

**Theory 2: Anthropology of Affect****Prof. Margot Weiss****Office Phone:** 685-5754**Email:** mdweiss@wesleyan.edu**Office:** Center for the Americas, Rm. 211**Office Hours:** Mondays and Thursdays, by appointment: <http://calendly.com/margot-weiss>

Theory 1 and 2 are core courses for the Anthropology major, designed to elucidate historical influences on contemporary anthropological theory. This semester, our topic is the anthropology of affect.

**Affect** – to affect and be affected. Anthropologists and other social theorists from Durkheim onward have considered questions of bodies, sensation, emotion, and social change. In recent years, the “affective turn” in the humanities and humanistic social sciences has brought renewed attention to these dynamics. For some, affect is contrasted with emotion: it is potential or capacity, not set cultural meaning. For others, affect is contrasted with structure or form: it is bodily sensation or intensity—dynamic, energetic, mobile. And for others still, affect might enable us to grasp how it feels to inhabit a life world, a particular atmosphere, texture, sensuality, the feel of things.

This course explores a range of theories of affect, foregrounding anthropology’s distinctive contributions to and critiques of the study of affect. Readings will tack between more theoretical essays and ethnographic representations of affect, sensuality, force/mobility, and emotion.

This course is part of the Social, Cultural, and Critical Theory Certificate.

**Course Readings**

1. Deborah Gould (2009), *Moving Politics: Emotion And ACT UP's Fight Against AIDS*. University of Chicago Press. 9780226305301.
2. Ann Cvetkovich (2012), *Depression: A Public Feeling*. Duke University Press. 978-0-8223-5238-9
3. Anne Allison (2013), *Precarious Japan*. Duke University Press. 978-0-8223-5562-5
4. Kathleen Stewart (2007), *Ordinary Affects*. Duke University Press. 978-0-8223-4107-9
5. **OPTIONAL:** Ruth Behar (1997), *The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology That Breaks Your Heart*. Beacon Press. 978-080704631-9

All essays are available on the course Moodle. Books are at Broad Street Books and on reserve at Olin library.

**Course Assignments**

- Attendance and Participation – 10%
- Weekly Discussion Questions – 15%
- 4 Book Précis – 40%
- Final Paper Proposal/Annotated Bibliography – 5%
- Final Paper/Project – 30%

**Participation: 10%**

This is an intensive, reading-heavy course, so your active participation is crucial to its success. I expect you to come to class on time and prepared, and to contribute to our discussion in a relevant and respectful way. We will be reading challenging theoretical essays, so participation in this course means coming to class ready to ask questions, to think about what is at stake, and to begin to forge your own

analysis. Your participation should be grounded in the reading; pointing us to relevant sections of an article or to a particular quote is most productive. Remember, participation does not just mean talking, it means contributing to our collective learning.

#### Weekly Discussion Questions: 15%

You'll need to post 1 (or, if you like, 2) discussion question on our class Moodle by midnight the night before our Monday or Wednesday class (your choice). The question should be a real, actual question that you would like to take up during our class. You will likely need a few sentences to explicate your question: make sure you give enough information for your question to be generative (aim for questions you think might link to other important ideas or topics, get at the heart of some theoretical issue, or open up a new way of thinking). Formulate your question *after* you have completed the reading for that day. I will on occasion ask you to share your question in class. If you would like to boost your class participation grade, you can post answers or thoughts about your classmates' questions on the Moodle site anytime before or after the class.

#### Book Précis: 35%

For each ethnography that we read, you will write a 4 page (give or take) précis. It is a "précis" because it is akin to an academic book review (but it is NOT a book report!).

Your précis has three parts:

- 1) a short summary of the key ideas / main point of the ethnography (1-2 paragraphs). Make sure you indicate the core idea, method, location, theme/topic, etc. This will serve as a reminder to you when you look at your précis in the future.
  
- 2) an analysis of the content, structure, and form of the text (1 ½ - 2 pages). What is the author arguing? What is their hypothesis and how do each of the chapters contribute (or detract) from the argument? Think about the author's key interlocutors, their goals and motivations, their writing (and research) strategies, the intellectual field and framework within which the text is located. How does the structure of the text work with its conceptual, theoretical, and analytical content?
  
- 3) a discussion of one or two ways this text connects to other work we've read in the course (1 - 1 ½ pages). You might, for all ethnographies, consider the guiding question of how this text represents affect, or you might uncover other important links to the other essays and ethnographies we have read.

The précis is intended to help you take apart and develop your own analysis of each ethnography, and ethnographic writing and theorizing in general. It is an occasion to have an intellectual conversation with each author. At the end of the course, you will have a handy set of précis for each ethnography that will serve you well in future Anthropology (and other) courses. **The précis is due in class on the day we finish reading the ethnography.**

#### Final Paper Proposal/Annotated Bibliography: 5%

You will turn in a proposal for your final paper (see below) that outlines your research question / starting point in 300-500 words, and includes an annotated bibliography of at least three sources (one paragraph per source) that you have consulted. Ask me if you have any questions on appropriate sources. Your proposal should be as detailed as possible; the point is for you to do some preliminary research on your paper topic so that you understand the scholarly conversation around it, and get a jump-start on the final paper. After you turn in your proposal, we will meet to discuss it so that I can

give you additional recommendations and assistance.

