



Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora
Instituto de Ciências Humanas
Programa de Pós-Graduação em Ciências Sociais



ANTHROPOLOGICAL THEORY

Course: Social Science (postgraduate)

Code: 216093

Syllabus:

The subject Anthropological Theory aims to offer the general approach to the history of the ideas that shaped the different aspects of anthropological thought, inserting them in the contexts of intellectual discussion of the development of anthropology. The course intends to thematize anthropology in the framework of nineteenth-century thought, the schools of thought which constituted the so-called classical anthropological model, which are associated with the main national traditions and contemporary anthropology. Thus, we can differentiate Social Evolutionism, Diffusionism, British Social Anthropology, French Sociological School, American Culturalism and French Structuralism - the latter represented in the figure of Lévi-Strauss, who would mark the transition to contemporary anthropology. Although the structuring of ideas in schools of thought is possible, as the recurring tendency among the historians of the discipline demonstrates, we can not fail to make room for the necessary internal differences between the authors that make up each of them and the circulation of the anthropologists among them. The structuring of the history of the discipline in schools allows a better understanding of the discussion contexts necessary to understand the concatenation and change of the key ideas of anthropological thought. These key ideas shaped the analytical axes to be pursued in the different schools of thought. Basically, we can differentiate three axes that show the path taken by the discipline to its constitution as an autonomous one: the construction of the idea of primitive society and the notion of culture; the emergence of the idea of cultural relativism and the perspective of cultures in the plural, and the relationship between individual and society. The discipline also intends to examine the theoretical diversity of anthropological thought from the late 1960s. This chronological cut is very imprecise and reflects the dispersion of the production of anthropological knowledge. This dispersion, in turn, ends up problematizing the idea of the school of thought that structured the first half of the twentieth century - which is why the period was characterized as the end of the 'isms'. For the development of this process of restructuring the anthropological subject, two movements were fundamentally important: on the one hand, the process of decolonization of the world, which brought the emergence of peripheral anthropologies as a corollary; and on the other, renewed



relations with other disciplines of the human sciences and natural sciences. The consequence of these two movements was the felt need to rethink the conceptual scheme that was built in the period of formation of anthropology. These two movements do not have to be thought of in isolation, given that with the development of the world made possible by the change of the world and, immediately, of the theoretical schemes used to think it, they sought new channels of communication between the discipline and the rest of the sciences and of the humanities, in order to find new metaphors to deal with mutant realities. Not having the possibility of great organizing schemes, the passage through the diversity of the ideas of the period will be based on key names, possessors of significant production and that have represented movements of rupture with the classic scheme.

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