ANTH3002
The Anthropology of Politics and Power
Session 2, In person-scheduled-weekday, North Ryde 2022
Macquarie School of Social Sciences

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
Chris Houston
chris.houston@mq.edu.au

Credit points
10

Prerequisites
130cp at 1000 level or above

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description
Politics and power can be thought of as intimate aspects of our social life and relationships, and hence as aspects of all subjects of anthropological investigation. Processes of domination, resistance and social transformation are inevitably involved in the creation and representation of cultural practices and meanings. In the first half of the unit students will identify and compare the themes - explicit or otherwise - that dominate the composition of a number of classical political ethnographies, while also exploring the wider question of their colonial contexts and how this context influenced the development of anthropological knowledge. Its second half examines how these themes are still relevant in illuminating more contemporary manifestations of power, including forms of political practice such as nationalism and its project of social transformation; violence and terror; gender and agency; resistance and collaboration; and peace-making and reconciliation.

Important Academic Dates
Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates

Learning Outcomes
On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

ULO1: Apply the concerns of various anthropological writings to contemporary processes of power and politics.

ULO2: Discern and discuss the tensions and correspondences between the political institutions of different societies, their representation in ethnographic writing or film, and political processes in the ethnographers’ own society.
ULO3: Demonstrate knowledge of influential ethnographies and debates relevant to the anthropology of politics and power.
ULO4: Write cogently about the sociocultural dimensions of political systems and practices

General Assessment Information

1. Essays (65%):

Students will write two essays in total, one from each half of the course, dealing with the major themes under discussion.

Essay questions will be self-selected, but this selection will be facilitated by tutorial discussion.

Your essay question must be clearly stated in your assignment.

Major Essay: The major essay will count for 40% of the total mark. This major essay should be approximately 2000 words.

Minor Essay: The minor essay will count for 25% of the semester’s work, and should be approximately 1000 words.

Essays that are written on material from the first half of the course are due at the end of Week 7.

Essays that are written from material in the second half of the course are due at the end of Week 12.

2. Tutorial Reading Response & Tutorial Participation (10%):

Tutorial preparation involves a couple of hours of pleasurable reading each week. To facilitate tutorial discussion, you are required to submit a one-page typed answer to the tutorial question for that week (see lecture and tutorial programme below).

The format of this answer is quite specific and you must address the following criteria:

- Your one-page answer must be double-spaced and in 12-point font. This ensures that everyone does the same amount of work for each week. Do not go over the one-page limit. It is quite challenging to provide a meaningful response to the question in such a
small word limit, but this will develop a really important set of skills that will make it easier to grasp some of the complex concepts in the course.

- **Answer the question in your own words. Do not simply summarize the reading!!**
- In addition to the answer you provide to the tutorial question, you are required to write one succinct sentence capturing the reading’s overall theme.

The tutorial mark will be awarded both on the basis of the written work, as well as on tutorial participation.

- **Tutorial papers are to be done every week and they can only be submitted at the tutorial in which the reading is to be discussed.**
- **You will be handing in 10 tute papers in total (which means out of the 11 weeks of tutorial questions, you can miss handing in one tutorial paper without academic penalty).**

3. **Take Home Test (25%):**

A take-home exam will be uploaded on the Friday of Week 12 and will be due on the Friday of Week 13. No extensions will be allowed and any late returns will be penalized. The exam will consist of a combination of short answers to questions that link together topics and themes covered in lectures, tutorials and practical activities throughout the course.

**Assessment Information**

- You must submit your essays through the turnitin link, found on iLearn for this subject.
- **Extensions:** Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, a 5% penalty (of the total possible mark) will be applied each day a written assessment is not submitted, up until the 7th day (including weekends). After the 7th day, a mark of ‘0’ (zero) will be awarded even if the assessment is submitted. Submission time for all written assessments is set at 11.55pm. A 1-hour grace period is provided to students who experience a technical issue. This late penalty will apply to non-timed sensitive assessment (incl essays, reports, posters, portfolios, journals, recordings etc). Late submission of time sensitive tasks (such as tests/exams, performance assessments/presentations, scheduled practical assessments/labs etc) will only be addressed by the unit convenor in a Special consideration application. Special Consideration outcome may result in a new question or topic.
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- **Important Note**: It is a requirement that all students keep a copy of their written work. In the event of work being lost, or if you have handed it in but it is not in our records, you must be able to present a second copy.

