AN 371: POLITICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Autumn 2012
PRB 146, Tuesday and Thursday, 11:00 A.M. to 12:30 P.M.
Professor Augustus Richard Norton
152 Bay State Road, Rm. 440
Office Hours: M, 4:00-5:00 p.m.; T, 2:00-3:30 p.m.; TH, 1:30-2:30 p.m.

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Webpage: http://people.bu.edu/arn/
Course Blog: http://politicalanthropology.blogspot.com/
Professor’s blog: http://bostonuniversity.blogspot.com/
http://blogs.bu.edu/arn/ (esp. for course related activities or supplementary lectures)
Blackboard

SYLLABUS:
POLITICAL ANTHROPOLOGY: THE MAKING OF THE MODERN WORLD

Do “modern” politics differ from premodern politics? How did colonialism and industrial capitalism transform non-Western societies? Is democracy a uniquely Western phenomenon or is it generalizable to non-Western societies? Is nationalism a social disorder or an integral part of being modern? How do we come to define ourselves as citizens of a given state? How does the state establish and sustain its control over its citizenry and how do citizens collectively or individually resist the state’s controls? How are women and men inspired, persuaded or compelled to engage in politics? What are human rights? What social conditions seem to be conducive to democratic governance and which conditions promote tyranny, intolerance or civil violence?

This course examines these and other questions in political anthropology as part of a broader effort to understand the origins and development of the modern political world. In general terms, we are interested this semester in exploring three problems: 1) the origins of modern politics, its institutions, and cultures, both Western and non-Western; 2) the meaning and sources of identity in complex contemporary societies; and, 3) the prospects for democracy and tolerance among and within the world’s diverse civilizations.

Though our primary focus in this course is on the forces that have shaped the modern era, we seek to understand them comparatively. Among other things, this means that we must analyze premodern patterns of political organization, and the forces that have promoted their destabilization and change. Our discussion will thus examine traditional forms of authority, domination, and resistance; the “rise of the West” and the impact of colonialism on the non-Western world; nationalism and ethnic violence; the role of politics in the development of market capitalism; and the prospects for democracy, freedom, and civil society in the diverse cultures of the modern world. The theme that unites all these concerns is the concept of “integrative revolution”: the political, economic, and cultural processes that have incorporated once autonomous regions into an increasingly interconnected world. These political processes created the modern world; our goal this semester is to understand their origins and implications for our future.

Texts: We will be reading several books this semester, as well as a few important articles. The books are available at the BU bookstore, except as noted. The required books are: Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, 9781844670864 (Mugar Reserve); Abner Cohen, Two Dimensional Man [this book is out of print, but cheap used copies are available] (Mugar Reserve HM131.C7417); Ted Lewellen, Political Anthropology, 3rd ed., 9780897898911 (Mugar Reserve); A. R. Norton, Hezbollah: A Short History, updated 2009, 978-0691141077 (Mugar Reserve); Sudhir Alladi Venkatesh, Gang Leader for a Day: A Rogue Sociologist Takes to the Streets (Mugar Reserve). Azoy, Whitney, Buzkashi, Game and Power in Afghanistan, 3d ed. 2011, 978 1 57766 720 9 (Mugar Reserve).

Requirements: There will be two scheduled quizzes in the course. Each quiz will be comprised of short essay questions that require the student to draw upon the assigned readings, as well as class discussions. There is also a mid-term examination in this course. Students in this course are expected to do all the readings for this course in advance of class. In each class session, at least one student will be asked to comment on the assigned reading.

A grade for course participation will take account of attendance as well as the student’s contributions to the classroom discussion, especially when called upon to comment.

Each student is required to prepare two incisive papers during the semester (see attached). Each of the two papers is a case study focusing on a distinct level of political organization (e.g., bands, tribes, chiefdoms or states). The second paper must focus on a different region, society and level of political organization than the first paper.

Each student is assigned to a three person working group, which then makes a graded formal presentation to the class on a topic developed by the trio and approved by the professor.

Attendance: Attendance is required. Unexcused absences and lateness will be considered in calculating the grade for participation. An attendance sheet will be circulated with an addendum for late arrivals.

Academic integrity: Please read the Boston University Academic Conduct Code. Handing in someone else's work or ideas as your own (even if you worked on it together as a group) constitutes plagiarism, as does using someone's ideas without attribution. You must give a citation when you use an author's ideas in your paper, even if you do not quote the text word-for-word. I will go over in class the correct procedures for quoting and referencing the work of other authors. If you miss that class or if you have any questions, please ask. Any infraction MUST be reported to the Dean for resolution by the Academic Conduct Committee. Be informed and be careful.

