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

The Anthropology of Human Rights

ANSO118 - Autumn - 6 ECTS

Schedule & Room

Course Description

Human rights are one of the most profound legacies of the 20th century, an attempt by politicians, policy makers, scholars, and humanitarians to erect obstacles against future state violence and other crimes against humanity. Over time, human rights have become a global phenomenon with unexpected outcomes and effects. Though developed by nations and transnational in scope, human rights ideas have been adapted and reworked in local contexts worldwide, becoming the object of as well as a resource for popular struggle, state policymaking, and transnational movements. All of this makes human rights a perfect object of anthropological inquiry: human rights are at once a global force and a set of resources that find distinct expressions in a variety of local settings. This course examines the historical origins and expansion of human rights thinking, and the impacts this has had on national formations, local contexts and individual subjectivities. It explores the various ways in which anthropologists have studied human rights and their specific contribution to this interdisciplinary field of study. Students will become familiar with classic ethnographies of human rights struggles in local contexts as well as more recent ones that examine the global institutions and transnational networks via which human rights are produced.

Syllabus

Teaching Method

The course is taught using a diversity of teaching methods and resources. In addition to weekly readings, students are encouraged to watch films (all films selected for this course are available via this link: https://vimeopro.com/graduateinstitutelibrary/the-anthropology-of-human-rights Password: ANSO118), reflect on contemporary world affairs by liaising debates discussed in class with current
news, and prepare questions/comments prior to seminars. Seminars will be composed of short interactive lectures, followed by classroom discussions, debates and exercises as well as guest lectures by human rights experts and activists.

**Learning Outcome**

By the end of the module, it is intended that students will have the following learning outcomes:

1. Describe major trends in the historiography of human rights.
2. Summarize key debates in the anthropology of human rights (cultural relativism vs universalism, global institutions vs local reception, the paradoxical effects of the bureaucratization of human rights)
3. Compare and appraise diverse disciplinary perspectives on human rights (law; anthropology; international relations; history).
4. Identify and assess the contemporary international human rights regime (United Nations; regional institutions; national bodies; international and local advocates).
5. Apply human rights to broader concerns (humanitarianism; post-conflict reconstruction).

**Transferable, practical and generic skills**

1. Refined ability to identify and access appropriate primary and secondary research resources.
2. Ability to collate and critically analyse those resources in relation to complex issues in the field.
3. Ability to present concise and cogently structured arguments, both orally and in writing.
4. Ability to work together with others as well as independently, including effective time management.
5. Ability to deploy a range of communication and information technology skills.

**Assessment**

Students’ performance will be evaluated on the basis of classroom participation and the quality of the written assignments. Participants have to show familiarity with the assigned readings that will be discussed in class.

More precisely students will be requested to:

- Study on a weekly basis the assigned readings and participate actively in classroom discussions.
- Discuss some readings at least once during the semester; be capable of situating them in relation to readings for other weeks in order to highlight the general thrust of the course; pose a few questions to initiate the debate.
- Submit an essay outline of no more than 2000 words (title; personal motivation; questions; relevance of the topic; short bibliography), due by **28 November 2019** to be discussed with the instructor. The topic should be one related to the course, but it is not restricted to the lectures’ titles and assigned readings.
- Write a final paper of no more than 5000 words (excluding bibliography and annexes), due by **19 December 2019**, building on the essay outline.

Grade will be determined as follows: 20% for general participation in class; 20% for the outline; 60% for the final essay.

The seminar provides 6 ECTS. Attendance is mandatory and represents 1 ECTS, the readings, presentation and discussion 2 ECTS, and the written papers 3 ECTS.
Course Policies

- Papers should be written in English or French, double-spaced, using standard 12 point font, with 1 inch margins. The student's name, the paper's title, the date, the course's title and page numbers must be mentioned.
- Quotations and bibliography must follow the Chicago Manual of Style or the Harvard Referencing System.
- Students must hand in papers on time electronically as a Word file (no need to provide a hard copy). Papers that are sent late without a valid reason or importantly exceed the word limit will not receive a grade higher than 4.0.
- Students who missed more than two classes without being excused by the instructor will not receive a grade higher than 4.0.
- Plagiarism constitutes a breach of academic integrity and will not be tolerated. Students who present the work of others as their own will receive a 0.
- Assigned readings will be made available as electronic reserve on the class' website.
Course Outline

PART 1: HISTORY, LAW, ANTHROPOLOGY

Session 1 – The Historical Emergence of Human Rights (September 19)

Compulsory readings:
Samuel Moyn,
Wasserstrom, Jeffrey N., Greg Grandin, Lynn Hunt, and Marilyn B. Young.
Slotte, Pamela, Miia Halme-Tuomisaari.

