

ANG 6274 sec4D53/ANT 4274 sec33B5

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# Political Anthropology

## Classic to Contemporary Concerns

### Spring 2019

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#### Course Description

Political Anthropology is a vast field covering the spectrum of human political organization past and present. In addition to documenting the organization of political life in small-scale societies, political anthropologists are concerned with the incorporation of such societies into wider political orders via colonialism, capitalism and processes of predatory expansion. The field equally seeks to understand the similarities and differences between indigenous, non-western and non-modern polities, and modern states. As few so-called 'traditional societies' remain to be discovered - or have ceased to exist - political anthropologists are increasingly preoccupied with the nation-state and global/planetary processes. At the same time, the preoccupations of political anthropology are down-shifting in scale to consider molecular and what have been coined 'microbiopolitical' processes. With this in mind, the course combines classic themes and case studies in political anthropology with interrogations of issues of new interest to anthropology such as border security and migration policy, climate change and the notion of the 'anthropocene,' energy extraction and large scale infrastructure, and multispecies relations. Some of these topics force scholars and students of anthropology alike to chart new ground at the same time they return us to core questions about strategies of human cooperation, the regulation of human mobility and the humans' place in nature.

Whatever the specific scale, location, or time-period at hand, this realm of anthropological inquiry hinges on four fundamental concerns. 1. The problem of order: How is political life structured? Through what mechanisms are human (and human/non-human) social relations regulated and power distributed? 2. The problem of inequality: How is the unequal distribution of power and resources achieved and sustained? How are inequalities experienced and how is opposition to them expressed? 3. The problem of culture: In what ways are cultural symbols, beliefs and practices bound up with political life? How do they represent and reinforce systems of domination as well as resistance? 4. The problem of violence: How is violence expressed and contained? How does it contribute to both the constitution and break down of specific political orders?

In this class, we bring these perspectives to bear on case studies from around the world, including the contemporary US. The course also attends to the politics of anthropological practice and the dangers, risks and ethics of anthropological research or the role of anthropology in revealing the dynamics of political abuse and empowerment. The course will be meaningful to students interested in activism and social change, environmental and international matters, indigenous rights, public policy, and science and technology issues and careers. By developing students' familiarity with the tools and tenets of anthropological inquiry through critical discussion and debate, informed reading and research and interaction with guest speakers and scholars, the ultimate goal of the class is to cultivate an informed skepticism with regard to received and new knowledge so we can all ask better questions about distant, emergent and familiar places, problems and phenomena.

Promoting 'experiential learning,' the course will include guest lectures from visiting scholars as well as participation in the Center for African Studies conference 'ENERGY|Africa' focused on Energy Politics and Energy Futures. Complementing course-based reading and discussion, students will interact with visiting scholars and practitioners for this event scheduled for March 21-23. Students should expect to devote 2-4 hours on Friday March 22 to this event, which will culminate in a writing assignment worth 15%. If you have scheduling concerns, please contact Dr. Chalfin by Feb. 1 to make alternate arrangements.

**Required Books:**

O. Adunbi, Oil Wealth and Insurgency in Nigeria. Indiana. 2015

N. Chagnon, Yanomamo, Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1997 (purchase 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> edition –used)

R. Lee, "Conflict, Politics and Exchange," in The Dobe Ju/'huansi, Holt, 1993 (purchase used)

All other reading will be posted on CANVAS. The professor reserves the right to make minor changes to reading assignments.

**Assignments:**

**Undergraduate:**

Each class: 5 terms, 2 questions, 2 observations/conclusions, 200 word post on Canvas 5% x 10 classes = 50%

Energy Politics Conference Reporting Mar 22: Interview 5% and Write-up 10% = 15%

Class Participation including two class "Raconteur/Wrap-ups" = 10% (sign-up by Jan 21)

Midterm Essay due March 1 @ 9a = 10%

Final Assignment due April 29 @ 9a = 15%

**Graduate:**

Same as above except that 'Each class' = 25% total (2.5ea) and there is a final 10 page annotated bibliography on the topic of your choice related to the course themes and your own research interests for 25% also due April 29.

Other than the posting on CANVAS required for each of 10 classes, all written assignments should be submitted on-line to bchalfin@ufl.edu.

