

Course Syllabus

01.070.365.01 /01.590.365.01

Anthro/LAS 365: Law, Justice and Rights in Bolivia and

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Anthro/LAS 366: Research Practicum in Law, Justice and Rights in Bolivia

Prof. Daniel M. Goldstein

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Course Description

How does law work in Latin America? What does “justice” mean in other cultural contexts? What are “rights,” and how are they understood and practiced in societies very different from our own? These are some of the themes that this course will explore. Conducted in the city of Cochabamba, Bolivia during the summer of 2008, this pair of courses (each worth three credits in Anthropology or Latin American Studies) will focus on topics related to the practices and realities of the Bolivian justice system, from the perspectives of those who create, manage, and work in the system, and those who are affected by it. Through readings, lectures, discussions, informal meetings, and direct participation, students will have the opportunity to learn first-hand about the workings of the Bolivian legal system, the meanings of justice, and the practice of rights by poor, indigenous people living in a Bolivian city. Students will meet and study with justice professionals in Bolivia, to learn about how a foreign judicial system operates, and will meet with human rights advocates to develop a sense of how human rights promotion and defense works “on the ground” in Latin America. Additionally, students registered in Anthro/LAS 365 will also enroll in Anthro/LAS 366, in which they will be trained in anthropological methods and conduct independent research, while working in a service capacity alongside residents of an urban Bolivian community.

This study abroad program is thus at once an academic course, a field school in Cultural Anthropology, and a service-learning program in urban Bolivia. It takes its orientation from an engaged anthropology, which holds that anthropology can take a critical and problem-solving approach to local and global issues, using the insights and tools of the discipline to work closely with local communities, helping people to understand and transform their social realities. Such an approach is increasingly necessary in a globalizing world, in which academic anthropologists are regularly called upon by their field “informants” or research collaborators to participate actively in confronting the real challenges that local communities face. This is particularly the case in Andean South America, where notions of reciprocity have historically provided the basic logic of cultural beliefs and practices. Anthropologists seeking to do field research in such a context have no choice but to be engaged anthropologists, sharing their insights, experience, and context with the people who have shared their knowledge, experience, and lives with them.

In addition to coursework on topics of the history, politics, and culture of Bolivia and the issues of law and justice in that country and the Latin American region, the field school/service-

learning program will focus on the research experience in Cochabamba, providing students with the tools and opportunities to conduct independent anthropological field research in a local community, while engaging with that community on a personal, daily level. Students will receive instruction in standard anthropological field techniques, which they will put into practice through a variety of exercises in anthropological research. As part of their research work, students will also work in a service capacity alongside local community residents, contributing something to local life in exchange for the opportunity to study and research in the community.

Course Objectives

This course is designed as part of a field school/study abroad program, in which students will learn about the realities of a Latin American society through direct participation and interaction with people, as well as by readings, discussions and regular classroom meetings. My objectives for this course are that students not only learn about the topics of law, justice and rights, but that they develop a deep understanding of what it is like to live in another society, where much of their taken-for-granted assumptions about social life are challenged on a fundamental level. As in any course whose basis is the discipline of Cultural Anthropology, I want students to appreciate the lack of clear-cut answers to daily and deeply structural social problems, and be willing to accept that ambiguity, more often than clarity, is the result of social encounters and analysis. I expect students to learn some of the techniques of anthropological research and to apply those techniques in preparing their assignments for the course. More specifically, my objectives for the course are that students:

- learn about the Bolivian justice system, and the operation of the law in Latin America more generally, understanding the realities and consequences of legal and social practice in a context of globalization;
- do all the assigned readings and writing projects by the dates due, as they would in any regular class at their home institutions;
- develop a comparative perspective on the law and how justice operates between different societies;
- improve their Spanish language skills through daily interactions and conversations;
- learn the basic techniques of anthropological field research through classroom discussion and hands-on practical application;
- gain an understanding of the process of developing an ethnographic analysis, from arrival in the field, through data collection, to writing up of results;
- participate wholeheartedly in service projects dedicated to helping the communities in which we will work;
- come to understand the realities of life in Bolivia, with a special emphasis on the problems that lack of access to the law has created for local families and communities;
- come to appreciate the usefulness of anthropology for studying and engaging with people and communities different from what is familiar to them;
- face the challenges of life in a foreign culture with humor and graciousness, showing a respect for local customs and a maturity to deal with the inevitable hardships that will arise; and
- comport themselves as ambassadors for their university and their country, remembering at all times that they are guests in another land.

