

Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

Culture and World Affairs
ANT/IRP 707
Section 001

Fall 2008
Wednesday, 9:30 am-12:15 pm
SOM 103

Robert A. Rubinstein
405A Maxwell Hall 443-3837
email: rar@sy.edu

OFFICE HOURS: Wednesday s 1:00-3:00 pm. Other times by arrangement.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: The entire enterprise of international relations is conditioned by cultural issues. These are of two kinds; the general background that is formed by cultural activities and phenomena that are specifically cultural. Both of these levels of culture are becoming more important in the international relations. This course offers a basic survey of a variety of domains of world affairs in which culture is of particular importance.

READINGS: The readings for this seminar are drawn from a variety of books and journals. All of these have been placed on reserve at Bird Library, some are accessible online through electronic reserve, and others you will find in the library stacks of in the electronic databases accessible from the library website. There is no reader for this class.

Each week there is a set of required readings that should be *completed prior to the class date for which they are listed*. Our weekly class discussions will begin with a focus on these readings, so it is essential to the success of the seminar that participants *read and think carefully about* the required readings and be ready to discuss them in class. The required readings appear alphabetically under the weekly topic heading.

There are several books that we will read completely or from which we will use large amounts of material. These books are:

Kertzer, D. I. 1988. *Ritual, Politics, and Power*. New Haven, CT, Yale University Press.

Johnston, D. and Sampson, C. 1994. *Religion: The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*. New York, NY, Oxford University Press.

Lane, S.D. 2008 *Why are our Babies Dying?: Pregnancy, Birth and Death in America*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.

Rao, V. and M. Walton, Eds. 2004. *Culture and Public Action*. Sanford, CA, Stanford University Press.

Renteln, A. D. 2004. *The Cultural Defense*. New York, NY, Oxford University Press.

Rubinstein, R. A. 2008 *Peacekeeping Under Fire: Culture and Intervention*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION:

<u>Percent of Final Grade</u>	<u>Assignment</u>
25	Class Participation
20	News Analysis
15	Briefing on Case
40	Problem-Based Case
<hr/> 100%	

There are four assignments for this class weighted as shown in the above table.

1) Do the weekly reading and participate in class (25%)

Preparation for and regular contribution to our class discussions are critical and the foundation for all of our work together in the seminar. High quality and regular **class participation** will be worth 25 percent of your semester grade.

Complete weekly readings before class and be ready to engage in discussion about them. All students must participate in all class discussions. Your goal each week should be to try and understand the key claims of the reading; and to raise critical questions about those claims.

Active class participation means that the use of cell phones, text messaging devices, email, web-browsing and so on are not permitted in class, unless being used publicly to support class discussions. If your use of these devices does not conform to this rule, you will be asked to leave the class and receive a failing grade for the course.

No audio or video recordings are to be made in class. Students do not participate as fully or forthrightly in class discussions when recording devices are in use.

Blackboard Reading Discussions

We will be using the Public Discussions function to “prime” our class discussions of the weekly readings. They should facilitate our class discussions by giving you time to think about what your fellow students have to say about the readings, and to enhance our ability to keep discussion focused on issues that are of genuine interest to the class.

There will be two different kinds of comments posted to our Public Discussion forum; Monday Comments and Tuesday Comments. Half of the class will be designated “A Group” and half of the class will be designated “B Group.”

Monday Comments: Each week either A Group or B Group (as indicated in the schedule in the syllabus) will be responsible for posting to the class Blackboard website comments on the week’s reading no later than **6 pm Monday** prior to class. These contributions will be available for all to read.

Your contribution should be between 400 and 600 words in which you:

- a) articulate issues or problems you are having with that week's reading, or any special insight or inspiration it has given you;
- b) raise, and perhaps give initial thoughts on, one or two questions the readings have raised for you that you would like your classmates to reflect on and discuss in class.

