

**Ethnicity and Nationalism:
War, Violence, and the Social Construction of Difference**

ANTH-535, Fall 2012
Mondays, 5:30-8:00pm, EQB 14

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Office Hours: Mon 8:10-8:40pm in EQB 14;

Tue 1:30-4:30pm in Hamilton 311; 8:10-8:40pm in Battelle-Tompkins T-30;
and by appointment

“Just as love for one individual which excludes the love for others is not love, love for one's country which is not part of one's love for humanity is not love, but idolatrous worship.”
-Erich Fromm

In Darfur, the “Arab”-led Government of Sudan has killed as many as 400,000 and displaced millions in a genocidal campaign against “African”¹ peoples, in which perpetrators and victims share the same religion (Islam) and skin-color, while exhibiting few if any phenotypic differences. In Iraq, following the 2003 U.S. invasion and occupation, hundreds of thousands have died as a result of an ongoing, multi-pronged war featuring Iraqi Shi’a, Sunnis, and predominantly Christian U.S.-led troops, in a country created by British colonialism, where for more than 1,000 years people have experienced repeated foreign conquest and both inter-group coexistence and conflict. In Israel/Palestine, Jewish Israelis and Palestinians, variously conceived as belonging to different religions, ethnicities, and races, continue more than 50 years of struggle over a small body of land identified as a homeland by both and made by World War II’s victors into a “Jewish state” for the survivors of the Nazi Holocaust, which sought to exterminate Jews as a “race.” In the United States, some still question the place of birth (i.e., nationality) and religion of the President, a man broadly considered “black” who was born to a “white” Euro-American mother and a “black” African father.

Around the world, warfare, violence, and conflict are all too prominent as people clash in struggles often marked by nationalism and by other human-made ideas about human differences linked to terms like ethnicity, race, religion, sect, tribe, clan, caste, culture, people, indigeneity, gender, sexuality, and class. This course attempts to understand ethnicity, nationalism, and related forms of socially constructed difference primarily through the lens of contemporary wars, violence, and conflict. In addition to the examples above, the course will devote attention to issues of ethnicity and nationalism in contexts including China, South Africa, Rwanda, Mauritius, Seychelles, Australia, Trinidad and Tobago, Brazil, Nazi Germany, Central America, Europe, and the United States. We will also address related issues including the state, identity, globalization, multiculturalism, migration, imperialism, colonialism, and genocide.

Throughout the course, we will self-critically analyze the role anthropology has played in the phenomena under discussion. We will also consider how these phenomena have shaped our own

¹ Apologies for all the scare quotes. They should be avoided in academic and all other writing and used only when absolutely necessary. I have used them here because we will question these and other labels, terms, and categories.

lives. Ultimately, the course hopes to offer tools to understand various forms of socially constructed difference, to analyze the role socially constructed difference plays in contemporary conflicts, and to use these understandings to advance conflict resolution.

Structurally, the class will be a discussion-based seminar. As such, and as a graduate-level course, the class assumes active and thoughtful participation from every seminar participant. The classroom will be a space for passionate, engaged discussion. Everyone will be able to express views freely and dissent with me and with others, while recognizing the responsibility to respect the rights of others, including their right to free expression. Beginning with the syllabus and throughout the semester, seminar participants will have opportunities to shape the direction of the class, choose the subjects of discussion, and improve the course design through regular feedback. The class will emphasize close attention to writing as a craft and as an essential part of producing anthropological and other knowledge.

PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE

Careful and thoughtful reading and active participation in class, in addition to written assignments, are the most important elements of this course. I expect advance notice for any classes you will miss, just as I will inform you if I must miss any classes.

Because this class stresses active participation in class discussions and respect for all course participants, computers, mobile phones, and other personal electronic devices may never be used in the classroom. I do not encourage the use of e-readers, but they may be used in the seminar only if they are used to examine course readings and for no other purposes. If there is a good reason to make an exception to this rule (e.g., a learning or disability issue requires such use), please come speak to me. Thanks for your understanding and assistance.

WEEKLY CRITICAL REACTION PAPERS

Each week (except when another assignment is due), I expect you to submit a 1-2-page double-spaced “critical reaction” paper in response to the assigned readings for the week. The critical reaction must be submitted typed and on paper at the beginning of each class. Your reaction should offer thoughtful reflection about each of the week’s readings. While summarizing the main points of each reading will be helpful, go beyond to offer your own original thoughts about the texts. In this way, the reactions should help you to work through and organize your thinking about the readings and clarify the key issues you want to discuss each week. The papers can include your ideas, critiques, questions, challenges, inspirations, uncertainties, connections, comparisons, concerns, applications, implications, and other thoughts. I will not grade the reactions, but thoughtful, focused papers will indicate effort and engagement in the course.

