselves less able than usual to focus on their academic work.

Grading

I do not like grading. The assignments in this course have been designed as opportunities for you to practice engaging with anthropological theory, and I am much more interested in your practicing than in your achieving some high level of quality where we can sort out A- from B+ work. So, in this course, we'll be using a version of what is sometimes called **specifications grading**. That means that, for all the assignments in the course, there are only two grades: credit or no credit. You will get credit if you meet the specifications for a particular assignment (think of this as roughly doing "B"-level work). If you don't meet the specs (or don't turn in the assignment), you get no credit. All written work turned in by its deadline will get substantial comments from me: I will tell you what works and what doesn't, I will tell you what I find interesting about your writing, I will suggest alternate lines of inquiry—I will engage you as the thinking person you are. If you get a no-credit, you can use these comments to revise and resubmit your assignment one time, so that you can get credit.

This gives you some more control over your final grade than usual: if you do all the work up to spec, you'll get an A. If you don't care to get an A (say you're happy with a B or just taking the course Pass/Fail), then you know how much work you can skip to do that. You can think of this like a reversed Pass/Fail grading scheme: instead of aggregating letter-graded assignments up to a binary grade, I'm aggregating binary grades up to a letter.

I know many of you are bright and motivated students, and I hope this arrangement frees you up to pursue your interests without worrying about aiming them toward a high grade. I also know that we're learning in a very challenging moment, and I want you to be able to put in the work you're able to without worrying about hurting your grade. This is a bit of an experiment, so I encourage you to share any concerns or issues with me as the course goes on—we can always adjust things as necessary.

This is the overall breakdown of how I'll calculate your final grade (more details about particular assignment types follow):

30% Annotations

30% Glossary

40% Short Papers (10% each)

Assignments

Reading

The core of this course is the reading. Everything else radiates out from it and returns to it. Especially since we're online this term, I don't want you to think of our class meeting times as the "real" part of the course—we'll be dedicating class time to clarifying and contextualizing ideas from the readings, developing our appreciation and critiques of them, not to supplementing them with more things. The graded assignments for the course reflect this focus, moving from close engagement with the texts, to abstracting ideas from them, to writing critically about them and extending what you've learned to new materials.

The amount of reading per class meeting is highly variable. (This is because I tried to cut as much as I could in recognition of Tough Times, but couldn't do it everywhere.) So, be sure to look ahead a bit—not just at the number of texts, but at how long they are—so that you're not caught by surprise. You can either check the PDFs themselves or look at the page ranges at the end of the references on the syllabus. Please be sure to do the reading before the class session for which it is assigned.

If you're having trouble with the reading, let me know, and we will work at it

Annotations (30%)

All of our readings are available on Canvas as PDFs embedded in Hypothesis, an online collaborative annotation tool. As you read, you should use Hypothesis to mark up the text with comments and questions. As a general rule, it's a good idea to identify key terms and their definitions, as well as key quotations that sum up aspects of the piece's argument. You may also want to annotate things you find confusing, with questions about them, or things you disagree with, explaining your disagreement. For most readings, I will also have included some annotated questions for you to consider while you read. Using Hypothesis, you can also respond to my or your classmates' questions and annotations. (If you prefer not to read on a screen, you're welcome to just print the readings out, but you'll need to allocate time to transferring some of your annotations back into Hypothesis.)

Each reading is thus an "assignment" in Canvas, due by noon the day of the corresponding class meeting. In those assignments, you'll find an expected minimum number of annotations (adjusted for the length of the particular reading), which you can meet by either annotating something new yourself, or by substantially responding to another annotation. You're welcome (encouraged, even!) to go beyond the minimum, but it's not required for your grade. If your annotations are not substantial enough, I'll let you know quickly, so you can bring them up to spec.

Since there are so many of us, I've split the class in half for annotation purposes. You'll only see the annotations from your half of the class. This should make it a little

easier to find things that haven't already been annotated for you to annotate. (Think ahead: there are many ways for you to contribute, from posing questions for classmates to answer to identifying key terms to answering your classmates' questions. Depending on when you do your annotations relative to your classmates, there may be more or less of those options available to you.)

While the assignments are due on the relevant class days—both to spread out your work and to help me prepare for our synchronous discussions—you are welcome to go back in after the deadline and add annotations if you did not meet the minimum. At the end of each Part (see our course homepage for the specific dates), I'll be going through and closing the assignments, after which point you may still annotate, but not for credit.

This is my first time using Hypothesis with a class, and there are bound to be some hiccups. If you encounter any trouble, please let me know ASAP so I can fix it.

