

**Anthropology of Power**  
**21:070:306**  
**Spring 2017**

**Instructor:** Isaias Rojas-Perez  
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**Time:** Tuesday 2:30-5:20 pm  
**Room:** Conklin Hall 346  
**Office hours:** Tuesday 12:30-2:00 pm  
 Thursday 12:30-2:00 pm

**Description**

This course introduces students to the anthropological study of the modern state. It looks closely at how social theorists and ethnographers have variously examined and rendered the nature of the political community and related questions of sovereignty, legitimacy, violence, rights, and political domination, at different historical moments and cultural contexts. In doing so, the course aims to familiarize students with some fundamental tools—theoretical and methodological—necessary for understanding the phenomenon of the modern nation-state in a distinctively anthropological manner. Students will thus acquire a political language that will prepare them to be active and critical participants in the life of the political community. The conceptual tools acquired in this course will also help students to critically reflect on the political stakes in their own research agendas and professional intervention.

The course is specifically organized around a critical exploration of some of the conceptual dichotomies (society v. state, war v. peace, public v. private, rational v. irrational, global v. local, etc.) through which the modern state has historically been rendered. By means of this exploration, the course will examine how institutions considered to be definitive of the modern nation state—such as citizenship, welfare, bureaucracy, secularism, consent, and monopoly of violence—are in fact broadly constituted, legitimized and contested beyond the set of government agencies and functions that usually are seen as “the state.”

The material will be discussed in four units: (1) Classical genealogies, in which we will explore the work of some of the classical political thinkers of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries who provided crucial conceptual foundations around the notion of “social contract” upon which the modern state has been erected; (2) Sociological perspectives, in which we will map some of the concepts through which some classic social theorists of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries have critically rendered the modern state beyond the conceptual framework of “social contract;” (3) Contemporary genealogies, in which we will explore the work of some European thinkers of the post-Second World War era exploring how, in the task of shaping the social order, state power operates beyond the confines of coercion and violence; (4) Ethnographic mappings in the neoliberal era, in which we will explore how contemporary anthropologists have critically engaged and contested classical and contemporary theories of the state by offering ethnographic pictures of state violence, gender formation, coloniality, and globalization.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

On completing successfully the course, students will:

- Recognize the state not simply as a set of government agencies and functions but as a set of practices, discourses and technologies embedded in social relations.
- Distinguish how “non-state” institutions (schools, churches, families, etc.) have a crucial role in constituting the state.
- Relate the concepts and theories of the modern state discussed in class to their local worlds and everyday life.

- Analyze the state beyond the constraints of force and violence by looking at it as a site of vulnerability, ambiguity and failure.
- Provide a basic account of the specific ways anthropology approaches the study of the modern state.
- Evaluate critically the contemporary validity of some foundational liberal theories and concepts such as sovereignty, consent and social contract.

### **Course requirements**

**Attendance is mandatory:** This is a weekly double session class. Any unexcused absence from any of the two sessions will have a negative impact in the students' grade. Consistent absence will be grounds for dismissal from the class or for receiving a failing grade. Needless to say, students are expected to conduct themselves courteously in class. This means arriving *on time* and not engaging in activities that will be distracting to their fellow students or the instructor. Excused absences required official documentation (see below for guidelines). Students are responsible for obtaining from their classmates all material covered during any missed classes. For excused and unexcused absences, this course abides to the Rutgers University's policy. See [http://catalogs.rutgers.edu/generated/nwk-ug\\_0608/pg23613.html](http://catalogs.rutgers.edu/generated/nwk-ug_0608/pg23613.html)

**Participation in class discussion:** Class discussion is a central component of the active learning process in this course. Students are required to arrive to class ready to participate actively in all class-discussions, and that simply means that students **MUST** timely complete all reading as scheduled on the syllabus.

**Group work:** Group work promotes a deeper and more active learning process by encouraging student participation, interaction and exchange of ideas. Working together in groups gives students the opportunity to learn from and teach each other and exposes them to different approaches and ways of thinking about common problems. In addition, group work fosters interpersonal skills and trains students in techniques of team work. Students are required to participate in group work either as an in-class exercise or as a group homework assignment. Group work is graded with pass or fail, and all the members of a group will receive the same grade.

**Quiz:** In each class there will be a quiz focusing on the readings assigned for the corresponding week. There will be a total of twelve quizzes. No make-up quizzes are allowed.

