

Public Anthropology

Social Anthropology 242
2017 (Term 4)

Contact Info

Lecturer: Dr. Eli Thorkelson

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Office Hours for Dr. Thorkelson: Mondays 10:00-11:00.

Tutors:

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Please consult SUNLearn regularly for updates on the module.

Course Objectives

This module is aimed at understanding the public role of anthropology in moments of political conflict and educational crisis. It will reach this goal through critical reflection on the notions of politics and publics, and through ethnographic study of the history of student protests since the 1960s, culminating in a reflexive study of the #FeesMustFall movement in South Africa.

The objectives of the course are as follows:

- To provide an introduction to the concept of public anthropology;
- To facilitate the critical reading and analysis of social research on policy, politics, higher education and the state;
- To expand students' skills in transmitting anthropological knowledge through teaching;
- To cultivate students' skills in writing for the media in relation to cultural dimensions of critical public issues;
- To advance students' critical thinking about their own institutional situations.

Lecture Times and Venues

Mondays 9:00 — Nat Sci 3004
Wednesdays 12:00 — Nat Sci 3004
Thursdays 8:00 — Old Main 1023

Tutorial schedule
Fridays 16:00 — Old Main 1023

Language Specification: E Module

All lectures will be presented in English and the reading materials for the course are also only provided in English. The tutors do have an understanding of Afrikaans and students are allowed to submit work in Afrikaans if they choose to do so.

Course policies

General policies

- All reading materials, assignments, and due dates are communicated in this course outline and through Sun Learn. We expect students to read through the course outline carefully to note the dates and instructions for their assessments. We will not accept excuses claiming ignorance of any information presented in this course outline. We will not respond to emails inquiring about information already available in this course outline. Please refer to the Sun Learn for regular updates.
- Plagiarism is a serious offense and will be dealt with strictly, and according to University of Stellenbosch policies. We thus expect you to be familiar with these policies before you submit any assignments (see Sun Learn for the necessary documentation).

Attendance

- Students have to attend at least 75% of the lectures to receive participation credit. Attendance will be monitored throughout the course of the module. We request you send a formal email within the first week of classes (11 September – 15 September) to your tutor to indicate clashes. This will be taken into account for attendance monitoring purposes.
- We expect students to submit sick notes for classes missed (excluding clashes). Documentation needs to be presented within three days of the missed lecture otherwise it will be indicated as non-attendance.

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- Tutorial attendance is compulsory.

Written Assignments

- Every type of assessment is compulsory to complete for passing the module. There will be five assessments in total. Failure to submit any of the stipulated assignments or complete the tests will result in an incomplete mark which translates to an immediate fail.
- No late assignments without proper medical documentation will be accepted after due dates. Students should inform their tutors in advance should they not be able to submit their work. A maximum period of three days after the submission date will be allowed to present said documentation. Thereafter neither the documentation nor the assignment will be accepted.
- No email submissions will be accepted for any assignment. All assignments have to be submitted at the very latest on the deadline through the Assignment link on SunLearn.
- The deadlines present the final opportunity to submit your work. You are most welcome to submit earlier. The submission links will be opened in advance. We do not accept late assignments in the absence of official documentation.
- All submitted work must be typed. The following specifications apply: 1.5 spacing, and 12 point Times New Roman font.
- Make use of the Harvard referencing system for all essays. We expect full bibliographies and in-text referencing. See Sun Learn for helpful documentation.

Assessment

This is a continuous assessment module. There will be no exam; the two class tests will be held during lecture periods.

Marks are allocated in the following way:

First class test — 20%
Class participation — 10%
Teaching assignment 1 — 15%
Teaching assignment 2 — 15%
Opinion piece assignment — 20%
Second class test — 20%

The required reading for each lecture is set out for every meeting.

Participation

Participation (10% of the total mark) will be measured in terms of:

Lecture and tutorial attendance as measured by attendance registers — 50%

Submission of in-class exercises — 25%

Participation in class debates and group work in tutorials — 25%

Teaching assignment 1

Part 2 (the write-up) is due September 29 by 19:00 on SunLearn.

To make anthropological knowledge useful in a public setting, you'll frequently need to *teach* it. In this two-part exercise, you will practice teaching and reflecting on teaching.

1. You will be randomly paired with a different student in the class. Your assignment will be to meet with that person and to teach them something that you have learned from the course. Afterwards, you should swap roles and practice being the student, so that your counterpart can also fulfill the assignment. We will provide a list of plausible teaching topics and teaching advice.

2. After completing Part 1, you will have to turn in a brief written statement (600 words) explaining:

- What you were trying to teach;
- Why your lesson matters;
- Whether your teaching was successful, and why (or why not);
- Whether your student was bored, and if so why;
- At least three ways that you could improve your teaching;
- At least three autoethnographic observations about your own social identity and that of your interlocutor.

Teaching assignment 2

Part 2 (the write-up) is due Friday, October 6 by 19:00 on SunLearn.

Repeat the same teaching assignment from Teaching Exercise I, but this time with a member of the public. Again, the exercise will take two parts:

1. Locate someone outside our class who is willing to serve as your student. (Your student can be a friend, member of your family, acquaintance, colleague, flatmate, or anyone else who you can find.) As before, your assignment will be to meet with your student and teach them something related to the course. We will again distribute a list of recommended teaching topics.

2. Turn in a written statement (500 words) mentioning:

- What you were trying to teach;
- Why your lesson is important;
- Whether your teaching was successful, and why (or why not);
- At least three ways that you tried to improve your teaching since Exercise I, or ways that you still want to improve;
- At least three autoethnographic observations about your own social identity and that of your interlocutor.

Opinion piece assignment

Due Friday, October 13 by 19:00 on SunLearn.