### Assessment Tasks

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Hurdle</th>
<th>Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Each week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Essay</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Week 7 or Week 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor Essay</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Week 7 or Week 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take-Home Test</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Week 13</td>
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### Tutorial Participation

Assessment Type: Participatory task  
Indicative Time on Task: 20 hours  
Due: Each week  
Weighting: 10%

Students participation in tutorial discussions and activities.

On successful completion you will be able to:
- Apply the concerns of various anthropological writings to contemporary processes of power and politics.
- Discern and discuss the tensions and correspondences between the political institutions of different societies, their representation in ethnographic writing or film, and political processes in the ethnographers' own society.

### Major Essay

Assessment Type: Essay  
Indicative Time on Task: 45 hours  
Due: Week 7 or Week 12  
Weighting: 40%

The major essay will account for 40% of the semester's work. Remember, students will write two essays in total, one from each half of the course, dealing with the major themes under discussion. Essay questions will be self-selected, but this selection will be facilitated by tutorial discussion. Your essay question must be clearly stated in your assignment.

On successful completion you will be able to:
• Apply the concerns of various anthropological writings to contemporary processes of power and politics.
• Discern and discuss the tensions and correspondences between the political institutions of different societies, their representation in ethnographic writing or film, and political processes in the ethnographers’ own society.
• Demonstrate knowledge of influential ethnographies and debates relevant to the anthropology of politics and power.
• Write cogently about the sociocultural dimensions of political systems and practices

Minor Essay
Assessment Type: Essay
Indicative Time on Task: 25 hours
Due: Week 7 or Week 12
Weighting: 25%

The minor essay will count for 25% of the semester’s work. Please base this essay on any cluster of readings that takes your fancy from the other 6 weeks of group presentations.

On successful completion you will be able to:
• Apply the concerns of various anthropological writings to contemporary processes of power and politics.
• Discern and discuss the tensions and correspondences between the political institutions of different societies, their representation in ethnographic writing or film, and political processes in the ethnographers’ own society.
• Demonstrate knowledge of influential ethnographies and debates relevant to the anthropology of politics and power.
• Write cogently about the sociocultural dimensions of political systems and practices

Take-Home Test
Assessment Type: Quiz/Test
Indicative Time on Task: 22 hours
Due: Week 13
Weighting: 25%

The exam will consist of a combination of short answers to questions that link together topics and themes covered in lectures and tutorials throughout the course.

On successful completion you will be able to:
• Apply the concerns of various anthropological writings to contemporary processes of power and politics.
Discern and discuss the tensions and correspondences between the political institutions of different societies, their representation in ethnographic writing or film, and political processes in the ethnographers’ own society.

Demonstrate knowledge of influential ethnographies and debates relevant to the anthropology of politics and power.

1 If you need help with your assignment, please contact:
   • the academic teaching staff in your unit for guidance in understanding or completing this type of assessment
   • the Writing Centre for academic skills support.

2 Indicative time-on-task is an estimate of the time required for completion of the assessment task and is subject to individual variation

Delivery and Resources

ABOUT THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF POWER AND POLITICS

This unit introduces students to many of the vital political practices generating social life in the present. It also introduces students to some of the key literature associated with the anthropology of politics and power. Our exploration of both the practice of power and its analysis will be organized around three enduring questions: the ‘secret of order’, the ‘secret of change’, and the ‘secret of action.’

In the first half of the course students will identify and compare the themes – explicit or otherwise – that dominate the composition of a number of classical political ethnographies, while also exploring the wider question of their colonial contexts and how this context influenced the development of anthropological knowledge. The second half of the unit examines how some of these themes may still be of relevance in illuminating more contemporary manifestations of power, including forms of political practice such as nationalism and its project of social transformation; violence and terror; gender and agency; resistance and collaboration; and peace-making and reconciliation. A continuing concern of the course will be to explore how the writing of ethnography and the making of ethnographic film – that is, textual and visual representations – are implicated in these issues.

