

**Anthropology of Violence and Suffering**  
**Anthropology 261**  
**Tuesday/Thursday 4 – 5:20**  
**Olin 204**

Professor Laura Kunreuther  
Hopson 304  
kunreuth@bard.edu  
x 7215

Office Hours: Thursday 2:30-4 pm. or by appointment

Why do acts of violence continue to grow in the 'modern' world? In what ways has violence become naturalized in the contemporary world? In this course, we will consider how acts of violence challenge and support modern ideas of humanity, raising important questions about what it means to be human today. These questions lie at the heart of anthropological thinking and also structure contemporary discussions of human rights. Anthropology's commitment to "local culture" and cultural diversity has meant that anthropologists often position themselves in critical opposition to "universal values," which have been used to address various forms of violence in the contemporary world. The course will approach different forms of violence, including ethnic and communal conflicts, colonial history, war, torture and its individualizing effects, acts of terror and institutionalized fear, and rituals of bodily pain that mark individuals' inclusion or exclusion from a social group. The course is organized around three central concerns. First, we will discuss violence as a means of producing and consolidating social and political power, and exerting political control. Second, we will look at forms of violence that have generated questions about "universal rights" of humanity versus culturally specific practices. In these examples, we explore gendered dimensions in the experience of violence among perpetrators, victims, and survivors. Finally, we will look at the ways human rights institutions have sought to address the profundity of human suffering and pain, and ask in what ways have they succeeded and/or failed.

**Required Books:**

- Malkki, Liisa. 1995. *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology Among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania*. Chicago: University Press.
- Nordstrom, Carolyn. 1997. *A Different Kind of War Story*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania.
- Taussig, Michael. 1987. *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man: A Study in Terror and Healing*. Chicago: University Press.
- Appadurai, Arjun. 2006. *Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay on the Geography of Anger*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press. (will be coming)

**Recommended Books (on reserve):**

Arthur Kleinman, Veena Das, and Margaret Lock, eds 2000. *Violence and Subjectivity*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Arthur Kleinman, Veena Das, and Margaret Lock, eds. 1997. *Social Suffering*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Foucault, Michel. 1979. *Discipline and Punish*. New York: Random House.

**All other readings are on Reserve Web**

**Requirements and Grading:**

**[get from prior syllabus – school]**

## **I. Ethnography and Everyday Violence**

January 30

Introductions: Anthropology, Ethnography, and Everyday Violence

February 1

Sheper-Hughes, Nancy. (M)Other Love: Culture, Scarcity, and Maternal Thinking. In *Death Without Weeping*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 340-399.

February 6

Farmer, Paul. 1997. On Suffering and Structural Violence: A View from Below. In *Social Suffering*, Arthur Kleinman, Veena Das, and Margaret Lock, eds. Berkeley: University of California Press, 261 – 283.

Kleinman, Arthur. 2000. The Violences of Everyday Life: The Multiple Forms and Dynamics of Social Violence. In *Violence and Subjectivity*, Veena Das, Arthur Kleinman, Mamphela Ramphele, and Pamela Reynolds, eds. Berkeley: University of California Press, 226-241.

## **II. Documenting Suffering and War**

February 8

Nordstrom, Carolyn. 1997. *A Different Kind of War Story*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, ch. 1.

Hobbes, Thomas, Chapter XIII: Of The Natural Condition of Mankind [3 pgs] in , *Leviathan* Norton: pp. 68-72.

February 13

Nordstrom, Carolyn. 1997. *A Different Kind of War Story*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, Ch. 2 – 4.

February 15

Nordstrom, Carolyn. 1997. *A Different Kind of War Story*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, Ch. 7.

**III. Disciplinary Power and Torture**

February 20

Foucault, Michel. 1997 [1975]. The Body of the Condemned and The Spectacle of the Scaffold. In *Discipline and Punish*. New York: Random House.

February 22

Foucault, Michel. 1997[1975]. Docile Bodies. In *Discipline and Punish*. New York: Random House.

February 27

Scarry, Elaine. 1989. The Structure of Torture. In *The Body in Pain: Making and Unmaking the World*. Oxford: University Press, p. 27-59.

