Anthropology of Oceania
ANT3341A
Astrid de Hontheim
Winter 2012

COURSE OUTLINE

Class schedule:  
Monday, 16:00-17:30  
Wednesday, 14:30-16:00  
TBT-317

Professor’s office hours:  
Vendredi, 13:45-16:45  
DMS8121  
613-562-5800, poste 1323 (pendant les heures de bureau seulement)  
adehonth@uottawa.ca

On virtual campus:  
Yes

All questions sent by e-mail should receive a response within two working days or by the next class if it takes place within the 48 hours following receiving the email. Please note that the professor reserves the right to not respond to an email if the level of language is not appropriate.

Teaching assistants:  
N/A

OFFICIAL COURSE DESCRIPTION

General introduction to the anthropology of Oceania. Provision, through the use of case studies, of a holistic analysis of cultures, societies, and change in the region.

Prerequisites: 9 credits in ANT or 54 university credits.
COURSE CONTENT

The oceanic continent is studied at different historical periods since the first European explorations in the Pacific until today. Important topics related to the intercultural encounter such as “first contacts” with Westerners, Pacific peoples’ trips to Europe, major changes occurred in the Pacific further to European invasion, the evolution of cultural creations and the meaning of “art”, and the exhibition of ritual items into museums. We will discuss how Western representations of the Pacific peoples have been progressively built through travel literature, painting and photography. This course also studies fundamental well-known issues related to Pacific societies such as “cargo cults”, the meaning of tattoo, relationships between societies and their ancestors and male initiation in Melanesia, among other rites of passage.

GENERAL COURSE OBJECTIVES

In this course we will:
1. discover the specificity of Oceania through the use of case studies;
2. describe major social institutions among Oceanic societies;
3. analyze the intercultural encounter in a colonial context;
4. discuss ethical issues in contemporary Oceania;
5. study shapes of social and religious change in post-colonial states.

TEACHING METHODS

Students’ participation and personal investigation of documentary resources are fundamental in this class. The professor will discuss Oceanic societies at different historical periods, explain major social institutions and describe in her lectures how contemporary Oceanic people cope with changing realities. Students are expected to attend lectures and to read the readings discussed in class.

By teams of two, students present a reading to the class. To work collectively eases the understanding of the text.

Among the different readings suggested in the course outline, the following one is particularly recommended: de Hontheim, Astrid. 2011. Devil Chasers and Art Gatherers: Intercultural Encounters among the Asmat. Cortil-Wodon: E.M.E. This text will be used in several chapters of the course.

Readings and lectures will provide the students some information to be used in the roles they will have to play in a debate in front of the class. This role-play will give them an opportunity to feel concerned about and to understand ethical issues occurring nowadays in the Pacific. The rest of the class will discover some new aspects of the issue - which would not have been discussed in class before - through the debate, and will participate by asking questions which the specialists (role-playing students) will answer.

Students will have the possibility - it is not compulsory - to evaluate themselves and the members of their teams after having performed their debates. It will stay strictly confidential and will help the Professor to build a more objective opinion about everybody’s efforts in the group.
EVALUATION

Complete details of each assignment will be provided by the professor in class.

1. **Two in-class tests:** Each test will count for 20% of the final grade (40% in total).
2. **Presence in class:** Students’ presence will be checked at each class (5%).
3. **Reading presentation (20% in total):**

   *Presentation in class:* Students prepare one of the readings by groups of 2-3 and present it to the other students. They give a biography of the author and try to understand his/her theoretical orientation and impact in anthropology. They provide a useful critique of the paper and answer the questions asked by the rest of the class. The presentation lasts around 30 minutes and counts for 10% of the final grade.

   *Written summary:* This short essay is composed with a summary of the presented reading, the biography of the author, a critique of the paper and a conclusion (3-6 pages [Times New Roman 12, single spaced, margins 2.5 cm], not-including the required bibliography). It counts for 10% of the final grade.

   This assignment needs to be submitted in paper form and by e-mail.

4. **A role-play debate:** Students will be divided into six groups and will prepare a debate on an ethical topic related to the Pacific (six different topics) to be presented to the class during 30 minutes for each group, followed by class discussion. A role will be assigned to each student in cooperation with his/her group. Each group will meet with the professor early in the term in order to discuss the roles allocated to each of its members. Each student is expected to gather documentation in order to provide convincing arguments to the debate. The use of multimedia is strongly encouraged. The personal involvement in the project and collective participation to the debate will count for 35% of the final grade.

   The topics are the following:
   1. Ancestor heads: art or human remains? Western collections (private or in museums) and their repatriation to indigenous museums
   2. Deforestation or exploitation of natural resources
   3. Christian missionaries faced with male initiation (or any other controversial issue such as domestic violence, abortion, the killing of twins,...)
   4. Tourism in fragile environments or “acting culture” for tourists
   5. Exoticism and the image of the Pacific on television screens, in ads and/or in magazines
   6. “Ethnic” reality shows
Components of Final Mark

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation format</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>To be determined in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short essay about the presented reading</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>The week following the presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presence in class</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>To be checked at each class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-class test 1</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>February 27, 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class test 2</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>March 26, 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Role-play debate</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>March 28 &amp; April 2 and 4, 2012</td>
</tr>
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Policy on language quality and late submissions

Class attendance is required to successfully complete this course.