The reaction is also an opportunity to ask any general questions about the class, anthropology, and things that are confusing in the course. You can also use it to give me feedback of any kind about the seminar, my teaching, ways I could improve the course, and general frustrations or inspiration. I also welcome emailed questions (best if the question is pressing; call if it is urgent) as well as anonymous questions or comments placed in my mailbox in the Anthropology Department in the Hamilton building.

CLASS FACILITATION

At least once during the semester, you and another seminar participant will be asked to serve as facilitators for part of a day's discussion. The aim is to stimulate discussion with one provocative question or argument that addresses the key substance of the week's readings and what you and your partner think we should be discussing. Groups will have a maximum of 5-7 minutes to present materials aimed at spurring constructive conversation. Most likely, you will want to frame the week's readings in some way, but do not simply regurgitate what everyone will already have read. Be sure to offer one critical question or argument about the readings and topics at hand that provides a lively springboard for discussion and critical thinking. Think about how best to engage the class creatively and don't be afraid to take risks. *Do not*, however, simply summarize the material, offer a perfunctory powerpoint, tell us what you liked and didn't like, provide biographical material about authors, substitute a long video clip for a thoughtful presentation, or read an unfocused list of questions. Generally, groups will facilitate discussion mid-way through each class period. If you have any technological requirements, you must arrive early to class to allow sufficient time to set-up.

SEMESTER-LONG INVESTIGATIVE PROJECT

The major assignment for this course is a semester-long project. Although this may take the form of a traditional research paper, I encourage you to make the paper an investigative or experientially-based project that will seek to understand some significant phenomenon related to topics addressed in the course. Investigative projects may involve original research in or around DC and may involve ethnography, interviewing, participant observation, archival research, surveys, and other research methodologies. The projects should result in a final paper of at least 20 pages and an op-ed or other opinion piece of 500-800 words based on the findings of your investigation.

Experientially-based projects may involve an internship or service learning activity with an organization working on issues relevant to the seminar and out of which a final project could be arranged. Those interested in this option (and, for undergraduates, the possibility of gaining a Community Service Learning Project credit) should speak to me as soon as possible to make necessary arrangements. Projects involving internships or service learning will require a final portfolio of work completed and a minimum 10-page paper. I am also open to discussing other kinds of projects.

As the assignments below should indicate, the projects are intended to be ones that you explore throughout the semester, not just in the last weeks before the final paper is due. Most of all, you are encouraged to select a project that will inspire you and sustain your interest and attention for at least the course of the semester. I also strongly encourage you to design your project so that it makes some impact in the world beyond fulfilling a course requirement. This could mean writing your paper as a publishable article, writing a short article as part of the final assignment, producing a project aimed at assisting the work of a specific organization, among other possibilities. I am open to receiving final projects that are not entirely written, although the format of your project must be approved in consultation with me and outlined in your 1-paragraph project proposal.

ASSIGNMENTS SUMMARIZED

- 1) Critical reaction papers turned in at the beginning of each class.
- 2) Informal meeting with me, due by September 17.
- 3) 1-paragraph minimum project proposal describing a semester-long research project, its focus and aim, a central question you will attempt to answer, methodologies employed to answer the question, any ethical concerns involved in the project, and expected outcomes, due October 1.
- 4) 1-2 page preliminary bibliography and final paper outline, due November 5.
- 5) 1 group presentation during the course of the semester, date to be determined for each group.
- 6) Final project presentation, December 3.
- 7) Semester-long project final papers and op-eds, due in class December 10.

WRITING REQUIREMENTS

All written assignments must be double spaced, 12-pt. font, with 1-inch margins on all sides, and comply with generally accepted rules of writing, style, and proper academic citation. For guidance, see the American Anthropological Association style guide: http://www.aaanet.org/pubs/style_guide.htm; the MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing (see <http://thewritesource.com/mla.htm>); or the Chicago Manual of Style (see <http://library.osu.edu/sites/guides/chicagofd.php>).

