

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>.

Ethics/Academic Integrity: Read the Rutgers academic integrity policy at <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.

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

--Noelle J. Molé, 2013. "Trusted Puppets, Tarnished Politicians: Humor and Cynicism in Berlusconi's Italy." *American Ethnologist* 49(2):288-299. [Access via Rutgers library and Wiley Online Library—under Indexes and Databases.]

--Dominic Boyer, 2013. "Simply the Best: Parody and Political Sincerity in Iceland." *American Ethnologist* 49(2):276-287. [Access via Rutgers library and Wiley Online Library—under Indexes and Databases.]

--Short video: Awarding Berlusconi the golden tapir on "Striscia la notizia":

http://www.striscialanotizia.mediaset.it/video/tapiro-d-oro-a-silvio-berlusconi_13948.shtml

--Short video: "Gabibbo helps the workers" (no subtitles):

http://www.striscialanotizia.mediaset.it/video/il-gabibbo-in-aiuto-dei-lavoratori_13386.shtml

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

Guest: Professor Daniel Goldstein

--Daniel Goldstein, 2014. "Laying the Body on the Line: Activist Anthropology and the Deportation of the Undocumented." *American Anthropologist* 116(4): 585-601. [Access via Rutgers library and Wiley Online Library—under Indexes and Databases.]

--Hannah Arendt, 1951. "The Decline of the Nation-State and the End of the Rights of Man, 1951." In *The Anthropology of Citizenship: A Reader*, First Edition, pp. 38-39. Edited by Sian Lazar. 2013 John Wiley and Sons, Inc.

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

--Jason De León, Eduardo ("Lalo") García, and the Undocumented Migration Project, 2016. 'Photo Essay/Field Notes: A View From the Train Tracks.' *SAPIENS*, February 16. <http://www.sapiens.org/culture/prevention-through-deterrence/>

--Jason De León, 2016. "Documenting the Undocumented: A Conversation with Jason De León on Migration, Disciplinary Boundaries, and the Ethics of Objects." Deniz Daser interviews Jason De León for the American Ethnological Society, Feb. 15. <http://americanethnologist.org/features/interviews/de-leon>

Reference/optional:

-- Jason De León, 2016. "Photography in the House of Pakal." *Anthropology News* <http://www.anthropology-news.org/index.php/2016/12/22/photography-in-the-house-of-pakal/>

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

--John Hartigan, 2016. "Power." Theorizing the Contemporary, *Cultural Anthropology* website, January 21. <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/794-power>

--Eric R. Wolf, 2002 [1990]. "Facing Power—Old Insights, New Questions." In *The Anthropology of Politics: A Reader in Ethnography, Theory, and Critique*, edited by Joan Vincent, pp. 222-233. Oxford: Blackwell.

--John Gledhill, 2002 [2000]. "Anthropology and Politics: Commitment, Responsibility and the Academy." In *The Anthropology of Politics: A Reader in Ethnography, Theory, and Critique*, edited by Joan Vincent, pp. 438-451. Oxford: Blackwell.

Reference/optional:

--Michel Foucault, 1986[1976], "Disciplinary Power and Subjection." In *Power*, Steven Lukes, ed., pp. 229-242. New York University Press.

--Max Weber, "Domination by Economic Power and by Authority. In *Power*, Steven Lukes, ed., pp. 28-36. New York University Press.

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

--Susanna Trnka, 2011. "Specters of Uncertainty: Violence, Humor, and the Uncanny in Indo-Fijian Communities Following the May 2000 Fiji Coup." *Ethos: Journal of the Society for Psychological Anthropology* 39(3):331-348.

***EXAM #1* (Feb. 16.)**

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

--Talal Asad, 2002 [1991]. "From the History of Colonial Anthropology to the Anthropology of Western Hegemony." in *The Anthropology of Politics: A Reader in Ethnography, Theory, and Critique*, edited by Joan Vincent, pp. 133-142. Oxford: Blackwell.

--Michael Taussig 2002 [1984]. "Culture of Terror—Space of Death." in *The Anthropology of Politics: A Reader in Ethnography, Theory, and Critique*, edited by Joan Vincent, pp. 172-186. Oxford: Blackwell.

Week 7/March 2 ~ Media and Political Culture

--Janine Wedel, 2014. "Privatizing Media, Performing 'Truth'," pp. 101-144, in *Unaccountable: How Elite Power Brokers Corrupt Our Finances, Freedom, and Security*. New York and London: Pegasus Books.

--Dominic Boyer and Alexei Yurchak. 2010. "American Stioib: Or, what Late-Socialist Aesthetics of Parody Reveal About Contemporary Political Culture in the West." *Cultural Anthropology* 25(2):179-221.

On false equivalence in media:

--James Fallows. 2015. "Today's Hero of the False-Equivalence Struggles: *On the Media*." *The Atlantic*, September 26.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/notes/2015/09/todays-hero-of-the-false-equivalence-struggles-on-the-media/407557/>

--National Public Radio (NPR) / WNYC. 2015. "Those Who Reject Mainstream Climate Science." 2015. *On the Media*, September 25 (8-minute podcast).