Glossary (30%)

Building on our annotations, we'll be collectively assembling a "glossary" of concepts and schools of thought from the course. The goal is to have, by the end of the term, a resource that you can draw on in other anthropology courses to remind you of things like what "structural functionalism" is, or what "culture" means.

Our glossary is a Google doc that you all can edit, either to start entries of your own or to contribute to and revise already-existing entries. The entries are up to you—I'm not going to dictate what terms should go in there, although many will become obvious during our synchronous discussions. You may want to copy in relevant quotations from the readings (cited appropriately) or draft your own summary text. I will give examples to show how things should be formatted, etc., but I expect it may grow in unexpected ways.

Here's how I'll grade it:

- When you contribute to an entry, sign your name to it. Each entry can have a maximum of three authors, so we spread ourselves out a bit.
- To get credit, an entry should: clearly define the term in question, refer to the relevant authors, and include relevant quotations from the reading. (It should also have complete sentences, etc. following the formatting guidelines in the doc.)
- If you are listed as an author on fifteen complete glossary entries, you'll get the full 30%.

If that plan produces some weird dynamics, I reserve the right to change it, but this will not change: the 30% of your grade from the glossary will be based on whether you've contributed to some minimum number of complete entries. (So, if we stick with fifteen total, that means each entry with your name on it = 2% of your final grade. If you only did ten up to spec, then you'd only get 20 of the total possible 30%.) The most likely change is that I'll increase the number of entries.

We'll be working in the doc fairly often during class time, so I expect that most of you will go above the minimum required count if you're attending class.

I'm linking the Google doc through Canvas, which should require that you be logged in to edit, so that we'll have a record of everyone's contributions. (Please be sure to double-check that you're logged in, in case this doesn't work for some reason.) You should also "sign" the entries you put substantial work into with your name.

Short Papers (40%)

At the end of each part of the course, there is a short (1,200–1,500 word) paper assignment, designed to help you practice the skills laid out in the learning objectives: the first one requires you to adopt a historicist point of view to appraise a classic dispute in anthropological theory; the second asks you to compare and contrast current-day social theorizing with work from anthropology's past; the third challenges you to trace a thread through the history of the discipline, looking at how a particular idea evolved; the fourth gives you the opportunity to locate a work of recent scholarship within the discipline's historical trajectory.

For each paper, you'll need to read one or two articles on your own; their due dates are all preceded by blank days on our schedule, to give you time to work on them. Given the circumstances, I will be fairly lenient with extensions on these. However, if you turn in an assignment late without having arranged for an extension with me, I will not give you any comments on the work.

Double down: Each paper assignment (except the final one) also includes an option to double its size, usually introducing something more open-ended that you might do with an extended word count. You can take this option on any paper, which will increase its share of your grade to 20%, displacing one of the other paper assignments. (So, you might do this if you were really into one of the short papers, or if you really didn't want to do another of them.) You still need to submit the original short version as usual, but the doubled version isn't due until the end of finals period (though you may want to do it while the original is still fresh in your mind!).

> *Fine print: Doubling applies within the 40% of the grade allocated to papers only. So you might, for instance, decide you want to double two of your papers, for each to count as 20%; then you wouldn't have to do either of the other paper assignments. But if you doubled any more, you wouldn't get any credit beyond 40%.*

Synchronous meetings (0%)

I do not take attendance in my courses, nor do I grade for "participation" in class discussion. This is a matter of accessibility and inclusion that is particularly evident now: I can't reasonably expect you all to be able to show up all the time, when you may be dealing with any of countless crises occasioned by the pandemic. So, showing up is

not part of your grade, and if you show up, I'm not going to score you based on how often or how well you speak.

That being said, I strongly encourage you to attend our synchronous meetings: they are a chance for us to think together, to clarify misunderstandings, and to work collaboratively. We will be breaking into groups and working on the annotations and glossary; if you (like me) are the kind of person that needs external structure to get your work done, this is a great way to make progress on those parts of your grade. But, if you can't make it, there will be no direct harm to your grade.

Aside from a brief framing introduction, I will not be lecturing you from my knowledge of the anthropological canon (although I will be weighing in, helping you fill in gaps in your knowledge, and guiding us through discussion). Because there are quite a few of us, I'll be making a lot of use of Zoom's breakout rooms, so that everyone has a chance to participate in discussion. Please come prepared to discuss the readings, for your own sake and for your classmates.

