

COURSE OUTLINE

The 'Culture' question in Anthropology

ANT6103_A
David Jaclin
Winter, 2015

Class schedule:	Thursdays, 14:30 - 17:30 FSS 10003
Professor's office hours:	Wednesdays, 15:00 – 17:00 (or by appointment) Office FSS10038 613-562-5800 poste 6132
E-mail:	djaclin@uottawa.ca All questions sent by email should receive a response within two working days or by the next class if it takes place within the 48 hours following your email. Please note that the professor reserves the right to not respond to an email if the language is not appropriate.
On virtual campus:	Yes

OFFICIAL COURSE DESCRIPTION

Historical and critical in-depth analysis of the contributions and limitations of the notion of 'culture' in anthropology revolving around major issues in the discipline: identity transformations; decolonization; socio-economic upheavals and migration; global dynamics and problems of pluralism; multiculturalism and interculturalism.

GENERAL COURSE OBJECTIVES

If the term 'culture' puzzles anthropologists, it is arguably because the reality it refers to is in itself troubling. Definitions of the term vary from a systematic sharing of traits to a more or less random *agencements* of anthropogenic practices. Which makes the concept of culture problematic not only in terms of its semiology but also in regards to its (teleological?) performativness. In fact, if people *make* cultures and if cultures *make* people in return, how can we envision not only certain people and their cultures, but the simultaneous making of both cultures and people?

Instead of looking at cultural activities from the point of view of pre-ordinated cultures, this seminar will explore the term culture (and the complex relational processes it suggests) from the perspective of cultural events - meaning activities of collective becomings (some ordinary, others extraordinary).

Throughout the semester, we will move across the histories of the meanings of the word with some of the classics (Tylor, Boas, Mauss, Lévi-Strauss) as well as with current approaches inviting to expand its boundaries to all social arrangements (Lock & Nguyen, Lock & Faquhar), make it multiple (Geertz, Ortner, Leslie), experimental (Fischer) or to move beyond the notion of culture in its ontological opposition to nature (Descola, Ingold, Mol, Viveiros de Castro).

In order to grasp some of the implications of applying particular notions of culture during research (in written accounts, as well as during fieldwork), discussions will be anchored in case studies borrowed from synthetic biology tissue culture, Zen Buddhism gardening and American artisanal cheesemaking. The seminar will examine different traditional aspects of 'cultures' (like emerging popular sub-cultures and other complex social relational entanglements), but also of actual cultivation practices (like cell cultures and other kinds of **growing** activities). Asking questions like what grows and what is grown, but also what could be grown or what would probably never be grown - or cultivated -, students will then be invited to articulate and deepen their understanding of some of the notions of culture within their own work and discuss them at length during the class.

TEACHING METHODS

Discussion based on attentive reading of the required texts will be the main pedagogical method used in this seminar. Videos will also be used. Students will be invited to animate two of the seminars around texts they will select in line with their interests during the introductory class of January 8th.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

Components of Final Mark

Evaluation format	Weight	Details
Contribution to discussions	20 %	- Presence and participation (10%) - Contribute one question/comment for each text to be discussed in class in order to stimulate the debate (10%)
Seminar presentations	20% + 20% = 40 %	Two texts from the syllabus will be attributed to each student who will: 1. Do an oral presentation (more or less 15 minutes) in class (10%) 2. Hand in a synthesis after the presentation that includes, mobilizes and discusses comments from the in-class discussions (10%)
Final essay	40 %	Essays are between 7 to 10 pages, Times New Roman 12pts, double-spaced and are due April 16th

SCHEDULE

DATE	COURSE	READINGS
Week 1_ Jan 15 th	Introduction and planning of the seminar	
Week 2_ Jan 22 nd	Genealogies 1 - (<i>filiation</i>)	Fischer (Geertz)
Week 3_ Jan 29 th	Genealogies 2 - (<i>generation</i>)	Faquhar & Lock (Helmreich & Roosth)
Week 4_ Feb 5 th	Ecologies 1 - (<i>way faring</i>)	Ingold (Paxson)
Week 5_ Feb 12 th	Ecologies 2 - (<i>relations</i>)	Massumi (Paxson)
Week 6_ Feb 26 th	Biologies 1 - (<i>tropes & Umwelt</i>)	Von Uexküll + (Paxson)
Week 7_ Mar 5 th	Biologies 2 - (<i>milieux</i>)	Simondon (Paxson)
Week 8_ Mar 12 th	Communications 1 - (<i>information</i>)	Bateson (Paxson)
Week 9_ Mar 19 th	Communications 2 - (<i>process</i>)	Franklin (Paxson)
Week 10_ Mar 26 th	Field-work (<i>engagement</i>)	Latour (Paxson)
Week 11_ Apr 2 nd	Time & space (<i>immersion</i>)	Linstead & Mullarkey (Helmreich)
Week 12_ Apr 9 th	Art, poetry & literature (<i>creation</i>)	To be determined (Debaize)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Week 2

- Fischer, Michael 2007, « Culture and Cultural Analysis as Experimental Systems » in Cultural Anthropology. 22(1): 1-65.