Requirements and Grading

1. Attendance Class will meet two times per week for two to three hours each session, on Monday and Thursday mornings. We will also meet as a group once per week for reflection on and discussion of our field and service experiences. In addition, several events outside of class will be scheduled each week; these may include visits to meet with justice professionals, interviews with community residents, and participation in public events. Attendance at every class meeting, group outing or event is mandatory, unless excused by illness. Tardiness will not be tolerated – tardies and unexcused absences will reduce your final course grade.

In addition to the above, we will devote two to three periods each week to service and research-related activities in the study communities in which we will be working. Class will meet every Sunday for research practice and service work. Sunday is the best day to be in the field communities, as this is the day when everyone is home from work, public events are held, and people are most accessible for interviewing or service collaboration. Students wishing to attend Sunday religious services may do so in the local community. Except for when we are traveling, Saturdays will be free time for all involved in the program.

2. Reading and participation Please do all the assigned readings for each class meeting. While I have tried not to overburden you with reading, please bear in mind that this is a six-credit program, and the workload reflects this. Being prepared for class is necessary for full comprehension of the lectures and engaged participation in class discussions. Participation involves being alert and taking notes during lectures; asking questions to clarify points of misunderstanding; engaging actively in small-group activities; and contributing meaningfully and often to discussions. Keeping up with the readings is the best way to be sure you are ready to participate. You are encouraged to bring a laptop computer, if possible. Photocopies of all readings (apart from the two books listed below) will be provided.

The following books are required for purchase:

Ben Kohl and Linda Farthing, *Impasse in Bolivia: Neoliberal Hegemony and Popular Resistance* (Zed Books, 2006).

Daniel M. Goldstein, *The Spectacular City: Violence and Performance in Urban Bolivia* (Duke University Press, 2004).

3. Research and Service Research practice and service work will go hand in hand in this course. Working with someone offers an ideal occasion to get to know them, establish rapport, and begin asking questions that interest you. As you work alongside local people, you will come to learn about their problems and difficulties, and help think of ways to resolve them. Service activities for this program are described below. Students will be expected to spend a minimum of 40 hours in research and service during the course of the six-week program.
4. Assignments and Evaluation You will receive one grade for your participation in this program; this grade will count for both Anthro/LAS 365 (the classroom component) and Anthro/LAS 366 (the research/service component). Assignments should be typed, double-

spaced, and submitted by email or in hard copy format on the dates indicated. The grades will be determined on the following bases, out of 100 total points:

- a. Participation (30 points) – Students are expected to attend and participate in all meetings and class events, including research and service activities.
 - b. Field Diary (10 points) – You will keep a daily field diary, in which you reflect on your experiences doing fieldwork and service. I will collect these diaries at the end of the program. In addition, you will be called upon to share your observations and reflections verbally in weekly group discussions.
 - c. Weekly Assignments (10 points each, 60 points total) – I will review and evaluate the data you collect in the field submitted as weekly assignments, described below.
5. Language All readings, writing, and classroom discussion for this course will be in English. Most of our field trips, events and activities will be in Spanish. Students are expected to have a good knowledge of Spanish, including formal coursework to the intermediate level, prior to enrolling in the program. Private Spanish tutoring (for credit) can be arranged in Cochabamba, but this is optional and will not count towards the grade in the course.
6. Disciplinary policy There will be a zero tolerance policy for student misbehavior while on this trip. Bolivia is generally a socially conservative society, and you should conduct yourselves accordingly. While I will not be supervising your behavior outside of class activities, any reports of students getting into trouble with host families or local authorities will result in disciplinary action, possibly including the student returning home immediately and receiving a failing grade in the class. I also expect you to know and abide by the Rutgers University academic honesty policy in preparing your work for this course.

La Fundación Pro Justicia

Helping to coordinate this study abroad program is a group of Bolivian researchers and development professionals who together have formed La Fundación Pro Justicia, a non-governmental organization devoted to improving access to justice for poor and marginalized urban Bolivians. The members of Pro Justicia will help to coordinate events, supervise and facilitate research, and coordinate service activities in the study communities. You should regard them as resources but treat them with the respect you would show a professor.