All writing assignments must be turned in on paper (i.e., *not electronically*) at the beginning of the class on which they are due, unless indicated otherwise. If there is a legitimate reason why you must turn in a paper late, you should contact me more than 24 hours before the due date to explain the problem and make other arrangements. For help with your writing beyond the classroom, visit the Writing Center, Battelle-Tompkins 228 (885-2991 for appointments), the Academic Support Center Writing Lab, or feel free to see me.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

By registering for this class and at the university, you have acknowledged your awareness of the Academic Integrity Code (<http://www.american.edu/academics/integrity/code.htm> or see the “Student Handbook and Planner”). You are responsible for familiarizing yourself and complying with all its standards of academic conduct, including those related to plagiarism. I take plagiarism and academic dishonesty very seriously, and I am required to report cases to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, whose policy is to fail students for the course. Please read the university's Academic Integrity Code closely, and be sure to ask me if you have any questions.²

Special Note: In addition to plagiarizing others, it is possible to plagiarize oneself when using your own previously written material without proper citation. To avoid self-plagiarism and related academic dishonesty, you must cite any and all material that you have written for any purposes other than this class. If you want to use material written for another class in this course, you must ask for advance permission to do so.

² Michael Manson, Academic Affairs Administrator, College of Arts and Sciences, American University, Washington, DC, email communications, January 8, 2008, January 8, 2009.

MY RESPONSIBILITIES

I pledge to the best of my ability to make this as enriching and exciting an academic experience as possible for everyone; to come prepared to lead engaging class sessions; to create a safe and nurturing academic environment in the classroom that encourages the free exchange of ideas; to remain open to all dissent, critique, suggestions about the class, and other feedback; to adapt the course as appropriate in response to feedback; to meet personally with course participants during my office hours and at other times by appointment or otherwise to discuss any aspect of the course; to read carefully and return all written assignments in a timely fashion; and to be fair in my evaluation and grading.

LEARNING AND LIFE RESOURCES

If you encounter any difficulty this semester for any reason that affects your participation in the course, please don't hesitate to speak with me. In addition to the department's assistance, the university offers a variety of learning and life resources. See:

<https://my.american.edu/content.cfm?load=includes/help.cfm> or the following:

Academic Support Center: 885-3360, MGC 243, www.american.edu/ocl/asc.

Counseling Center: 885-3500, MGC 214, www.american.edu/ocl/counseling.

Disability Support Services: 885-3315 (V/TDD), MGC 206, www.american.edu/ocl/dss.

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please notify me in a timely manner with a letter from the Academic Support Center or Disability Support Services so that we can address your needs.

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender & Ally Resource Center: 885-3347, MGC 201, www.american.edu/ocl/glbt.

International Student and Scholar Services: 885-3340/50, Butler 410, www.american.edu/ocl/iss.

Judicial Affairs and Mediation Services: 885-3328, Butler 408, www.american.edu/ocl/jams.

Multicultural Affairs: 885-3651, MGC 204, www.american.edu/ocl/oma.

New Student Programs: 885-3303/74, Butler 407, www.american.edu/ocl/orientation.

Student Health Center: 885-3380, McCabe Hall 1st Floor, www.american.edu/healthcenter.

PRIMARY TEXTS

All these texts should be available in the campus bookstore, on 2-hour reserve in the library, and at inexpensive prices when purchased (often used) online. All other required readings will be available on Blackboard, on 2-hour reserve in the library, on the internet, or in class.

Alexander, Michelle

2012 *The New Jim Crow*. New York: New Press. Reprint ed.

Anderson, Benedict.

2006 *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised ed. London: Verso.

Conover, Ted

2006 *Coyotes : A Journey across Borders with America's Illegal Migrants*. New York: Vintage Books. [Or 1987 edition.]

Logan, Enid Lynette

2011 *"At This Defining Moment": Barack Obama's Presidential Candidacy and the New Politics of Race*. New York: NYU Press.

Mamdani, Mahmood

2010 *Saviors and Survivors: Darfur, Politics, and the War on Terror*. New York: Three Rivers Press.

Mullaney, Tom

2011 *Coming to Terms with the Nation: Ethnic Classification in Modern China*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Nordstrom, Carolyn

2004 *Shadows of War: Violence, Power, and International Profiteering in the Twenty-First Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

CLASS SCHEDULE

All assignments and readings are due on the date indicated.

Notes for where to find texts

B=Book

BBc=Blackboard "Course Reserves"

BBo=Blackboard "Other Readings"

August 27: Introductions

September 3: Labor Day, No Class

September 10: Nation and Nationalism

Anderson. B [Recommended: start at least the first two readings for the following week.]

