

ANG 6274 sec4D53/ANT 4274 sec33B5

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## **Political Anthropology Classic to Contemporary Concerns**

Spring 2020  
Thurs 1:55-4:55  
Turl rm. 1350

**Dr. Brenda Chalfin**

Professor of Anthropology & Director Center for African Studies  
[bchalfin@ufl.edu](mailto:bchalfin@ufl.edu), 427 Grinter, 392-2427, Office Hours: Tuesday 2-4p and by appt.  
Course Assistant (&questions about CANVAS): Nathan Dobson  
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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 '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 humans' place in nature.

Whatever the specific scale, location, or time-period at hand this realm of anthropological inquiry hinges on five 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? 5. The subject/agent problem: How is subjectivity formed, known and expressed, including non-human agency.

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.

**Required Books:**

K. MacLeish, Making War at Fort Hood: Life and Uncertainty in a Military Community. Princeton. 2013.  
N. Chagnon, Yanomamo, Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1983 or 1997 or older (purchase 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.

**Additional Required Book for Graduate Students :**

Simpson, A., Mohawk interruptus: Political life across the borders of settler states. Duke. 2014.

**Required Assignments and Evaluation of Grades:**

**Undergraduate:**

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

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

Midterm Essay due Feb 28 @ 9a = 15%

Final Essay Assignment due April 27 @ 9a = 25%

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

Students will have one week to rewrite graded assignments to raise grade by maximum of one grade rank.

**Graduate:**

Each class: 5 terms, 2 questions, 2 observations/conclusions, 200word post on Canvas 2.5% x 10 classes = 25%

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

Midterm Essay due Feb 28 @ 9a = 20%

Book Review (choice of Scott 2017, Simpson, Feldman, MacLeish, Agrawal) – 500 words due in class on reading date=5%

Final Essay Assignment due April 27 @ 9a = 20%

Annotated Bibliography (10pg) on topic related to the course and student interests due April 24 @ 9a = 20%

Graduate Students will be responsible for additional reading material and will be asked to share their knowledge of the material with other students during the designated class discussion.

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

Students will have one week to rewrite graded assignments to raise grade by maximum of one grade rank.

**Grades:**

A: 93-100, A-90-93, B+ 86-90, B 82-86, B-78-82, C+72-76, C-72-68, C-68-64, D+64-60, D 60-56-60, D-56-52, E -52 or less.

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**Class 1. Jan 9 Introduction and Course Overview**

**Part 1: Foundations of Political Anthropology**

**Class 2. Jan 16 - 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/'hoansi, 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.

G. Silberbauer, "Political Process in G/wi bands," in E. Leacock and R. Lee (eds), Politics and History in Band Societies, Cambridge, 1982, pp. 23-35.

**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)

**Class 3. Jan 23 - Tribal Societies, Violence, and Political Order**

**Required Reading:**

N. Chagnon, Yanomamo, Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1983, 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)

**NO CLASS JAN 30**

**Class 4. Feb 6 - 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.

Napoleon Chagnon, Obituary. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/30/science/napoleon-chagnon-dead.html>

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

In-class: DEBATE

### **Class 5. Feb 13 - 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.

#### Additional Graduate Required Reading:

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

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

### **Class 6. Feb 20 – Resistance, Refusal and Social Movements**

#### Required Reading:

R. Fox and O. Starn, "Introduction," Between Resistance and Revolution: Cultural Politics of Protest, Rutgers, 1997, pp. 1-6

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

McGranahan, C., 2016. Theorizing refusal: An introduction. *Cultural Anthropology*, 31(3), pp.319-325.

Simpson, A., 2014. Mohawk interruptus: Political life across the borders of settler states. Duke. 2014.

