

ANT 3PH3 Winter Syllabus 2017

POWER, DISSENT & HISTORY: TOPICS IN POLITICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Mondays, 2:30-5:20 Room LRW 1056

Instructor: Prof. Andrew Gilbert

Office: CNH 510

Office Hours: Mondays, 1:00-2:00pm or by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores ethnographically the social and cultural practices through which the exercise of power is legitimized, authorized, and contested, examining such topics as anti-globalization and anti-austerity protests, how to advocate freedom and emancipation beyond the concept of sovereignty, and dissent and justice. We will look at the ways in which many of the concepts we use to understand politics—concepts like democracy, sovereignty, and self-determination—can only be understood as part of distinctly political projects themselves. We explore these issues through deep engagement with two ethnographies, supplemented with films and discussions of recent or current forms and events of dissent.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course has three main objectives. The first is to familiarize students with some of the ways in which anthropologists have studied politics, and how the study of politics helps us understand how people make sense of the world and act to transform it – and themselves. The course thus takes an expansive view on what politics is: from the struggle for power within the fairly restricted domain of government to the projects people seek to implement based on theories about how society is and ought to be. It can even be argued that politics, like culture, is a part of everything humans do, that every relationship and action in the world entails the operation of power. Students should leave this course with a solid understanding of how people create and contest relationships of power, and be able to apply advanced knowledge of key theoretical ideas in political anthropology, such as subjectivity, sovereignty, representation, and self-determination.

The second course objective is to develop students' active listening and reading skills, as well as the capacity to synthesize material and think across contexts and media. Coursework and class meetings will be made up of reading, watching visual media, listening to the occasional lecture, in-class discussion, writing, and oral presentations.

The third course objective is to help students develop the crucial skill of testing ideas in critical dialogue with their peers. The organizational format of the class is thus designed to encourage both agreement *and* disagreement while at the same time promoting a spirit of intellectual generosity whereby students feel comfortable taking the kinds of risks that are necessary to developing their own ideas. In this way and others, students will be encouraged to see one another as a critical resource in their own learning process.

COURSE ORGANIZATION

Class meetings will be conducted according to one of two different formats. Weeks 1-2 are designed to provide background to certain conceptual issues and debates within the field of political anthropology and the relationship between history, power and culture. This will include lecture portions, a Socratic-style of discussion of the texts, as well as some in-class group discussion. Students will also form permanent discussion and work groups.

Weeks 3-10 will proceed according to the following format:

Oral Response (+ Follow-up Paper)

No later than Thursday of every week, I will circulate questions for the next week's readings to the class. All students should come to class prepared to answer/discuss these questions, and three students will be scheduled to do so in an oral presentation per week. (Three days after the class meeting the students who gave oral responses to the questions are required to submit a written answer to the pre-circulated questions, having had the benefit of class discussion).

Collective Discussion of Readings

Using the questions provided by the instructor and the oral responses by the students, the class will engage in a collective discussion of the readings for that week. Active contributions to this discussion will form the basis of a participation grade.

Reflection and Further Discussion

After discussion of the readings, students will break into groups and generate one question for further discussion, and these questions will then be discussed further as a class in the order voted upon by students. Occasionally, we may view a film or part of a film, and students may be asked to generate discussion questions for the film. Active contributions to this discussion will form the basis of a participation grade.

Conclusion

About 10-15 minutes before the end of class, we will break back up into the course groups and students will collectively come up with a statement on what the take-home points of the class discussion were. One student per group will write up this discussion, and submit it to the rest of the group and the course instructor.

As part of this course, the student groups will choose a current or recent protest movement from a list provided by the instructor and in Weeks 11-12 they will make five-minute presentations that provide an overview of their analysis of some aspect of or writing about these movements to the class, and the class will have a short discussion based upon their work. Based upon the feedback received on their presentations, students will then submit a written paper between of between 1400-1750 words within one week of their presentation. More detailed instructions will be provided halfway through the course.

GRADING

The course grade will be made up as follows:

Oral Responses/Paper:	20% (10% for oral response, 10% for written submission)
Class Participation:	15%
Eight Post-Class Reflections:	40% (5% each)
Final Presentation/Paper:	25% (10% for oral presentation, 15% for paper)

COURSE TEXTS/READINGS

A small number of individual articles, chapters, and books form the reading list for this course. Some will be made available in class, some are available on-line, and the others to be purchased or checked out from the library. The following books are required for the course.

Razsa, Maple. 2015. *Bastards of Utopia. Living Radical Politics after Socialism*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press

Bonilla, Yarimar. 2015. *Non-Sovereign Futures. French Caribbean Politics in the Wake of Disenchantment*. Chicago: Chicago University Press

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g., the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, Appendix 3, <http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf>.

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g., the submission of work that is not one’s own for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

In this course we will be using a software package designed to reveal plagiarism. Students will be required to submit their work electronically and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES E-MAIL COMMUNICATION POLICY

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Email Forwarding in MUGSI: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/uts/support/email/emailforward.html>

*Forwarding will take effect 24-hours after students complete the process at the above link

(Approved at the Faculty of Social Sciences meeting on Tues. May 25, 2010)

Most questions can and should be asked in class/discussion section or in person outside of class/discussion section. However, if you need to email the instructor, do so with very brief

questions (a couple of sentences) and in a form that can be answered briefly (ideally “yes” or “no”). I cannot respond to lengthy questions in writing but are happy to discuss them in office hours. Please do not expect an immediate answer. I will try and answer emails within two days (three if it is over a weekend).

