



SYLLABUS:

Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Violence

Spring 2018

Lecturer: Dr LORENZO D'ORSI (lesson 1 – 2, 4 – 7, 9 – 11)

Email address: lorenzo.dorsi1985@gmail.com

Associated Researcher, Centre for Southeast European Studies, Karl-Franzens University of Graz

Guests:

- Prof FRANÇOIS RUEGG (lesson 3)
- Dr LUIGIGIOVANNI QUARTA (lesson 7)
- Dr AURORA MASSA (lesson 12)

Course Description:

With respect to the first half of the course, the second module aims to provide a more strict anthropological reading on violence. How can socio-cultural anthropology contribute to the understanding of the causes, characteristics, and effects of mass violence, collective traumas, as well as the politics of post-conflict situations? The course will response these questions through theoretical key-concepts and ethnographic case studies from Balkans, Argentina, Rwanda, Palestine, etc., which will offer a comparative outlook. We will critically review theories and discourses on phenomena ranging from the so-called ethnic conflicts, religious clashes, structural violence, routinization of terror, painful memories, state violence. The course will also queries contemporary hot topics, like terrorism and refugee crisis, and critically scrutinize the prominent effects of politics of intervention such as multiculturalism, human rights and humanitarianism. Students will have ample opportunities for in-class discussion and debate.

Course Objectives:

Upon successful completion of the course, students will become familiar with fundamental concepts, paradigms, and debates that have shaped anthropological understanding of violence. They will develop the necessary analytic insight to critically discuss ethnic rhetoric, to debate the cultural construction of identity, to assess conditions of structural violence, and to interrogate sites marked by post-conflict policies. They will be able to apply that knowledge to enhance their own research design.

Course Structure:

The course is divided in 6 units (1 unit per week). Each unite includes 2 modules (tot: 12 modules). Each module lasts 3-hour (1 hour= 45 min.).

Classes will be held in **English**.



Course Material:

Required readings for the exam:

1 Monograph:

- Bourgois, P. and J. Schonberg. 2009. *Righteous Dopefiend*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

11 Articles:

- Bowen, J. R., 1996. "The myth of global ethnic conflict". *Journal of democracy*, 7 (4): 3-14.

- D'Orsi L., 2015. "Trauma and the Politics of Memory of the Uruguayan Dictatorship". *Latin American Perspective*, Issue 202, 42 (3): 162-179.

- Goodale, M. 2016. "Toward a Critical Anthropology of Human Rights". *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 47 (3), 485-498.

- Hayden, R. M, 1996. "Imagined Communities and Real Victims, Self-determination and Ethnic Cleansing in Yugoslavia". *American Ethnologist*, 23 (4): 783-801.

- Scheper-Hughes, N., and Bourgois, P. 2003. Introduction: making Sense of Violence. In Scheper-Hughes, N., and P. Bourgois, eds., *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1-31.

- Fassin, D. 2011. "Policing Borders, Producing Boundaries: the Governmentality of Immigration in Dark Times". *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 40, 213-226.

- Fassin, D. and R. Rechtman. 2009. "Introduction to Part One. The reversing of the Truth". In Fassin, D. and R. Rechtman, eds. *The Empire of Trauma. An Inquiry into the Condition of Victimhood*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1-25.

- Ruegg, F. 2012. "Shamanism among the Gypsies of South-eastern Europe". In Zarcone, T. and A. Hobart, eds, *Shamanism and Islam. Sufism, Healing Rituals and Spirits in the Contemporary Muslim World*. London & New York: Tauris, 259-280.

- Taussig, M. 1984. *Culture of terror –space of death: Roger Casament's Putumayo Report and the explanation of torture*. "Comparative Studies in Society and History", 26 (3): 467-497.

- Wacquant, L. 2007. "The Place of the Prison in the New Government of Poverty". *Excerpted from Prisons of Poverty*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 2007.

- Whitehead N., and Abufarha N., 2008. "Suicide, Violence, and Cultural Conceptions of Martyrdom in Palestine". *Social research*, Vol 75 (2): 395-416

Non-attending students will be required to study the additional readings of at least 3 modules (chosen by the student).