**Final essay (1,800 to 2,000 words [5-6 double space pages in Times New Roman 12 points]):** In the final essay students will have an opportunity to expand their knowledge about one specific issue or particular discussion raised throughout the course. For this purpose, at the end of the first unit students will have developed a preliminary topic of their essay in conversation with the instructor. Other two rounds of discussion about the writing projects will take place at the end of the second and third units. At the end of the second unit, students must have developed a preliminary abstract of their final papers. At the end of the third unit, students must have developed a preliminary outline and a working bibliography for their final essays. The final essay must demonstrate engagement with the content and theories discussed in class, and must make use of the references used throughout the course. Additional sources are welcome with the instructor's approval.

### **Course Evaluation**

Evaluation will be based on:

- Participation in class discussion	(15%)
- Group work	(15%)
- Quizzes	(40%)
- Final essay	(30%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **Grade Conversion**

<b>A</b>	100 - 90		
<b>B+</b>	89.9 - 84.5	<b>B</b>	84.49 - 79.5
<b>C+</b>	79.49 - 74.5	<b>C</b>	74.49 - 69.5
<b>D</b>	69.49 - 59.5	<b>F</b>	59.49 - 0

There will be no “extra credit” in this course. Students have plenty of opportunities to achieve an excellent grade through the regular requirements of the course.

### **Academic Honesty**

Students are expected to comply with ethical standards of behavior set by Rutgers-Newark, The State University of New Jersey (<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>). These standards are concerned with cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, forgery, falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition. Every assignment must be entirely the work of the student who submits it. Any material or idea borrowed from another source must be properly cited. Following the University’s policy on academic integrity, any violation of these rules will be seriously taken and correspondingly prosecuted.

### **Cell phones and laptops**

Cell phones will be turned off and stored during all class meetings. There will be no exceptions in this regard. The use of laptops is expected to be exclusively for taking notes and students must refrain from other usages such as texting, emailing or social networking during class meetings.

### **Drop and withdrawal deadlines**

The last date for students to drop a course without “W” grade: 1/24/17

The last date to withdraw from a course with a "W" grade: 3/27/17

### **Readings and Themes**

This course draws on a carefully selected interdisciplinary set of theoretical and ethnographic readings aimed to provide an overview of the topics under consideration. A *Reading Package* (RP) will be posted online on Blackboard.

### **Films**

Films speak directly to the topics of the course. Due to their summarizing power, they are meant to provide specific examples upon which a more detailed discussion of the material provided by critical literature can be grounded.

### CLASS SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Unit	Date	Topic	Readings
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Week 1</b> Jan. 17	Overview of course objectives, requirements and procedures	Syllabus presentation.
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>UNIT I</b></p> <p><b>Classical Genealogies</b></p> <p>The unit explores the work of some of the classical thinkers of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries who provided crucial conceptual foundations to think of the modern state in terms of a <i>social contract</i> among the subjects of a political community. It explores questions concerning violence, consent and community.</p>	<b>Week 2</b> Jan. 24	<p><b>State against War</b></p> <p>How classical liberal theory has theorized the state as a necessary evil against war.</p>	<p>Hobbes, Thomas. 1651(1991). <i>Leviathan</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Introduction (pp. 9-11) and chapters XI, XIII, &amp; XIV, (pp.69-75, 86-100)]</p> <p><i>Film</i>: The Square (104 min. 2013) directed by Jehane Nouhaim.</p> <p><u>Optional Readings:</u></p> <p>Hampsher-Monk, Iain. 1992. <i>A History of Modern Political Thought</i>. 'Thomas Hobbes', pp. 1-69. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.</p> <p>Connolly, W. 1992. <i>Political Theory and Modernity</i>. 'Hobbes: The Politics of Divine Containment'. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. pp. 16-41</p>
	<b>Week 3</b> Jan. 31	<p><b>The Problem of Consent</b></p> <p>This session explores how force is not the only determination of state power.</p>	<p>Locke, John. 1988. <i>Two Treatises of Government</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [chapters 1-5 &amp; 7-8 (pp. 267-302, 318-349)]</p> <p><i>Film</i>: 5 Broken Cameras (94 min. 2012) directed by Guy Davidi &amp; Emad Burmat.</p> <p><u>Optional Readings:</u></p> <p>Hampsher-Monk, Iain. 1992. <i>A History of Modern Political Thought</i>. 'John Locke', pp. 69-117. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.</p> <p>Cavell, Stanley. 2004. 'Locke' in <i>Cities of Words: Pedagogical Letters on a Register of the Moral Life</i>. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.</p>