Politics and power can be thought of as intimate aspects of our social life and relationships, and hence as aspects of all subjects of anthropological investigation. Processes of domination, resistance and social transformation are inevitably involved in the creation and representation of cultural practices and meanings. Accordingly, the specific investigation of these issues is of great help in contributing to students’ understandings of the present, as well as to their comprehension
of other units in the anthropology programme at Macquarie. Appropriately, the various and competing ways that the anthropology of politics has been conceptualized and delimited has meant that political anthropology itself has been described as a “running intellectual battleground.” One key reason for this resides in the historical political context of anthropology. Anthropology is a discipline more immediately familiar and hence more immediately implicated than other disciplines with the transformations produced by European power upon the non-European world. For a long intellectual moment, colonialism’s primary object of control constituted anthropology’s primary object of investigation. For this very reason, in this course we will seek to explore both the anthropology of politics, and the politics of anthropology.

Classes

Anth 3002 involves a two-hour lecture-seminar. Part of this weekly seminar will be used for lectures, part for films and part for discussion. The lecture-seminar will be recorded but much discussion will be lost in this process. Students are strongly encouraged to attend the weekly lecture/seminar.

Students are also required to attend face-to-face weekly tutorials. Please check the timetable for room/schedule details.

Unit Schedule

Lecture and Tutorial Programme ANTH 3002 [This is a Provisional schedule that may change slightly]

Note: All tutorial readings and core articles are found on the library website in the e-reserve section (you can search for ANTH302 in e-reserve or follow the link on iLearn). All listed secondary readings are in three-day loan (books), electronic reserve (journal articles) or available in electronic data bases.

Part One: The Political Anthropology of Colonialism

The first six weeks of the course introduce students to the key issues in anthropology’s long historic encounter[s] with state and stateless societies, which raise many fascinating questions about how such societies instituted themselves politically. Yet these questions also arose in the context of both the planned and unplanned colonial transformation of those societies, generally by the very nation states and business corporations of the European anthropologists themselves. As a consequence, anthropologists have always been studying and constructing moving targets – albeit more or less consciously: political regimes undergoing multiple transformations in which anthropologists themselves were implicated, with political institutions and practices in flux as incorporation into global flows of capital, ideologies and social practices proceeded.

Week One: Introduction to Political Anthropology and its Key Concepts
**Film:** *First Contact*

**Tutorial Activity:** Discussion of *First Contact*, Course Overview and Assessment Details

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**Week Two: Anthropology, Colonialism & Science**

**Film:** Robert Gardner’s *The Nuer*

**Tutorial Question:** Given Feuchtwang’s analysis of the relationship between the colonial State and anthropological knowledge, who should fund anthropological research?

**Tutorial Reading:**


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**Week Three: World Systems Theory, Global Cultural History & Anthropology**

**Film:** Joe Leahy’s *Neighbours*

**Tutorial Question:** Using Kahn’s discussion, give some examples of how ideas of cultural difference might be connected to contemporary processes of power.

**Tutorial Reading:**


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**Part Two: Representing Politics**

In the next three weeks of the course we will seek to ground some of the above claims in the complexities of a number of ‘classic’ political anthropology texts, seeking to clarify the assumptions ethnographers have made about culture, structure, historical change, conflict, authority, and individual activism in the process of representing particular societies. Student
seminar presentations make up a proportion of the seminar sessions.