September 17: Nationalism, Imperialism, and Colonialism
BE SURE TO MEET WITH ME BY THIS DATE

Chatterjee, Partha. "Whose Imagined Community?" In *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*. Pp. 3-13. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993. BBc

Held, David. "The Development of the Modern State." In *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies*. David Held, et al., eds. Pp. 55-89. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996. BBc

McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest*. Pp. 352-89. New York: Routledge, 1995. BBc

Foster, Robert J. "Making National Cultures in the Global Ecumene." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 20 (1991):235-260. BBo

Hall, Stuart. Section 3 from "The Question of Cultural Identity." In Hall, et al. Pp. 611-618. [Other sections optional]. BBc

Fanon, Franz. Selections from *The Wretched of the Earth*. Pp. 37-62, 94-5, 48-162, 203-5, 311-316. New York: Grove Press, 1963. BBc

King, Martin Luther, Jr. "The Birth of a New Nation," Sermon, Montgomery, AL, April 7, 1957. http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/kingpapers/article/the_birth_of_a_new_nation_sermon_delivered_at_dexter_avenue_baptist_church/ W

[Recommended] "The Nationalism Project." www.nationalismproject.org. Read "About," "What is Nationalism" (including all of the definitions highlighted), and take a look at the blog and other features. W

[Optional] Hobson, J.A. *Imperialism: A Study*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1978. Pp. 3-27. [For the rest of the book, see <http://marxists.org/archive/hobson/1902/imperialism/index.htm>.] BBo.

[Optional] McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest*. Pp. 1-74. New York: Routledge, 1995. [Note: The details aren't so important at the beginning.] BBc

September 24: Nation and Nationalism in China
Mullaney. B

October 1: Race and the Social Construction of Difference
1-PARAGRAPH PROJECT PROPOSAL DUE

Smedley, Audrey. Introduction and Chapter 1. In *Race in North America: Origin and Evolution of a Worldview*. Pp. 1-36. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. BBc

Wolf, Eric. "Perilous Ideas: Race, Culture, and People." *Current Anthropology* 35, no. 1 (1994): 1-12. BBo

Hall, Stuart. "The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power." In Hall, et al. Pp. 184-227. BBc

Goodman, Alan H. "Biological Diversity and Cultural Diversity: From Race to Radical Bioculturalism." In *Cultural Diversity in the United States*. Ida Susser and Thomas C. Patterson, eds. Pp. 229-45. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001. BBc

Marx, Anthony. Preface, chapters 1, 11 in *Making Race and Nation: A Comparison of South Africa, the United States, and Brazil*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. BBc

Pager, Devah. "The Mark of a Criminal Record." *Focus* 23, no. 2 (2003): 44-46. BBo

[Optional] Pager, Devah, Bruce Western, and Bart Bonikowski. "Discrimination in a Low-Wage Labor Market: A Field Experiment." *American Sociological Review* 74 (2009):777-799. BBo

[Optional] Mullings, Leith. "Interrogating Racism: Toward an Anti-Racist Anthropology." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34 (2005):667-693. BBo

[Optional] Harrison, Faye V. "Introduction: Expanding the Discourse on 'Race.'" *American Anthropologist* 100, no. 3 (1998):609-631. BBo

[Optional] Templeton, Alan R. "Human Races: A Genetic and Evolutionary Perspective." *American Anthropologist* 100, no 3 (1998):632-650. BBo

October 5-6: Public Anthropology Conference

Attendance required in at least one session.

October 8: Ethnicity and the Social Construction of Difference

Barth, Fredrik. "Ethnic Groups and Boundaries." In *Ethnicity*. John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, eds. Pp. 75-83. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. BBc

Williams, Brackette F. "A Class Act: Anthropology and the Race to Nation across Ethnic Terrain." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 18 (1989):401-444. BBo [Read carefully.]

Munasinghe, Viranjini. Preface, chapters 1-2, 9. In *Callaloo or Tossed Salad: East Indians and the Cultural Politics of Identity in Trinidad*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001. BBc [This will help explain Williams, which is challenging.]

Bourgois, Philippe. "Conjugated Oppression: Class and Ethnicity among Guayami and Kuna Banana Workers." *American Ethnologist* vol. 15, no. 2 (1988):328-348. BBo

October 15: The Racial Order in a "Post-Racial" Era

Alexander. B

October 22: Immigration and Nations

Anzaldúa, Gloria. "The New Mestiza." In *Social Theory: The Multicultural and Classic Readings*. Charles Lemert, ed. Pp. 626-632. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993. BBc

Conover. B

October 29: The Politics of Race

Logan. B

November 5: Genocide and Violence

1-2 PAGE PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY AND OUTLINE DUE

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy, and Philippe Bourgois. "Introduction: Making Sense of Violence." In Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, eds. Pp. xvi-31. BBc

Gass, William H. "Kinds of Killing: The Flourishing Evil of the Third Reich." *Harper's Magazine* August 2009: 75-82. BBo.