Additional readings:
Hunt, Lynn.
Moyn, Samuel.
Ishay, Micheline R.
Rajagopal, Balakrishnan.

Session 2 – The Anthropology of Law, Dispute Processes and Legal Pluralism (September 26)

Compulsory readings:
Nader, Laura.
Nader, Laura.
Randeria, Shalini
Beyer, Judith.

Further readings
Gluckman, Max.
Nader, Laura.
Session 3 – Anthropologists and human rights : From rejection to active engagement (October 3)

Compulsory readings:
American Anthropological Association

Goodale, Mark.

Goodale, Mark.

Wilson, Richard Ashby.

Further Readings:
Farmer, Paul.

Sanford, Victoria.

Messer, E.

Sanford, Victoria.

Speed, Shannon.

Wilson, Richard.

Tate, Winifred.

PART 2 : CULTURE AND RIGHTS

Session 4 – The Universalism vs Cultural Relativism debate (October 10)

Compulsory readings
Cowan, Jane K.

Merry, Sally Engle.


Additional readings:
Benhabib, S.


Dembour, M. – B.

Donnelly, J.

Engelke, M.

Engle, Karen.

Geertz, C.

Goodale, M. and S. E. Merry (eds)

Harris-Short, S.

Howell, S.

Ibhawoh, B.

Levitt, P., and S. Merry
2009. ‘Vernacularization on the ground: local uses of global women’s rights in Peru, China, India and the United States’, *Global Networks*, Vol. 9 No. 4.

Merry, Sally Engle.

Mutua, M.

Pollis, A.

Tilly, J. T.

Waltz, S. E.

Wilson, Richard

Session 5 – Vernacularization, Translation, Adaptation, Frictions (October 17)

Compulsory readings
Merry, Sally Engle

Cheng, S.

Englund, Harri.

Curtis, Jennifer.

Additional readings
Tagliarinaa, D.

Englund, H.

Goldstein, D.

Goldstein, D.

Goodale, M.

McCorquodale, R. and R. Fairbrother

McGrew, A. G.
1998. ‘Human rights in a global age: Coming to terms with globalisation’ in Evans, T. (ed.)
Human Rights Fifty Years On: A Reappraisal (Manchester: MUP).

Merry, Sally Engle

Merry, S. and R. Stern
2005. 'The Female Inheritance Movement in Hong Kong: Theorizing the Local/Global Interface', Current Anthropology, Vol. 46, No. 3.

Murray, D. A. B.
2006. 'Who’s right? Human rights, sexual rights and social change in Barbados', Culture, Health & Sexuality, Vol. 8 No. 3.

Preis, A.

Thomas, F.

Zwart, T.

Meernik, J. et al

Mihr, A., and H. P. Schmitz

Nelson, P. J., and E. Dorsey

Orentlicher, D. F.

Smith, J et al

Tate, W.

Welch, C. E.

Wilson, R.

Session 6 – The Politics of Culture (1): Indigenous Rights (October 24)

Compulsory readings
Wright, Susan

Kuper, Adam
Conklin, Beth

Speed, Shanon

Further readings
Barnard, A.
2006. 'Kalahari revisionism, Vienna and the 'indigenous peoples' debate', Social Anthropology, Volume 14, No. 1.

Bowen J. R.
2000. 'Should we have a universal concept of "Indigenous People's" Rights?: Ethnicity and essentialism in the twenty-first century', Anthropology Today, Vol. 16, No. 4

Brulotte, R.

Chernela J.

Clifford, J.

Clifford, J.

Colchester M.

Conklin B A.

Corntassel, J.

French, J. F.

Goggin, S.


Handler, R.

Hodgson D.

Hodgson, D.

Holder, C. L. and J. J. Corntassel
Jackson, J. E.

Jung C.

Karlsson B G.
2003. 'Anthropology and the 'Indigenous Slot': Claims to and Debates about Indigenous Peoples' Status in India,' Critique of Anthropology, Vol. 23, No. 4.

Kenrick, J. and J. Lewis

Kuper, A.

Lee R. B.

McIntosh I, Colchester M, Bowen J, Rosngren D.