### Final Paper/Project: 30%

Your final assignment is a research paper (or other substantive project) on the aspect of anthropological theory and affect of your choice. The paper should be 8-10 typed, double-spaced pages. Choose a topic in which you are particularly interested, and integrate the concepts and frameworks you have learned in the course with new perspectives you have researched on your own. Be on the lookout throughout the semester for something you want to examine, and be sure to come meet with me to discuss / brainstorm ideas. Final papers are due **5/14 by 5pm**

### **Course Policies**

**1. Policy on Absences:** You may miss two classes without explanation or penalty: think of these as your sick (or health) days, and take them as you see fit. I do not accept “excused” absences except in the case of catastrophic happenings, for which I will expect to be notified by your class dean/other Wesleyan official. If you miss more than 2 classes, I may ask you to withdraw. If you miss more than 5 classes, you will fail the course.

**2. Policy on extensions and late papers:** I do not grant extensions. I will accept late précis with a grade penalty of ONE letter grade (=10 points) per day. You cannot submit discussion questions late.

**3. Policy on computers/cell phones in the classroom:** Please talk with me if you want to use your laptop to take notes, store readings, or you have another documented reason for having it in the class. Otherwise, please do not use your laptop, cell phone, or other device during our class.

### **Resources**

Please come see me in office hours if there is any course material you do not understand, if you want to talk through the course material or dynamics, or if you need guidance on my expectations for any aspect of this course. Use my online calendar—<http://calendly.com/margot-weiss>—to make an appointment. If you cannot make any of my available times, email me and I will work out an alternative time to meet with you.

### **Disability Resources**

Wesleyan University is committed to ensuring that all qualified students with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from its programs and services. To receive accommodations, a student must have a documented disability as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and provide documentation of the disability. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact Disability Resources as soon as possible.

If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact Dean Patey in Disability Resources, located in North College, Room 021, or call 860-685-5581 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations.

### **Honor Code**

All work must be done in compliance with the Honor Code. If you need help with proper citations or you have questions on how to avoid plagiarism, let me know or contact the **Writing Workshop**: <http://www.wesleyan.edu/writing/workshop/>

## Course Schedule

### Monday, Jan 26: Course Introduction

### Wednesday, Jan 28: The Affective Turn

- Gregory Seigworth and Melissa Gregg (2010), “An Inventory of Shimmers” *The Affect Theory Reader*
- Emily Martin (2013), “The Potentiality of Ethnography and the Limits of Affect Theory” *Current Anthropology*
- Affect and Anthro – online

## (Re)theorizing Affect I: Communitas and Collectivity

### Monday, Feb 2: “Collective effervescence”

- Émile Durkheim (1915), excerpts from *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*

### Wednesday Feb 4: Communitas

- Victor Turner (1969), “Liminality and Communitas,” in *The Ritual Process*
- Victor Turner (1974), “Passages, Margins, and Poverty” in *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors*
- Edith Turner (2012). “Introduction” to *Communitas: The Anthropology of Collective Joy*

### Monday, Feb 9: Collectivity and Diffusion

- Teresa Brennan (2004), “Introduction” to *The Transmission of Affect*
- Sara Ahmed (2004), “Collective Feelings or, the Impressions Left by Others” *Theory, Culture & Society*

### Wednesday Feb 11: Representing Affect I: Mobility and Movement Politics

- start Debbie Gould, *Moving Politics: Emotion and ACT-UP's Fight Against AIDS*

### Monday Feb 16:

- finish Debbie Gould, *Moving Politics: Emotion and ACT-UP's Fight Against AIDS*

### Due: Précis on *Moving Politics*

## (Re)theorizing Affect II: Emotions vs. Affect

### Wednesday, Feb 18: Language, Culture, Emotion

- Michelle Rosaldo, (1984) “Toward an Anthropology of Self and Feeling” in *Culture Theory: Essays on Mind, Self, and Emotion*
- Catherine Lutz and Lila Abu-Lughod (1990), “Introduction” to *Language and the Politics of Emotion*

Recommended: Catherine Lutz and Geoffrey White (1986), “The Anthropology of Emotions” *Annual*

*Reviews Anthropology***Monday, Feb 23: Affect vs. Emotion?**

- Brian Massumi (2002), “The Autonomy of Affect” in *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (read the “Introduction” too if you have the time)
- William Mazzarella (2009), “Affect: What is it Good For?” *Enchantments of Modernity: Empire, Nation, Globalization*

Recommended: Clare Hemmings (2005), “Invoking Affect” *Cultural Studies*

**Wednesday, Feb 25: Cross-Cultural Affect**

- Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1985), “Culture, Scarcity, and Material Thinking” *Ethos*
- Renato Rosaldo (1989), “Grief and a Headhunter's Rage” in *Culture and Truth*
- Lila Abu-Lughod (1985), “Honor and the Sentiments of Loss in a Bedouin Society” *American Ethnologist*-or-Arjun Appadurai (1985), “Gratitude as a Social Mode in South India” *Ethos*-or-Catherine Lutz (1985), “Depression and the Translation of Emotional Words” in *Culture and Depression*