Week 8/March 9 ~ Occupy Movements and the Tea Party

--William H. Westermeyer, 2016. "Local Tea Party Groups and the Vibrancy of the Movement." *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 39 (S1):121-138

--Hannah Appel, 2014. "Occupy Wall Street and the Economic Imagination." *Cultural Anthropology* 29(4):602-625. <https://culanth.org/articles/753-occupy-wall-street-and-the-economic-imagination>

--Selections from *The Occupy Handbook*, Janet Byrne, editor. New York, Boston, London: Little, Brown, and Co. [Short chapters by Michael Lewis ("Advice from the 1 Percent: Lever Up, Drop Out," pp. 3-6), Paul Krugman and Robin Wells ("The Widening Gyre: Inequality, Polarization, and the Crisis," pp. 7-17), David Graeber ("Occupy Wall Street's Anarchist 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),

--Selections from *Occupying Wall Street: The Inside Story of an Action That Changed America*, by Writers for the 99%, 2011. ("Timeline of a Movement on the Move," pp. 205-212; "POccupy—People of Color Occupy Wall Street Too!," pp. 111-122; "The Media, Occupied," pp. 167-174).

Reference/optional:

--Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson, 2013. *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism*. Oxford University Press.
--Arlie Hochschild Arlie, 2012. *The Outsourced Self*. New York: Metropolitan Books.
--Jill Lepore, 2010. "Tea and Sympathy: Who Owns the American Revolution?" *The New Yorker*, May 3. <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2010/05/03/tea-and-sympathy-2>
--Sarah Jaffe, 2016. *Necessary Trouble: Americans in Revolt*. Nation Books.
--Jeffrey Juris, 2012. "Reflections on #Occupy Everywhere." *American Ethnologist* 39(2):259-279.
--Maple Razsa and Andrej Kurnik, 2012. The Occupy Movement in Zizek's Hometown." *American Ethnologist* 39(2):238-258.
--David Nugent, 2012. "Democracy, Temporalities of Capitalism, and Dilemmas of Inclusion in Occupy Movements." *American Ethnologist* 39(2):280-283.

SPRING BREAK, MARCH 11-19

Week 9/March 30 ~ Black Lives Matter Movement

--Bonilla, Yarimar and Jonathan Rosa. 2015. "#Ferguson: Digital Protest, hashtag ethnography, and the racial politics of social media in the United States." *American Ethnologist* 42(1):4-17.
--Smith, Christen. 2015b. "Blackness, Citizenship, and the Transnational Vertigo of Violence in the Americas." *American Anthropologist* 117(2):384-387.
--Auston, Donna. 2015. "Recalled to Life: On the Meaning and Power of a Die-In." *Anthropology Now*, January 16. <http://anthronow.com/online-articles/recalled-to-life-on-the-meaning-and-power-of-a-die-in>, accessed March 16, 2016.
--Cobb, Jelani. 2016. "The Matter of Black Lives." *New Yorker*, March 14, pp. 34-40. <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/03/14/where-is-black-lives-matter-headed>
--Cox, Aimee Meredith. 2015a. "The Choreography of Survival." Hot Spots, *Cultural Anthropology* website, June 29. <http://www.culanth.org/fieldsights/690-the-choreography-of-survival>, accessed March 16, 2016.

Week 10/April 6 ~ Popular Culture and Politics in Africa

--Achille Mbembe 2006[1992]. "The Banality of Power and the Aesthetics of Vulgarly in the Postcolony." In *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader*, edited by Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta, pp. 381-400. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
--Nyairo, Joyce, and James Ogude. 2005. "Popular Music, Popular Politics: *Unbwogable* and Idioms of Freedom in Kenyan Popular Music." *African Affairs*: 225-249.

Week 11/April 13 ~ Lying and Politics

--Cathy Caruth, 2010. "Lying and History." In *Dark Times: Hannah Arendt on Ethics and Politics*, edited by Roger Berkowitz, Jeffrey Katz, and Thomas Keenan, 79-92. New York: Fordham University Press.

--F.G. Bailey, 1991. "Everyman's Truth," in *The Prevalence of Deceit*, pp. 30-34. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

***EXAM #2* (April 13)**

Week 12/April 20 ~ Anti-Politics Machine? Standardized Tests, Audit Culture, Democracy

--James C. Scott, 2012. "For Politics," pp. 101-128 in *Two Cheers for Anarchism*. Princeton University Press.

--J.K. Gibson-Graham, 2006. "Affects and Emotions for a Postcapitalist Politics." pp. 1-22, in *A Postcapitalist Politics*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.

--Karl Polanyi, 1957 [1944]. *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*, excerpts. Boston: Beacon Press.

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

--Daniel M. Knight, 2015. "Wit and Greece's Economic Crisis: Ironic Slogans, Food, and Anti-Austerity Sentiments." *American Ethnologist* 42(2): 230-246.

OR

--Stavroula Pipyrou, 2014. "Cutting Bella Figura: Irony, Crisis, and Secondhand Clothes in South Italy." *American Ethnologist* 41(3):532-546.

30-minute quiz on April 20

Week 14/April 27 ~ Course Wrap-Up

--Student presentations and discussion