

ANTH V3884.001  
W 11:00am-12:50pm  
467 Schermerhorn Hall

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## CAPITALISM AND AUTHORITARIANISM

This course investigates capitalism developed *outside* liberal democratic societies. Namely, we will study market capitalism in the societies that are most commonly characterized as authoritarian. In recent decades, there have been an increasing number of successful market economies such as Singapore or China that flourished within political regimes marked by state intervention, cronyism, and lack of transparency. Authoritarian capitalism appears to provide an ideological alternative to the Western model of capitalism based on liberal democratic governance.

Our objective is to bring an anthropological perspective to the study of this phenomenon. Although authoritarian capitalism has been one of the key issues for political scientists, policy-makers and the public at large, few anthropologists have engaged with and commented on this analytical category. In this light, we begin the class with an overview of existing scholarship on the phenomenon of authoritarian capitalism. Subsequently, we will engage the studies by anthropologists that have analyzed and discussed similar geographical, political, and economic contexts— but use different conceptual approaches. The purpose of this juxtaposition is to connect the rarely overlapping disciplinary concerns of anthropology and political science to generate some common conclusions. Overall, this course aims to develop a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of capitalism in authoritarian societies.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- 1) **Participation (20%):** Students are expected to have acquainted themselves with the assigned materials and to participate fully in discussion each class. Depending on the size of the class, students will take turns facilitating discussions based on readings. Facilitators are expected to provide a summary of key themes and their own critical evaluation of these ideas. Participation also includes individual meetings with the instructor at least *twice* a semester in order to develop final ideas for the final paper. I am happy to talk about students' participation grade at any point of the semester.
- 2) **Response Questions (25%):** In response to assigned materials, students will be required to formulate and electronically circulate three questions (\*six questions for graduate students) the evening before each class. Questions must engage with major themes and key ideas. A successful question would put different materials in dialogue with each other. This assignment is designed to help students to synthesize and critically evaluate assigned materials. These questions will form the basis for class discussion.

**3) Midterm Exam (20 %):** There will be a take-home mid-term exam, distributed in class on October 19 and due by 5 p.m. on the following Monday. This mid-term will require approximately 5-7 double-spaced pages of high-quality writing in response to a selection of questions offered by the instructor.

**4) Final Paper (35%):** This assignment is an opportunity for students to develop their ideas and interests that emerged out of readings and discussions used in the class. Students must critically discuss at least three of the class readings in a 10-page paper. Graduate students must engage at least five of the class readings and produce a 15-page paper. Students must submit a **Proposal for Final Paper** (3-5 pages) at the end of week 11.

## **COURSE OUTLINE:**

### **September 7- Week 1: Introduction**

Terms and Definitions. Why Have Anthropologists Shied Away From the Study of Authoritarianism? Outline of the Course.

### **September 14- Week 2: Authoritarianism, Democracy, and Capitalism**

- Francis Fukuyama, [Are We Entering the Age of the Autocrat?](#) *Washington Post*, August 24, 2008
- Timothy Frye (2010) *Building States and Markets after Communism: the Perils of Polarized Democracy*. Cambridge University Press), Introduction (pp.1-20) and Chapter 10, pp.229-243
- Wendy Brown (2003) Neoliberalism and the End of Liberal Democracy, *Theory and Event*, 2003, 7(1), pp.1-21.

### **September 21- Week 3: Approaches to Capitalism**

- Karl Marx, *The Marx-Engels Reader* (selections from *Capital* and “The Communist Manifesto”), pp. 302-308, 329-343, 473-483
- Introduction to Max Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*
- Marshal Sahlins, "Cosmologies of Capitalism: The Trans-pacific Sector of 'the World System'" in *Culture/Power/ History: A Reader in Contemporary Social Theory*, ed. Nicholas B. Dirks, Geoff Eley, and Sherry B. Ortner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 414-456.

**September 28- Week 4: Defining Authoritarianism**

- Juan Linz (2000) *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*. Lynne Rienner Publishers Chapter 4, pp.159-262
- Paul Sondrol (2009) "Totalitarian and Authoritarian Dictators: A Comparison of Fidel Castro and Alfredo Stroessner". *Journal of Latin American Studies* 23 (03), pp. 599-620

**October 5- Week 5: Economics of Authoritarianism**

- Ronald Wintrobe (1998) *The Political Economy of Dictatorship*, New York: Cambridge University Press, pp.127-246, 337-342.
- Katherine Verdery (1991) "Theorizing Socialism: A Prologue to the "Transition," *American Ethnologist*, 18(3):419-439

**October 12- Week 6: Colonialism**

- Film: *There Will Be Blood* (2007), 158 min.
- Uday S. Mehta (1997) "Liberal Strategies of Exclusion" in Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, eds, *Tensions of Empire*, pp.59-86
- Timothy Mitchell (2002) *Rule of Experts*, University of California Press, Chapter 2, pp. 54-79
- Aihwa Ong (1999) "Saying No to the West: Liberal Reasoning in Asia." In *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 185-213.

