

Political Anthropology

Anthropology 127
University of California, Riverside
Winter 2009
Watkins 1350
MW 11:10AM-12:30 PM
Course website - access via <http://ilearn.ucr.edu>

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Office Hours: Tues. 1:30-2:30 PM and
Weds 1:30-2:30 PM
or by appointment

Course Overview

This course examines politics and power through an anthropological perspective. The first section of the course examines the field of political anthropology as it was practiced roughly through the 1960s, when anthropologists were primarily concerned with politics in so-called primitive societies, institutions of rule in societies in which the state seemed absent, and the evolutionary and historical emergence of the state. It then examines the implications of anthropologists' recognition of the importance of colonialism and global capitalism on the societies they studied. The second section considers the way anthropologists have rethought the concept of power, influenced by transformations in the societies they studied, changes in the global political economy, and ideas from thinkers outside the field of anthropology. In doing so, it examines both "formal" politics and everyday forms of power, domination and resistance. Finally, we consider politics and power in an age of "globalization"--questioning that term even as we examine its implications for identity, the state, and political action, and emphasizing the ways ethnographically grounded anthropological research can shift from the micro-level to illuminate large-scale, national, transnational and global processes.

Requirements and Policies

Read this syllabus. Understand the policies stated here. If anything is unclear, contact me for clarification. Always bring your syllabus to class in case changes are announced. Check it frequently to be sure you are aware of upcoming assignments and due dates. The syllabus is subject to change. I will announce all changes in class and post an updated version on the course iLearn site.

Attend class. If you miss class it is your responsibility to get notes, find out about any announcements, etc.

Participate in class discussions. Despite its large size, this class is a group effort, and will include much dialogue and discussion. The more members of the class contribute and are actively engaged in our discussions, the better the class will be.

Do the readings listed prior to class. For example, you should read the selections listed from the texts by Lewellen, Gough and Marx for Weds January 7. The readings be necessary for adequate class participation.

Bring your texts to class. If you've read something, it's because we're going to discuss it in class. I will frequently refer to specific pages and passages from the readings, and expect you to be ready to do the same. Some of the readings will be fairly easy, but others will be difficult--classes will provide the opportunity to work through challenging texts and build your comprehension and understanding of what you've read.

In the classroom: Please turn off all cell phones. Laptops are acceptable but I expect you to use them responsibly--that is, only for purposes related to the class. You are welcome to eat and drink as long as you are not disturbing others. Please think about the environment: use recyclable or reusable containers, and clean up after yourself.

Satisfactory / No-credit. Students in good academic standing (2.00 GPA or above) may take courses not required in their majors on S/NC grading basis. You have until the end of the eighth week of instruction to decide about grading status. Full details are at <http://chassstudentaffairs.ucr.edu/academicstanding/options.html> .

Withdrawal. I hope that you won't withdraw! But if you do so after the second week of classes, a "W" will appear on your transcript, indicating withdrawal from the course. Students are allowed to withdraw until the sixth week of instruction.

Disability Accommodations. If you may need accommodation for any sort of disability, please make an appointment to see me during my office hours. You should also arrange with the Services for Students with Disabilities Office (<http://specialservices.ucr.edu/>) to provide appropriate documentation.

Academic Integrity. You should be familiar with UCR's regulations on academic honesty and plagiarism (available from <http://conduct.ucr.edu/Policies/Academic%20Integrity%20Policy%20and%20Procedures.htm>); any instance of cheating or plagiarism will be punished with a failing grade for the course and will be referred to the University administration for further disciplinary action.

Required Texts

There is only one book required for this course, available from the UCR bookstore:
Ted Lewellen, Political Anthropology: an Introduction. London: Praeger Publishers, 2003.

All other readings will be available on the course iLearn site. It's up to you whether you print them out; however, you should always bring them to class and have them available, either on paper or in electronic form. If do the readings electronically, I strongly recommend you use a pdf viewer that lets you add annotations (highlights, comments, etc.) to the pdfs. Three such programs are:

Skim - <http://skim-app.sourceforge.net/> - for the Mac (OS 10.4 and newer)

Foxit Reader - http://www.foxitsoftware.com/pdf/rd_intro.php - for Windows (2000 and newer)

PDF-Xchange Viewer - http://www.docu-track.com/home/prod_user/PDF-XChange_Tools/pdfx_viewer - for Windows (2000 and newer).

iLearn Web Page

This syllabus, assignments, readings, announcements, etc. will be posted on the iLearn site for this course: <http://ilearn.ucr.edu/>.

Directions to access iLearn will be provided in a separate handout.

