Fundamentals of Anthropological Theory

Course Number: 240B  
Semester: Spring  
Year: 2017  
Section: 001  
Location: 221 Kroeber  
Instructor: Hanks, W  
Units: 5  
Time: Tu Th 2 - 5 pm  
CCN: 12678

This seminar explores selected problems in basic social theory, and is designed to be taken after Anthr 240A. It will work through a series of readings organized around the following issues (in the order listed): (1) The relation between language, culture and consciousness as construed by Boas and Sapir; (2) Structure and relationality as developed in French social thought (Durkheim, Mauss, Saussure, Lévi Strauss); (3) Translation as problem and practice (Goodman); (4) Phenomenology of the body (Merleau-Ponty, Schutz); (5) Social action and kinds of social relationships (Weber, Simmel, Schutz); (6) Social practice as object and method (Bourdieu, de Certeau, Giddens); (7) Pragmatism, reflexivity and semiotics (Mead, Peirce); and (8) Ritualization and performativity (Van Gennep, Durkheim, Evans Pritchard, Austin, Goffman). The objective is to engage with a range of different theoretical approaches to constitutive aspects of social life. For each of the eight core issues, the syllabus will have suggested readings in which concepts are brought to bare on ethnographic cases.

The seminar meets for two sessions of three hours apiece, in the first of which (Tu 2-5) I will present brief lectures to frame the readings and help orient discussion. Working in pairs, seminar members will rotate in the role of leading discussion in the second half of Tu meetings. Discussion leaders should prepare handouts for all seminar members. Seminar members will also turn in a brief essay (7-10 pages) in week 6, and a final paper (15 pages) in week 14. Grades will be based on attendance and participation discussion, handouts and leadership of discussion and the two essays.

Texts:
(1) The relation between language, culture and consciousness as construed by Boas and Sapir;

(2) Structure and relationality as developed in French social thought (Durkheim, Mauss, Saussure, Lévi Strauss);

(3) Translation as problem and practice (Goodman);

(4) Phenomenology of the body (Merleau-Ponty, Schutz);

(5) Social action and kinds of social relationships (Weber, Simmel, Schutz);

(6) Social practice as object and method (Bourdieu, de Certeau, Giddens);

(7) Pragmatism, reflexivity and semiotics (Mead, Peirce); and

(8) Ritualization and performativity (Van Gennep, Durkheim, Evans Pritchard, Austin, Goffman).