**October 19- Week 7: Global Capitalisms: Movements and Forms**

- Aihwa Ong (2006) *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty*. Duke University Press, Chapters 3 and 4 (pp.75-120)
- Mayfair Young (2000) "Putting Global Capitalism in its Place: Economic Hybridity, Bataille, and Ritual Expenditure," *Current Anthropology*, 41(4), pp.477-509

**\*TAKE-HOME MID-TERM EXAM QUESTIONS WILL BE DISTRIBUTED IN CLASS\***

**October 26- Week 8:** *Non-State Authoritarianism: International Development Agencies and Transnational Corporations*

- Timothy Mitchell (2002) *Rule of Experts*, University of California Press, 2002, Chapters 7-9 (pp.209-305)

**November 2- Week 9:** *The State as a Production*

- Akhil Gupta (1995) “Blurred Boundaries: The Discourse of Corruption, the Culture of Politics, and the Imagined State,” *American Ethnologist*, 22(2): 375-402.
- James Ferguson and Akhil Gupta (2002) “Spatializing States: Toward an Ethnography of Neoliberal Governmentality,” *American Ethnologist* 29(4): 981-1002.
- Timothy Mitchell (1999) “Society, Economy, and the State Effect” In *State/Culture: State Formation after the Cultural Turn*, edited by George Steinmetz. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, pp. 76–97.

**November 9- Week 10:** *Political Authority and the Domestic Domain*

- Morgan Liu (2005) “Post-Soviet Paternalism and Personhood: Why 'Culture' Matters to Democratization in Central Asia.” In *Prospects of Democracy in Central Asia*. Edited by Birgit Schlyter. London: I.B. Tauris. 225-238.
- David Kideckel (2004) “The Undead: Nicolae Ceausescu and Paternalist Politics in Romanian Society and Culture” in *Death of the Father: An Anthropology of the End in Political Authority*, edited by John Borneman, pp.123-147.
- Robert Weller (1998) “Divided Market Cultures in China: Gender, Enterprise, and Religion” in *Market Cultures: Society and Morality in the New Asian Capitalisms*, edited by Robert Heffner, pp.78-103

**November 16-Week 11:** *no class (American Anthropological Association Meetings)*

**\*PROPOSAL FOR FINAL PAPER (3-5 PAGES) DUE ON NOVEMBER 19 @ NOON\***

**November 23- Week 12:** *Dispositions and Subjectivities*

- Alexei Yurchak (2002) “Entrepreneurial Governmentality in Postsocialist Russia: A Cultural Investigation of Business Practices” in *The New Entrepreneurs of Europe and*

*Asia: Patterns of Business Development in Russia, Eastern Europe, and China* edited by Victoria E. Bonnell and Thomas B. Gold, pp.278-324

- Bruce Grant (1998) "The Return of the Repressed: Conversations with Three Russian Entrepreneurs" in *Paranoia Within Reason*, edited by George Marcus, pp.241-267
- Tomas Matza (2009) "Moscow's Echo: Technologies of the Self, Publics, and Politics on the Russian Talk Show," *Cultural Anthropology*, 24(3), pp. 489-522

**November 30- Week 13: Marketization of the State/State-ization of the Market**

- Esra Özyürek (2004) "Miniaturizing Ataturk: Privatization of the State Imagery and Ideology in Turkey." *American Ethnologist*, 31:3 pp. 374- 391.
- Mun Young Cho (2011) "We Are the State": An Entrepreneurial Mission to Serve the People in Harbin, Northeast China" *Modern China*, 37, pp.422
- Zhanara Nauruzbayeva (2011) "Portraiture and Proximity: 'Official' Artists and the State-ization of the Market in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan," *Ethnos*, 76(3): 375-397

**December 7- Week 14: Paper Presentations**

**\*FINAL PAPERS DUE ON DECEMBER 11 @ MIDNIGHT\***