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**Class 1. Jan 8 Introduction and Course Overview**

**Class 2. Jan 15 NO CLASS MEETING**

**Part 1: Foundations of Political Anthropology**

**Class 3. Jan 22 - Fundaments of Human Political Organization**

Required Reading:

R. Lavenda and E. Schultz, Core Concepts in Cultural Anthropology, McGraw Hill, 2007, pp. 112-124

T. Lewellen, Political Anthropology, Bergin & Garvey, 1992, pp. 22-30

R. Lee, The Dobe Ju/'huansi, Holt, 1993, Chs 1,3,4,5 (only read p61-66),6,7,11 (read Ch.7 carefully-).

R. Hitchcock, 2003. Land, Livestock and Leadership among the Ju/'hoansi San of North Western Botswana. Anthropologica, pp.89-94.

Graduate Required and Undergraduate Optional Reading:

Sylvain, R., 2002. " Land, water, and truth": San identity and global indigenism. American anthropologist, 104(4), pp.1074-1085.

Wiessner, P, 2005. Norm enforcement among the Ju/'hoansi Bushmen. Human Nature, 16(2), pp.115-145.

In-class: FILMS (John Marshall Kalahari Peoples series)

Excerpts in-class: E. Wolf, "Facing Power: Old Insights, New Questions."

#### **Class 4. Jan 29 - Tribal Societies, Violence, and Political Order**

Required Reading:

N. Chagnon, Yanomamo, Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1997, Chs. 1, 4, 5, 6, 7

S. Davis, "Highways and the future of the Yanomamo," in Spradley & McCurdy eds., Conformity and Conflict, 1980, Little, pp. 379-388.

In-class: FILMS (N. Chagnon and T. Ash Series)

#### **Class 5. Feb 5 - Predatory Expansion and Anthropological Ethics**

Required Reading:

B. Ferguson, 'A Savage Encounter: Western Contact and the Yanomami War Complex', in R. Brian Ferguson and Neil L. Whitehead, War in the Tribal Zone: Expanding States and Indigenous Warfare, SAR, 1992, pp.199-227.

P. Tierney, "The Fierce Anthropologist," The New Yorker, Oct. 9, 2000

Borofsky, R. (ed), Yanomami: The Fierce Controversy and what we can learn from it, California, 2005, pp. 22-34, 61-71.

Ferguson, R.B., 2015. History, explanation, and war among the Yanomami: A response to Chagnon's Noble Savages. *Anthropological Theory*, 15(4), pp.377-406.

American Anthropological Association Code of Ethics" [www.aaanet.org](http://www.aaanet.org)

In-class: Debate

#### **Class 6. Feb 12 - State Authority, Ritual, and Resources**

Required Reading:

C. Geertz, Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth Century Bali, Princeton, 1980, pp. 11-25, 121-136

B. Anderson, "The idea of power in Javanese culture," in Language and Power in Indonesia, Cornell, 1990, pp. 17-33.

Book Review of S. Lansing Perfect Order: Recognizing Complexity in Bali (2006)

Scarborough, V.L., 2017. The hydraulic lift of early states societies. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 2pp.

In class: FILM: S. Lansing, Three Worlds of Bali

Graduate Required and Undergraduate Optional:

J. Scott, Against the Grain, Yale, 2017. Selections.

#### **Class 7. Feb 19 – Explaining the Nation-State**

Required Reading:

C. Tilly. "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime," in Bringing the State Back In, D. Rueschmeyer et al eds., Cambridge. 1985. pp. 167-91.

Anderson, B. Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism. Verso. 2006. selections.

J. Scott, Seeing like a state: How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed. Yale. 1998. selections.

M. Foucault, M. Discipline and Punish, Vintage. 1991. selections.

## **Class 8. Feb 26 - Domination, Resistance, and Social Movements**

### Required Reading:

P. Farmer, "On Suffering and Structural Violence," in N. Scheper-Hughes ed., Violence in War and Peace, Blackwell, 2004.

J. Scott, Domination and the Arts of Resistance, Yale. 1990. Selections

R. Fox and O. Starn, "Introduction," Between Resistance and Revolution: Cultural Politics of Protest, Rutgers, 1997, pp. 1-13

O. Adunbi, Oil Wealth and Insurgency in Nigeria. Indiana. 2015. Selections.

Review of Sawyer, S., 2006. Crude Chronicles: Indigenous Politics, Multinational Oil, and Neoliberalism in Ecuador. *Journal of Latin American Anthropology*, 11(1), pp.238-240.

