

Faculty of Economic, Social and Political Sciences



ANTR3100 Foundations of anthropology

[30h] 3.5 credits

This course is taught in the 1st semester

Teacher(s): Pierre-Joseph Laurent
Language: French
Level: Third cycle

Aims

To enable students to find their way in the current arena of anthropological problems and research.

To introduce them to the meaning of matters associated with the foundations of anthropology.

The setting up of an anthropological discourse based on the various currents where it has been formulated, with a view to putting the various cultural structures that have made it possible, and the sectors where its unity is nowadays researched (nature, the psyche and social issues), into a historical perspective.

Main themes

First objective: Through the guiding light of the perception of time (i.e. the relationship of human beings to death), the exposition will, on the basis of temporal (the Renaissance and the West at the present time) and spatial (a traditional African family) decentring, report on the upheavals that have recently taken place in our perception of nature and of human unity.

Second objective: The focus will be on contemporary conflicts of basic ideas through an attempt to interpret the most important, recent inputs of writers in these disciplines who have contributed to research on the basis of anthropology (i.e. astrophysics, ecology, ethnology, ethology, genetics, linguistics, paleo-anthropology, philosophy, pre-history and psychology).

Content and teaching methods

Part I: Humankind against nature - modernity (the 17th century to the beginning of the 20th century) and the conception of a new time:

1. science in the Renaissance and the Baroque period (16th century);
2. time and science during the Classical period (17th-18th centuries);
3. modernity, or the singularity of universalism - a return to Kosellek's transcultural categories.

Part II: The perception of time and death in ancient (mythical) societies:

1. the institution of time and the symbolisation of death in ancient societies - basic principles;
2. empirical thickening - composition of the human person among the Mossi (Burkina Faso);
3. the foundations of traditional thinking about time.

Part III: Human nature a lost paradigm? Or the discovery of the time of finiteness:

1. time rediscovered - from the Big Bang to modern humankind;
2. paleo-anthropology: following in the African footsteps of our ancestors;
3. a transversal interpretation of Hominisation;
4. the contributions of ethnology (hunter-gatherers) and of ethology to basic anthropology;
5. the contribution of historical linguistics to the debate on basic anthropology;
6. the contribution of psycho-analysis to basic anthropology;
7. a provisional synthesis - towards a basic anthropology.

Other information (prerequisite, evaluation (assessment methods), course materials recommended readings, ...)

A good theoretical basis in human and social sciences.

DES students in anthropology: This course belongs to the section of the course called "prospective anthropology", for which assessment of the whole course takes the form of a single examination before a jury of senior academics. On the basis of a 20-page piece of written work that has been produced about a substantive issue drawn from their field, and previously discussed with the tutor, students will demonstrate their synthesised understanding of the concepts, the methodology and the theories that have been taught. They have to defend themselves orally before a jury of professors.

Other students: An oral examination based on a written 20-page document that has been previously handed in.

The course consists largely of lectures, and is supported by visual documents (e.g. a video, slides and transparencies).

Students will be given a reading list.

Other credits in programs

ANTR3DS	Diplôme d'études spécialisées en anthropologie		Mandatory
SOC2M1/AN	Master en sociologie et anthropologie (option anthropologie)	(3.5 credits)	Mandatory
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