**Studying the State**

SOC/ANTH-598 Course ID- 5793

Instructor:Mahendran Chokkalingam

Time : Wednesday 17:00- 19:40 Room. 403

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Office Hours: Wednesdays (15:00-17:00) please send an email for appointment

**Course Overview:**

The course introduces sociological and anthropological perspectives on the modern state. How state can be conceptualized, violence, bureaucracy, sovereignty and the everyday forms of state in practice. The course looks into how social theorists and anthropologists approached state as an object of analysis.  Students will be introduced to foundational texts, theoretical approaches and methodological tools in studying the state. Students will acquire the conceptual tools and critically reflect the role of the state in their research.

**Learning Objectives**

* Understand different theoretical approaches in understanding State and its functions
* Engage in key concepts like state, citizenship, bureaucracy, and power
* To apply different methodologies and ways to study the state.
* Apply critical understanding and articulate the role of state in your research works.

**Assignments and Grade**

**Weekly Reflection paper (20%)** Reflection paper outlining the key takeaways and discussions from the class. Each student is required to submit two response papers.

**Ethnography Book Review (10%):** Students are required to write a book review (700 words) on any ethnographic work on state. Please have a consultation before presentation

**Presentation (20%)** : Students are required to make three presentations, two for regular class and one for ethnographic book. Presentation is evaluated along with the reflection paper and book review.

**Attendance and Participation (10%):** Active participation in the class is required. More than 3 absences without prior permission will lead to dismissal in the course.

**Final Essay (40%):** Students will be required to write a 1500-word essay on themes and topics discussed in the class. Essays will be graded on the strength of arguments made and clear understanding of the concepts made use in the paper.

**Grading system**

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

100-96 = A; 95-91 = A-; 90-86 = B+; 85-81 = B;80-76 = B-;75-71 = C+;70-66 = C;65-61 = C-;60-56 = D+;55-51 = D;50-46 = D-; 45 and lower = F

**Tentative Schedule:**

**Week 1:** **Introduction**

Introduction to course and syllabus

**Week 2: Understanding State**

Abrams, Philip. 1988. “Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State,” Journal of Historical  
Sociology (1), 58-89

Bouchard, Michel. 2011. “The State of the Study of the State in anthropology.” Reviews in Anthropology 40(3): 183-209

Mitchell, Timothy. 1999. “Society, Economy, and the State Effect.” In State/Culture: State- Formation after the cultural turn. Cornell

*Recommended readings*

Navaro-Yashin, Yael. 2002. “Introduction,” In: Face of the State: Secularism and Public Life inTurkey. Princeton University Press.

Durkheim Emile. 1986. “The concept of the State” in Anthony Giddens (ed.) Durkheim on Politics and the state. Stanford (pp.32-72)

**Week 3: Modern State formation**

Das, Veen. 2004 “The Signature of the State: The Paradox of Illegibility” In: Anthropology inthe Margins of the State. Veena Das and Deborah Poole (eds.) Oxford: James Currey. pp.  
225-252.

Hansen, Thomas Blom, and Finn Stepputat.2001. States of Imagination: Ethnographic Explorations of the Post-Colonial State. Duke University Press. Introduction

**Week 4: State Ideology and Hegemony**

Althusser, Louis. 1971. “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus: Notes towards an Investigation.” In Lenin and Philosophy. Monthly Review Press.

Gramsci, Antonio. 1971. “State and Civil Society.” In Aradhana Sharma &Akhil Gupta (eds) The Anthropology of the State. A Reader. Pp. 86-112

**Week 5: State, Space and Territory**

Elden, Stuart. 2013. “How do We Do the History of Territory?” Territory, Politics, Governance. 1(1)

Reeves, Madeleine. 2009. “Materialising State Space: ‘Creeping Migration’ and Territorial integrity in Southern Kyrgyzstan,” Europe-Asia Studies. 67(7).

**Week 6: Bio- Politics and Governmentality**

Foucault, Michel. 2000. “Governmentality” in Power (ed.) James Faubion. New York. The New Press. Pp. 92-107

Fassin, Didier. 2011. “policing Borders, Producing Boundaries. The

Foucault, Michel.1990. The History of Sexuality. Vol.1: An Introduction. New York. Vintage Books. Pp. 135-145

**Week 7: Structural Violence**

Auyero, Javier. 2012. Patients of the State. The politics of Waiting in Argentina. Duke University Press.

Mbembe, 2001. On the Postcolony. Vol. 41. University of California Press. Chapter 1 and 2

Mbembe, and Libby Meintjes 2003. “Necropolitics” Public Culture 15(1):11-40

**Week 8: Citizenship and Belonging**

Das, Veena. 2011. “State, Citizenship and the urban Poor,” Citizenship Studies 15(3):319-333

Additional readings will be added

**Week 9: Colonial and post-colonial state**

Chakrabarty, Dipesh. 2002. “Two histories of Capital,” In Provincializing Europe: Post-colonial thought an Historical Difference. Princeton University Press.

Mamdani, Mahmood. 2020. “Decolonising the Political Community,” In: Neither Settler nor native: The making and unmaking of Permanent Minorities. Belknap Press of Harvard university Press.

**Week 10 & Week 11:**

Ethnography book presentations: Each student chooses an ethnographic work on state and presents it in the class.

**Week 12: Gendered State**

Conway, Daniel. 2008. “The Masculine State in Crisis.” Men and Masculinities 10: 422:439.

Massino, Jill. 2019. “Introduction” and “Good Times, Bad Times: Gender, Consumption and  
Lifestyle,” In: Ambiguous Transitions: Gender, the State, and Everyday Life in Socialist and  
Post-socialist Romania. Berghahn Books.

**Week 13: Everyday practices of the state: Bureaucracy**

Gupta, Akhil. 2006. Blurred boundaries. The discourse of corruption, the culture of politics and the imagined state. In Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta (eds) The Anthropology of State : A Reader.

Kregg Heatherington. 2008. “Populist Transperancy: The documentation of reality in Rural Paraguay.” Journal of Legal Anthropology

**Week 14: Evading the State**

Scott, J. C. (2009). *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. Yale University Press.

Additional readings will be added

**Week 15: State, market and Development**

Ferguson, James. 2006. “The Anti-Politics Machine” In Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta (eds) The Anthropology of State : A Reader.

Mitchel, Timothy.2002. Rule of Experts. Egypt, Techno-politics, Modernity. University of California Press.

**Week 16:**

Wrap up