Department of Anthropology and Sociology (ANSO)  
Academic year 2019-2020

The State: Post-colonial perspectives

ANSO105- Autumn - 6 ECTS  
Schedule & Room

Course Description

The course will focus on the state as an object of sociological and anthropological analyses. Students will be introduced to the Subaltern Studies scholarship on the colonial state as well as to writings using Gramscian and Foucauldian approaches to study modern state power and everyday practices. How can state power be conceptualized? How well do western concepts of the state, sovereignty, bureaucratic rationality, travel to non-western contexts? What forms of violence, legality, welfare characterize the functioning of post-colonial states? What follows from a theorization of state power in terms of its incapacies and weaknesses?

Ethnographies of the post-colonial state in Africa (Comaroffs, Roitman, Mbembe), Middle East (Mitchell), India (Das, Chatterjee, Gupta), Latin America (Coronil) and Central Asia will be used to familiarize students with a variety of theoretical perspectives and conceptual frameworks as well as methodological tools for a study of state institutions, practices and imaginaries. The course will introduce students to questions of law and violence, bureaucracy and corruption, sovereignty and hegemony, bio-power and governmentality as well as neo-liberal transformations of the state in a comparative perspective.

Syllabus

SESSIONS :
There will be four full day sessions

Friday, 11 October 9:15 am to 6 pm (room P3-506)  
Saturday, 12 October 9:15 am to 6 pm (room P3-506)
Friday, 1 November 9:15 am to 6 pm (room P3-506)
Saturday, 2 November 9:15 am to 6 pm (room P3-506)

GRADING:
- 30% classroom participation and group presentation
- 70% Final Paper of 3500-4000 words on topics discussed in the course.
  The final paper must be submitted by December 30, 2019 (midnight)

SESSION 1: Friday, 11 October 2019

9:15 am – 11 am: The state of the state in anthropology:
An introduction (Shalini Randeria):
An overview of the course; What is the state? How can state power and practices be conceptualized? How can state power and practices be studied?
Discussion of our experiences of studying or encountering the state

Required readings:


Additional readings:

Fassin, Didier, 2015. At the Heart of the State, London: Pluto Press.


11.15 am - 13:00 am: The State: From modernization theory to post-colonial and post-structural approaches (Shalini Randeria):

Introduction to the literature; discussion of key concepts and theories esp. Gramscian and Foucauldian approaches; What does it mean to study the state from its margins? How well do western concepts of the state, sovereignty, bureaucratic rationality travel to the rest of the world?

Readings:


Lunch Break (1-2 pm)

2:00 pm – 3.30 pm: Studying the state at its margins: the case of the sponsorship system and migrant labour in Lebanon (Presentation and Discussion led by Dalia Zein, TA)

Readings:


Thelen, Tatjana; Vettess, Larissa; von Benda-Beckmann, Keebet. 2014. "Introduction to Stategraphy: Toward a Relational Anthropology of the State" Social Analysis, 58(3) 1-19


4:15 pm – 6:00 pm
Guest lecture by Vinh-Kim Nyugen (ANSO, IHEID)

Readings:

SESSION 2: Saturday, 12 October, 2019

9:15am -11 am: Populism in Latin America (Guest Lecture by Rafael Sanchez, ANSO IHEID)

Readings:


11:15 am - 1:00 pm: Foucault on Governmentality

(We will discuss together the texts in the following session but if anyone would like to make an individual or group presentation on these readings please let the TA know)

Readings:


Lunch Break (1-2 pm)

2 pm - 3.30 pm State, Law and Development I (Deval Desai, Albert Hirschman Centre on Democracy) Guest Lecture

Readings:


4.15 pm – 6 pm State, Law and Development II (Shalini Randeria)

**Readings:**


SESSION 3: Friday, 1 November 2019

(GROUP PRESENTATIONS)

09:15am -11 am: State, Market, Development


Part I Chapter 2: Principles true in every country
Part III Chapter 7: The Object of Development Chapter 8: The Market’s Place


11.15 am -1:00 pm: (Il)legality of State Power: Law, Sovereignty, Emergency

Readings:


1-2 pm Lunch Break

2pm –3.30 pm: Everyday Practices of the State: Bureaucracy, Corruption


Part I Chapter 2 : The State and the Politics of Poverty
Part II Chapter 3 : Corruption, Politics and the Imagined State
Part III Chapter 5 : «Let the train run on paper» : Bureaucratic Writing as State Practice


Olivier de Sardan, 2013."The Bureaucratic Mode of Governance and Practical Norms in West Africa and Beyond", in: Local Politics and Contemporary Transformations in the Arab World, Palgrave. Edited by Bouziane, M. and Harders, C.


**4.15 pm- 6:00 pm: From Welfare States to Neoliberal States**


**SESSION 4: Saturday 2 November, 2019**

(GROUP PRESENTATIONS)

**9:15 am -11 am: The State and Violence: Imaginaries and Practices**

**Readings:**


11.15 am - 1 pm: The Colonial State

Readings:


1 – 2 pm Lunch Break

2 pm- 3.30 pm: Can post-colonial approaches analyze transformations of state power and practices in the post-socialist context?

Readings:


4.15 pm - 5:00 pm: Concluding session: regional comparisons, methodological approaches and theoretical differences

5.15 pm - 6 pm: Feedback on the seminar

Some background readings:


