

The Space and Time of Crisis:
New Anthropological Perspectives on the Current Capitalist Predicament.

“Recent Theory in Anthropology” - PhD course

Teachers:
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24th – 26th November, 2017

Since the economic meltdown of 2007-08 and the years of austerity across the European continent that followed, a sizable body of new anthropological work on the issue of crisis has been produced. Much of this theory has engaged in a timely matter, paying attention to the historicity of current processes, while some of this literature discusses how subjects engage with their precarious futurity.

In this PhD course, we would like to discuss some of the key texts published on the subject of the ever-growing contradictions that capitalism brings along. In particular, we aim to explore how the economic uncertainty marking our day and age comes to affect notions and experiences of space and time – through acceleration, scaling, projection and dispossession. The annihilation of some terrains of accumulation and the simultaneous emergence of new territories dedicated to the production of capital is a key dynamic of a capitalist system that is seemingly perennially staggering from crisis to crisis.

We will couple an exploration of the effects that such large-scale spatial and temporal movements have on people’s lives with a focus on the various coping mechanisms that anthropologists have also identified amongst their informants living amidst crisis. For instance, people’s capacity to imagine better futures – i.e. their ability to hope –but also, through resistance, enact upon the formation of alternative scenarios, has become a focal point for many scholars who are trying to make sense of how people counter the everyday economic and social dilemmas they are faced with.

Specifically, we will look at the following sub-themes / bodies of literature:

1. Capitalist reconfigurations of space and time

Literature:

David Harvey. *Limits to Capital*. (Chapter 11: The theory of rent), Verso, 2006.
Laura Bear. *Navigating Austerity: Currents of debt along a South Asian river*, Stanford university press (entire monograph), 2015.
Caitlin Zaloom: *Out of the pits: Traders and technology from Chicago to London* (first chapter: Finance from the floor.) University of Chicago Press, 2006.

2. Provincializing Austerity. “Fixing” Euro-America’s decline?

Literature:

Theodoros Rakopoulos. *The Global Life of Austerity* (introduction), Berghahn: Critical Interventions, 2017.
John and Jean Comaroff. *Theory from the South: Or, how Euro-America is evolving towards Africa* (introduction), Paradigm, 2012.
E. Paul Durrenberger and Gilsil Palsson. *Gambling Debt: Iceland’s rise and fall in the global economy* (introduction), Colorado University Press, 2015.

3. The temporalities of crisis

Literature:

Henrik Vigh. “Crisis and Chronicity”: Anthropological perspectives on continuity and decline, *Ethnos* 73 (1): 5-24, 2008.
Jane Guyer. “Prophecy and the near future: Thoughts on macroeconomic, evangelical and punctuated time, *American Ethnologist* 34(3): 409-421, 2007.”.
Victoria Goddard. “This is history. Nation and Experience in Times of Crisis”, *History and Anthropology* 3: 267-286, 2006.

4. Coping with Crisis: From Resistance to Hope – and Back?

Literature:

Vincent Crapanzano. *Imaginative horizons. An essay in literary-philosophical anthropology*. Chicago University Press, 1-12 (introduction) and 178-210 (“World-Ending”), 2003.
Hirokazu Miyazaki. *The Method of hope: Anthropology, philosophy and Fijian Knowledge*, Stanford University Press, 1-30 (introduction), 2004.
Susana Narotzky and Niko Besnier. “Crisis, value, and hope: Rethinking the economy”. *American Ethnologist* 55(9): S4-16, 2014.

Schedule / Time-table

Location: Department of Social Anthropology, University of Oslo, Blindern
(Eilert Sundt Building, 6th floor, Room 648)

24th November:

3pm – 5pm: Welcome round & first discussion of how individual PhD projects relate to course topic.

7pm: dinner (optional, location TBA).

25th November:

9.30am – 11.30am: *Capitalist reconfigurations of space and time*

11.30 – 12.30pm: lunch

12.30- 14.30: *Provincializing Austerity. “Fixing” Euro-America’s decline?*

14.30 – 15pm: Coffee break

15pm – 17pm: *The temporality of crisis*

7pm: dinner (optional, location TBA).

26th November:

9.30 – 11.30 am: *Coping with Crisis: From Resistance to Hope –and Back?*

11.30 – 12.30am: wrap-up over lunch.