- Geertz, Clifford 1973, *The Interpretation of Cultures*. Basic Books: USA: 1-30.

Week 3

- Faquhar & Lock 2007, « Introduction » in Lock & Faquhar (eds.) *Beyond the Body Proper. Reading the Anthropology of Material Life*. Durham, London: Duke University Press. Pp 1-18

- Helmreich & Roosth 2010, « Life Forms: A Keyword Entry » in *Representations*. 112:27-53.

Week 4

- Ingold, Tim 2004, « Culture on the Ground. The World Perceived Through the Feet » in *Journal of Material Culture*. 9(3):315-340.

- Paxson, Heather 2013, *The Life of Cheese. Crafting food and value in America*. University of California Press. Pp 1-29.

Week 5

- Massumi, Brian 2002, *Parables for the Virtual*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 68-75. [Excerpts available online at: <http://books.google.com/books?id=yXUPCX5axbcC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false/>]
- Paxson, Heather 2013, *The Life of Cheese. Crafting food and value in America*. University of California Press. Pp 30-62.

Week 6

- Von Uexküll Jakob (1934) 2010, *A foray into the worlds of animals and humans: With a theory of meaning*. Mineapolis, University of Minnesota Press. Pp 1-53 & 209-244.
- Paxson, Heather 2013, *The Life of Cheese. Crafting food and value in America*. University of California Press. Pp 63-94.

Week 7

- Simondon, Gilbert 1958, *On the Mode of Existence of the Technical Objects*. Translated by Nenia Mellamphy (1980), University of Ontario, pp. 1-50. [Available on line at: <http://dephasage.ocular-witness.com/pdf/SimondonGilbert.OnTheModeOfExistence.pdf>]
- Paxson, Heather 2013, *The Life of Cheese. Crafting food and value in America*. University of California Press. Pp 95-127.

Week 8

- Bateson, Gregory (1972) 1987, « A Theory of Play and Fantasy » in *Steps to an Ecology Of Mind*. Northvale, London: Jason Aronson Inc. Pp. 183-199
- Paxson, Heather 2013, *The Life of Cheese. Crafting food and value in America*. University of California Press. Pp 128-157.

Week 9

- Franklin, Sarah 2013, *Biological Relatives. IVF, Stem Cells and the Future of Kindship*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 1-29.
- Paxson, Heather 2013, *The Life of Cheese. Crafting food and value in America*. University of California Press. Pp 158-186.

Week 10

- Latour, Bruno 2009, « Spheres and Network. Two ways to Reinterpret Globalization » in *Harvard Design Magazine*, 30, pp. 138-144. [Available online at: <http://www.bruno-latour.fr/sites/default/files/115-SPACE-HARVARD-GB.pdf>]
- Paxson, Heather 2013, *The Life of Cheese. Crafting food and value in America*. University of California Press. Pp 187-218.

Week 11

- Linstead & Mullarkey 2003, « Time, Creativity and Culture: Introducing Bergson » in *Culture and Organization* 9(1): 3-13.
- Helmreich, Stefan 2009, *Alien Ocean. Anthropological Voyages in Microbial Seas*. Berkley: California University Press. Pp 212-249.

Week 12

- Debaize, Didier 2012, « What is Relational Thinking » in Boucher, M-P., Harrop, P. eds. *Milieus, Techniques, Aesthetics, INFLeXions*, No.5. [Available online at: http://www.inflexions.org/n5_debaisehtml.html]

RESOURCES FOR YOU

FACULTY MENTORING CENTRE - <http://www.sciencesociales.uottawa.ca/mentor/fra/>

The goal of the Mentoring Centre is to help students with their academic and social well-being during their time at the University of Ottawa. Regardless of where students stand academically, or how far along they are in completing their degree, the Mentoring Centre is there to help them continue on the path to success.