Course Schedule

For each week of the program, the syllabus lists the research activities, readings, and written or other assignments students are expected to complete in the course of that week. Readings should be completed by the first course meeting of the week – written assignments are due at the last meeting of the week. If you are short of time, read the methods-related readings first, so that you are prepared to do your research for the week.

Prior to the Course

Please read Kohl and Farthing's *Impasse in Bolivia* prior to arriving in Cochabamba. This book provides an account of recent events in Bolivia that have had an impact on the social reality you will be observing and living in during your stay.

Week 1 (Thursday 6/5) – Bolivian Political Life/Arrival and Orientation

Discussion this week will be based on your reading of Kohl and Farthing; it will focus on Bolivian political history, the impacts of neoliberal reform on Bolivian society, and the emergence and rise to power of Bolivian social movements in recent years. In the methods section, students will learn about the challenges of beginning fieldwork, including site selection, obtaining permissions, establishing a local presence, building rapport, ethical issues, gender considerations, dealing with culture shock, and the relationship between field research and community service. A discussion of the history of ethnographic field research will be included.

- Reading:* 1) Crane, Julia G., and Michael V. Angrosino, “Beginning Fieldwork,” from *Field Projects in Anthropology*, pp. 13-22.
2) Goldstein, *The Spectacular City*, chapter 1.

Assignment 1: Begin keeping your field diary this week (to present during Reflection on Friday 6/6).

Week Two (week of 6/9) – Andean Culture and Society/Mapping

Class this week will provide an orientation to the culture and society of Andean peoples, including traditional beliefs and practices, family life, gender and sexuality, work and household economy, and social organization. Students will begin working with local consultants to become oriented to the sites in which they are working. Understanding space, home design, employment, and urban social dynamics will be a focus.

- Reading:* 1) Allen, Catherine J. “To Be Quechua: The Symbolism of Coca Chewing in Highland Peru.”
2) Goldstein, *The Spectacular City*, chapter 4.
3) Hammersley, Martyn, and Paul Atkinson. “Field Relations,” from *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, pp. 77-104.

Assignment 2: Socially significant map (due Thurs 6/12)

Week Three (week of 6/16) – Cochabamba and Urban Life/Diagramming Kinship

Bolivia, formerly one of the most rural countries in Latin America, is now highly urbanized. This process of migration and urbanization has transformed Bolivian society, as it has transformed many other countries in Latin America. We will explore this process, focusing on the growth of Cochabamba, its marginal communities, and the nature of urban life today in Bolivia. Students will practice the techniques of kinship diagramming, working closely with individual field consultants to prepare a kinship diagram that not only illustrates family patterns but gives a sense of the rural-urban diaspora in Bolivia.

- Reading:* 1) Goldstein, Introduction and chapters 2-3
2) Crane and Angrosino, “Charting Kinship,” pp. 44-52.

Assignment 3: Kinship diagram (due Thurs 6/19)

Week Four (week of 6/23) – Justice and the Law/Participant-Observation

As Bolivia has experienced urbanization and a turn to neoliberalism over the last 30 years, problems of income inequality, differential access to justice, and social marginalization have emerged as key social problems. We will read about these issues, and how the legal system operates in a society characterized by marked social inequities, including the unequal distribution of citizenship rights. In methods, students will be instructed in the arts of observation and participation, the kinds of data that can be acquired, and ways to interpret observations. Attention will be given to skills of taking scratch notes and writing field notes.

- Reading:*
- 1) Goldstein, chapter 5 and Conclusion.
 - 2) DeWalt, Kathleen et al. "Participant Observation." In *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology*, pp. 259-300
 - 3) Emerson, Robert M., et al. Chapters 1, 2 and 3 in *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*.

Assignment 4: Fieldnotes (due Thurs 6/26)

Week Five (week of 6/30) – Human Rights in Transnational Perspective/Interviewing

What are human rights and are they always a universal good? We will explore the transnational concept of human rights and explore their application locally in Cochabamba, to understand the relative nature of rights in different social contexts. In methods, we will study and practice techniques of unstructured, semi-structured, and focus group interviewing. Strategies of identifying interview subjects, preparing an interview guide, recording and transcription techniques, and other related concerns will be discussed and practiced.

- Reading:*
- 1) Farthing, Linda. "Social impacts associated with anti-drug law 1008"
 - 2) Hammersley and Atkinson, "Insider Accounts," pp. 77-126.
 - 3) Levy, Robert I., and Douglas W. Hollan. "Person-Centered Interviewing and Observation." In *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology*, pp. 333-364.