Tuesday Comments: Each week the group that has not posted Monday comments will be responsible for posting response comments no later than **6 pm on Tuesday** prior to class. Tuesday comments should also be between 400 and 600 words. Their function is to respond to the Monday comments and begin (not end!) discussion on the topics raised

Comment Group Assignment:

If you are registered for this class as ANT 707 you are in comment group A.

If your are registered for this class as IRP 707 you are in comment group B.

2) News Analyses (20%)

In order to allow us to link a systematic understanding of cultural processes to contemporary problems, issues and conflicts in world affairs each class member will **monitor contemporary news**, analyzing developments from a cultural perspective. You may focus on a particular geographic area or on a specific topic in world affairs. There are two aspects of this. First, you should read the news each day from a cultural perspective and be prepared to discuss in class what you observe. *Second, one brief (750 word maximum) paper in the form of an Op-Ed article should be posted to the News Analysis discussion board on our class Blackboard site **no latter than 6pm on Friday, 26 September.*** You should feel free to use the material from these media reviews in our discussions throughout the semester.

3) Problem-Based Case Study (40%)

Each student in the class will prepare a paper examining a contemporary issue, problem or conflict. Students should meet with me early in the semester to agree upon the subject of their paper. The **papers will be problem-based**, in that they will address an actual issue that is a source of conflict or a policy dilemma and will highlight and explains the role of culture in the chosen issue. They will have the form of a brief, white paper.

Theoretical approaches to understanding the problem should also be used, but the core aspects of the paper are about the problem, an analysis of its roots, its context, and, if possible, some practical strategies with which to address the issue under study. To accomplish this objective the problems chosen must be in small enough that the student can fully address them in no more than 5,500 words (about 12 pages). Creating "peace in the Middle East," for example, is too large a topic. A more on-the-ground and doable topic in this regard, for example, might be a study of the images of one party to a conflict in the school texts of the other. The final case study paper is due on **Tuesday, 9 December**, by 5pm. The paper should be turned in by depositing it in the designated area of our course Blackboard site.

Each student should finalize their case study topic in discussion with me no later than by the end of the fourth week of class, that is no later than by 17 September 2008.

4) Case Briefing (15%)

The ability to make a clear, concise and persuasive presentation is a highly valuable skill for a career in international relations. Once during the semester, each student will give a **15 minute briefing** on their developing problem-based case study (plus 10 minutes for discussion). These presentations will serve as a developmental step in preparation of the final paper. They will occur on a schedule to be handed out on week 4 of the class. All presentations will be made between Weeks 6 and 11.

Guidelines for submitting written assignments: All written assignments must be double-spaced, 12 point font, with 1 inch margins on all sides. When you need to cite a source do so using a parenthetical reference format. (If you need clarification of the citation style, please consult a recent issue of the *American Ethnologist* that contains "instructions for contributors"). I encourage students to use a bibliography management program, such as Endnote or RefWorks (the latter is available at the Bird Library website). This makes it easy to keep track of your references and to set up your paper in the proper format.

You must submit an electronic copy by posting it in the appropriate “drop box” or discussion forum on the class Blackboard website. Papers placed in the wrong drop box or discussion forum will not count as received.

A Note on Writing: The written assignments for this class are relatively short in length. This means that you should write with great economy. Eliminate from your writing any unnecessary words and phrases. If you feel something is important, state it, but don't precede it with a phrase like: 'It is important to note that...'

Policy on late assignments and incomplete grades: Papers and assignments are due when indicated on the syllabus. Only under extreme circumstances will I agree to a delay in the submission of assigned material. But, it is essential that you discuss with me in advance your need to be late with an assignment. Assignments that are turned in late without my prior agreement will have one letter grade deducted for each day they are late. No grades of incomplete will be issued unless the circumstances legitimating this grade are discussed with me and I have agreed that an incomplete is warranted.