Since we're in crisis management mode, I have limited resources to make the benefits of synchronous class available to people who, for whatever reason, can't make it: I will record the sessions (minus the breakouts) and make them available to stream for a week, after which they will be deleted. The transience of class discussion is an extremely important feature that is poorly replicated in online learning: I want you to be able to make mistakes, to change your mind, or to take risks that having a permanent archive stifles. So, the recordings are there for people to catch up with, but not to hoard or return to. See our code of conduct for more, but briefly: ***Recording or taking screenshots of each other from synchronous discussion, or circulating such materials beyond the context of the class, is a violation of my expectations for behavior in this class. If I find out that you're doing it, I may ask you to drop the course.***

Availability

I try to be available via email, and you should generally receive a reply within 24–48 hours of emailing me. Some topics are easier dealt with in synchronous conversation, so I may ask you to come to office hours. As a rule, I do not answer messages over the weekend or after 5 pm the day before an assignment is due. Plan ahead.

I have regularly scheduled office hours to talk with students. I use an online sign-up sheet to make sure I have time to talk with the students who want to talk to me and to spread you out through the hour (see the link at the top of this syllabus or on Canvas). Some students are unclear about the purpose of office hours: these are *your* hours, and you should feel free to sign up to talk with me about anything regarding the course, anthropology, or general advice. You don't need to have a specific problem to sign up, and I enjoy talking with you outside the classroom context, so feel free to make use of them.

Late Policy

Given the circumstances, I will be very flexible this term around deadlines, but there are a few guidelines to keep in mind. All assignments have due dates in Canvas, which you should try to make in order to spread out the work. But, I know things will come up that pose challenges. You can get full credit on any assignment so long as you submit your work by the "close date" on Canvas. For the short papers and glossary, that date is the end of finals period; for the annotations, that is the end of each of the four course parts. Unless you've arranged for an extension with me, those close dates are absolute. For your short papers, if you turn them in after the deadline but before the close date, you can get credit, but you will not get any comments from me.

If you have any questions, or if unexpected problems arise, please feel free to talk with me about how we can adjust things to help you participate in the course.

Academic Integrity

Our expressions are not our own. Humans communicate with words and concepts—and within cultures and arguments—that are not of our own making. Writing, like other forms of communication, is a matter of combining existing materials in communicative ways. Different groups of people have different norms that govern these combinations: modernist poets and collagists, mashup artists and programmers, blues musicians and attorneys, documentarians and physicists all abide by different sets of rules about what counts as "originality," what kinds of copying are acceptable, and how one should relate to the materials from which one draws.

In this course, you will continue to learn the norms of citation and attribution shared by the community of scholars in the social sciences. Failure to abide by these norms is considered plagiarism, as laid out in the Tufts Academic Integrity Policy, which you should familiarize yourself with: http://students.tufts.edu/student-affairs/student-life-policies/academic-integrity-policy. I am required to report suspected violations of this policy to the Dean of Student Affairs, and consequences can be severe. If you have any questions or doubts about this policy or my expectations regarding assignments, please get in touch with me immediately. Cheating in any form will not be tolerated and offenders will be penalized, reported, and potentially removed from the class.

However, plagiarism policies tend to focus on the less productive side of the issue, urging students to be "original" and telling them what not to do (buying papers, copying text from the internet and passing it off as one's own, etc.). While you should follow these rules, I encourage you to take a more expansive view of what academic integrity means. Academic integrity is not a matter of producing purely original thought, but of recognizing and acknowledging the resources on which you draw. In light of this, I do not use "plagiarism detection" services like Turnitin. Rather than expending your energy worrying about originality, I suggest that you think instead

about what kind of citational network you are locating yourself in. What thinkers are you thinking with? Where do they come from? How might their positions in the world inform their thoughts? What is your position relative to them? How might you re-shape your citational network to better reflect your priorities or ideals?

If you are interested in these issues, I recommend these pieces:

Ahmed, Sara. 2013. "Making Feminist Points." *feministkilljoys*. http://feministkilljoys.com/2013/09/11/making-feminist-points/

Biagioli, Mario. 2014. "Plagiarism, Kinship and Slavery." *Theory, Culture & Society* 31(2-3): 65–91.

Introna, Lucas. 2016. "Algorithms, Governance, and Governmentality: On Governing Academic Writing." *Science, Technology & Human Values* 41(1): 17–49.

The Syllabus is a Living Document

This syllabus is a starting point for the course. It is subject to change as the term unfolds, in response to your feedback and my assessment of how things are going. I'll be seeking out your feedback regularly. Any changes will be discussed in class and announced via Canvas. Everything in this PDF should be identical to what you'll find on Canvas, but if there is a discrepancy, you should follow Canvas (and let me know, so I can fix my mistake). The current version number is on the front page, top-right.