

AN 371: POLITICAL ANTHROPOLOGY (with AN 771)

Autumn 2007

CAS B18A, Tuesday and Thursday, 11:00 A.M. to 12:20 P.M.

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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? What are human rights? What social conditions seem to be conducive to democratic governance and which conditions promote tyranny, intolerance and 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 political conditions that have worked at times to create unprecedented human liberty and at other times unparalleled tyranny; 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](#); Abner Cohen, [Two Dimensional Man](#) (Cohen is out of print but you may download it from the Courseinfo page; if you prefer to own the book, you can find cheap used copies on the web and there is one copy on reserve, HM131.C7417); Ted Lewellen, [Political Anthropology](#) (3rd. ed); A. R. Norton, [Hezbollah: A Short History](#); Sudhir Alladi Venkatesh, [Off the Books: The Underground Economy of the Urban Poor](#). Recommended: John Gledhill, [Power and its Disguises: Anthropological Perspectives on Politics](#);

Graduate students: an additional reading list will be provided.

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 group, which then makes a graded formal presentation to the class drawing on their course papers.

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: The CourseInfo page is an excellent 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. The URL for our page is shown above, and you may also enter through the Boston University web page by clicking "Resources" and then following the trail to the CourseInfo page for AN 371/771.

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 are Tuesday/Thursday, 1:30-3:00 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 CourseInfo page. 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 COMPARISONS

Read: Geertz, "An Inconstant Profession" on the courseinfo page.

View: Fredrik Barth and Unni Wikam on fieldwork (video)

Lewellen, Political Anthropology, chaps. 1.

WEEK 2 (Sept. 11/13): THE BIRTH OF NATIONALISM

Read: Anderson, Imagined Communities, to p. 140;
Lewellen, chaps. 2-3.

WEEK 3 (Sept. 18/20): NATIONALIST REVOLUTION AND RESPONSES

Read: Imagined Communities, to end.

WEEK 4 (Sept. 25/27): MAN AND WOMAN IN COMPLEX SOCIETIES

Read: Cohen, all (on reserve or courseinfo page).
Topic 1 due, Sept. 25.

WEEK 5 (Oct. 2/4): ETHNICITY AND IDENTITY

Read: Barth, "Ethnic Groups and Boundaries" (on courseinfo page);
Lewellen, chaps. 5 and 6.

WEEK 6 (Oct. 11): CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS?

(Due to revised BU holiday schedule there is no class on the 9th)

QUIZ I on all readings to date. Quiz takes 35 minutes.

Read: Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations" (Mugar reserve).

**WEEK 7 (Oct. 16/18): POWER RELATIONS IN THE MODERN STATE,
RESISTANCE AND COERCION**

Read: Gledhill, pp. 1-126 (on reserve).

WEEK 8 (Oct. 23/25): RELIGION, IDENTITY AND RESISTANCE

Read: Norton, all; Lewellen, chap. 4.
Paper I due, October 23.

WEEK 9 (Oct. 30/Nov. 1): NETWORKS AND INFORMAL POLITICS.

Read: Venkatesh, all.

WEEK 10 (Nov. 6/8): WHAT DOES GENDER EXPLAIN?

Nov. 6: **QUIZ II** on all readings through Nov. 1.
Read: Lewellen, chap. 8; reserve readings.

WEEK 11: (Nov. 13/15): FISSURES, BORDERS AND COMMONALITIES

Read: Lewellen, chaps. 7, 9-11.

WEEK 12 (Nov. 20): THE MID-TERM EXAMINATION

Nov. 20: **Mid-term**: Essay format; all reading and lectures will be covered.

WEEK 13 (Nov. 27/29): STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

WEEK 14 (Dec. 4/6): STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

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

Paper II due.

Spring 2006 Course Requirements

Summary of Deadlines:

September 25	Topic for paper I due.
October 11	Quiz I
October 23	Paper I due
November 6	Quiz II
November 20	Mid-term examination
November 27	Presentations commence
December 11	Paper II due

Grade calculation: Grades are posted on the CourseInfo page. You may gain access to your grades by using your unique BU alias and kyberos password. The components of the course grade are as follows:

Participation:	10% (1% for blogging)
Quizzes (2):	10% each
Topic I	5%
Papers (2):	15% each.
Presentation:	10%
Mid-term 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 11 and November 6. 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 as part of a research group designated based on paper topics. The presentations will be scheduled for April. 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 March 17 and May 1. The papers should be four to five pages in length (approximately 1,000 words and no more than 1,200 words—please 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 and also check the courseinfo page for ideas.

Topic for first paper: NLT than February 9, submit your topic for the first paper.

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