Assignment 5: Interview (due Thursday 7/3)

Week Six (week of 7/7) – Synthesis and Sharing

In our final week, students will reflect on their experiences during their time in Bolivia, with a particular focus on what they learned through their ethnographic research. We will discuss ways to identify key themes in research, and transforming data into written text. We will also discuss questions of ethnographic writing, and how anthropologists make choices about representation of ethnographic information.

Assignment 6: Public sharing of research (date/time TBA)

Weekly Assignments in Ethnographic Research (10 points each)

Assignment 1: Keeping a field diary

Beginning even before your arrival in Cochabamba, start keeping a daily field diary. This diary should be the place where you record your observations and experiences of your time in Bolivia, as well as your personal reactions to what you are observing and experiencing. Use the diary to reflect on your experiences and relate them to what you are reading about and discussing in the course. You will continue to keep this field diary throughout the course of this program. For this first week, be sure to consider the following questions: What are your reactions to your new reality in Bolivia? What things strike you as unfamiliar and unexpected? What things seem familiar? How are you adjusting to your homestay situation, working with a new group of students, and navigating a strange city? How does what you've seen so far match or conflict with your prior expectations? How do your prior fears seem now, and what new concerns have arisen? Write at least five pages this week in your journal, and be prepared to present a section publicly in our group reflection meeting on Friday afternoon. (Note: 10 points are awarded for this assignment, and an additional 10 for successful completion of the diary at the end of the course.)

Assignment 2: Socially significant map

With the assistance of a local "map partner," create a socially significant map. You may choose to focus on an area as small as one room or building, or as large as a marketplace, a downtown street, an entire neighborhood, or the entire city of Cochabamba. The scale of the project is up to you and your map partner to decide. Similarly, the style and formatting of the map are for you to determine. If you are artistic, you might want to draw selected areas using paint or other art supplies. If you are more linearly inclined, you might choose to use graph paper and attempt to sketch out part or all of your area to scale. The map might even be three-dimensional. Feel free to use regular street maps or other diagrams as aids, but remember: you are supposed to produce something different and much more significant than a mere street map. Let your map partner guide you to what s/he feels is the heart of the area, or walk through a building and let her/him tell you what used to be where in the past. Your map should label those spaces or locations that are significant to your map partner and the community in which s/he lives or works. Listen to how your map partner describes the personal and social significance of the place, then use your imagination to capture that significance as accurately as possible. Hand in the map, and a 2-3 page explanation of what makes this map socially significant for your map partner.

Assignment 3: Kinship Diagram

In this assignment you will be following the instructions in Crane and Angrosino's chapter "Charting Kinship." You might choose to diagram the kinship relations of a your map partner from Assignment 2, or select another person whom you know in your field site. In any case, choose someone with whom you feel comfortable, and who will be willing to sit with you for as long as it takes to map out their family tree. Make sure to explain the purpose of this activity, and offer to share the results of it with your consultant at the end. In your chart, be sure to include the following information: kin terms and relationships; personal names, ages, professions, and interesting characteristics (if any) of people on the chart; and places of origin and residence of

those on the chart. This last point is particularly important, as it will help you to identify the personal trajectory of this individual and her/his family, and to understand where spatially they are situated in Bolivia and how this has changed over time. Feel free to be as artistic as you would like to be, using whatever media you wish and creating as large a chart as is necessary. In addition to the chart, write a 2-3 page reflection on the things you learned through this activity, what you can understand about spatial mobility in Bolivia, and comment on the experience of doing the research itself.

Assignment 4: Fieldnotes

For this assignment, you will write and submit 3-5 pages of written fieldnotes, based on your participant-observation. For your participant-observation, choose either an event or a practice to observe. If you choose to study an event, identify and attend a public event – a meeting, a performance, a religious service – in which your key consultants are involved. If you choose a practice, observe someone at work or engaged in some kind of specialized activity, like making a craft or cooking a meal. In either case, observe and participate in the event or activity as much as possible, while asking questions of your consultants to get the most detailed explanations you can of what is going on. Take scratch notes of your observations, and then write up the results. Remember, don't just describe what you observe, but analyze it according to what you know of these people and the context in which they live.

From here on in, your field diary should consistently include the kinds of detailed observations and analysis that are part of fieldnote writing.

