

Anthropological Perspectives on Conflict and Violence (JPM732)

Winter semester 2018/19

Charles University in Prague, Institute of Political Studies

4 ECTS

Mondays 7.10., 21.10., 2.12., 9.12., 16.12., 6.1.; 9:30-10:50, room J2083, Jinonice campus

Course description

This course seeks to familiarize students with anthropological and anthropology-inspired works dealing with different forms of political violence like terrorism, state-sanctioned practices, civil wars, or racialized violence. Nonetheless, it does not aim to provide comprehensive and exhaustive overview of the scholarship approaching conflict through anthropological lenses. Rather, by discussing several pertinent themes, the class demonstrates the novel methodological, analytical and theoretical insights that anthropological perspective provides for the students of political violence in particular, and (international) politics in general.

Aims of the course

The class seeks to achieve three broad objectives. First, to widen students' analytical toolbox by making them more familiar with scholarly approaches which are more practice-near than is the case with most political science discipline.

Second, through discussing particular kinds of political violence, the course seeks to flesh out practical, political and ethical issues discussed in anthropology and ethnography, like access to the field, rapport with informants, and relationship towards (state) power.

Third, by discussing particular instances of political violence, the class will make the students more familiar with the intimate and everyday dimensions of these phenomena.

Course requirements

Active participation (15%): Students are supposed to read the required literature, prepare for the classes and critically assess the literature and put it in a broader context. If you are unable to attend the seminar, please inform the lecturers in advance (students should not miss more than one seminar during the semester).

Short assignments (30%): Before every class (except for week 1), students shall take a brief online quiz focused on understanding the assigned readings. The responses must be submitted via Moodle one day

before the seminar (by Sunday noon). For each quiz, every student may receive up to 6 percent points. This requirement applies even to classes missed by students.

Presentation/Extended Commentary (20%): Each participant is required to either present during the seminar or write one extended commentary for one of the classes. In any case, students are required to read and comment on the “additional reading” assigned for the given class. Both types of assignment will be discussed at the first session, after which the distribution of presentations/commentaries among students will be organized electronically.

Final essay (35%): Each participant is required to prepare a final essay (3 000 words) related to the topic of the course.

Late submissions of the papers will be subject to grade penalty (minus 2 percent points from the total score for each day after the deadline).

Structure of the course

A note on the literature:

Except for the first session, there are three categories of assigned literature. “Conceptual reading” engages more general questions pertaining to the ethnographic and anthropological scholarship. “Case studies” consists of ethnographic works which draw directly on authors’ fieldwork and that deal with particular forms of political violence. “Additional reading” is meant for those who present or write commentaries for the given class.

1. Introduction; 7.10.

The first session deals, apart from organizational matters, with the basic definitions of and distinctions between anthropology, ethnography and political science.

Reading:

Interview with Emma Mc Cluskey, available at: <https://www.e-ir.info/2018/10/04/interview-emma-mc-cluskey/>

2. Terrorism; 21.10.

The second class engages one of the most prominent and discussed forms of political violence, terrorism. In conceptual terms, we will revisit the issue of what insights can ethnography bring to students of politics and IR.

Conceptual reading:

Finn Stepputat and Jessica Larsen (2015) "Global political ethnography: A methodological approach to studying global policy regimes", DIIS Working Paper, available at: https://www.diis.dk/files/media/publications/publikationer_2015/wp2015-01.pdf

Schatz, Edward (2009) "Ethnographic Immersion and the Study of Politics", in: Edward Schatz (ed.) *Political Ethnography: What Immersion Contributes to the Study of Power*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 1-22.

Case studies:

Ochs, Juliana (2011) *Security and Suspicion. An Ethnography of Everyday Life in Israel*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, Chap. 3 (pp. 64-78)

Abufarha, Nasser (2009) *The Making of a Human Bomb. An Ethnography of Palestinian Resistance*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, Chap. 5 (pp. 134-186).

Additional reading:

Brigden, Noelle K. (2016) "Improvised Transnationalism: Clandestine Migration at the Border of Anthropology and International Relations", *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 60, No. 2, pp. 343-354.

Asad, Talal (2007) *On Suicide Bombing*. New York: Columbia University Press, Chap. 1.

3. State violence; 2.12.

The third class tackles the notion of state and violence carried out by its agents. The issue of positionality and identity in the field will also be engaged.

Conceptual reading:

Shehata, Samer (2006) "Ethnography, identity and the production of knowledge", in: In Yanow, Dvora and Peregrine Schartz-Sea (eds.) *Interpretation and Method*. London: Routledge.

Case studies:

Pachirat, Timothy (2013) *Every Twelve Seconds: Industrialized Slaughter and the Politics of Sight*. New Haven: Yale University Press, Chaps. 1 and 6.

Fassin, Didier (2013) *Enforcing Order: An Ethnography of Urban Policing*. London: Polity Press, pp. 85-143.

Additional reading:

Pachirat, Timothy (2013) *Every Twelve Seconds: Industrialized Slaughter and the Politics of Sight*. New Haven: Yale University Press, Chap. 9.