Plagiarism: In all papers and assignments for the class it is important that proper conventions of scholarship be followed. If you use someone else's words, indicate this with quotation marks and a citation. If you make a paraphrase of another person's work, citation is necessary. If you draw substantially on the ideas of another person, credit them. Plagiarism is a very serious matter and grounds for failing the class. If you have any doubt about the meaning of plagiarism please see me.

Students with Disabilities: Students who are in need of disability-related academic accommodations must register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS), 804 University Avenue, Room 309, 315-443-4498. Students with authorized disability-related accommodations should provide a current Accommodation Authorization Letter from ODS to me and review those accommodations with me. Accommodations such as exam administration, are not provided retroactively; therefore planning for accommodations as early as possible is necessary. For further information, see the ODS website <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu/>.

Office Hours: My office hours are Wednesdays from 1:00pm-3:00pm. There is a sign up sheet on my office door. Please use it. I generally keep my office hours. However, if no one has signed up 24 hours in advance of a particular office hours session, I may not be in. If you cannot make my office hours but need to talk with me, please email me at rar@syr.edu. I'll be glad to arrange an alternative time to meet with you.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

1) 27 August 2008 Introduction to the class

Structure of the class
Inventory of professional skills incorporated in the class
Administrative matters

Outline of the area of study
Selection of topics covered.

2) 3 September 2008 Political symbolism and authority, 1

Monday Comments: Group A
Tuesday Comments: Group B

Political authority is rooted in important part in the manipulation of political symbols. Being familiar with the cultural logic of political symbols helps to figure out the sources and prospects of particular claims for political authority. These provide as well the meanings that inform political systems of diverse forms.

Kertzer, D. I. 1988. *Ritual, Politics, and Power*. New Haven, CN, Yale University Press. Chapters 1-6.

Rubinstein, R. A., 1988, "Cultural analysis and international security," *Alternatives* 13:529-542.

3) 10 September 2008

Monday Comments: Group B
Tuesday Comments: Group A

O'Neill, B., 1999, *Honor, Symbols, and War*. Ann Arbor, MI, University of Michigan Press. Part 1: "Symbolism: An Introduction," "Message Symbols in Practice," "Message Symbols in Theory," "Focal Symbols" Pp. 3-62.

Verweij, M., A. Oros, et al., 1998, "Culture in world politics," *Culture in World Politics*. M. Verweij, A. Oros and D. Jacquin-Berdal. New York, NY, St. Martin's Press, Pp. 1-10.

Lakoff, G., and M. Johnson, 1980. "Conceptual metaphor in everyday life," *The Journal of Philosophy* 77:453-486.

4) 17 September 2008 Moral/ normative /religious dimensions of social life

Monday Comments: Group A
Tuesday Comments: Group B

Presentation schedule distributed

Moral, normative and religious factors seem to more frequently provide the motivation and background upon which claims are advanced in international settings. Understanding the operation of such variables becomes critical in developing and evaluating policy.

Bateson, Mary Catherine 1997 [1988], "Compromise and the rhetoric of good and evil," *The Social Dynamics of Peace and Conflict: Culture in International Security*, R.A. Rubinstein and M.L. Foster (eds.). Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt, Pp.35-45.

Hinton, A., 1998, "A head for an eye: revenge in the Cambodian genocide," *American Ethnologist* 25:352-377.

Luttaw, E., 1994, "The missing dimension," *Religion: The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*. D. Johnston and C. Sampson. New York, NY, Oxford University Press, Pp.8-19.

Rubin, B., 1994, "Religion and international affairs," *Religion: The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*. D. Johnston and C. Sampson. New York, NY, Oxford University Press, Pp. 20-35.

5) 24 September 2008 Politics, Identity, Language and Ethnicity

Monday Comments: Group B
Tuesday Comments: Group A
News Analysis due 6pm FRIDAY

One of the toughest areas of international relations revolves around language and education policies. Language is deeply rooted in culture and understanding the effects of particular policy initiatives depends on understanding their cultural implications

Gurr, T. R. 1996. "Minorities, nationalist and ethno-political conflict," *Managing Global Chaos: Sources of and Responses to International Conflict*. C. Crocker, F. Hampson and P. Aall. Washington, DC, USIP Press: 53-78.

