

Anth 222.11
**Anthropology of Intervention:
Development, Human Rights, Humanitarianism**

Fall 2007

Professor Ilana Feldman
Office: 502D 1957 E. St.
Tel: 994-7728
Email: ifeldman@gwu.edu
Office hours: Wednesday 11-1 and by appointment

Course Description: This course will explore how anthropology, and related disciplines, approaches the study of selected sorts of interventions into human life and society. These forms of intervention – development, human rights, humanitarianism – differ in the scale and scope of their projects and of their intended effects. They also share many common features. Each is explicitly concerned with improving conditions under which people live, and yet each has also been subjected to substantial critique for often producing opposite outcomes. In one way or another, each of these projects also takes as its object the human subject, and in so doing contributes to shaping ideas about humanity. The aim of this course will not be to be simply “for” or “against” any of these forms of intervention, but to critically engage with the multiplicity of their effects. In the process we will also consider what an “anthropology of intervention” might look like. The geographical focus of the course will be the Middle East, though materials will be drawn from other areas as well.

Required Texts:

The following texts are available for purchase at the GWU bookstore and are on reserve at Gelman library:

Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford: University of Stanford Press, 1998)

Julia Elyachar, *Markets of Dispossession: NGOs, Economic Development, and the State in Cairo* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980).

Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002)

Susan Slyomovics, *The Performance of Human Rights in Morocco* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).

Additional required readings are available through electronic reserves on blackboard.

Course Requirements:

Attendance and Participation: This course is a seminar and in order for it to be successful, we all need to come to class having done the readings and prepared to discuss them. Preparation for discussion includes identifying puzzling aspects of the text, highlighting passages for analysis, and raising questions for debate. If you have to miss class, please let me know beforehand.

Reading Response: For each class, everyone is required to post – through Blackboard – ½- to 1- page reflection papers. You should also read each other's postings before class. Responses should be posted by 9 am on the day of class (to accommodate night-owls and still leave enough time for us all to read the postings). These are not formal papers, but rather are an opportunity for you to react to and reflect on the readings for the week. Raise questions the readings posed for you, think about how they relate to other things we have read, consider how they fit into the course as a whole. These postings are intended to help you in organizing your thoughts about the readings and to create a space for dialogue outside the classroom.

Presentation and Leading Discussion: Each week a student (or two) will be responsible for presenting the reading to the class and for helping to lead class discussions. These presentations should be brief – 10-15 minutes. In addition to discussing the readings, presenters should comment on the postings (noting themes in the responses, interesting questions raised). The presentations are not meant to be the final word on anything, but rather to open up class discussion on the texts.

Seminar Paper and Paper Preparation: The seminar paper is something you should be thinking about and working toward throughout the semester. To this end, you will be required to submit a paper topic and tentative bibliography on **October 23**, an abstract on **November 13**, and you will be required to do a presentation on your project on **November 27** or **December 4**, all before submitting the final paper, which is due **December 10**. The paper should be 15-20 pages.

Your grade for the course will reflect your efforts in fulfilling each of these requirements.

Class Schedule

Part One: Anthropology and Interventions

September 4: Introduction: On the idea of an anthropology of intervention

Paul Rabinow, "Midst Anthropology's Problems," *Cultural Anthropology* 17, 2 (2002): 135-149.

September 11: Anthropology as intervention: modes of knowledge, forms of practice

James Ferguson "Anthropology and its evil twin: "development" in the constitution of a discipline" in *International Development and the Social Sciences: Essays on the History and Politics of Knowledge*, ed. Frederick Cooper and Randall Packard, 150-175 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

George Marcus, "Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography," in *Ethnography Through Thick and Thin*, 79-104 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, 183-202 (New York: Routledge, 1991).

Anna Tsing, "Introduction," from *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connections* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

September 18: Powers of Life and Death

Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford: University of Stanford Press, 1998) - Introduction; Part 1, Chapter 1: "The Paradox of Sovereignty;" and Part 3

Michel Foucault, "The Right of Death and Power over Life," in *History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, 133-159 (New York: Vintage Books, 1978).