Muehlebach A.

Niezen, R.

Oakdale S.

Parker E.

Povinelli, E. A.

Samson, C.

Short, D.

Sisson, J.
1993. 'The Systematisation of Tradition: Maori Culture as a Strategic Resource', Oceania, Vol. 64.

Speed, S.

Sylvain, R.

Turner, T.
1991. 'Representing, resisting, rethinking: Historical Transformations of Kayapo Culture and Anthropological Consciousness' in Stocking, G. (ed.) Colonial Situations:
**Session 7 – The Politics of Culture (2): Islam and women’s rights (October 31)**

**Compulsory readings**


Aslo watch

Ziba Mir Hosseini’s 1997 documentary film « Divorce Iranian Style ». Movie can be accessed via this link: https://vimeopro.com/graduateinstitutelibrary/the-anthropology-of-human-rights

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**Additional readings:**


**PART 3: HUMAN RIGHTS AND GLOBALIZATION – BEYOND THE LOCAL/GLOBAL**

**Session 8 – Global Governance: Assemblages, Frictions, Flows (November 7 – tutor in NYC. Course taught by TA?)**

**Compulsory readings**


Additional readings:
Feldman, Gregory.
Xavier Inda, Jonathan and Renato Rosaldo.
Collier, Stephen.
Tsing, Anna.
Appadurai, Arjun.
Ong, Aiwha and Collier, Stephen.

Session 9 – Transnational activism and advocacy (November 14) – Intervention of Charles Heller, Forensic Oceanography project.

Compulsory readings
Merry, Sally Engle.
Heller, Charles and Pezzani, Lorenzo
Pezzani, Lorenzo, & Heller, Charles

Additional Readings
Goodale, M.
McLagan, Meg.

Session 10 – The UN human rights system (November 21)

Compulsory readings
Cowan, Jane, and Julie Billaud.
Kelly, Tobias.
Sapignoli, Maria.

Additional readings

PART 4: HUMAN RIGHT BUREAUCRACY AND ‘GOOD GOVERNANCE’

Session 11 – Transparency, Good governance, Expertise (November 28)

Deadline for submitting your essay outline.

Compulsory readings


Additional readings


———. 2014. ‘7 The Reign of Terror of the Big Cat: Bureaucracy and the Mediation of Social Times in

Riles, Annelise.


Sharma, Aradhana.


Strathern, Marilyn.


Webb, Martin.


**Session 12 – Producing Accountability: Documents, audit cultures, indicators (December 5)**

**Compulsory readings**

Riles, Annelise.


Merry, Sally Engle.


Davis, Kevin E., Benedict Kingsbury, and Sally Engle Merry.


Garsten, Christina, and Kerstin Jacobsson.


**Additional readings**

Löwenheim, Oded.


Cabot, Heath.


Garsten, Christina, and Magnus Boström.


Navaro-Yashin, Yael.


Hull, Matthew S.


Hull, Matthew S.


Shore, Chris.


Shore, Chris, and Susan Wright.

Shore, Cris, and Susan Wright.


PART 5: HUMAN RIGHTS, HUMANITARIANISM AND POSTWAR TRANSITION

Session 13 – Human Rights and « democracy building »: the case of Afghanistan (December 12)

Compulsory readings

Daulatzai, Anila.


Wimpelmann, Torunn.


De Lauri, Antonio.


Billaud, Julie,


Additional readings

Billaud, Julie.


De Lauri Antonio.


De Lauri, Antonio.


Session 14 – Transitional Justice: the ICC, International Tribunals and Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (December 19)

Compulsory readings

Selimovic, J. M.

2010. Perpetrators and victims: Local responses to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. Focaal, Vol. 57

Niezen, Ronald.

Wilson, Richard Ashby.  

Eltringham, Nigel.  

Further readings

Anders, G.  

Arendt, H.  

Eltringham, N.  
2014. “‘When we walk out; what was it all about?’: Views on “new beginnings” from within The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda”, Development and Change, Vol. 45 No. 3.

Wilson, R. A.  

Films:

Singer, Henry and Rob Miller.  
2018. *The Trial of Radko Mladic*.

Panth, Rithy.  

Schroeder, Barbet.  

Stevens, Barry.  
2010. *Prosecutor*. (documentary film which follows the Chief Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo through the first trials of the newly formed International Criminal Court)

All films for this course can be accessed via this link:
Password : ANSO118