

**LAS 6938/4935 ANG 6930**

**Ethnographies of the State in Latin America**

Spring 2021

Tuesdays 1:55-4:55

Professor Carmen Martínez Novo

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**Course description:**

There are abundant references to the state in the social sciences, but the state is often reified, taken for granted, and seldom carefully investigated. Many assume that the state is a “thing” and that we already know what it is. However, the concept of the state contains unexamined assumptions and is rather opaque. This course will explore theoretical, methodological and empirical questions about the state through the use of Latin American examples: What is the state? Where is it located? Who is the state? How are public decisions made? What are the effects of the state over populations? How do common people experience and understand the state? How does the state operate in the margins of society or in the margins of a territory such as in borders and frontiers? What is the relation of the state to society? These questions will be examined theoretically in a Latin American context. We will explore the following questions: To what degree are some Latin American states “failed states” as they have sometimes been represented? What is corruption and what is the “normal” functioning of the state? How is the state experienced differently by the rich, the poor and minoritized/colonized populations? How should we study the state when doing fieldwork? The approach of the class will be to look at

Latin American states through an ethnographic lens. This will allow us to “see” the state as embodied in particular individuals and institutions, while also paying attention to the power of ideas and discourses.

### **Class delivery:**

Class delivery will be in person and online. Since some students will be in the classroom and some online at the same time, we will be flexible and will try to provide the best learning experience possible for all under the circumstances. The class will be a seminar where we will discuss the assigned texts in depth. It will be a synchronous class for the students who are registered online. If someone who is registered in person has covid 19 symptoms, please refrain from coming to class and attend that session online (if your health permits). If we need to isolate as a group, the class may move to a synchronous online seminar format. Meeting times and class content will remain stable even if the class transfers to an online format.

### **Class materials:**

Javier Auyero. 2012. *Patients of the State: The Politics of Waiting in Argentina*. Duke UP.

Nancy Postero. 2017. *The Indigenous State: Race, Politics and Performance in Plurinational Bolivia*. U California Press.

Kim Clark. 2012. *Gender, State and Medicine in Highland Ecuador: Modernizing Women, Modernizing the State 1985-1950*. University of Pittsburgh Press.

These books are on electronic reserve at Smathers Library automatic reserves (ARES). The rest of the articles and texts will be made available to students through canvas.

### **Components of course grade and value of each activity:**

1. Class attendance and participation 10 %
2. Mid-term essay 30 %
3. Final essay 40 %
4. Analysis of assigned readings and leading the discussion for one session 20 %

### **Grading scale:**

A 93-100

A- 90-93

B+ 87-90

B 83-87

B- 80-83

C+ 77-80

C 73-77

C- 70-73

D+ 67-70

D 63-67

D- 60-63

E 0-60

**Course schedule:**

1/12 Introduction to the class

1/19 Theoretical Perspectives

Max Weber. Bureaucracy.

Philip Abrams. Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State.

1/26 Theoretical perspectives continued

James Scott. Cities, People and Language.

Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer. The Great Arch. Introduction.

2/2 The state and citizenship

Claudio Lomnitz Adler. Modes of citizenship in Mexico.

Claudio Lomnitz Adler. Ritual, rumor and corruption in the constitution of the polity in modern Mexico.

2/9 The state and national-subnational identities

Carmen Martinez Novo. 2004. We are against the government, although we are the government. State institutions and indigenous migrants in Baja California. JLAA 9(2), 352-381.

Emiko Saldívar. 2011. Everyday practices of indigenismo. JLACA 16(1), 67-89.

2/16 Anthropology in the margins of the state

Veena Das and Deborah Poole. State and its margins: Comparative Ethnographies.

Deborah Poole. Between Threat and Guarantee. Justice and Community in the Margins of the Peruvian State.

2/23 Experiencing/perceiving the state

David Nugent. Appearances to the contrary: Fantasy, fear and displacement in twentieth century Peruvian State Formation.

Maria Clemencia Ramírez. The Idea of the state in Colombia: An analysis from the periphery.

**Questions for mid-term paper distributed.**

**3/2 Midterm due. No class.**

3/9 How the poor experience the state

Javier Auyero. 2012. Patients of the state.

Introduction. Tempography: Waiting now and then.

Chapter one. The time of the denizens.

3/16 The poor and the state

Auyero, chapters 2 and 4

3/23 Gendered states

Kim Clark. 2012. Gender, the state and medicine in highland Ecuador.

Chapter 1. Gendered experiences of state formation.

Chapter 2. Gender, class and state in child protection services.

3/30 Gendered states

Clark, chapter 3 governing sexuality and disease

Chapter 4 midwifery, morality and the state

4/6 Authoritarian state and corruption

Margarita López Maya. 2014. Venezuela: The political crisis of post-chavismo. Social Justice 40(4), pp. 68-87.

César Montúfar. 2020. State-organized crime: A hypothesis on the institutionalization of corruption during the Revolución Ciudadana.

4/13 Alternative states? Alternatives to the state?

Nancy Postero. 2017. The indigenous state. Race politics and performance in Bolivia.

Introduction: The cultural, democratic revolution of Evo Morales

Chapter 2. The constituent assembly.

4/20 Alternative states?

Postero, chapter 4 Living well?

Chapter 6 From indigeneity to economic liberation.

