Fall 2014

Online Course Description

Y657: Ethnic and Indigenous Politics: Challenges of Democracy and Development

Lauren M. MacLean

Course Description:

The objective of the course is to explore theories of citizenship and representation and examine how these theories help us understand ethnic and indigenous politics around the world. The course is designed to be explicitly comparative both theoretically and empirically. We will be pairing scholarship in political theory with empirical applications from a wide range of areas in the world including possibly Brazil, Mexico, Ecuador, Bolivia, Paraguay, the U.S., Canada, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Cameroun, Uganda, South Africa, Tanzania, and India. Thus, we will read Kymlicka and Iris Marion Young the same week that we read a book on indigenous movements in Bolivia that engages with multicultural theory.

Some of the themes covered in the course will include but are not limited to: colonialism and concepts of indigeneity; concepts of ethnicity and distinctions with indigeneity; ethnicity and democracy and indigenous concepts of democracy; theories of sovereignty; liberal, Marxist, multicultural and constructivist theories of citizenship; theories of representation, including bureaucratic representation; ethnicity and state capacity; the historical role of state-building on indigenous movements; ethnicity/indigeneity and the distributional politics of public service provision; federalism and ethnic/indigenous politics; transnational networks, ethnic/indigenous politics and citizenship; and globalization and ethnic/indigenous politics.

This course will be valuable for political science students studying comparative politics, political philosophy, and/or public policy. The course readings will be primarily political science but may also include works in history, anthropology, sociology, and geography.

The course will be jointly listed with the African Studies Program, the Center on Latin American and Caribbean Studies, and American Studies (and counts towards the Native American and Indigenous Studies (NAIS) minor).

Course Requirements:

The course is primarily a reading seminar. We will be talking about how to read critically and use the literature, not just review it passively or destroy it aggressively. We will be thinking constructively about how to build! The most critical requirement will be coming to class prepared to participate in engaging discussions of the literature. Students will also be required to complete three short (approximately 3-5 pages) written assignments. The first will concentrate on how to locate arguments and explanations in the theoretical literature. The second will focus on using the literature to define and measure concepts. And the final will address how we use the literature to select cases and construct a solid research design. The written assignments will be useful to students at a variety of stages of their careers. The skills that we will be practicing are the foundation of any good research project.

NB: This course is only offered every three years.