

Course Title: Anthropological Theories of Society and Culture

Course Level: BA Programme (Optional)

Total Credits: 4

Classes: 4 hours of lectures and tutorials

Course Objective:

Anthropology holistically studies humans, integrating biological, cultural, and social dimensions. In India's diverse context, it gains special relevance. This course introduces key concepts, theories, and debates in social and cultural anthropology, emphasizing Indian contributions—tribal epistemologies, Indic frameworks—and critically examines issues of caste, tribe, gender, and globalization through an integrative lens.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Explain anthropology's scope and significance in Indian society.
- Analyze key theories on caste, tribe, family, and gender.
- Apply anthropological approaches to Indian institutions and practices.
- Engage with debates on globalization, gender diversity, and indigenous knowledge with critical, culturally sensitive perspectives.

Mode of Evaluation: This is a 4 Credit Course. Students are required to:

- One Credit for **Mid-Semester Test**
- One Credit for **Term Paper** and deliver a **Presentation**
- Two Credit for the **End-Semester Examination**

Note: As per University guidelines, students who fail to complete both the Mid-Semester Test and the Term Paper (with Presentation) will not be eligible to appear for the End-Semester Examination.

Course Outline

Unit 1: Introduction to Anthropology: Indian and Global Contexts

- History and Development of Anthropology globally and in India
- Meaning, Scope, Branches, and Significance of Anthropology
- Basic Concepts: *Society and Culture* — Comparative Understanding
- Indian Social Categories: Caste, Tribe, and Communities
- Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Tribal Worldviews in India

Essential Readings

- Majumdar, D.N. & T.N. Madan (1956). *An Introduction to Social Anthropology*. Bombay.
- Evans-Pritchard, E.E. (1981). *A History of Anthropological Theory*. New York: Basic Books.
- Metcalf, Peter (2005). *Anthropology: The Basics*. London: Routledge.

- Jain, R.K. (1986). *Social Anthropology of India: Theory & Method*, ICSSR Survey of Research in Sociology & Social Anthropology, Vol I, ICSSR Publications.

Suggested Readings

- Alexander, C. Jeffrey and Steven Seidman (eds) (1990). *Culture and Society: Contemporary Debates*. Cambridge University Press.
- Banton, M (ed) (1966). *The Social Anthropology of Complex Societies*. Tavistock, London.

Unit 2: Anthropological Theories

- Social Evolutionism
- Diffusionism and Cultural Flows
- Functionalism and Structural Functionalism:
- Structuralism: Myths and Kinship
- Gender Perspectives in Anthropology
- Critique of Colonial Anthropology in India

Essential Readings

- Bernard, Alan (2000). *History and Theory in Anthropology: Changing Perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jerry D. Moore (2008). *Visions of Culture: An Introduction to Anthropological Theories and Theorists*.
- Erikson, T.H. and Nielsen, F.S. (2001). *A History of Anthropology*. Pluto Press.
- Ritzer, George (2011). *Sociological Theory*. Tata McGraw-Hill.

Suggested Readings

- Carrithers, Michael (1992). *Why Humans Have Cultures*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Davis, Kingsley (1949). *Human Society*. New York: Macmillan Co.
- Herdt, Gilbert (2020). *Third Sex, Third Gender: Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History*. Princeton University Press.
- Levine, Philippa (2017). *Eugenics: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press.
- Bashford, Alison & Levine, Phillipa (2010). *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*. Oxford University Press.

Unit 3: Macro and Micro Approaches in Social Theory

- Functionalism
- Conflict Theory
- Interactionism
- Social Exchange Theory

Essential Readings

- Turner, Jonathan (1995). *The Structure of Sociological Theory*. Jaipur: Rawat.
- Ritzer, George (2011). *Sociological Theory*. Tata McGraw-Hill.

Suggested Readings

- Metcalf, Peter (2005). *Anthropology: The Basics*. London: Routledge.
- Majumdar, D.N. & T.N. Madan (1956). *An Introduction to Social Anthropology*. Bombay.
- Jain, R.K. (1986). *Social Anthropology of India: Theory & Method*, ICSSR Survey of Research in Sociology & Social Anthropology, Vol I, ICSSR Publications

Unit 4: Contemporary Debates in Anthropology: Indian Reflections

- *The Global Condition* (Arjun Appadurai) and Cultural Flows in India
- Post-Structuralism and Relatedness: New Approaches in Indian Anthropology
- Third Gender and Gender Diversity: Indian Experiences and Discourse
- Eugenics, Ethics, and Anthropology at the Crossroads
- Anthropology and Pluralism

Essential Readings

- Appadurai, Arjun (Selected readings on cultural flows — from Unit 4 discussions).
- Metcalf, Peter (2005). *Anthropology: The Basics*. London: Routledge.
- Turner, Jonathan (1995). *The Structure of Sociological Theory*. Jaipur: Rawat.

Suggested Readings

- Bashford, Alison & Levine, Phillipa (2010). *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*. Oxford University Press.
- Levine, Philippa (2017). *Eugenics: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press.
- Rao, Amrita & Bock, Monica (2000). *Culture, Creation and Procreation: Concept of Kinship in South Asian Practice*.