Course Description

The course is designed to present various theoretical developments or debates within anthropology. It aims to provide an intensive introduction to some of the most important theoretical perspectives and to show the ways in which they have been used in explaining social and cultural processes among particular peoples. Utilising a number of ethnographic studies, both ‘classic’ and more recent, it focuses on the intimate link between theory and ethnography- an attempts to elucidate the distinctive character of anthropology. Theoretical approaches are seen in the context of anthropological field research and the various genres of ethnographic writing. The challenges of understanding some specific ethnographic cases have been influential both in and beyond the discipline.

The aim of this course is thus to enable students: (a) to understand, evaluate, and engage with contemporary debates in anthropological theory; and (b) to approach substantive questions of ethnographic interpretation in a theoretically informed manner. Above all, having explored a variety of ethnographies, students should have a clear understanding of the anthropological 'mode of thought' and its intrinsic connection with the methodological challenges embedded in ethnographic enquiry.

The course begin with colonial origin of anthropology considering how western encounters with non-western peoples in the 19th-20th centuries opened up different set of questions that continue to shape the horizons of our thought today. It then covers structuralism and Levi-Strauss, symbolic and interpretive anthropology of Clifford Geertz followed by modern and post-modern turn in anthropology coupled with ethnographic critiques.

**Course Content: The Development of Anthropology-Colonial and the Post-Colonial**

**Unit-1: Classical Approaches in Anthropology**

This unit mainly focuses on the development Anthropology from the British tradition locating its roots in functionalism and structural-functionalism.
Suggested Readings:


“Anthropologists and Anthropology” by A Kuper (1973) London: Allen Lane


“Putting Hierarchy in its Place” by Arjun Appadurai (1988), Cultural Anthropology, 3:36-49

Unit 2: Structuralist Approaches in Anthropology

This unit highlights the development of Anthropology from the French Tradition particularly with the emphasis of structuralism.

Suggested Readings:


Unit 3: Interpretive and Symbolic Approaches in Anthropology

This unit concentrates on the development of Anthropology from the American tradition of cultural Anthropology.

Suggested Readings:

“Interpretive Anthropology” by Michael Fisher (1977) in Reviews in Anthropology, 4:391-404


Unit 4: Modern and Postmodern Approaches in Anthropology

This unit mainly covers the modernists and post-modernists cultural and ethnographic critiques in Anthropology.

Suggested Readings:


Assessment Information

The course will be assessed by a combination of (i) assessed course work in the form of class presentation (10%), (ii) an essay (word-limit 3,000mx) to be submitted towards the end of the Semester (20%) (iii) Mid-term exam. (30%), (iv) Final exam (40%).