	<b>Week 4</b> Feb. 7	<b>The General Will</b>  This session examines how state power is derivative of moral relations.	Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. 1997. <i>The Social Contract and other later Political Writings</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [TBA]  <i>Film</i> : Democracia Indígena (35 min. 1999) directed by Bruce “Pacho” Lane.  <u>Optional Readings:</u>  Hampsher-Monk, Iain. 1992. <i>A History of Modern Political Thought</i> . ‘Jean-Jacques Rousseau’, pp. 153-197. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.  Connolly, W. 1992. <i>Political Theory and Modernity</i> . ‘Rousseau: Docility Through Citizenship’. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. pp.41-68
<p align="center"><b>UNIT II</b></p> <p><b>Sociological Perspectives</b></p> <p>This unit maps some fundamental concepts through which classic social theorists have rendered the historical reality of the modern state beyond the conceptual constraints of the “social contract” theory. It explores notions of class formation, collective representation, legitimacy and bureaucracy.</p>	<b>Week 5</b> Feb. 14	<b>State and Class Formation</b>  Primitive accumulation and “state effects.”	Marx, Karl. 1976. <i>Capital. A Critique of Political Economy, Vol. 1</i> . Trans. Ben Fowkes. London: Penguin. [pp. 896-904; 914-926]  <i>Film</i> : Modern Times (96 min. 1936) directed by Charlie Chaplin.  <u>Optional readings:</u>  Abrams, Philip. 1988. Notes on the difficulty of studying the state. in <i>Journal of Historical Sociology</i> Vol. 1 No. 1
	<b>Week 6</b> Feb. 21	<b>State and Conscience Collective</b>  Forms of social solidarity and the State.	Durkheim, Emile. 1986. “The Concept of the State” in Anthony Giddens (ed.) <i>Durkeim on Politics and the State</i> . Stanford: Stanford University Press. [pp. 32-72]  Giddens, Anthony. 1986. <i>Durkeim on Politics and the State</i> . Stanford: Stanford University Press. [pp. 1-31]
	<b>Week 7</b> Feb. 28	<b>Legitimacy and Bureaucracy</b>  Function and structure of the modern state. An initial approach.	Weber, Max. 2004. “The Three Pure Types of Legitimate Rule,” and “The Nation.” In Sam Whimster (ed.) <i>The Essential Weber: A Reader</i> . New York: Routledge.  Weber, Max. 2006. “Bureaucracy.” In Aradhana Sharma & Akhil Gupta (eds.) <i>The Anthropology of the State: A Reader</i> . Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. (pp. 71-86)

			<p><i>Film: Brazil</i> (142 min. 1985) directed by Terry Gilliam.</p> <p><u>Optional readings:</u></p> <p>Gerth H. H. &amp; C. Wright Mills. 1946. <i>From Max Weber. Essays in Sociology</i>. New York: Oxford University Press (Introduction, pp. 3-23)</p>
<p><b>UNIT III</b></p> <p><b>Contemporary Genealogies</b></p> <p>The unit explores the work of some European thinkers of the post-Second World War era that have explained why and how the modern state has the extraordinary power of producing a socially ordered world without necessarily giving orders or exerting constant coercion and violence.</p>	<p><b>Week 8</b></p> <p>Mar. 7</p>	<p><b>Ideology and Ideologies</b></p> <p>The state as “cultural” problem.</p>	<p>Althusser, Louis. 1971. Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation), in <i>Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays</i>. New York and London: Monthly Review Press. (pp. 127–86)</p> <p><i>Film: Ai Weiwei: Never Sorry</i> (91 min. 2012) directed by Alison Klayman.</p> <p><u>Optional Readings:</u></p> <p>Gramsci, Antonio. 1971. “State and Civil Society.” In Aradhana Sharma &amp; Akhil Gupta (eds.) <i>The Anthropology of the State: A Reader</i>. pp. 86-112</p> <p>Williams, Raymond. 1983. <i>Keywords</i>. New York: Oxford University Press. [entries on Hegemony (pp. 144-46) and Ideology (pp. 153-57)]</p>
	<p><b>Mar. 14</b></p>	<p>Spring Break</p>	
	<p><b>Week 9</b></p> <p>Mar. 21</p>	<p><b>Biopolitics and governmentality</b></p> <p>Power as productive force</p>	<p>Foucault, Michel. 2000. “Governmentality” in <i>Power</i> (ed.) James Faubion. New York: The New Press. [pp.92-107]</p> <p>Foucault, Michel. 1990. <i>The History of Sexuality. Volume 1: An Introduction</i>. New York: Vintage Books. [pp. 135-145]</p> <p><i>Film: The Interrupters</i> (125 min. 2011) directed by Steve Adams.</p> <p><u>Optional Readings:</u></p> <p>Foucault, Michel. 1982. “The Subject and Power,” in <i>Critical Inquiry</i> 8(4):777-795</p>