The syllabus, course descriptions, and handouts created by Professor Norton, and all class lectures, are copyrighted by Boston University and/or Professor Norton. Except with respect to enrolled students as set forth below, the materials and lectures may not be reproduced in any form or otherwise copied, displayed or distributed, nor should works derived from them be reproduced, copied, displayed or distributed without the written permission of Professor Norton. Infringement of the copyright in these materials, including any sale or commercial use of notes, summaries, outlines or other reproductions of lectures, constitutes a violation of the copyright laws and is prohibited.

Students enrolled in the course are allowed to share with other enrolled students course materials, notes, and other writings based on the course materials and lectures, but may not do so on a commercial basis or otherwise for payment of any kind. Please note, in particular, that selling or buying class notes, lecture notes or summaries, or similar materials both violates copyright and interferes with the academic mission of the College, and is therefore prohibited in this class and will be considered a violation of the student code of responsibility that is subject to academic sanctions.

Communication: Blackboard is a good device for conveniently providing course materials, schedules, grades and announcements. Access is limited to enrolled students in the course. Class members are urged to check the page twice weekly using the Boston University user name and password.

Routine communications and announcements will be made by email. If you use an email address other than your __@bu.edu address, please be sure to provide that email address to the professor (by email to arn@bu.edu).

Consultation and office hours: 152 Bay State Road (IR), fourth floor, Rm. 440. Feel free to come by and chat. Office hours M, 4:00-5:00 p.m.; T, 2:00-3:30 p.m.; TH, 1:30-2:30 p.m., and at other times by appointment (353-7808 or 9279; email: arn@bu.edu).

AN 371: TOPICS AND READINGS

(A note on the readings: Throughout this semester I will draw on and refer to many other readings, some of which you may wish to explore on your own. Where copyright restrictions allow, I will make these additional items available on the Blackboard. There may, in addition, be one or two short articles added to the list of readings over the course of the semester.)
WEEK 1 (Sept. 4/6): ANTHROPOLOGY AND POLITICS
Read: Geertz, “An Inconstant Profession” on the Blackboard.
Lewellen, Political Anthropology, chaps. 1-2.

WEEK 2 (Sept. 11/13): FROM BAND TO EMPIRE: ALTERNATIVE POLITICAL FORMS
Read: Lewellen, chaps. 3-4.

WEEK 3 (Sept. 18/20): THE BIRTH OF NATIONALISM (The 18th is a reading day; no class meeting)
Read: Imagined Communities, to 68.

WEEK 4 (Sept. 25/27):— NATIONALIST REVOLUTION AND RESPONSES
Guest lecture on Turkey by Professor Jenny B. White (reading is from her new book, to be published in November, so please do not share the unpublished chapter with anyone outside of class.)

WEEK 5 (Oct. 2/4): ETHNICITY AND IDENTITY
Read: Cohen, all (on reserve and Blackboard).
Lewellen, chaps. 5 and 6.
Topic 1 due, Oct 4.

WEEK 6 (Oct. 11): BOUNDARIES AND THE OTHER
Read: Barth, “Ethnic Groups and Boundaries” (on Blackboard and Mugar Reserve).
View: Fredrik Barth and Unni Wikam on fieldwork (video)

WEEK 7 (Oct. 16/18) QUIZ I; COERCION, IDENTITY AND GENDER IN THE MODERN STATE
Quiz I is on October 16 covers all material through October 11.
Peruse: Gledhill, pp. 1-126 (on reserve).
Read: Barfield on Blackboard.
View: Afghan Star

WEEK 8 (Oct. 23/25) RELIGION, RITUAL AND IDENTITY: LEBANON
Read: Norton, all; review Lewellen, chap. 4.
View: Excerpts from al-Jazeera history of the Lebanese civil war.
Paper I due October 25.

WEEK 9 (Oct. 30/Nov. 1): GAMES, SOCIAL POWER AND COALITIONS: AFGHANISTAN
Read: Azoy; Barfield on Blackboard.
View: Excerpt from the “The Horsemen”.

WEEK 10 (Nov. 6/8): MOBILIZATION AND SOCIAL CAPITAL ON THE MARGINS: CHICAGO
Read: Venkatesh, to end.

WEEK 11: (Nov. 13/15) QUIZ II; POPULAR RESISTANCE AND REVOLT: ARAB SPRING
Quiz II on November 13 is on all readings through Nov. 8.
Read: Lewellen, chap.7-11; Norton, “Middle East Realignment: The Arab Upheaval”, and on Blackboard.
Recommended: Gledhill, pp. 1-126 (on reserve).
WEEK 12 (Nov. 20): FISSURES, BORDERS AND COMMONALITIES
Read: Samuel P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations” (Mugar reserve); Hannerz, chaps. 3 and 5 (on reserve).
Nov. 20: Presentation topic due.

