This course examines the contributions and limitations of ethnographic research for theoretical and political discussions of the modern state. We begin by asking what sort of object "the state" is. We then engage texts and authors that show how ethnographic attention to the temporal, material and sensory domains of everyday life can complicate and deepen interdisciplinary discussions of sovereignty, bureaucracy, violence and expertise. During the final sections of the class, we explore new ethnographic approaches to the study of the neoliberal state, international governance and law.

Course requirements include:

a) active participation in all class discussions
b) responsibility for leading at least two seminar discussions during the semester
c) a 5 page midterm exam
d) a final 10-15 pp. paper due the last week of class.

Prompts for the midterm exam will be handed out in class on October 7. Final midterm essays will be due in class on Wednesday October 14.

The final paper for this class should draw on original library or ethnographic research to address or deepen theoretical issues and topics from the assigned readings. Students should plan to finalize the topic for their final paper at least three weeks before the due date. Students are also encouraged, but not required, to draw on short term ethnographic work in the form of interviews or observations. The instructor will work closely with those students who wish to carry out new research for the paper. Grading rubrics and detailed instructions for the final paper, which is due Weds December 16, will be handed out in class in early November.
Schedule of Readings

I. Defining the object

Sept. 2  Introduction to class


Sept. 9


Sept. 16


V. Das & D. Poole, eds. 2004  “Introduction,” In Anthropology in the Margins of the State, pp. 3-34. Santa Fe, MN: SAR Press,

recommended:

II. Affect and expertise

Sept. 23


recommended:


Sept. 30


Fabiana Li. 2015. "Stepping outside the document." In Unearthing Conflict: Corporate Mining, Activism, and Expertise in Peru, pp. 185-214


October 7

D. Fassin. 2015. In D. Fassin, et. al., At the Heart of the State: The Moral World of Institutions, Pluto Press: READ: Introduction, Conclusion and Chapter 4 (pp. 1-14, 93-116, and 257-261.)

**recommended:**


**III. Sovereignty**

**October 14 (Midterm essay due in class)**


**October 21**


**October 28**


**recommended:**

**IV. Neoliberalism (Scale and Form)**

**November 4**


**November 11**


**Recommended:**


**November 18**


November 19: *(make up class for December 2)*: Review of readings; and discussion of final papers

November 25: No Class (Thanksgiving break)

December 2: No Class

December 16: Final Papers Due