You are an emerging social anthropologist and you will have to write an op-ed (850 word short opinion piece) for the *Mail & Guardian* on the relationships between student protest and inequality in South Africa.

Your op-ed should contain the following:

- A title which summarizes your main arguments in relation to the relationship between student protest and inequality in South Africa in 5-10 words.
- An opening paragraph which points to the newsworthiness and social and political importance of your piece.
- Short sentences written in plain English/Afrikaans which a non-specialist could readily understand.
- Short paragraphs consisting of 2-3 sentences.
- Powerful opening and closing sentences which state your main argument as crisply as possible.

Reading Schedule

Part 1: Anthropology, publics and politics

Sept. 11 - Decolonizing anthropology in SA

Nyamnjoh, Francis B., and Nantang B. Jua. "African Universities in Crisis and the Promotion of a Democratic Culture: The Political Economy of Violence in African Educational Systems." *African Studies Review* 45, no. 2 (2002): 1-26.

Dubbeld, Bernard, and Kelly Gillespie. "The Possibility of a Critical Anthropology after Apartheid: Relevance, Intervention, Politics." *Anthropology Southern African* 30, no. 3&4 (2007): 129-34.

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See also:

Comaroff, Jean, John Comaroff, and Isaac Schapera. "On the Founding Fathers, Fieldwork and Functionalism: A Conversation with Isaac Schapera." *American Ethnologist* 15, no. 3 (1988): 554-65.

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. "Anthropology and the Savage Slot: The Poetics and Politics of Otherness." In *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*, edited by Richard G. Fox, 17-44. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1991.

Sept. 13 - Power and the Postcolony

Mbembe, Achille. "The Banality of Power and the Aesthetics of Vulgarly in the Postcolony." *Public Culture* 4, no. 2 (1992): 1-30.

Comaroff, Jean, and John Comaroff. "Reflections on Liberalism, Policulturalism, and Id-Ology: Citizenship and Difference in South Africa." *Social Identities* 9, no. 4 (2003): 445-73.

See also:

Bates, Thomas R. "Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 36, no. 2 (1975): 351-66.

Balibar, Etienne. "Three Concepts of Politics: Emancipation, Transformation, Civility." Translated by Chris Turner. In *Politics and the Other Scene*, 1-39. London: Verso, 2002.

Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Translated by Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press, 2004.

Sept. 14 - Decolonizing Knowledge

Mbembe, Achille. "Decolonizing Knowledge and the Question of the Archive."

<http://wiser.wits.ac.za/content/achille-mbembe-decolonizing-knowledge-and-question-archive-12054>.

See also:

Gilroy, Paul. *Postcolonial Melancholia*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.

Sept. 18 - Publics & Counterpublics

Cody, Francis. "Publics and Politics." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 40 (2011): 37-52.

See also:

Warner, Michael. *Publics and Counterpublics*. New York: Zone Books, 2002.

Sept. 20 - Policy and Critique

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Mosse, David. "Anti-Social Anthropology? Objectivity, Objection, and the Ethnography of Public Policy and Professional Communities." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 12, no. 4 (2006): 935-56.

See also:

Shore, Cris, and Susan Wright. "Conceptualising Policy: Technologies of Governance and the Politics of Visibility." In *Policy Worlds: Anthropology and the Analysis of Contemporary Power*, edited by Cris Shore, Susan Wright and Davide Però, 1-25. New York: Berghahn Books, 2011.

Sept. 21 - Test 1

We will have a written test in class covering questions about Part I of the module.

Part II: Historical anthropology of student protest

Sept. 25 - Public Holiday

There will be no class or reading today.

Sept. 27 - Biko

Biko, Steve. *I Write What I Like*. Oxford: Heinemann, 1987. (Selections.)

See also:

Ally, Nurina, and Shireen Ally. "Critical Intellectualism: The Role of Black Consciousness in Reconfiguring the Race-Class Problematic in South Africa." In *Biko Lives! Contesting the Legacies of Steve Biko*, edited by Andile Mngxitama, Amanda Alexander and Nigel C. Gibson, 171-88. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Sept. 28 - France

Feenberg, Andrew, and Jim Freedman. *When Poetry Ruled the Streets : The French May Events of 1968*. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2001. (Selections.)

Oct. 2 - United States

Jones, Alethia, and Virginia Eubanks, eds. *Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around: Forty Years of Movement Building with Barbara Smith*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2014. (Selections.)

Oct. 4 - The 80s and "neoliberalism"

Bundy, Colin. "Street Sociology and Pavement Politics: Aspects of Youth and Student Resistance in Cape Town, 1985." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 13, no. 3 (1987): 303-30.

Oct. 5 - SASO to SANSCO

Badat, Saleem. *Black Student Politics, Higher Education and Apartheid: From Saso to Sansco, 1968-1999*. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1999. (Selections.)

Part III: #FeesMustFall

Oct. 9 - #FeesMustFall

Badat, Saleem. "Deciphering the Meanings and Explaining the South African Higher Education Student Protests of 2015–16." *Pax Academica* 1-2 (2016): 71-106.

Oct. 11 - Gender

Cornell, Josephine, Kopano Ratele, and Shose Kessi. "Race, Gender and Sexuality in Student Experiences of Violence and Resistances on a University Campus." *Perspectives in Education* 34, no. 2 (2016): 97-119.

Oct. 12 - Colonial History

Nyamnjoh, Francis B. "Black Pain Matters: Down with Rhodes." *Pax Academica* 1-2 (2015): 47-70.

Oct. 16 - Stellenbosch

We will discuss a range of ethnographic materials dealing with the history of student organizing at Stellenbosch University.

Oct. 18 - Course Review

There is no assigned reading for today. We will review the module content.

Oct. 19 - Test 2

We will have a written test in class covering questions about Parts II and III of the module.