Political Anthropology (070:304), Spring 2017  
Th 2:15-5:15 p.m., Bioscience 205

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POLITICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

How do anthropologists analyze power and contemporary political life? What is cultural about politics and what is political about culture? Topics and themes this course addresses include political protest, social movements (e.g., Black Lives Matter, Tea Party, Occupy), migration, political lying, race, gender, violence, social media, and more. Assigned readings are theoretical and ethnographic works drawn mainly from anthropology, supplemented by some from other disciplines. The class format will include lectures, films, and group discussion.

Course Objectives:

• Introduce students to key theories and ethnographic works in political anthropology.  
• Help students develop critical analytical skills for interpreting contemporary political life.  
• Examine political practices and experiences in diverse geographic settings.  
• Explore how ideas about politics shape perceptions of self, family, society, nation, and citizenship.

Anthropology Department Learning Goals Met by this Course:

1. Students gain knowledge that will allow them to identify, explain, and historically contextualize the primary objectives, fundamental concepts, modes of analysis, and central questions in their major field and demonstrate proficiency in their use of this knowledge.  
2. Students are able to demonstrate proficiency in the use of critical thinking skills.

Pre-requisite: Introduction to Cultural Anthropology (070:101) or Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology (070:108).

Required Texts: Articles and book chapters will be available on the Sakai course site or through databases such as Wiley Online Library that are accessible through Rutgers libraries. Supplemental materials (such as ethnographic, documentary, and popular films) will be available online or on reserve in the Douglass Library Media Center.

Requirements include regular attendance, completing assigned readings on time (so that students are prepared to discuss them in class the week they are assigned), two in-class exams during the semester, a 30-minute quiz during week 13, pop quizzes, and short in-class presentations. Quizzes and exams will cover assigned readings, lectures, and films. There will be no final exam.
Grades will be determined as follows:

- Pop quizzes = 20%
- Exam #1 (Feb. 16) = 25%
- Exam #2 (April 13) = 25%
- 30-minute quiz (April 20) = 15%
- Attendance, participation, in-class presentations = 15%

Make-ups of the two exams and 30-minute quiz will not be allowed except in cases of serious illness. If you miss an exam or the 30-minute quiz, please notify the professor of the reason no more than 24 hours later. (Be sure to notify the professor by both voice mail and email.) *Travel plans are not an acceptable reason for missing a quiz.* Make your travel arrangements so that you will be in class when quizzes are given. Pop quizzes cannot be made up, but the lowest score will be dropped when calculating grades.

Office hours will be announced during class. Please feel free to drop in or make an appointment, and please let the professor know if you would like any assistance with course material.

Attendance: Students are expected to attend all classes. (See information below about required advance notification for a necessary absence due to a religious holiday.)

If you miss a class, please use the University absence reporting website https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me. **Students are required to see a Dean of Students for assistance in verifying the circumstances of any absence longer than one week, or when an exam is missed.**

Points will be deducted for class absences as follows: 20% of the total possible points for the attendance and participation portion of the grade will be deducted if two classes are missed; 65% will be deducted if three classes are missed; 100% if four classes are missed. Anyone who misses three or more class meetings is advised to drop the course.

Religious Holidays: Please notify the instructor during the first two weeks of the semester if you will observe a religious holiday that will prevent you from attending a class meeting. You may arrange to make up the missed session and any required work (sometimes through an oral quiz on assigned readings)—if you notify the instructor during the first two weeks of the semester.

Lateness: To avoid disrupting the class, students should arrive on time.

Classroom atmosphere: We are all responsible for creating a friendly, relaxed, and productive classroom atmosphere. That requires listening respectfully to everyone, phrasing comments constructively and politely, turning off cell phones and other electronic devices, coming to class on time, and refraining from reading the newspaper or working on
other assignments during class. *No recording devices may be used during class.*

**Communication:** Students are responsible for timely attention to email and Sakai postings for this course and therefore should check the Sakai site and their Rutgers email accounts regularly. Dates and assignments may change; all changes will be announced in class or posted on Sakai or both. To access Sakai, go to http://sakai.rutgers.edu, log in with your Rutgers userid and password, and use the course membership tool to access class materials.

**Students with disabilities** requesting accommodations: Please follow the procedures outlined at [http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/request.html](http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/request.html).

**Ethics/Academic Integrity:** Read the Rutgers academic integrity policy at [http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu). Violations include cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, denying others access to information or material, and facilitating violations of academic integrity. You are responsible for knowing what plagiarism is. For tips about how to consult sources without plagiarizing, and how to take notes so that you don't plagiarize by accident, see [http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/avoid_plagiarism](http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/avoid_plagiarism).

**Schedule of Topics and Readings**

**Week 1/Jan. 19 ~ Introduction to the Course**

**Week 2/Jan. 26 ~ Parody and Sincerity in Political Culture**

**Guest via Skype:** Professor Noelle J. Molé


Week 3/Feb. 2 ~ Lives of the Undocumented (Text, Photos, Video)

Guest: Professor Daniel Goldstein


[2-minute video] Jason De León, 2016. Undocumented Migration Project. December 5: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILRaLNjhc0w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILRaLNjhc0w)


**Reference/optional:**

Extra credit: Dr. Jason De León, Social and Behavioral Sciences Distinguished Lecture, Monday, January 30, 4:30 p.m., Alexander Library, Teleconference Room.

Week 4/Feb. 9 ~ Power


**Reference/optional:**

Week 5/Feb. 16 ~ Violence, Humor, and a Military Coup in Fiji

*EXAM #1* (Feb. 16.)

Week 6/Feb. 23 ~ Anthropology, Colonialism, Post-colonialism

Week 7/March 2 ~ Media and Political Culture

On false equivalence in media:

EXTRA CREDIT (for questions on exam #2)

Week 8/March 9 ~ Occupy Movements and the Tea Party
Roots,” pp. 141-149), Chris Hedges (“A Master Class in Occupation,” pp. 164-172), Amy Goodman and Denis Moynihan (“Occupy the Media: Journalism for (and by) the 99 Percent,” pp. 239-244), Rebecca Solnit (“Civil Society at Ground Zero,” pp. 294-299),


Reference/optional:

SPRING BREAK, MARCH 11-19

Week 9/March 23 ~ Black Lives Matter Movement


Week 10/March 30 ~ Popular Culture and Politics in Africa


**Week 11/April 6 ~ Lying and Politics**


**Week 12/April 13 ~ EXAM #2* (includes readings assigned this week)**

--- Anti-Politics Machine? Standardized Tests, Audit Culture, Democracy


**Week 13/April 20 ~ Irony, Wit, and the Cultural Politics of Austerity in Southern Europe**


**OR**


**30-minute quiz on April 20**

**Week 14/April 27 ~ Course Wrap-Up**

--- Student presentations and discussion