## **Midterm Writing Assignment Due Friday March 1, 9a (or before) – 10%**

## **No Class Mar 5 - SPRING BREAK**

## **Part 2: New Directions in Political Anthropology**

## **Class 10. Mar 12 – Infrastructure and Technopolitics**

### Required Reading:

A. Barry, Material Politics: Disputes along the Pipeline, Blackwell, 2013. Selections.

M. De Laet & A. Mol. 2000. The Zimbabwe Bush Pump: Mechanics of a Fluid Technology. Social Studies of Science, 30(2), 225-263.

B. Latour, 2005. From realpolitik to dingpolitik. Making things public: Atmospheres of democracy, MIT. Pp.15-31.

A. Von Schnitzler. 2008. "Citizenship Prepaid: Water, Calculability and Techno-Politics in South Africa" Journal of Southern African Studies, 34(4), pp.899-917.

In-class: G. Hecht, Technopolitics. <http://www.theory-talks.org/2014/07/theory-talk-64.html>. Theory Talk #64: Gabrielle Hecht on Nuclear Ontologies, De-provincializing the Cold War, and Postcolonial Technopolitics  
Theory Talk #59: Timothy Mitchell Mitchell on Infra-Theory, the State Effect, and the Technopolitics of Oil  
<http://www.theory-talks.org/2013/10/theory-talk-59.html>

## **Class 11. Mar 19 – Energy Politics and Energy Futures**

### Required Reading:

Boyer, D. 2014. Energopower: an introduction. Anthropological Quarterly, 87, no. 2 pp.309-333.

Howe, C. 2011. Logics of the wind: Development desires over Oaxaca. Anthropology News, 52(5), pp.8

Degani, M., 2013. Emergency power: time, ethics, and electricity in post-socialist Tanzania. Cultures of energy: power, practices, technologies, pp.177-192.

T. Mitchell. 2009. Carbon Democracy, Economy and Society. 38(3): pp. 399-432.

Szeman, Imre. "Conclusion: On Energopolitics." Anthropological Quarterly 87, no. 2 (2014): 453-64.

**Attendance Required Friday March 22, 2019 – CAS CARTER CONFERENCE  
ENERGY|Africa: From Technopolitics to Technofutures  
Interview Conference Participant and Write-up of Conference Session**

**Class 12. Mar 25 – Carter Conference Recap and Recuperation**  
Conference Interviews and Write-ups Due by 2p.

**Class 13. Apr 2 – Anthro-politics and the Anthropocene**

Required Reading:

H. Swanson et al. 2018. Domestication Gone Wild: Politics and Practices of Multispecies Relations. Duke. Ch.1 “Naming the Beast” & Ch. 9 “Nine Provocations”

M. DeLa Cadena, “Indigenous Cosmopolitics in the Andes: Conceptual Reflections beyond “Politics”. Cultural Anthropology. 2010. 25/2. pp. 334-370.

Rojas, D., 2016. Climate politics in the Anthropocene and environmentalism beyond nature and culture in Brazilian Amazonia. *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review*, 39(1), pp.16-32.

Donna Haraway, et al. 2016 Anthropologists Are Talking – About the Anthropocene, Ethnos, 81:3, 535-564. (skim)

Graduate Required and Undergraduate Optional:

Alf Hornborg (2017) Dithering while the planet burns: Anthropologists’ approaches to the Anthropocene, *Reviews in Anthropology*, 46:2-3, 61-77.

Watson, M. C. (2016). On Multispecies Mythology: A Critique of Animal Anthropology. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 33(5), 159–172

What should a political anthropology the Anthropocene look like?

In-class: Skype Conversation with Matt Watson

**Class 14. Apr 9 - The Politics of Security, Migration and Emergency**

Required Reading:

K. Fosher, Under Construction: Making Homeland Security at the Local Level, Chicago, 2009. Intro & Ch.1.

J. De Leon, “Better to be Hot than Caught,” American Anthropologist, 2012. 114(3): 477-495

G. Feldman, The Migration Apparatus, Stanford, 2012. Ch.4 Border Control

S. Collier, Vital Systems Security and the Government of Emergency. In Theory Culture and Society. 2014

B. Chalfin, 2012. “Border Security as Late-Capitalist “Fix”” in Companion to Border Studies, Blackwell. pp. 283-300.

In-Class: <https://limn.it/issues/systemic-risk/>

Guest Lecture: Making and Mapping the Afro-Euro Border, Laia Soto Bermant & Philippe Rakewicz

**Class 15. Apr 16 - WRAP-UP**

**Final Paper Assignment and Graduate Student Bibliography Assignment Due Monday, Apr 29, 9a – 15%**