DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY  
ST. FRANCIS XAVIER UNIVERSITY  
Winter 2014

ANTH 425 Power and Change

Power and change can be volatile processes. This course allows students to understand and analyse them from an anthropological point of view. We will examine theories of power and change, and processes at levels from the individual to beyond the state.

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Susan Vincent [Office: JBB 335L; tel: 867-5281; email: svincent@stfx.ca]

READINGS: All readings are available through the library’s electronic database.

EVALUATION:

Participation/assignments/links to current events: 10%
Reading arguments: 10%
Presentation: 10%
Paper proposal (due February 5): 10%
Paper (due March 19): 30%
Take home exam (due): 30%

RE TESTS AND ASSIGNMENTS AND CLASS CONDUCT: the following rules have been designed to ensure fairness to all students, to facilitate your academic success, and to allow me to fulfill my responsibilities.

1. Assignment dates are fixed and cannot be changed.
2. Assignments must be submitted in HARD COPY. Electronic submissions will NOT be accepted.
3. Written assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day specified. I WILL NOT ACCEPT LATE PAPERS. If you have a legitimate reason for missing an assignment, inform me AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, preferably ahead of time. Be prepared to provide documentation. Understand that I will accept only fully documented and clearly justifiable reasons, out of fairness to students who have worked hard to get the assignments in on time. I do not accept papers after I have returned those already submitted. Papers handed in after the last day of the term in which they are due will receive a 0.
4. You are required to keep a copy of assignments when you hand them in. Keep the returned marked assignment until the end of the course.
5. PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING WILL NOT BE TOLERATED: Suspected cases of plagiarism will be reported to the appropriate authorities and proven cases will result in a mark of zero for the assignment. See the University’s policy on plagiarism and cheating. It is covered in Section 3.8, “Academic Integrity Policy” in the Academic Calendar.
6. You are expected to attend all classes and are responsible for all in-class discussion and assigned material. IF YOU MISS THREE CLASSES OR MORE, WHETHER FOR ILLNESS OR FOR ANY OTHER REASON, YOUR ABILITY TO PASS WILL BE SEVERELY COMPROMISED.
7. You are expected to refrain from using electronic devices in class, unless you have been given permission by the instructor to use a device to assist you.
8. My responsibility is to maintain the academic standards of St Francis Xavier University as well as of
my discipline as I: transmit knowledge about the course subject to the students; and foster the
development of critical academic reading, researching, analytical and writing skills. I will endeavour to
do this in a way that recognizes that students have other demands on their time, and within the
constraints presented by my other teaching, administrative and research duties. I will return marked
assignments as quickly as I can and am happy to meet with students to discuss the course.

EQUITABLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT
Everyone learns more effectively in a respectful, safe and equitable learning environment, free from
discrimination and harassment. I invite you to work with me to create a classroom space—both real and
virtual—that fosters and promotes values of human dignity, equity, non-discrimination and respect for
diversity. These values and practices are in accord with the StFX Discrimination and Harassment Policy
which can be found at http://www.mystfx.ca/campus/stu-serv/equity/.

Please feel free to talk to me about your questions or concerns about equity in our classroom or in the
StFX community in general. If I cannot answer your questions or help you address your concerns, I
encourage you to talk to the Chair of the Department of Anthropology (Dr. Mikael Haller,
mhaller@stfx.ca), or the Human Rights and Equity Advisor (Marie Brunelle at mbrunell@stfx.ca).

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE
Theoretical positions: are power and change evolutionary processes? Is power a structure? Is power a
process? Is change the result of political struggle?
Jan. 6  Introduction


http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17540290902760857

Herskovits: Gossip and Scandal.” Current Anthropology, 4(3): 307-316. Stable URL:
http://www.jstor.org/stable/2739613

Ethnography. 4(4):491 - 519. Sage

Science Journal 59(191): 59-68. Wiley
Black Female Athletes in a Collegiate Athletic Program.” Anthropology & Education Quarterly. 34(3):
300-323. Anthrosource.