Nancy Scheper-Hughes, "The Last Commodity: Post-Human Ethics and the Global Traffic in "Fresh" Organs," in *Global Assemblages: Technology, Politics, and Ethics as Anthropological Problems*, ed. Aihwa Ong and Stephen Collier, 145-167 (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005).

September 25: Subjects of Intervention

Talal Asad, "Redeeming the Human Through Human Rights" *In Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

Fred Cooper, "Modernizing Bureaucrats, Backward Africans, and the Development Concept" in *International Development and the Social Sciences*, 64-92.

Lila Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others," *American Anthropologist* 104, 3 (2002): 783-790

Aihwa Ong, "Refugee Medicine: attracting and deflecting the gaze" in *Buddha is Hiding: Refugees, Citizenship, the New America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

Part Two: Development

October 2: The Development Apparatus

Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002) – chaps. 1-3, 7-9

October 9: Development and Market Logics

Julia Elyachar, *Markets of Dispossession: NGOs, Economic Development, and the State in Cairo* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

Part Three: Human Rights

October 16: Justice for Whom?: Crimes, Courts, and Possibilities for Resolution

Lisa Hajjar, *Courting Conflict: The Israeli Military Court System in the West Bank and Gaza* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005) – chapters 1, 2, 6

Laurie King-Irani, “Advocacy, Accountability, and Academia: Is Human Rights Activism within the Jurisdiction of Anthropology?,” in John Borneman, ed. *The Case of Ariel Sharon and the Fate of Universal Jurisdiction* (Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies Monograph Series, 2004).

Dan Rabinowitz, “Indict Sharon: Enough Said? Enough Done?” in *The Case of Ariel Sharon*.

Ron Dudai, ““Can You Describe This?: Human rights reports and what they tell us about the human rights movement,” unpublished manuscript

October 23: Paper topic and tentative bibliography for seminar paper due

Initial discussion about proposed topics

October 30: Ethnography of Human Rights

Susan Slyomovics, *The Performance of Human Rights in Morocco* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).

November 6: Sexuality and the Arab World: Colonialism or Human Rights?

Joseph Massad, “Reorienting Desire: The Gay International and the Arab World” *Public Culture* 14, 2 (2002):361-385.

Human Rights Watch, “In a Time of Torture: the assault on Justice in Egypt’s Crackdown on Homosexual Conduct” [can skim parts]

available to download at: http://www.hrw.org/doc/?t=mideast_pub&c=egypt

Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980) (p. 3-49, 77-114)

Part Four: Humanitarianism

November 13: Humanitarianism and Refugees

Giorgio Agamben, "We Refugees" *Symposium* 49, 2 (1995):114-119.

Ilana Feldman, "Difficult Distinctions: Refugee law, humanitarian practice, and political identification in Gaza" *Cultural Anthropology* 22, 1 (2007):127-67

Liisa Malkki, "Speechless Emisaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization" *Cultural Anthropology* 11, 3 (1996):377-404

Elena Fiddian, "Relocating: The Asylum Experience in Cairo," *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 8, 2 (2006): 295-318

Aihwa Ong, "The Refugee as an Ethical Figure," in *Buddha is Hiding*

November 20: Humanitarian Actors and Ethical Dilemmas

Peter Redfield, "Doctors, Borders, and Life in Crisis," *Cultural Anthropology* 20, 3 (2005):328-361.

Ilana Feldman, "The Quaker Way: Ethical Labor and Humanitarian Relief," *American Ethnologist* 34, 4 (2007):

Mariella Pandolfi, "Contract of Mutual (In)Difference: Governance and the Humanitarian Apparatus in Contemporary Albania and Kosovo" *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies* 10, no. 1 (2003): 369-381.

J.L. Holzgrefe, "The Humanitarian Intervention Debate," in J.L. Holzgrefe and Robert Keohane, eds. *Humanitarian Intervention: Ethical, Legal, and Political Dilemmas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 15-52.

Abstract for seminar paper due

November 27: presentations

December 4: presentations

December 10: **Papers Due, by 4pm**