FIRST UNIT: CULTURE, VIOLENCE AND IDENTITY

This first unit will introduce the course and will illustrate its theoretical guidelines. It will explain the peculiarities of an anthropological approach on violence; and the necessity of thinking violence in plural. It will illustrate the relevance of cultural meanings, and power relationships in comprehending concrete forms of violence. The tension between those perspectives that emphasize cultural readings and those that highlight



power inequalities – the two main cornerstones of the anthropological understanding of violence –, will guide of every single module. The unit will also provide the students a critical reading of the concepts of identity, ethnicity, and nationalism.

1. Module, 12 April: a cultural reading of violence

Required Reading:

- Scheper-Hughes, N., and Bourgois, P. 2003. Introduction: making Sense of Violence. In Scheper-Hughes, N., and P. Bourgois, eds., *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1-31.

Additional Readings:

- Beneduce, R. 2008. “Introduzione. Etnografie della violenza”. In Beneduce R., ed., *Violenza. Annuario di Antropologia*. Roma: Meltemi, 5-47.

- Dei, F. 2005. “Introduzione. Descrivere, interpretare, testimoniare la violenza”. In Dei F., ed., *Antropologia della violenza*. Roma: Meltemi, 7-75.

2. Module, 13 April: Ethnicity, social boundaries and identity

Required Reading:

- Hayden, R. M, 1996. “Imagined Communities and Real Victims, Self-determination and Ethnic Cleansing in Yugoslavia”. *American Ethnologist*, 23 (4): 783-801.

Additional Reading:

- Cohen, A. 2000. “Introduction: Discriminating Relations: Identity, Boundary and Authenticity”. In Cohen, A., ed., *Signifying Identities. Anthropological perspectives on boundaries and contested value*. London: Routledge, 1-13.

SECOND UNIT: ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS

Through concrete ethnographic cases, this unit will focus on the so-called ethnic and religious conflicts. It will explore the “myth of global ethnic conflict” (Bowen 1996) and the “new wars” (Karlidor 1999).

3. Module, 19 April: Violence and religion

guest: FRANÇOIS RUEGG

Required Reading:

- Ruegg, F. 2012. “Shamanism among the Gypsies of South-eastern Europe”. In Zarccone, T. and A. Hobart, eds, *Shamanism and Islam. Sufism, Healing Rituals and Spirits in the Contemporary Muslim World*. London & New York: Tauris, 259-280.



4. Module, 20 April: The myth of global ethnic conflict

Required Reading:

- Bowen, J. R., 1996. "The myth of global ethnic conflict". *Journal of democracy*, 7 (4): 3-14.

Additional Reading:

- Appadurai, A. 1998. "Dead Certainty. Ethnic Violence in the Era of Globalization". *Public Culture*, 10 (2): 225-247.

THIRD UNIT: VIOLENCE IN TIME OF PEACE

This unit will examine forms of social exclusion, dehumanization, reproduction of domination, depersonalization of everyday life, as well as urban marginality and ghettoization. Through famous ethnographic cases, we will critically address key-notions of the anthropological debate such as "symbolic violence" (Bourdieu 1990 [1980]); "structural violence" (Farmer 2004); "genocide continuum" (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2004), "routinization of fear" (Green 1999), "culture of terror" (Taussig 1984).

5. Module, 26 April: symbolic and structural violence

Required Reading:

- Bourgois, P. and J. Schonberg. 2009. *Righteous Dopefiend*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Additional Reading:

- Farmer, P. 2004. "Anthropology of Structural Violence". *Current Anthropology*, 45, 3: 305-325.

6. Module, 27 April: Culture of terror and routinization of fear

Required Reading:

- Taussig, M. 1984. *Culture of terror –space of death: Roger Casament's Putumayo Report and the explanation of torture*. "Comparative Studies in Society and History", 26 (3): 467-497.

Additional Reading:

- Green, L. 1995. "Living in a State of Fear". In Nordstrom, C. and A. Robben, eds., *Fieldwork under Fire*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 105-128.



FOURTH UNIT: CULTURAL TRAUMAS AND POLITICS OF MEMORY

This unit will explore the wide anthropological debate on cultural traumas and politics of memory. It will review different socio-anthropological perspectives on trauma, from the cultural approach of Jeffrey Alexander (2004) to the critical reading of Didier Fassin and Richard Rechtman (2009). Through concrete ethnographic example, it will also examine the dynamics of remembering violence, and the intergenerational memory transmission.

