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

Anthropology of Populism

ANSO085- Autumn - 6 ECTS
Schedule & Room

Course Description

Recently populist movements have gained prominence in both Europe and the USA, having inflected the political landscapes of these two regions in arguably irreversible ways. There are important differences between so-called right wing and left wing populism; the similarities, however, are equally salient: they both, 1/ appeal to a seamless "people" as the undivided source of sovereignty; 2/ draw on a a friend/enemy political logic; 3/ reject all forms of mediation in favor of the direct communication between authoritarian leaders and their followers. This course explores this emergent populism both empirically and theoretically. Theoretically, the main social theories addressing populism will be reviewed. Empirically, the second part of the course will examine comparatively case studies from Europe, the US, and Latin America. In line with Anthropology, attention will be given to the social practices, subjectivities, political interpellations and cultural forms that characterise authoritarian populism as an inflexion of the democratic imaginary. All along, the question of whether recent populisms are assimilable to classical populism or whether they are a relatively emergent phenomenon corresponding to our highly globalized predicament will be kept in mind.

Syllabus

Evaluation: Active student participation is expected. Each week 1-2 students will be responsible for presenting the material in class (guidelines will be provided). The final grade will be based on the following assignments:

1 in-class presentation  %20
1 book or film review  %30
1 final paper proposal %20
1 final paper %30

The assignments will be posted on blackboard.

Lecture Topics and Assigned Reading:

**Wednesday**

**September 18**  *Introduction: The Anthropology of Populism*

**Wednesday**

**September 25**  *Theories of Populism I*

**Wednesday**

**October 2**  *Theories of Populism II*

**Wednesday**

**October 9**  *Theories of Populism IV*

**Wednesday**

**October 18**  *Theories of Populism V*

**Wednesday**

**October 16**  *Crowds and Figures I*
Passage on Crowds from the diaries of Thomas Hardy.

**Wednesday**

**October 23**  *Crowds and Figures II*
Wednesday October 30  “Real” and “Virtual” Crowds
Charles Baudelaire, “Crowds” (short poem); “To a Passerby (short poem).
Song “Les Foules” by Edith Piaf.

Wednesday November 13  Classical Populism I: Venezuela

Wednesday November 20  Classical Populism II: Argentina
Readings to be assigned.

Wednesday November 27  Populism Today: Venezuela

Wednesday December 4  Populism Today I: Trump's USA
Readings to be assigned.

Wednesday December 11  Populism Today II: France
Readings to be Assigned

Wednesday December 18  Conclusion