			<p>Ferguson, J. and A. Gupta, 2002, "Spatializing States: toward an ethnography of neoliberal governmentality, <i>American Ethnologist</i>, 29 (4), pp. 981-1002</p> <p>Scott, D. 1995. 'Colonial Governmentality', <i>Social Text</i>, No.43, Autumn Issue.</p> <p>Rutherford, D. 2009. 'Sympathy, State Building, and the Experience of Empire', <i>Cultural Anthropology</i>, Vol. 24, Issue 1, pp. 1-32.</p>
	<p><b>Week 10</b> Mar. 28</p>	<p><b>The Two Faces of the State</b>  Domination and integration</p>	<p>Bourdieu, Pierre. 2014. <i>On the State. Lectures at the Collège de France, 1989-1992</i>. Malden, MA: Polity Press. [TBA]</p>
<p><b>UNIT IV</b> <b>Contemporary Ethnographic Mappings</b></p> <p>The unit explores how contemporary anthropology has engaged critically and contested classical and contemporary theories of the state by offering ethnographic pictures of globalization, state violence, gender formation, and coloniality of the state.</p>	<p><b>Week 11</b> Apr. 4</p>	<p><b>Globalization</b>  How contemporary anthropology problematizes the study of the modern state.</p>	<p>Sharma, A. &amp; Gupta, A. 2006. 'Rethinking Theories of the State in an Age of Globalization' in Aradhana Sharma &amp; Akhil Gupta (eds.) <i>The Anthropology of the State: A Reader</i>. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. (pp. 1-43)</p> <p>Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. 2001, 'The Anthropology of the State in the Age of Globalization,' <i>Current Anthropology</i>, 42/1: 125-138</p> <p><u>Optional readings:</u></p> <p>Das, Veena &amp; Deborah Poole. 2004. 'State and its Margins: Comparative Ethnographies' in Veena Das &amp; Deborah Poole (eds.) <i>Anthropology in the Margins of the State</i>. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press. pp. 3-35</p> <p>Hansen, T and Stepputat, F. 2001 'Introduction: States of Imagination,' in <i>States of Imagination</i>, Hansen and Stepputat (eds.), Durham, NC: Duke University Press, pp. 1-38.</p>
	<p><b>Week 12</b> Apr. 11</p>	<p><b>State Violence and Terror</b>  The state as machine of terror and violence.</p>	<p>Taussig, Mick. 1989. "Terror as Usual. Walter Benjamin's Theory of History as a State of Siege." <i>Social Text</i>, 23:3-20</p> <p>Lutz, Catherine. 2002. "Making War at Home in the United States: Militarization and the Current Crisis." <i>American Anthropologist</i>, 104(3): 723-35.</p> <p><i>Film: Dirty Wars</i> (90 min. 2013) directed by Rick Royley.</p>

			<p><u>Optional Readings:</u></p> <p>Taussig, Michael. 1984. "Culture of Terror – Space of Death." <i>Comparative Studies in Society and History</i>, 26(3):467-497</p> <p>Kapferer, B. 2005. 'New formations of power, the oligarchic-corporate state, and anthropological ideological discourse', <i>Anthropological Theory</i>, 5 (3): 285-299.</p>
<b>Week 13</b> Apr. 18	<b>The Gendered State</b>  How the state constitutes itself as gender "neutral."	<p>Das, Veena. 2007. "The Figure of the Abducted Woman. The Citizen as Sexed." In <i>Life and Words. Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary</i>. Berkeley: University of California Press. [pp. 18-37]</p> <p>Abu-Lughod, Lila. 2013. <i>Do Muslim Women Need Saving?</i> Cambridge, MA. Harvard University Press. [TBA]</p> <p><i>Film: Invisible Wars</i> (97 min. 2012) directed by Kirby Dick.</p> <p><u>Optional Readings:</u></p> <p>Bhattacharjee, Anannya. 1997. "The Public/Private Mirage: Mapping Homes and Undomesticating Violence Work in the South Asian Immigrant Community." In M. J. Alexander and C. T. Mohanty (eds.), <i>Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures</i>. New York and London: Routledge. [pp. 308–29]</p> <p>Brown, Wendy. 1995. "Finding the Man in the State." in <i>States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity</i>. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. [pp. 166–96]</p>	
<b>Week 14</b> Apr. 25	<b>The Coloniality of the State</b>  Encounters with "progress" and "civilization"	<p>Bessire, Lucas. 2014. <i>Behold the Black Caiman. A Chronicle of Ayoreo Life</i>. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press [TBA].</p> <p><i>Film: From Honey to Ashes</i> (47 min. 2006) directed by Lucas Bessire.</p>	