Wolf, Eric. "Nationalist Socialist Germany." In *Envisioning Power: Ideologies of Dominance and Crisis*. Pp. 197-273. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999. BBc

Arendt, Hannah. From *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. In *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology*. Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois, eds. Pp. 91-100. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004. BBc

Orwell, George. "Politics and the English Language," 1946. BBo

[Optional] Friedman, Jonathan. "Introduction." In *Globalization, the State, and Violence*. Jonathan Friedman, ed. Pp. vii-34. AltaMira Press, 2003. BBc

[Optional] Hinton, Alexander Laban. "The Dark Side of Modernity: Toward an Anthropology of Genocide." In *Annihilating Difference: The Anthropology of Genocide*. Alexander Laban Hinton, ed. Pp. 1-40. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002. BBc

November 12: The Jewish People(s), Palestine, and Israel

Sand. B

November 19: Darfur and Sudan

Mamdani. B

[Optional] O'Brien. Jay. "Toward a Reconstitution of Ethnicity: Capitalist Expansion and Cultural Dynamics in Sudan." *American Anthropologist* vol. 88, no. 4 (1986):898-907. BBo

[Optional] For Nicholas Kristoff's op-eds on Darfur, see:

<http://query.nytimes.com/search/query?ppds=desAbody&v1=WAR%20CRIMES,%20GENOCIDE%20AND%20CRIMES%20AGAINST%20HUMANITY&v2=Kristof> W

November 26: War, Capitalism, and the Limits of the Nation

Nordstrom. B [Chapters 2, 11-12 optional.]

December 3: Presentations

December 10: Final Class Session

FINAL PAPER AND OP-ED DUE IN MY MAILBOX IN THE HAMILTON BUILDING.

SEMINAR OBJECTIVES

By the end of the semester, my objective is that each of us will be able to:

- Work cooperatively and constructively with other seminar participants, building a rich, thoughtful, and supportive learning environment;
- Define, discuss, , and theorize concepts including ethnicity, race, and nationalism/nation/nationality; the historical emergence of each of these concepts; their similarities and differences; and the relationship between and among them;
- Understand the relationship between nationalism/nation/nationality and ethnicity (and related forms of socially constructed difference). In particular, to understand the relationship between nationalism and race and ethnicity;
- Understand how human difference is socially constructed and some of the processes and mechanisms through which it is constructed;
- Understand the role that various forms of difference (including ethnicity, nation/nationality, race, caste, religion, sect, culture, and people) play in violent conflicts and wars;
- Understand the role that ethnicity, race, and nationalism play in contemporary U.S. electoral politics;
- Understand how ethnicity, nationalism, and related forms of socially constructed difference are shaped, constructed, defined, transformed, and mobilized (consciously and unconsciously) in various places, at various times, by various individuals, groups, forces, and institutions;
- Think critically about ideas and issues of broad public and academic significance;

- Speak publically and communicate original ideas to others, being thoughtful and intentional about classroom pedagogy;
- Conduct anthropological and other social science research;
- Write successfully for academic and non-academic audiences.

EVALUATION (AND, UNFORTUNATELY, GRADING)

I expect your full participation in all aspects of class sessions and the completion of all assignments. My evaluation and (what I hope you will find to be) constructive feedback on your work will primarily come in the form of written comments returned to you on your assignments. Although I wish all our classes could be pass/fail, AU requires me to assign final grades. I will do so in accordance with the following distributions and AU guidelines:

Seminars participation, completion of critical reactions: 50%

Seminar facilitation and final project presentation: 10%

Final project paper: 30%

Op-ed: 10 %

Improvement and effort: Bonus

A: Superior, original, thoughtful work in completion of all course requirements;

B: Very good work in completion of course requirements;

C: Satisfactory work in completion of course requirements;

D: Unsatisfactory or incomplete work in course requirements and/or a failure to meet minimum attendance requirements;

F: Failure to meet minimum course standards for assignments, participation, attendance.³

³ See "Guideline of a General Education Syllabus," online document, available at <http://www.american.edu/academics/gened/faculty.htm>.