**First Essay Due**

March 1

Daniel, Valentine. 1996. Embodied Terror. In *Charred Lullabies: Chapters in an Anthropography of Violence*. Princeton: University Press.

**IV. Violence in Colonial Worlds: “Terror as Usual”**

March 6

Taussig, Michael. 1987. *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man: A Study in Terror and Healing*. Chicago: University Press, Ch. 1-2.

March 8

Taussig, Michael. 1987. *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man: A Study in Terror and Healing*. Chicago: University Press, Ch. 3 – 6.

March 13

Taussig, Michael. 1987. *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man: A Study in Terror and Healing*. Chicago: University Press, Ch. 18 and 21.

**V. Witnessing Violence**

March 15

Das, Veena. 2000. The Act of Witnessing: Violence, Poisonous Knowledge, and Subjectivity. In *Violence and Subjectivity*, Veena Das, Arthur Kleinman, Mamphela Ramphele, and Pamela Reynolds, eds. Berkeley: University of California Press, 205 – 225.

Recommended:

Bose and Jalal. 1998. Partition and the Creation of Pakistan. In *Modern South Asia*. pg. 165 –190.

March 20

Zelizer, Barbie. 2000. Covering Atrocity in Image. In *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust through the Camera's Eye*. Chicago: University Press.

**Paper Proposal Due**

March 22

Feldman, Alan. 2000. Violence and Vision: The Prosthetics and Aesthetics of Terror. In *Violence and Subjectivity*, Veena Das, Arthur Kleinman, Mamphela Ramphele, and Pamela Reynolds, eds. Berkeley: University of California Press, 46- 78.

March 27

Marriot, David, 2000. "'I'm gonna borrow me a Kodak': Photography and Lynching [19 pgs]" in *On Black Men* Columbia University Press: pp. 1 –23.

Strassler, Karen. 2004. Gendered Visibilities and the Dream of Transparency: The Chinese-Indonesian Rape Debate in Post Suharto Indonesia. *Gender and History* 16(3): 689 – 725. (JSTOR)

March 29– NO CLASS/ ARRANGE MAKE-UP CLASS

**SPRING BREAK**

## V. Genocide and Ethnic War

### April 10

Sheper-Hughes, Nancy. 1997. Specificities: Peace Time Crimes. In *Social Identities* 3(3): 471-497.

Malkki, Liisa. 1995. Introduction. *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania*. Chicago: University Press,.

### April 12

Malkki, Liisa. 1995. The Mythico-History and The Uses of History and The Danger of Assimilation and the Purity of Exile. *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania*. Chicago: University Press.

### April 17

Malkki, Liisa. 1995. The Danger of Assimilation and the Purity of Exile. *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania*. Chicago: University Press.

### April 19

Appadurai, Arjun. Dead Certainty: Ethnic Violence in the Era of Globalization. *Public Culture* 10(2) : pp. 225-247.

## VI. Cultural Practices and Human Rights

### April 24

Ross, Fiona. 2001. Speech and Silence: Women's Testimony in the First Five Weeks of Public Hearings of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In *Remaking a World*. Veena Das, Arthur Kleinman, Margaret Lock, Mamphela Ramphele, Pamela Reynolds, eds. Berkeley: University of California Press, 250- 279.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Reprinted in *The evolution of international human rights*. Lauren, Paul. 1998. Pp. 299-303.

**Video:** Long Nights Journey Into Day

### April 26

Geertz, Clifford. 1984. Distinguished Lecture: Anti Anti-Relativism. *American Anthropologist* June, Vol. 86(2):263-277.

Asad, Talal. Xxxxx.

May 1

Walley, Christine J. 1997. Searching for "Voices": Feminism, Anthropology, and the Global Debate Over Female Genital Operations. *Cultural Anthropology*. v. 12 no3: 405-38.

May 3

Appadurai, Arjun. 2006. *Fear of Small Numbers*, ch. 2-3 (p. 15 – 48).

May 8-May 10: No Class Senior Board Week

Finish Appadurai book

May 15

**Papers Due**

Discuss Appadurai.

May 17

Presentations

May 22

Presentations