McRae, K. 1990. "Canada: reflections on two conflicts," *Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies*. J. V. Montville. Lexington, MA, Lexington Books: 197-218.

Stein, J. G. 1996. "Image, identity and conflict resolution," *Managing Global Chaos: Sources of and Responses to International Conflict*. C. Crocker, F. Hampson and P. Aall. Washington, DC, USIP Press: 93-111.

6) 1 October 2008 Language and politics

Monday Comments: Group A
Tuesday Comments: Group B

Case study briefings begin.

ALL OF THE ARTICLES FOR TODAY'S CLASS ARE FOUND IN *THIRD WORLD QUARTERLY* 26(1).
ALL CAN BE ACCESSED VIA THE BIRD LIBRARY'S ELECTRONIC DATABASE: INFORMAWORLD

Bar, Neta, and Eyal Ben-Ari. 2005. "Israeli snipers in the Al-Aqsa intifada: killing, humanity and lived experience." *Third World Quarterly* 26: 133-152.

Bhatia, Michael V. 2005. "Fighting words: naming terrorists, bandits, rebels and other violent actors." *Third World Quarterly* 26: 5-22.

Harb, Mona, and Reinoud Leenders. 2005. "Know thy enemy: Hizbullah, 'terrorism' and the politics of perception." *Third World Quarterly* 26: 173-197.

Ivie, Robert. 2005. "Savagery in democracy's empire." *Third World Quarterly* 26: 55-65.

Peteet, Julie. 2005. "Words as interventions: naming in the Palestine-Israel conflict." *Third World Quarterly* 26: 153-172.

7) 8 October 2008 Identity: Local and Global Dimensions

Monday Comments: Group B
Tuesday Comments: Group A

Increasingly, international relations deals with issues of competing identities that are rooted in cultural conceptions of history. Sometimes these lead to competition among groups and this in turn may lead to conflicts.

Castells, M., 1997, *The Power of Identity: Economy, Society and Culture*. Oxford, UK, Blackwell.
"Chapter 1. Communal heavens: identity and meaning in a network society." Pp 5-67.

Davis, S., 2004, "The Mayan movement and national culture in Guatemala," *Culture and Public Action*.
V. Rao and M. Walton. Sanford, CA, Stanford University Press, Pp. 328-358.

8) 15 October 2008 Human Rights

Monday Comments: Group A
Tuesday Comments: Group B

Although the universal Declaration of Human Rights is said to be universal there is increasing debate about it. In this debate cultural defenses are often invoked. The tension between universalism and relativism is debated against specific cultural backdrops. It is increasingly important to understand the dynamics of this debate on many issues, including gender issues, education, health and the flow of refugees.

Chanock, M. 2000. 'Culture' and Human Rights. *Beyond Rights Talk and Culture Talk: Comparative Essays on the Politics of Rights and Culture*. M. Mamdani. New York, NY, St. Martins Press: 15-36.

Renteln, A. D. 2004. *The Cultural Defense*. New York, NY, Oxford University Press. "Chapter 1: Why Culture Matters for Justice," "The Cultural Defense in Theory and Practice," "The Right to Culture." Pp. 10-19, 185-210, 211-219. Choose one topic in the case studies.

Edgerton, R. A. 1992. *Sick Societies: Challenging the Myth of Primitive Harmony*. New York: The Free Press. "Chapter 2: From relativism to evaluation," Pp. 16-45.

9) 22 October 2008 Culture and Gender

Monday Comments: Group B
Tuesday Comments: Group A

Gender roles and conflicts about what is "gender appropriate" are increasingly part of the discourse and content of international affairs.