You will also be judged on language quality, therefore it is recommended that you take the appropriate measures to avoid mistakes such as spelling, syntax, punctuation, inappropriate use of terms, etc. You may be penalized up to 15%, to the professor’s discretion.

Late submissions are not tolerated. Exceptions are made only for illness or other serious situations deemed as such by the professor. There will be a penalty for unauthorized late submissions. University regulations require all absences from exams and all late submissions due to illness to be supported by a medical certificate.

Absence for any other serious reason must be justified in writing, to the academic assistants of the Faculty, within five business days following the date of the exam or submission of an assignment. The Faculty reserves the right to accept or refuse the reason. Reasons such as travel, jobs, or any misreading of the examination timetable are not acceptable.

In the case of illnesses, only the Counseling Service or a doctor can issue a valid certificate for justification of a late submission or an absence.

A penalty of 5% will be given for each subsequent day following the due date (weekends not included). This goes for assignments submitted through e-mail as well, and, in this case, the time that the e-mail was received will be counted as the time of submission of the document.

We suggest that you advise your professor as early as possible if a religious holiday or a religious event will force you to be absent during an evaluation.
SCHEDULE

January 9 & 11 - Geographic Divisions of Oceania (week 1)
Readings:

Explanations about the course organization and assessment methods.

Presentation of the Professor’s fieldwork. The origin of contemporary geographic divisions (Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia). Visits of the first Pacific people to Europe.

January 16 & 18 - Intercultural Encounters in Oceania (week 2)
Presented readings:

Other readings:
• Wogan, Peter. 2006. Laughing at First Contact. Visual Anthropology Review 22(1), 14-34.

Division of the students in groups to prepare for the role-playing debates which will occur on April 2 & 4.

The construction of race and stereotypes in Oceania. The first atlas including contemporary geographic divisions. Polemics around Margaret Mead’s work in Samoa.

January 23 & 25 - “Culture”, “Tradition” and Respect for the Ancestors (week 3)
Presented readings:

Other readings:


January 30 & February 1 - Theories about Mana (week 4)
Presented readings:

Other readings:

Diversity of shapes and points of view about mana. Sacred stones and sacred stone sites in the Pacific.

February 6 & 8 - Missionaries, Christianity and Change (week 5)
Presented readings:
Other readings:

**February 13 & 15 - Cargo Cults and Millenarianisms** (week 6)
Presented readings:

Other readings:

The first “cargo cults” and movements of rebellion. The reinterpretation of the “cults” by colonial authorities.

**February 20 & 22 - Study break**

**February 27 & 29 - Dreams, Ghosts and Ancestors** (week 7)
Presented readings:

Other readings:

Test 1 on Monday 27.

The importance of dreams in knowledge.

**March 5 & 7 - Headhunting and Male Initiation** (week 8)
Presented readings:
Other readings:

The connection between headhunting and male initiations in Melanesia. Discourse on purity to justify masculine domination.

**March 12 & 14 - Sexuality, Ritual Male Sexuality and Polynesian Transvestism** (week 9)

Presented readings:

Other readings:


**March 19 & 21 - Maori Tattooing, Ancestor Skulls and Museum Collections** (week 10)

Presented readings:

Other readings:


March 26 & 28 - Role-play debates (week 11)

Test 2 on Monday 26.

Role-play debates on Wednesday 28. Personal evaluation forms available to fill in.

April 2 & 4 - Role-play debates (week 12)

Role-play debates on Monday 8 and Wednesday 12 (cont’d). Personal evaluation forms available to fill in.

**COMPLEMENTARY BIBLIOGRAPHY**


Be Aware of Academic Fraud!

Academic fraud is an act committed by a student and it can negatively affect your school evaluation (with respect to assignments, tests, exams, etc.). It is not tolerated by the University. Anyone found guilty of fraud will be liable to severe penalties.

Here are some examples of Academic Fraud:
- Plagiarize or cheat in any way;
- Present falsified research data;
- Submission of an assignment that, in part or in entirety, you are not the author of;
- Presentation of, without written permission of the professor(s) concerned, the same work from another course;

Over the years, the perfection of the Internet has strongly facilitated the discovery of cases of plagiarism. The tools that are at the disposal of your professors permit, with the help of only a few words, to retrace the origin of a text on the Web.

For more information on fraud and how to avoid it, you can refer to the Faculty web page, which offers tips to help you with your studies and the writing process for university level projects at the following address: http://www.socialsciences.uottawa.ca/eng/ugrad_tips.asp. You can also refer to the Faculty web page for information on plagiarism and university assignments: http://www.socialsciences.uottawa.ca/eng/ethics.asp.

The person who committed or attempts to commit academic fraud or who was an accomplice will be punished. Here are some examples of sanctions that could be imposed:
- The assignment or course in question will receive a grade of "F";
- An additional requirement will be added to the program of study (3 to 30 credits);
- Suspension or expulsion from the Faculty.

Over the past session, the majority of people found guilty of fraud received an “F” in their course and will need to obtain three to twelve extra credits in their program of study.

You may refer to the following address to find the regulations:
http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/info/newsletter/fraud_e.html