

Contemporary Anthropological Theory

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This is a core seminar for doctoral students in anthropology to develop a grounding in contemporary anthropological and social theory engagements and discussions. The reading list will be developed in close consultation with students so as to reflect their own research and topical interests in formulating their dissertation projects. Some theoretical themes and sections of literature we may discuss will include: Writing Culture debates, ontology, science and technology studies, sensory anthropology and qualia, and multi-species ethnography. The course is particularly well suited to students in Anthropology and Asian Studies interested in writing ethnographically about the region, and in gaining a sense for the particularities of Anthropological Theory through intimate ethnographic narratives. Students will engage not only with the theoretical insights advanced by core texts, but also with the relationship between ethnographic research and the production of “theory”, and with questions of tone, voice and style in ethnographic writing. Finally, the course provides students with the opportunity to write their own theoretical and/or ethnographic texts, and will include writing workshops for course participants.

The course will follow a seminar format of in-class discussions in conjunction with assigned readings. Readings should be completed *before* the unit in which they are listed. It's crucial to keep up on readings, since they form the basis of the core concepts of this course, and since you will be asked to take part in and lead in-class discussions on the readings each week.