Assignments and Evaluation

Course grades will be based on the following: 2 quizzes, 5% each; Midterm 25%; Project 30%; Final 35%.

The quizzes, midterm and final will primarily consist of multiple choice, short answers, and possibly short essays.

The project will consist of a paper of 5-8 pages in which you apply the anthropological concepts and approaches to the study of a topic of your choice, within the wide realm of political anthropology. You should start to think about a possible topic now -- selection of topics will be due at the end of the second week. Further instructions will be provided in a separate handout which will be distributed in class and on the course web site.

Important Dates

Wednesday, January 14 (week two) - project topic due

Monday January 26 (week four) - Quiz #1

Monday February 9 (week six) - Midterm

Monday February 23 (week eight) - Quiz #2

Monday March 16 - project due, 10:30 AM, in Watkins 1350

Wednesday March 18 - Final Exam

Class Schedule

Week One: Overview

- Mon 1/5** Introduction to the course
- Weds 1/7** Lewellen, pp. 1-26
Gough, "New Proposals for Anthropologists" (iLearn)
Marx, "The Communist Manifesto" (iLearn)

Part One: Comparing Political Systems

Week Two - Bands, Tribes, Chiefdoms, States, and Colonialism

- Mon 1/12** Lewellen pp. 26-62, 206-216
Wilmsen and Denbow, "Paradigmatic History of San-Speaking Peoples and Current Attempts at Revision" (iLearn)
- Weds 1/14** Ranger, "European Attitudes and African Realities" (iLearn)
Gailey, "The State of the State in Anthropology" (iLearn)
Whitehead, "Tribes Make States and States Make Tribes" (iLearn)

Week Three

- Mon 1/19** **No Class - Martin Luther King Day**
- Weds 1/21** Lonsdale and Berman, "Coping with the Contradictions: The Development of the Colonial State in Kenya, 1895-1914" (iLearn)
Stoler, "Making Empire Respectable: The Politics of Race and Sexual Morality in 20th-Century Colonial Cultures" (iLearn)

Part Two: the Workings of Power

Week Four - Language and Symbolic Power

- Mon 1/26** **Quiz #1**
Lewellen, pp. 190 (paragraph beginning "What Foucault...")-194
Lakoff, "Framing 101" (iLearn)
Comaroff, "Talking Politics: Oratory and Authority in a Tswana Chiefdom" (iLearn)
- Weds 1/28** Li, "Rendering Technical?" (iLearn)
Fortmann, "Talking Claims: Discursive Strategies in Contesting Property" (iLearn)
Lewellen, pp. 184-188

Week Five - Techniques of Power

- Mon 2/2** Lewellen, ch. 5
Foucault, "Security, Territory, Population" (iLearn)
- Weds 2/4** Mitchell, "Society, Economy, and the State Effect" (iLearn)
Agrawal, "Environmentality" (iLearn)

Week Six - Domination and Resistance

- Mon 2/9** **Midterm**
- Weds 2/11** Lewellen, pp. 181-184, ch. 7
NY Times article (iLearn)
Abu-Lughod, "The Romance of Resistance" (iLearn)

Week Seven - Actors and Strategies

- Mon 2/16** **no class - Presidents' Day**
- Weds 2/18** Lewellen, ch. 6
Lewis, "A New Look at Actor-Oriented Theory" (iLearn)
Brockington, "The Politics and Ethnography of Environmentalisms in Tanzania" (iLearn)

Part Three: Politics and Power in an Age of Globalization

Week Eight - the Politics of Identity

- Mon 2/23** **Quiz #2**
Lewellen, ch. 9
Anderson, "Imagined Communities" (iLearn)
Gluckman, "Analysis of a Social Situation in Modern Zululand" (iLearn)
- Weds 2/25** Biolsi, "Race Technologies" (iLearn)
Brodin, "Global Capitalism: What's Race Got to Do with It?" (iLearn)
Bourgeois and Schonberg, "Intimate apartheid" (iLearn)

Week Nine - Globalization and Transnational Politics

- Mon 3/2** Lewellen pp. 216-225
Gledhill, "Neoliberalism" (iLearn)
Edelman, "Bringing the Moral Economy Back In" (iLearn)
- Weds 3/4** Nash, "Transnational Civil Society" (iLearn)
Kuper, "The Return of the Native" (iLearn)

Week Ten - Crime and Punishment

Mon 3/9 Schneider and Schneider, "Mafias" (iLearn)
Comaroff and Comaroff, "Criminal Obsessions, After
Foucault" (iLearn)
Gordon, "Popular Justice" (iLearn)

Weds 3/11 **review for final exam**

Final Exam - Wednesday March 18, 8-11 AM