Recommended: Arthur Kleinman and Joan Kleinman (1985), “Somatization: The Interconnections in Chinese Society Among Culture, Depressive Experiences, and the Meanings of Pain” in *Culture and Depression*

**Monday, March 2: Representing Affect II: Mixed Genres**

- start Ann Cvetkovich, *Depression*

Recommended: Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank, “Shame in the Cybernetic Fold: Reading Silvan Tomkins” *Critical Inquiry*

**Wednesday, March 4:**

- finish Ann Cvetkovich, *Depression*

**Due: Précis on *Depression***

**SPRING BREAK**

**(Re)theorizing Affect III: Structures of Feeling**

**Monday, March 23: Structures of Feeling**

- Raymond Williams (1977), “Structures of Feeling.” in *Marxism and Literature*
- Sianne Ngai (2004), “Introduction” to *Ugly Feelings*

**Wednesday, March 25: Feeling Capitalism**

- Michael Taussig (1991), “Tactility and Distraction” *Cultural Anthropology*
- Kathleen Stewart (1988), “Nostalgia—A Polemic” *Cultural Anthropology*
- Lauren Berlant (2007), “Nearly Utopian, Nearly Normal: Post-Fordist Affect in La Promesse and Rosetta” *Public Culture*

Recommended: Walter Benjamin, selection from *The Arcades Project*

**Monday, March 30: Affective Labor**

- Arlie Hochschild (2003), “Feeling Management: From Private to Commercial Uses,” in *The Managed Heart*
- Andrea Muehlebach (2011) “On Affective Labor in Post-Fordist Italy,” *Cultural Anthropology*
- Kalindi Vora (2012), “Limits of 'Labor': Accounting for Affect and the Biological in Transnational Surrogacy and Service Work,” *South Atlantic Quarterly*

Recommended: Michael Hardt (1999), “Affective Labor”

**Wednesday, April 1: Representing Affect III: Feeling Precarity**

- start Anne Allison, *Precarious Japan*

**Monday, April 6:**

- finish Anne Allison, *Precarious Japan*

**Due: Précis on *Precarious Japan***

**(Re)theorizing Affect IV: Sensation / Sensuality**

**Wednesday, April 8: Intensity and Sensation**

- Giles Deleuze (1996), “Percept, Affect, Concept” in *What is Philosophy?*
- Nigel Thrift (2004), “Intensities of Feeling: Towards a Spatial Politics of Affect,” *Geografiska Annaler*

Recommended: Spinoza, Book III, Prop. 2 in *Ethics*

Félix Guattari (1996), “Ritornellos and Existential Affects,” *The Guattari Reader*

**Monday, April 13: Sense, Loss, Memory**

- C. Nadia Seremetakis (1994), “The Memory Of The Senses: Historical Perception, Commensal Exchange And Modernity” *Visual Anthropology Review*
- Paul Stoller (1994), “Embodying Colonial Memories,” *American Anthropologist*
- Yael Navaro-Yashin (2009), “Affective Spaces, Melancholic Objects: Ruination And The Production Of Anthropological Knowledge,” *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*

**Wednesday, April 15: Anthropology of the Senses**

- Kath Weston (2012), “Politics Ecologies of the Precarious” *Anthropological Quarterly*
- Elizabeth Povinelli (2006), “Rotten Worlds,” in *The Empire of Love*
- Paul Stoller (1989), excerpt from *The Taste of Ethnographic Things: The Senses in Anthropology*

Recommended: “On the Visceral” *GLQ*

**Monday April 20: Representing Affect III: Affect as Everyday**

- start Katie Stewart, *Ordinary Affects*

**Wednesday, April 22:**

- finish Katie Stewart, *Ordinary Affects*

**Due: Précis on *Ordinary Affects***

<b>Conclusion: Ethnography's Affect</b>
---

**Monday, April 27: Vulnerability**

- Ruth Behar (1996), excerpts from *The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology That Breaks Your Heart*
- Kamala Visweswaran (1994), "Betrayal" *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography*

**Wednesday, April 29: Hope**

- Lisa Duggan and Jose Munoz (2009), "Dialogue on Hope and Hopelessness" *Women & Performance*
- David Harvey (2000), "The Difference a Generation Makes" in *Spaces of Hope*
- Hirokazu Miyazaki (2006), "Economy of Dreams: Hope in Global Capitalism and Its Critiques," *Cultural Anthropology*

Recommended: Vincent Crapanzano (2003), "Reflections on Hope as a Category of Social and Psychological Analysis" *Cultural Anthropology*

**Monday, May 4: The Affective Turn, redux**

- review: Clare Hemmings (2005), "Invoking Affect" *Cultural Studies*
- TBD

**Last class: May 6**

Wrap-up

Final papers are due **5/14 by 5pm**