#### Additional Graduate Required Reading

Complete A. Simpson Book

### **FRIDAY NOV 21: SPECIAL EVENTS**

Lunch with Antina Von Schnitzler, Friday, Nov 21, 471 Grinter Hall

Antina Von Schnitzler Baraza 3:30p, Friday, Nov 21, 404 Grinter Hall

### **Class 7. Feb 27. Mid-Term Exam - 15%**

### **Mar 5 - SPRING BREAK**

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

### **Class 8. Mar 12 Governmentality & Political Society**

#### **Required Reading:**

- J. Scott, Seeing like a State: How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed. Yale. 1998. Chapter 1.
- J. Inda, Analytics of the Modern: An Introduction. In Anthropologies of Modernity: Foucault, Government, and Life Politics, Blackwell, 2005. Pp.1-10
- A. Agrawal. Environmentality: Technologies of Government and the Making of Subjects. Duke. 2005. Pp. 181-201.
- P. Chatterjee. Politics of the Governed. Columbia, 2004, Ch. 3, pp. 53-78 (+ illustrations)

#### **Additional Graduate Reading:**

- P. Chatterjee. Politics of the Governed Columbia, 2004, Ch. 1+2
- M. Foucault, Governmentality. In The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality. Chicago. 1988. pp. 87-104.
- A. Agrawal. Environmentality: Technologies of Government and the Making of Subjects. Duke. 2005. Chs. 1&6

### **Class 9. Mar 19 - Infrastructure, Energy and Technopolitics**

#### **Required Reading:**

- M. De Laet & A. Mol. 2000. The Zimbabwe Bush Pump: Mechanics of a Fluid Technology. Social Studies of Science, 30(2), 225-263.
- A. Von Schnitzler. 2008. "Citizenship Prepaid: Water, Calculability and Techno-Politics in South Africa" Journal of Southern African Studies, 34(4), pp.899-917. GUEST LECTURE FEB 21
- Tim Mitchell, Carbon Democracy, Verso, 2011. Brief extract. (5pp)
- Lennon, M., 2017. Decolonizing energy: Black Lives Matter and technoscientific expertise amid solar transitions. Energy research & social science, 30, pp.18-27.
- Howe, C. 2011. Logics of the wind: Development desires over Oaxaca. Anthropology News, 52(5), pp.8
- Szeman, Imre. "Conclusion: On Energopolitics." Anthropological Quarterly 87 2 (2014): 453-64.

In-class: <http://www.americananthropologist.org/2018/07/03/decentralizing-energy/>

Postcolonial Technopolitics

Theory Talk #59: Timothy Mitchell on Infra-Theory, the State Effect, and the Technopolitics of Oil <http://www.theory-talks.org/2013/10/theory-talk-59.html>

#### **Required Graduate Reading:**

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

### **Class 9. Mar 26 – 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 Gray Zone Stanford, 2015. Preface and excerpts.

In-Class:

<https://limn.it/articles/resilience-and-homeland-security-patriotism-anxiety-and-complex-system-dynamics/>

<https://limn.it/articles/system-vulnerability-and-the-problem-of-national-survival/>

Required Graduate Student Reading

Complete Feldman book

### **Class 10. April 2-3 Achebe | Baldwin Symposium**

### **Class 11. April 9 War-Making and the Militarization of Everyday Life**

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.

K. MacLeish, Making War at Fort Hood. Princeton. 2013. Chs. 1,2,4

Lutz, C. Militarization in Companion to an Anthropology of Politics, pp.319-331

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

Required Graduate Student Reading

Complete MacLeish book

### **Class 12. Apr 16 – Getting beyond Anthropolitics in the Anthropocene**

Required Reading:

H. Swanson et al. 2018. Domestication Gone Wild: Politics and Practices of Multispecies Relations. Duke. "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

### **Class 13. Apr 16 - WRAP-UP**

**Undergraduate and Graduate Final Paper Assignment Due Monday, Apr 27, 9a**

**Graduate Student Bibliography Assignment Due Friday, Apr 24, 9a,**

**Send to bchalfin@ufl.edu**

**See FINAL PAGE FOR UF POLICY**

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**UF POLICY**

**Class Attendance and Make-Up Policy** Class attendance is expected. Each unexcused absence will result in a 5% point reduction in the final grade. Excused absences are consistent with university policies in the undergraduate catalog (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>) and require appropriate documentation. Late essay response papers will not be accepted. A makeup midterm and makeup final exam will be provided for students who miss either exam only due to extreme, documented circumstances.

**Students Requiring Accommodations** Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

**Course Evaluation** Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/>.

**Class Demeanor** Students are expected to arrive to class on time and behave in a manner that is respectful to the instructor and to fellow students. Please avoid the use of cell phones outside of the classroom. Opinions held by other students should be respected in discussion, and conversations that do not contribute to the discussion should be held at minimum, if at all.

**University Honesty Policy** UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

**Counseling, Wellness and Safety Center** Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.