



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

Political Anthropology - 53308

Last update 17-10-2018

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: Sociology & Anthropology

Academic year: 0

Semester: 1st Semester

Teaching Languages: English

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Dr. Brink-Danan

Coordinator Email: Marcy.bd@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Tues 11-12 OFFICE

Teaching Staff:

Dr. Marcy Brink-Danan

Course/Module description:

Political anthropology offers tools, theories and methods for thinking about power, belonging, exclusion and the many ways that humans organize into groups. Although anthropologists study many forms of political life, this semester we focus on ethnographic studies of democracy. Everywhere we look, the term "democracy" is employed toward a wide range of political and social goals. We should not, however, assume that democracy means the same thing across contexts.

Course/Module aims:

By reading case studies from across the globe, this course examines the ability -and failure- of democratic regimes to govern citizens. Through the lens of political anthropology, this course also examines cultural citizenship - the right to be different while remaining part of the national and/or global community.

Throughout the semester, we accomplish these goals by:

1. Reading texts that describe the issues relevant to the study of political cultures from around the world.
2. Situating these narratives in a comparative framework through class discussion and individual reflections on these themes.
3. Learning to critique stereotypes and generalizations about politics (especially ethnocentric ones) by evaluating these against alternative modes of representation.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

This course is oriented around certain goals that help build skills and knowledge in the field of anthropology. These include:

1. Ability to chart the historical and cultural trajectories of political movements and processes.
2. Evaluating diverse manifestations of political life through a comparative lens; at the same time, investigating what diverse political phenomena have in common.
3. Critically examining different forms of cultural representation of politics from around the globe.

Attendance requirements(%):

100

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Lecture and discussion. Class Participation (in class and 20%/ online %10)

Class attendance is mandatory. If you have to miss a class, please contact me beforehand. Students will keep up with all readings. If a student is absent, it is his/her responsibility to get notes from peers. Preparation for class includes writing THREE QUESTIONS ABOUT the readings for general viewing on our "moodle" page 24 hours prior to each class meeting. Do not post your questions 5 minutes before class; this does not allow us to incorporate your thoughts into the discussion.

Course/Module Content:

Introduction to Political Anthropology, relative meaning of the term "democracy", Democratization and Socio-political Changes, Cultural Citizenship, Protest and Revolution

Required Reading:

Please note: syllabus subject to revision by professor!

Week 1) Introductory presentation by Dr. Brink-Danan

Week 2) Hromadzic, A. 2011 "Bathroom Mixing: Youth Negotiate Democracy in Postconflict Bosnia and Herzegovina" *PoLAR* 34(2):268-289.

Week 3) Schaeffer, F. 1997 Political Concepts and the Study of Democracy: The Case of Demokaraasi in Senegal *PoLAR* 20(1).

Week 4) Faier, E. 1998 *Global Moderns: Democracy Discourses and Palestinian Social Activism in Haifa, Israel. City and Society.*

Week 5) Greenberg, Jessica 2006 *Noc ´ Reklamoz ˇ dera: Democracy, Consumption and the Contradictions of Representation in Post-Socialist Serbia. Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 29(2):181-207

Week 6). Coles, Kim A. 2004 *Election Day: The Construction of Democracy through Technique. Cultural Anthropology* 19(4):551-580.

Week 7) Paley, Julia 2001 "The Paradox of Participation: Civil Society and Democracy in Chile." *PoLAR* 24(1).

Week 8) Comaroff, J. L., and J. Comaroff 1997 *Postcolonial Politics and Discourses of Democracy in Southern Africa: An Anthropological Reflection on African Political Modernities. Journal of Anthropological Research* 53(2):123-146.

Week 9) Kymlicka, W., and W. Norman *The Return of the Citizen. Democracy: A Reader*:220-27.

Week 10) *Please Vote for ME!* Documentary about Chinese schoolchildren
Week 11) Rosaldo, Renato 1994 *Cultural Citizenship and Educational Democracy*.
Cultural Anthropology 9(3):402-411.
Week 12) Brink-Danan, Marcy 2009 "I Vote, therefore I Am:" *Rituals of Democracy*
and the Turkish Chief Rabbi. *PoLAR*: 32(1):5-27.
Week 13) Razsa, M and Kurnik, A. 2011 *The Occupy Movement in Zizek's*
hometown: Direct democracy and a politics of becoming. *American Ethnologist*
39(2):238-258.

Week 14) Abu-Lughod, Lila 2012 *Living the "revolution" in an Egyptian village:*
Moral action in a national space. *American Ethnologist* 39(1)21-25.

Additional Reading Material:

Brown, Keith 2005 *The Ethnography of Democracy Promotion: An Opportunity and a Challenge*. *Anthropology News* 46(8):26-27.

Lukose, R. A. 2007 *The Difference that Diaspora Makes: Thinking through the Anthropology of Immigrant Education in the United States*. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 38(4):405-418.

Occupy and anarchism's gift of democracy | David Graeber in The Guardian, Tuesday 15 November 2011.

Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 0 %
Presentation 30 %
Participation in Tutorials 30 %
Project work 0 %
Assignments 40 %
Reports 0 %
Research project 0 %
Quizzes 0 %
Other 0 %

Additional information:

Class Participation (in class and/or online) (30%)
Class attendance is mandatory. If you have to miss a class, please contact me beforehand. Students will keep up with all readings. If a student is absent, it is his/her responsibility to get notes from peers. Preparation for class includes writing 3 questions or comments for general viewing on our "moodle" page 24 hours prior to each class meeting. Do not post your questions 5 minutes before class; this does

not allow us to incorporate your thoughts into the discussion.

Presentations by Groups of Expertise (G.O.E.) (30%)

Everybody comes to class with different goals. Because political anthropology is such a broad field, students are required to become “experts” in a chosen topic through extra attention to the readings. As such, during the second week, class will be divided into “groups of expertise” (G.O.E.) that take responsibility for deeper knowledge of one section of the material presented. They are expected to work together outside of class in order to prepare an oral and/or visual review of their findings (to be presented to the class [this may be in English or in your native language, as long as there is a basic translated class handout, power point, prezi, etc.]). Throughout the course, all students will be responsible for submitting 3 questions to our course website (at latest) the day before class meets; these may be the starting point for the G.O.E.’s review. In order to prepare the best presentation possible, groups will discuss their ideas with the professor during office hours the week prior to their class presentation.

FINAL PROJECT: 40% Interview on a topic of your choice

The final project will be an extension of your growing expertise in a set of questions about democracy and difference as defined over the course of the semester. As part of your final assignment, choose a problem that most concerns you (citizenship, voting, equality, gender, ethnicity, free expression, etc.) and explore the background and present status of this issue as an anthropological subject. You will then conduct a 1/2 hour interview with someone – to be cleared with the professor first - whose experience speaks to this issue. Your final submission should be a 5 page analysis of the interview (double spaced), written in English. This includes a 1 page introduction to the topic (with citations to relevant class articles), 3 pages of analysis and a 1page conclusion. You will not be graded on the excellence of your English language writing, BUT all writing should be clear, organized and without obvious typos (use spell check to make sure there are not obvious errors). Copying passages from Wikipedia will result in a failing grade (yes, students do try this!). Any works cited must be clearly marked in your writing. You must also include your interview notes and/or recordings – which are not graded, but failure to submit these will result in a lower grade.