When sending the instructor an email put **ANT 3PH3** in the subject line of your email. Please sign it with your full name and student number. A final note on communication etiquette: when writing the instructor an email, please conform it to the standard greeting in letter-writing practices, i.e. “Dear Prof. Gilbert.”

LAPTOP AND PDA/CELL PHONE POLICY

In class lectures and discussion sections, laptops are strongly discouraged for reasons made clear on the first day of class. If you need or strongly prefer a laptop for taking notes or accessing readings in class for any reason, please come talk with me, and I am happy to make that work. I’ll just ask you to commit to using the laptop only for class-related work. Students using laptops for other purposes will be asked to turn their laptops off for the remainder of the course.

Students are required to silence and refrain from using cell phones and other PDAs during class meetings and discussion sections. This includes sending and receiving text messages. Students who violate this rule will be asked to leave the classroom.

LATE AND MISSING WORK

You are responsible for completing all of the learning assessments on the dates for which they are scheduled. In the event of missed course work and/or exam(s), the student must take the following actions:

Properly submit a McMaster Student Absence (MSAF) Form. The MSAF should be used for medical and non-medical (personal) situations.

- Approval of the MSAF is automatic (i.e. no documentation required)
- Rules governing the MSAF are as follows:
 - The timeframe within which the MSAF is valid has been reduced from 5 days to 3 days.
 - The upper limit for when an MSAF can be submitted has been reduced from ‘less than 30%’ to ‘less than 25%’ of the course weight.
 - The ‘one MSAF per term’ limit is retained.
 - As per the policy, an automated email will be sent to the course instructor, who will determine the appropriate relief. Students must immediately follow up with their instructors. Failure to do so may negate their relief.
- Policy: The MSAF policy can be found in the Undergraduate Calendar under General Academic Regulations > Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work or here: http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=11&navoid=1698#Requests_for_Relief_for_Missed_Academic_Term_Work

If you do not properly submit an MSAF Form, or if you have already submitted one during the semester, your late work will be assessed a late penalty of half a grade per day up to 5 days (i.e. if you earned a B, it becomes a B- after one day, a C+ after two, a C after three, and so on), after which the assignment will not be accepted without appropriate medical documentation. This is not true of oral presentations; they cannot be submitted late and so will garner a grade of zero. Emailed excuses do not constitute appropriate documentation. Extensions are almost never granted, and for some assignments (oral responses) are impossible.

SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

All written work (essays) will be submitted in electronic copy through the Dropbox function on the course's ATL website; hard copies may also be required. Ungraded work will **not be accepted** or date stamped by the administrative staff in the Department of Anthropology. All written work (written responses, post-class reflections) are subject to evaluation for originality. This course uses an evaluation service provided by Turnitin.com, which **students may opt out** of; in this case, Grammarly.com will be used. If you would like to opt out of evaluation by Turnitin.com, please let the instructor know before February 1.

ACCESSIBILITY

McMaster University has an office of Student Accessibility Services (<http://sas.mcmaster.ca/>). Students who require accommodation for documented issues should contact SAS as early in the term as possible. McMaster also recently launched AccessMAC, part of the Office of Human Rights and Equity Services to help advance the University's goal of building an inclusive community with a shared purpose. More information can be found at <http://www.hres.mcmaster.ca/>.

If you require this information in an alternate/accessible format, please contact Eszter Bell at 905-525-9140 extension 24423 or email bellesz@mcmaster.ca

CLASS SCHEDULE

WEEK 1: JANUARY 9: INTRODUCTION

WEEK 2: JANUARY 16

Reading: David Graeber 2004. *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press. (1-37, 95-105 required; the rest recommended). (Available as a pdf on-line.)

Eric Wolf. 1990. "Facing Power: Old Insights, New Questions." *American Anthropologist*. 92(3): 586-596 (Accessible through library)

Gledhill, John. 2000. "Locating the Political: A political anthropology for today" from *Power and Its Disguises*. 1-23

WEEK 3: JANUARY 23

Reading: Razsa, Maple. 2015. *Bastards of Utopia. Living Radical Politics after Socialism*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. Introduction + Chapter 1

WEEK 4: JANUARY 30

Reading: Razsa, Maple. 2015. *Bastards of Utopia. Living Radical Politics after Socialism*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. Chapters 2 & 3

WEEK 5: FEBRUARY 6

Reading: Razsa, Maple. 2015. *Bastards of Utopia. Living Radical Politics after Socialism*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. Chapters 4 & 5

WEEK 6: FEBRUARY 13

Reading: Maple. 2015. *Bastards of Utopia. Living Radical Politics after Socialism*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. Conclusion

FEBRUARY 20: NO CLASS: READING WEEK.

WEEK 7: FEBRUARY 27

Reading: Bonilla, Yarimar. 2015. *Non-Sovereign Futures. French Caribbean Politics in the Wake of Disenchantment*. Chicago: Chicago University Press. Preface, Introduction, Chapters 1 & 2

WEEK 8: MARCH 6

Reading: Bonilla, Yarimar. 2015. *Non-Sovereign Futures. French Caribbean Politics in the Wake of Disenchantment*. Chicago: Chicago University Press. Preface, Introduction, Chapters 3 & 4

WEEK 9: MARCH 13

Reading: Bonilla, Yarimar. 2015. *Non-Sovereign Futures. French Caribbean Politics in the Wake of Disenchantment*. Chicago: Chicago University Press. Preface, Introduction, Chapters 5 & 6, Coda

WEEK 10: MARCH 20

Reading: TBA

WEEK 11: MARCH 27: STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

WEEK 12: APRIL 3: STUDENT PRESENTATIONS