**4/27 Final paper due**

## **COURSE POLICIES**

-Online etiquette: I expect students to join the meeting on time and stay connected while it

lasts. I strongly encourage students to turn on their cameras while in class so that we can have an engaging teaching-learning experience. Please, turn your microphones off when somebody else is talking so that we do not get unneeded background noise.

-Students should be familiar with canvas and should check their UF e-mail for instructor's messages. Instructor will be sending class announcements through the canvas system.

-Students should read the texts assigned for the day before attending online or face to face classes. This is very important because we intend to have a participatory class with an inviting academic environment in which all feel free to express their **informed** opinions. Students should be ready to participate, ask questions, engage in group discussion, based on the assigned readings for that day and on readings from previous days.

-Attendance is extremely important in this class. Students are allowed up to one unexcused absence without a repercussion in grades. Each additional absence will be reflected in a deduction of a letter grade from the class attendance and participation component of the final grade.

-Unexcused tardiness of 15 minutes or more or leaving class early will be counted as an unexcused absence unless the student has a documented reason for starting late or leaving early. This includes online classes.

### **Excused Absences:**

Students need to notify the professor of absences prior to class when possible. The following are acceptable reasons for excused absences: (a) serious illness, (b) illness or death of family member, (c) University-related trips, (d) major religious holidays, and (e) other circumstances found to fit "reasonable cause for nonattendance" by the professor.

Students anticipating an absence for a major religious holiday are responsible for notifying the instructor of anticipated absences due to their observance of such holidays.

-Students should hand their assignments according to the instructions and by the deadline. Students may be given extra time to complete assignments when they provide documentation of justified cause for the delay. If there is no justified cause for delay, 5 points will be deducted from the assignment per day of delay.

-While differences of opinion are valued and encouraged, discussion and debate must take place in a civil and respectful manner. Personal attacks or other acts of denigration will not be tolerated in this class.

### **UF POLICIES**

- **Students with Disabilities Act:** The Dean of Students Office coordinates needed accommodations of students with disabilities. This includes the registration of disabilities, academic accommodations within the classroom, accessing special adaptive computer

equipment, providing interpretation services, and mediating faculty-student disability related issues. *Dean of Students Office*, 202 Peabody Hall, 392-7066.

- **Software Use:** All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator.
- **Academic Misconduct:** Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Work submitted for credit by UF students should not include any form of plagiarism, cheating or unauthorized aid. Unless an assignment is explicitly identified as collaborative, all work should be completed independently. Students should understand and follow the [Student Honor Code](#) that they signed upon enrollment at the University of Florida: *"I understand the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University."*

## UF HELPING RESOURCES

- **Latin American and Caribbean Collection at UF Libraries:** Specialized staff support use and enjoyment of the 500,000 volumes, 50,000 microforms, thousands of current and historical serial titles and digital resources in [this world-class collection](#). LACC library staff provide expert help in online searches for research and study materials.
- **Academic Writing, Grammar and Style:** The [UF Writing Studio](#) is committed to helping University of Florida students and faculty meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. We support independent learning and scholarship by providing one-on-one consultations, workshops tailored to specific classes (graduate and undergraduate), and faculty retreats focusing on publishing original research. Students and faculty at all levels and in every discipline are welcome!
- **Technical difficulties with E-learning in CANVAS:** Contact the [UF Help Desk](#) at [Learning-support@ufl.edu](mailto:Learning-support@ufl.edu) or (352) 392-HELP, then select option 2.
- **Personal Challenges:** Students experiencing crises or personal problems that interfere with general wellbeing are encouraged to utilize the university's counseling resources. The Counseling Center and Student Mental Health both provide confidential counseling services at no cost for enrolled students. Resources are also available for students seeking to clarify career and academic goals and to deal with academic challenges.
  - [University Counseling Center](#), 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575; personal and career counseling.
  - Student Mental Health, [Student Health Care Center](#), 392-1171, personal counseling.
  - Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.
  - Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601, career development assistance and counseling.

\*\*\*THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITH NOTICE\*\*\*

## APPENDIX

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR IN CLASS DISCUSSION OF A CLASS READING

Each student will be responsible for **presenting and discussing the reading assigned for one day of their choice**. The presentation should be visual, written (in a power point or other presentation technology), and oral. The presentation should contain the following elements:

1. Context for the reading:
2. A) Information on the author  
B) General information on the topic or geographical location of the reading
3. Brief summary of the main points of the reading
4. Discussion of points in the reading that need further explanation
5. What is significant or interesting from this reading? What have we learned from this reading that can be of value to us?
6. Criticisms of the reading: What is unclear in the reading? Point to inconsistencies and contradictions in the argument. What do you disagree with and why?
7. Connect the reading to the student's own background if appropriate. How is what is described in the reading similar or different from the students' personal experiences?
8. Questions for class discussion.

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR FINAL RESEARCH PAPER

1. Students choose a topic in consultation with the instructor. They write a 1-page proposal immediately after the mid-term and receive comments on its relevance and feasibility from the instructor.
2. Students review an instructor's approved bibliography on their chosen topic. Students conduct interviews and participant observation for their chosen topic if they have decided to conduct ethnography.
3. Students combine the debates in the bibliography with their findings (if appropriate) in a final research paper. The paper should be 10- 15 pages long.