Assignment 5: Interview

Conduct a semi-structured interview, based on an interview guide that you have prepared. Focus the interview around a set of themes related to questions of law, justice and rights in Bolivia, as we have been studying in this course. Take notes during the interview; recording is optional. Write a 3-5 page description of the content of your interview, an analysis of the themes discussed and their relationship to the themes of the course, and a reflection on the interview process itself.

Assignment 6: Public sharing of research

For the final activity of this course, you will try to synthesize what you have learned during your various field activities in Cochabamba and prepare a public presentation on your findings. This can be fairly informal, and does not require you to submit a formal written component. The idea is to try and draw whatever conclusions you can about life among the people you have been working with during the course of the program, with particular emphasis on themes of law, justice and rights, broadly understood. You will also reflect on the field experience and the service work you have done in conjunction with the field research. You will present this information to your field consultants, members of Pro Justicia, and your fellow students, so that all can learn from your findings. It is particularly important that you present whatever insights you have gained to the people in the community where you have worked, so that they can see how their collaboration has produced results and that you have shared these with them.

Service Activities

A critical component of this program is the service-learning dimension. The philosophy of service-learning is that through engagement with people in the world, students can gain a much deeper understanding of social reality than through book learning alone, and can make meaningful contributions to improving the world around them. This program in engaged anthropology joins service to others with direct study of their lives and condition, to contribute to both the advancement of knowledge about a particular set of issues and problems. and direct intervention in helping people to confront those problems.

As mentioned above, we will be spending two to three periods each week in service and research activities in the communities where we will be studying. Service activities will be run through and coordinated by the Fundación Pro Justicia, in collaboration with Rutgers University.

Project 1: Constructing a Community Center in Loma Pampa

Through the support of this program, funds are being directed to the urban community of Loma Pampa, a key site of our field research and service activities in Cochabamba, for the purpose of constructing a community center. There is desperate need for such a building in this community, as residents currently have nowhere to assemble, to organize events, to hold workshops and training sessions, or other activities that would improve local collective life. This center also can be used to house a library and media center, which future Study Abroad in Bolivia programs hope to be able to provide. The resources our program is providing to the community will be used to buy materials for the construction of this center; the actual construction work will be done by community residents themselves. As part of our service learning, our entire group will spend every Sunday morning working alongside community residents to help them construct their new community center, building friendships and learning about the community in the process.

In addition to the construction project in which all students will participate, each student will also participate in one of four additional projects that our program is initiating. Students will be divided into smaller groups of three or four students each and assigned primary involvement in one of these projects, based on their individual interests and aptitudes.

Project 2: Supporting the Women's Group of Loma Pampa

In 2006, Pro Justicia helped to found a Women's Group in Loma Pampa. Like many women in Bolivia, the women of Loma Pampa work night and day to support their families, and have few if any spaces for collective gathering, mutual support, and discussion. In addition, women are frequently a major financial contributor to their family's welfare, yet lack the skills and opportunities to do so adequately. Pro Justicia created the Women's Group in order to provide a space for women to come together to discuss their problems and to help find possible solutions. Now, with the support of this Study Abroad program, the women of Loma Pampa will be able to develop a project that can help them to learn skills, generate resources, and provide for their families. Through our service, we will help the women's group to develop income-generating activities, and to use this income to better themselves and their community.

Project 3: Creating a Multimedia Library in Concordia Central

With funds from this project, we will be establishing a multimedia library in the marginal barrio of Concordia Central. The centerpiece of this library will be computers that the program is donating to the barrio. Our students will help to organize a youth group in the community, and to engage them in activities around the library, offering training in computer literacy and maintenance.

Project 4: Supporting Cultura Nativa in Concordia Central

Students will be working with a group of women in Concordia who are interested in developing a business in native crafts, helping them to get this program started. Students will assess local needs and help the group to design and initiate this activity.

Project 5: Developing a Childcare Center for Ambulant Vendors in the Cancha

We will be working with a group of ambulant market vendors who sell in the streets of Cochabamba's large outdoor market, the *Cancha*. Many of these vendors have no place to leave their children while they are at work, and desire a childcare center so that they don't have to leave their kids unattended, or have them with them in the streets all day while they sell. Students will work with the vendors to create this center, and will respond to other needs of this group to develop additional proposals for assistance that they can provide. In this and other projects, students will also work with local people to make videos and develop website content to publicize their situation and to promote the service-learning program to external audiences.