WEEK 13 (Nov. 27/29): ESSAY EXAMINATION (TUESDAY); WORKING GROUP PRESENTATIONS (THURSDAY)
The exam is essay format; all readings and lectures will be covered.

WEEK 14 (Dec. 4/6): WORKING GROUP ENT PRESENTATIONS

WEEK 15 (Dec. 11): WRAP-UP DISCUSSION
Paper II due.

AN 371: Political Anthropology
Autumn 2012
Course Requirements

Summary of Deadlines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 4</td>
<td>Topic for paper I due.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 16</td>
<td>Quiz I</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 25</td>
<td>Paper I due</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 13</td>
<td>Quiz II</td>
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<td>November 20</td>
<td>Presentation topic due</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 27</td>
<td>Essay examination</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 29</td>
<td>Presentations commence</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 11</td>
<td>Paper II due</td>
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Grade calculation: Grades are posted on Blackboard. You may gain access to your grades by using your unique BU alias and Kerberos password. The components of the course grade are as follows:

- Participation: 10%
- Quizzes (2): 10% each
- Topic I: 5%
- Papers (2): 15% each
- Presentation: 10%
- Essay exam: 25%

Grade scale: A (95% or above), A- (92% or above); B+ (88% or above); B (85% or above), B- (82% or above), C+ (78% or above), C (75% or above), C- (72 or above), D (65% or above).

Quizzes: Quizzes on the course readings will be given on October 16 and November 13. The format will be short answer, objective questions based on the course readings, lectures and films. N.B., No make-up quizzes will be offered, except in the case of bona fide emergencies and documented illness.

Class presentations: Each student participates in a ten to twelve minute presentation to the class. The presentations are scheduled for the end of the semester. Papers will be grouped by subject, and dates for presentation will be randomly chosen. Each group is expected to provide a two-page outline to the class at the time of presentation. This outline is intended to facilitate note taking and should be distributed to all class members. Arrangements will be made for audiovisual support, including overhead projectors, digital projectors, slide projectors, and video equipment.
Papers: There are two required short papers as described below. The papers are due on October 25 and December 11. The papers should be four to five pages in length (approximately 1,000 words and no more than 1,200 words—include a word count on your cover sheet). The Department of Anthropology publishes a short and inexpensive style manual that you may find helpful:

Parish, Steven M., The Student’s Practical Guide: Writing Term Papers for Anthropology (and Related Subjects) (Boston: BU Dept. of Anthropology, 1994). This is available in the Boston University bookstore for a few dollars.

The bible for style is the Chicago Style Manual, or the “Turabian Guide”, which derives from the CSM.

Topics for papers: Each of the two papers should treat a single type of political system (i.e., band, tribe, chiefdom or state). You must choose a different political system in a different world region for the second paper. Thus, if you choose a Latin American tribe as your first topic, you must choose a band, chiefdom or state outside of Latin America as your second topic. A sampling of topics is shown below and also check the course blog for ideas.

Late papers: Unless there is a bona fide emergency or otherwise authorized exception, late papers will be docked half a letter grade per day.

The class readings do a good job of introducing the basic themes and concepts of political anthropology. Choose a theme that interests you and apply it to the political system that you are treating. Thus, you may write about conflict resolution in a Bedouin tribe, leadership among the !kung of the Kalahari, the blood feud in Corsica, or religious legitimation in Pharaonic Egypt. The following list of topics is only intended to be suggestive:

**Conflict and conflict resolution**
- Mediation and mediators
- Feud
- Rituals of conflict resolution
- Warfare
- How the poor or the disempowered resist

**Religion**
- Political legitimation
- Social stratification and political specialization
- Succession among shamans
- Totemism and social hierarchy
- Revivalist movements
- Symbolism and ritual

**Law**
- Taboos and the realm of the profane
- Customary (unwritten) law
- Social stratification and political specialization
- Interaction of traditional and modern legal systems

**Leadership**
- Big man
- Headman
- Political succession
- Clientelism and patronage

**Economic exchange systems**
- Redistribution systems
- Taxation and tributary systems
- Property and ownership
Gender
Gender specialization
Patriarchy and matriarchy
Patrimonialism

Politics of Identity
Representations of the other
Inter-sectarian or inter-ethnic politics
How identity changes?
Symbolic aspects of identity