BANC 108: THEORIES OF CULTURE AND SOCIETY
TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT
(TMA)

Course Code: BANC 108
Assignment Code: BANC 108/ASST/TMA/July 2026- January 2027
Total Marks: 100

There are three Sections in the Assignment. You have to answer all questions in all the Sections.

Assignment – I

Answer the following in about 500 words each. 2X20= 40

a. Discuss the basic premises of the evolutionary school and examine its criticisms.
b. Write a note on the American cultural tradition.

Assignment – II

Answer the following in about 250 words each. (Write Short Notes) 2X10=20

a. Examine some of the classical anthropological works on symbolic and interpretive approach.
b. Explain Lévi- Strauss's contribution to structuralism.

Answer the following questions in about 75 words each. 5X2=10

a. Malinowski
b. Marxian theory
c. Social integration
d. Dialogical ethnography
e. Neo evolutionism

Assignment – III

a. Define theory and examine the need for a theory in an ethnographic study. **10**
b. Prepare a synopsis to study the social aftermaths of the COVID-19 pandemic and digital learning. With relevant justifications, write a note on which theory you would apply to study the topic. **20**

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a. Discuss the basic premises of the evolutionary school and examine its criticisms.

Answer

The evolutionary school was one of the earliest systematic approaches in social and cultural anthropology. It developed mainly during the nineteenth century when scholars began explaining similarities and differences between societies through historical change rather than supernatural causes. Edward B. Tylor, Lewis Henry Morgan, Herbert Spencer and J. J. Bachofen were among its important contributors. Influenced by ideas of progress and developments in the natural sciences, they asked how human institutions, beliefs and technology had developed over time. Their work gave anthropology a comparative framework, although many assumptions have since been challenged.

Basic premises of the evolutionary school

Unity of humankind and the human mind. Classical evolutionists generally assumed that all human populations possess essentially comparable mental capacities. Therefore, similar needs and similar circumstances could produce comparable cultural inventions in different parts of the world. This idea, often called the psychic unity of humankind, helped them look for common patterns beneath cultural diversity. It was a useful alternative to explanations that treated different peoples as separate kinds of humanity.

Evolution from simpler to more complex forms. Evolutionists proposed that human societies had moved over long periods from relatively simple forms of social organisation to increasingly differentiated ones. They interpreted transformations in family life, property, government, religion and technology as signs of cumulative change. Morgan's well-known scheme of savagery, barbarism and civilisation arranged broad phases around technological criteria, including methods of obtaining food, pottery, domestication and writing. Such labels are historically important but are not suitable classifications of living societies today.

Unilinear development and an assumed common sequence. Many nineteenth-century writers believed that all societies passed, or would eventually pass, through essentially the same stages of development. The societies of their own industrial Europe were frequently placed at the highest stage. The order of stages was treated as a general law: institutions might develop at different speeds, but their direction of movement was expected to be alike. Spencer linked increasing social complexity with differentiation and integration, drawing an analogy between organisms and societies.