7. Module, 3 May: Politics of Trauma

Required Reading:

- Fassin, D. and R. Rechtman. 2009. "Introduction to Part One. The reversing of the Truth". In Fassin, D. and R. Rechtman, eds. *The Empire of Trauma. An Inquiry into the Condition of Victimhood*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1-25.

Additional Readings:

- Alexander, J. 2004. "Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma". In Alexander J., R. Eyerman *et. al.*, eds. *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Suárez-Orozco, M., and A. Robben. 2010. "Interdisciplinary perspective on violence and trauma". In Suárez-Orozco, M., and A. Robben, eds., *Cultures under Siege: collective Violence and Trauma*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1-47.

8. Module, 4 May: Ruins of memory

Required Reading:

- D'Orsi L., 2015. "Trauma and the Politics of Memory of the Uruguayan Dictatorship". *Latin American Perspective*, Issue 202, 42 (3): 162-179.

Additional Readings:

- Argenti N. and K. Schramm. 2010. "Introduction: Remembering Violence". In Argenti N. and K. Schramm, eds., *Remembering Violence. Anthropological Perspectives on Intergenerational Transmission*. New York, London: Berghahn Books, 1-39.

FIFTH UNIT: STATE VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM

In this unit we will examine the forms of violence perpetrated by state institutions and how they can be functional to the construction of nation-states. The class will also be given a framework to understanding contemporary forms of violence like the so-called terrorist attacks and suicide bombing.

9. Module, 10 May: State and Carceral Condition



guest: **LUIGIGIOVANNI QUARTA**

Required Reading:

- - Wacquant, L. 2007. "The Place of the Prison in the New Government of Poverty". *Excerpted from Prisons of Poverty*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 2007.

Additional Reading:

- Fassin, D. 2015. "Conclusion. Ce qu'enfermer veut dire". In Fassin, D. *L'Ombre du monde. Une anthropologie de la condition carcérale*. Paris: Seuil, 485-514.

10. Module, 11 May: Terrorism, martyrdom and suicide bombing

Required Reading:

- Whitehead N., and Abufarha N., 2008. "Suicide, Violence, and Cultural Conceptions of Martyrdom in Palestine". *Social research*, Vol 75 (2): 395-416.

Additional Readings:

- Asad, T., 2007. *On Suicide Bombing*. New York: Columbia University Press.

- Dei, F. 2016. *Terrore suicida. Religione, politica e violenza nelle culture del martirio*. Roma: Donzelli.

SIXTH UNIT: VIOLENCE, REFUGEES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Through ethnographic cases, this last unit will focus on forms of violence within the European reception system of migrants and the European border regime. It will also provide students with an anthropological criticism of multiculturalism, cultural relativism, human right discourse. Through in-class discussion and debate, we will dedicate a part of the last module to recapitulate the topics covered during the whole course, and the main concepts acquired.

11. Module, 17 May: migrants and borders

guest: **AURORA MASSA**

Required Reading:

- Fassin, D. 2011. "Policing Borders, Producing Boundaries: the Governmentality of Immigration in Dark Times". *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 40, 213-226.

Additional Reading:

- Fassin, D. and E. D'Halluin. 2005. "The Truth from the Body: Medical Certificates as Ultimate Evidence from Asylum Seekers". *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 107 (4), 597-608.

- Pinelli, B. 2017. "Borders, politics and subjects". *Etnografia e Ricerca Qualitativa*, 1, 5-24.



- Taliani S. 2011. "A credible past and a shameless body: history, violence and repetition in the lives of asylum seekers women in Italy. *Sociétés politiques comparées*, n°32.

12. Module, 18 May: the predicaments of Human Rights

Required Reading:

- Goodale, M. 2016. "Toward a Critical Anthropology of Human Rights". *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 47 (3), 485-498.

Additional Reading:

- D'Orsi, L. 2017. "Antropologia, educazione e multiculturalismo". In Dei, F., ed. *Cultura, scuola, educazione: la prospettiva antropologica*. Pisa: Pacini, 41-69.

- Fassin, D.