Sharma, Aradhana and Akhil Gupta "Bureaucracy and Governmentality", and Gupta, Akhil "Blurred Boundaries: The Discourse of Corruption, the Culture of Politics, and the Imagined State"; in: Sharma, Aradhana and Akhil Gupta (eds.) (2006) *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader*, Malden: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 165-168 and 211-242.

4. Civil Wars, Trauma and Reconciliation; 9.12.

This session engages civil wars and their societal and political legacies. We will also discuss how anthropologists relate to and enact relationships with people in the field.

Conceptual reading:

Bueger, Christian and, Manuel Mireanu (2015) "Proximity", in: Aradau et al. (eds.) *Critical Security Methods: New frameworks for analysis*. London, New York: Routledge, pp. 118-141.

Case studies:

Maček, Ivana (2011) *Sarajevo Under Siege. Anthropology in Wartime*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, chap. 8-9.

Hermez, Sami (2017) *War Is Coming Between. Past and Future Violence in Lebanon*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, chap. 3.

Jackson, Shirley (1948) "The Lottery", *The New Yorker*, June 26.

Additional reading:

Ratelle, Jean-François (2013), "Making sense of violence in civil war: challenging academic narratives through political ethnography", *Journal Critical Studies on Security*, Vol. 1, No. 2.

Kleinman, Arthur (2000) "The Violences of Everyday Life: The Multiple Forms and Dynamics of Social Violence", in: Veena Das et al. (eds.) *Violence and Subjectivity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 226-241.

Das, Veena (2007) *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary*, Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 205-221.

5. Gendered and Racialized Violence; 16.12.

This session will engage different forms of identity-based political violence. The emphasis will be put on intersection of different identity markers and how they feed into the processes of violence. The class will also attend to the notions of objectivity and bias in ethnographic research.

Conceptual reading:

Becker, Howard S. (1967) "Whose Side Are We On?" *Social Problems*, Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 239-247.

Case studies:

Cohn, Carol (1987) "Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals", *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, Vol. 12, No. 4, pp. 687-718

Menon, Kalyani Devaki (2009) *Everyday Nationalism. Women of the Hindu Right in India*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, chap. 2.

Goffman, Alice (2009) *On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Chaps. 3 and 5 (pp. 55-90 and 107-140).

Additional reading:

Das, Veena (2008) "Violence, Gender, and Subjectivity", *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 37, pp. 283-299.

Alcoff, Linda Martin (1999) "Towards a phenomenology of racial embodiment", *Radical Philosophy*, No. 95, pp. 15-26.

Mc Cluskey, Emma (2019) *From Righteousness to Far Right: An Anthropological Rethinking of Critical Security Studies*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, Chap. 5.

6. Ethnography, Ethics, Responsibility; 6.1.

The last session engages the issues of ethnographers' responsibility vis-à-vis the processes and people they study. Via close reading of controversies surrounding Alice Goffman's book and the US counterinsurgency Human Terrain System (HTS) program, we will discuss ethics inherent in ethnographic endeavors.

Conceptual reading:

Pachirat, Timothy (2018) *Among Wolves. Ethnography and Immersive Study of Power*. London: Routledge, chap. 6 (pp. 132-159).

Case studies:

Griffin, Marcus B. (2010) "An Anthropologist among the Soldiers: Notes from the Field", in: John D. Kelly et al. (eds.) *Anthropology and Global Counterinsurgency*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gusterson, Hugh (2008), "The U.S. military's quest to weaponize culture", Blog of Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, available at: <https://thebulletin.org/2008/06/the-u-s-militarys-quest-to-weaponize-culture/>.

Gusterson, Hugh (2015) "Ethics, expertise and human terrain", in: Berling, Trine Villumsen and Christian Bueger (eds.) *Security Expertise: Practice, Power, Responsibility*. London: Routledge, pp. 204-227.

Le Guin, Ursula (1975) "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas", in: *The Wind's Twelve Quarters*. New York: Harper Perennial.

Additional reading:

Taylor, Steven (1987) "Observing abuse: Professional ethics and personal morality in field research", *Qualitative Sociology*, Vol. 10, No. 3, pp. 288-302.

Fassin, Didier (2017) "The endurance of critique", *Anthropological Theory*, Vol. 17. No. 1, pp. 4-29

Evaluation

General Grade	Grade Specification	Percentage
<i>A</i>	Excellent	100 – 91
<i>B</i>	Very good	81 - 90
<i>C</i>	Good	71 – 80
<i>D</i>	Sufficient	61 - 70
<i>E</i>	Sufficient, meeting minimal criteria	51 – 61
<i>F</i>	Fail	0 - 50

Course rules

The Code of Study and Examination of Charles University in Prague provides the general framework of study rules at the university. According to art. 6, par. 17 of this Code, “a student may not take any examination in any subject entered in his study plan more than three times, i.e. he shall have the right to two resit dates; no extraordinary resit date shall be permitted. (...) If a student fails to appear for an examination on the date for which he has enrolled without duly excusing himself, he shall not be marked; the provision of neither this nor of the first sentence shall constitute the right to arrange for a special examination date.”

Any written assignment composed by the student shall be an original piece. The practices of plagiarism, defined by the Dean’s Provision no. 18/2015, are seen as “a major violation of the rules of academic ethics” and “will be penalized in accordance with Disciplinary Regulations of the faculty.”