**Week Four: The Secret of Order**

**Tutorial Question:** For what reasons does Clastres accuse western political philosophy of ethnocentrism?

**Tutorial Reading:**


**Recommended Readings for Essay:**


[See also review essay on ‘Anthropology of colonialism’ in *Annual Review of Anthropology* 1993]

**Week Five: The Secret of Change**

**Tutorial Question:** Can we speak of exploitation in pre-capitalist societies?

**Tutorial Reading:**

Recommended Readings for Essay:

*Week Six: The Secret of Action*

**Tutorial Question**: What might a focus on the purposive political actions of individuals simultaneously obscure?

**Tutorial Reading:**

**Recommended Readings for Essay:**
[See also ‘Overview: Sixty years in Anthropology’, by Barth in *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 2007]

*Part Three: The Political Anthropology of Modernity*
The most recent globalization of the world economy has encouraged anthropologists to theorize the ways tensions and accommodations between local, national and global forces impact on the political processes and the social relations of societies represented in their ethnographic writing. It has also encouraged a re-thinking of how we might understand the human diversity traditionally studied by anthropologists and paradoxically both produced and managed by nation states and modern modes of governance. This section will centre on some of the questions these studies raise, on the effects and unintended consequences of self-conscious modernizing projects of different nation-states and elites, and on the political legacy of European colonialism.

Week Seven: Project Modernity (1): Nationalism, Republicanism and Language Reform in Turkey

Film: *Triumph of the Will*

Tutorial Question: In Scott’s contrast between high modernist planning versus practical knowledge/local practices, which side do you come down on?

Tutorial Reading:


Week Eight: Project Modernity (2): Soviet Collectivism

Film: *Three Songs of Lenin*

Tutorial Question: In their discussion of ‘primitive’ society, how are Marx and Sahlins' contrasting interpretations related to their different analysis of capitalism?

Tutorial Reading:


Recommended Readings for Essay:


Week Nine: TBA

Week Ten: Domination & Resistance (1): Theoretical Problems

Tutorial Question: How might we understand relations between gender, language and power in Australia?

Tutorial Reading:


Recommended Readings for Essay:


*Week Eleven: Domination & Resistance (2): Islam and Gender*

**Film:** *Divorce Iranian Style*

**Tutorial Question:** Do Muslim women need saving (from Islam)?

**Tutorial Readings:**


**Recommended Readings for Essay:**


*Week Twelve: Violence and Terror*

**Tutorial Question:** Can Das’ discussion of witnessing be applied to Primo Levi’s work?

**Tutorial Readings:**


**Recommended Readings for Essay:**


Week Thirteen: The Politics of Truth and Reconciliation

**Tutorial Question:** In projects of reconciliation, is it just to make victims the primary actor, expecting them to initiate what those in power are unwilling to do?

**Tutorial Reading:**


ANTH 302: Reserve List

**Books:**


* Asad, T (ed.) *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*


* K. Hunt & K. Rygiel (eds) (En)gendering the War on Terror: War Stories and Camouflage Politics. UK, Ashgate Publishing.

** Articles from Journals **


Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from Policy Central (https://policies.mq.edu.au). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- Academic Appeals Policy
- Academic Integrity Policy
- Academic Progression Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Fitness to Practice Procedure
- Assessment Procedure
- Complaints Resolution Procedure for Students and Members of the Public
- Special Consideration Policy

Students seeking more policy resources can visit Student Policies (https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

To find other policies relating to Teaching and Learning, visit Policy Central (https://policies.mq.edu.au) and use the search tool.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/admin/other-resources/student-conduct

Results

Results published on platform other than eStudent, (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in eStudent. For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

Academic Integrity

At Macquarie, we believe academic integrity – honesty, respect, trust, responsibility, fairness and courage – is at the core of learning, teaching and research. We recognise that meeting the expectations required to complete your assessments can be challenging. So, we offer you a range of resources and services to help you reach your potential, including free online writing and maths support, academic skills development and wellbeing consultations.
Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit http://students.mq.edu.au/support/

The Writing Centre

The Writing Centre provides resources to develop your English language proficiency, academic writing, and communication skills.

- Workshops
- Chat with a WriteWISE peer writing leader
- Access StudyWISE
- Upload an assignment to Studiosity
- Complete the Academic Integrity Module

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- Subject and Research Guides
- Ask a Librarian

Student Services and Support

Macquarie University offers a range of Student Support Services including:

- IT Support
- Accessibility and disability support with study
- Mental health support
- Safety support to respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault
- Social support including information about finances, tenancy and legal issues

Student Enquiries

Got a question? Ask us via AskMQ, or contact Service Connect.

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy. The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.