A student may choose to visit the Mentoring Centre for very different reasons: talking to older peers to gain insight into programs and services offered by the University, or to simply brush up on study skills (time management, note-taking, exam preparation, etc.).

In sum, at the Mentoring Centre, you can discuss all things academic and everything about life on campus with mentors who are social science students themselves and trained to answer all your questions.

ACADEMIC WRITING HELP CENTRE - <http://www.sass.uottawa.ca/writing/>

The Academic Writing Help Centre provides free, individualized help and advice for writing academic assignments. With the help of our advisors, you learn to correct your errors, to write well independently, to improve your critical analysis and to sharpen your argumentation skills—everything you need to master the official language of your choice.

CAREER SERVICES - <http://www.sass.uottawa.ca/careers/>

This unit provides an array of career-development services and resources designed to help students identify and put forward the critical skills they need to enter the work force.

COUNSELLING-SERVICE - <http://www.sass.uottawa.ca/personnel>

There are many reasons to call on the Counseling Service, including:

- personal counselling
- career counseling
- study skills counseling

ACCESS SERVICE - <http://www.sass.uottawa.ca/acces/>

The University has always strived to meet the needs of individuals with learning disabilities or with other temporary or permanent functional disabilities (hearing/visual impairments, sustained health issues, mental health problems), and the campus community works collaboratively so that you can develop and maintain your autonomy, as well as reach your full potential throughout your studies. You can call on a wide range of services and resources, all provided with expertise, professionalism and confidentiality.

If barriers are preventing you from integrating into university life and you need adaptive measures to progress (physical setting, arrangements for exams, learning strategies, etc.), contact the Access Service right away:

- in person at the University Centre, Room 339
- online at <http://www.sass.uottawa.ca/access/registration/>
- by phone at 613-562-5976

Deadlines for submitting requests for adaptive measures during exams

- midterms, tests, deferred exams: seven business days before the exam, test or other written evaluation (excluding the day of the exam itself).
- final exams:
 - November 15 for the fall session
 - March 15 for the winter session
 - Seven business days before the date of the exam for the spring/summer session (excluding the day of the exam itself).

STUDENT RESOURCES CENTRE - <http://www.communitylife.uottawa.ca/en/resources.php>
These centres strive to meet all sorts of student needs.

POLICY ON ATTENDANCE, LATE SUBMISSIONS AND LANGUAGE QUALITY

Attendance is required for the successful completion of this course. Absences must be justified, and unauthorized late arrivals carry a penalty.

Absences from exams and the late submission of assignments must be supported by a medical certificate. See the University policy on this matter.

<http://www.uottawa.ca/governance/regulations.html#r36>

Absences for any other serious reason must be justified in writing to the professor or to the academic secretariats of the Faculty within **five business days** following the date of the exam or the assignment deadline. **The professor or the Faculty reserves the right to accept or refuse the reason put forward. Justifications such as travel, jobs or the misreading of the examination timetable are not acceptable.**

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.

Late assignments will be penalized (10%) for each subsequent day (including weekends) following the due date if justification is not acceptable.

You will be judged on your writing abilities. It is recommended to take the appropriate measures to avoid mistakes such as spelling, syntax, punctuation, inappropriate use of terms, etc. You will be penalized by (10%).

BE AWARE OF ACADEMIC FRAUD

Academic fraud consists of dishonest and wrongful acts on exams, tests or assignments, resulting in flawed grades and assessments. The University does not tolerate academic fraud, and anyone found guilty of this behaviour is liable to severe penalties.

Here are some examples of academic fraud:

- Plagiarizing or cheating in any way;
- Presenting falsified research data;
- Submitting an assignment of which you are not the sole author ;
- Presenting the same work from another course without written permission from the professors concerned.

With the development of the Internet these past years, it has become much easier to detect plagiarism. Indeed, given the powerful tools now at their disposal, your professors can, by typing a few simple words, readily trace the exact source 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/undergraduate/student-life-academic-resources>.

You can also refer to the Faculty web page for information on plagiarism in university assignments: <http://web5.uottawa.ca/mcs-smc/academicintegrity/home.php>.

Persons who commit or try to commit academic fraud, or who are accomplices in fraud, will be penalized. Here are some of the possible sanctions:

- a grade of **F** for the assignment or course in question;
- the imposition of three to 30 more credits as a condition of graduation;
- suspension or expulsion from their faculty.

To consult the regulation, go to: <http://www.uottawa.ca/governance/regulations.html#r72>.