Jan. 27  Applying the theories: In-class exercise.

Anthropology and Activism


Additional reading:


Identity politics: Micro and macro politics of race, class, gender


Class, politics and post-work
Mar. 3-5 READ: Sherman, Rachel (2011) Beyond interaction: customer influence on housekeeping and
room service work in hotels. Work Employment Society 25(1) 19–33

ALSO READ: Van Oort, Madison (2013) Making the neoliberal precariat: Two faces of job searching in Minneapolis. Ethnography http://eth.sagepub.com/content/early/2013/10/08/1466138113506636


State processes of power and change


Fear, terror and war

Ferguson, R. Brian (2001) “Materialist, cultural and biological theories on why Yanomami make war.”


Sage


EXPLANATION OF ASSIGNMENTS

Exam: The final exam will be composed of essay questions.

Participation and assignments: Students are expected not only to attend class, but to participate in class discussion. This class will be run as a seminar, with input from everyone. You will be expected to have prepared by reading the required readings before class and thought about them. During at least five classes, you comment on current events, linking themes from the course to items in the news; alternatively, you could comment on the links between course themes and musical lyrics from a song that you present to the class. There may also be assignments on occasion to provide opportunities to work through some of the material.

Reading arguments: For the reading arguments assignment, students must provide two sentences about five of the required readings in the course. The first sentence states the argument of the reading. The second sentence gives your argument about the reading. It must begin “I agree/disagree with (author) because (the basis for your agreement or disagreement).” Each sentence must be 45 words or less. You may choose which readings you do this assignment on, but must complete five throughout the course. You will be given a pass or fail, depending on whether you can capture the argument of the reading, and on whether you can put together a good reason for agreeing or disagreeing with it.

Presentation: You will present one of the required readings in class on the day scheduled for that reading. Ideally this reading will be one related to your essay topic, however only one student may present on a reading. We will schedule the reading presentations through in-class discussions by January 15. Your presentation will be 15 minutes in length. It will not simply summarize the reading, but will point to key arguments and evaluate those arguments. You will NOT use audiovisual props such as PowerPoint. You will be expected to summarize the main argument, outline the theoretical approach, explain the kind of evidence the author uses to support it, and critique the argument. To help in your critique you might want to search for articles which engage with the author or the theoretical perspective used by the author. After the presentation you will lead class discussion.

Term paper proposal: Due February 5. This is the first stage of the term essay. The outline MUST include:

a) a title (one that lets the reader know what the paper is about);
b) an introduction to the topic and why it is important to study;
c) a thesis statement (one sentence of no more than 35 words stating what you will argue in your paper);
d) an outline of the sections of your paper that makes it clear how you will structure your argument; include references to the sources you will use in each section and how they will be used (e.g. for theory, for comparative purposes, for ethnographic data, etc.);
e) a list of the major sources that you plan to use in your essay. Note that you must use the proper bibliographic form for your list of sources. You MUST use ethnographic sources to provide the data you will analyse. You MUST use at least one required reading from the theory section of the course for your theoretical framework. You should have between 5 and 10 sources.
The whole assignment should be about 3 to 5 pages long. The major purpose of this assignment is to encourage you to identify the topic; develop a strategy for answering a question about it; and locate appropriate sources to assist you in the analysis.

**Default topic for proposal and paper:** Focusing on one of Spain, Egypt or Canadian First Nations, write a paper on popular political activism. Locate three or more ethnographic sources about this activism. Develop an argument that addresses issues raised by either the required reading by Donna Chollett or that by Low and Engle Merry.

**Term paper:** Write a paper which is 12-15 pages in length (around 3000 words). Style and format MUST follow the guidelines available at [http://stfx.libguides.com/content.php?pid=53968&sid=395159](http://stfx.libguides.com/content.php?pid=53968&sid=395159)

**Addendum:**

So if there is power, is there also resistance?