Edgerton, R. A. 1992. *Sick Societies: Challenging the Myth of Primitive Harmony*. New York: The Free Press. "Chapter 4: Women and children first. from inequality to exploitation," Pp. 75-104.

Hoogensen, G., and S. V. Rottem, 2004. "Gender identity and the subject of security," *Security Dialogue* 35:155-171.

Inhorn, M. C., 2003. "Global infertility and the globalization of new reproductive technologies: illustrations from Egypt," *Social Science & Medicine* 56:1837-1851.

Lane, S. and R.A. Rubinstein 1996, "Judging the Other: responding to traditional female genital surgeries," *Hastings Center Report* 26(3):31-40.

Rubinstein, R. A., and S. D. Lane, 2002, "Population, identity, and political violence," *Social Justice: Anthropology, Peace and Human Rights* 3:139-152.

10) 29 October 2008 Intervention 1: Development

Monday Comments: Group A
Tuesday Comments: Group B

Economic, technological and health development are all met by peoples who organize themselves in diverse ways. How they engage development, what it means, and the ties it creates are all embedded in their cultural understandings. Being able to describe and analyze these can make the difference in the success or futility of development efforts.

Appadurai, A. 2004. "The capacity to aspire: culture and the terms of recognition," *Culture and Public Action*. V. Rao and M. Walton. Sanford, CA, Stanford University Press, Pp.59-84.

Klamer, A. 2004. "Cultural goods are good for more than their economic value," *Culture and Public Action*. V. Rao and M. Walton. Sanford, CA, Stanford University Press, Pp.138-162.

Harragin, S. 2004. "Relief and an understanding of local knowledge: the case of Southern Sudan," *Culture and Public Action*. V. Rao and M. Walton. Sanford, CA, Stanford University Press, Pp. 307-327.

Trostle, J. 2005. *Epidemiology and Culture*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. "Chapter 4: Cultural issues in measurement bias," pp. 74-95; "Chapter 7: Perceiving and representing risk," pp. 150-167.

11) 5 November 2008 Intervention 2: Conflict Management and Dispute Resolution

Monday Comments: Group B
Tuesday Comments: Group A

Although international regimes create structures within which disputes can be settled, how different groups (states and non-states) respond to and participate in these regimes is conditioned by their indigenous mechanisms for conflict management. In addition, the details of how different cultural groups negotiate—what their expectations are about good conflict management vary.

Abraham, A. and J.-P. Platteau 2004. "Participatory development: where culture creeps in," *Culture and Public Action*. V. Rao and M. Walton. Sanford, CA, Stanford University Press, Pp. 210-233.

Chopra J, and T. Hohe 2004 "Participatory intervention," *Global Governance* 10 (3): 289-305.

Duffey, T. 2000. "Cultural issues in contemporary peacekeeping." *International Peacekeeping* 7(1): 142-168.

Hohe, T. 2002. "Totem polls: indigenous concepts of 'free and fair' elections in East Timor." *International Peacekeeping* 9(4): 69-88.

Hohe, Tanja. 2003. "Justice without judiciary in East Timor." *Conflict, Security and Development* 3: 335-357.

12) 12 November 2008 Health

Monday Comments: Group A
Tuesday Comments: Group B

The sources of morbidity and mortality are important aspects of international affairs. Infectious diseases spread regardless of political divisions and national boundaries. Yet, social and cultural circumstances affect how diseases are spread and how they are responded to. For example, structural violence and other socially and culturally patterned aspects of life affect health and wellness globally.

Lane, S. 2008 *Why are our Babies Dying? Pregnancy, Birth and Death in America*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers. Entire book

13) 19 November 2008

Monday Comments: Group B
Tuesday Comments: Group A

Rubinstein, R. 2008. *Peacekeeping Under Fire: Culture and Intervention*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers. Entire book

14) 26 November 2008 No Class – Thanksgiving Break

NO Class

15) 3 December 2008 Last Class -- Course Review and Summary