

Bandits, Rebels and Freedom Fighters: Anthropologies of Insurgency

*Anthropology 474/674 Yale University
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Office Hours: Thursday, 1-3

This course explores the interlinked categories of rebel, bandit, and freedom fighter to understand insurgency from an anthropological viewpoint. Privileging sociological and micropolitical analysis, the course approaches specific instances of illegal use of force in their sociocultural and historic settings, and builds toward a consideration of insurgency from “the actors’ points of view”. Through the categories of the rebel, bandit, and insurgent, the course considers broader issues of structure and agency, state power and sovereignty, and definitions of legal and illegal uses of force from the oblique angle of those whose violence is classified as illegitimate.

Beginning with Marx and the problematic category of the lumpenproletariat, the course moves on to consider Hobsbawm’s analysis of banditry as well as his critics. Moving forward, the class considers a series of case studies from Europe, West and East Africa, and Central America, finishing with a consideration of contemporary insurgency in the Middle East. Rather than focus on strategic analysis of insurgency/counterinsurgency, this course will focus on questions of meaning and intentionality that go to the heart of how insurgents build (or sometimes destroy) the essential bonds between themselves and the wider groups on whose behalf they claim to fight.

The course will be offered to graduate students and upper level undergraduate anthropology majors with the permission of the instructor. This is a seminar course, with enrollment limited to 20 students.

The grade will be based on class participation (33%) and on the final paper or project (66%). Readings will be modest, and it is expected that students will have done all of the reading for each meeting. It is the responsibility of each student to demonstrate her or his mastery of the readings during class sessions, and failure to do so will result in a lower grade for participation.

Books [All books available at Labyrinth Bookstore and on reserve at Cross Campus Library reserve desk.]

Begoña Aretxaga 1997 *Shattering Silence: Women, Nationalism, and Political Subjectivity in Northern Ireland*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Clifford Bob 2005 *The Marketing of Rebellion: Insurgents, Media and International Activism*. New York: Cambridge U. Press.

Georgi Derlugian 2005 *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus: A World-System Biography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Stephen Ellis *The Mask of Anarchy: The Destruction of Liberia and the Religious Dimension of an African Civil War*. 1999 New York: NYU Press.

Charles Hale 1996 *Resistance and Contradiction: Miskitu Indians and the Nicaraguan State, 1894-1987* Palo Alto Stanford University Press.

Eric Hobsbawm 2000 *Bandits, Revised Edition*. New York: New Press.

Sharon Hutchinson 1996 *Nuer Dilemmas: Coping with Money, War and the State*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Karl Marx 1972 *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* New York: New World Press.

Mike McGovern [manuscript] *Making War in Côte d'Ivoire*. London: Hurst.

Paul Richards 1996 *Fighting for the Rainforest* Oxford: James Currey.

James Scott 1976 *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Nandini Sundar 2007 *Subalterns and Sovereigns: An Anthropological History of Bastar (1854-2006)*. New Delhi: Oxford U. Press.

William T. Vollmann 2004 *Rising Up, Rising Down: Some Thoughts on Violence, Freedom and Urgent Means*. New York: Ecco.

Readings

15 January—Introduction. Insurgency and War: William T. Vollmann 2004 *Rising Up, Rising Down: Some Thoughts on Violence, Freedom and Urgent Means*. New York: Ecco.

Please read any 100 pages of Vollmann for the first class session.

‘Everyone deplores violence. So why do so many of these people seem so happy?’

22 January-- Karl Marx 1972 *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* New York: New World Press.

Ideologies of rebellion and of revolution: The lumpen as Marxist *aporia*.

Recommended: Joan Scott 1991 “The Evidence of Experience” In *Critical Inquiry*.

29 January--Bandits I: Eric Hobsbawm 2000 *Bandits, Revised Edition*. New York: New Press.

Redistributive justice: the bandit as proto-revolutionary

Recommended: Anton Blok 2001 *Honour and Violence*. Cambridge: Polity.

5 February James Scott 1976 *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Recommended: Julian Pitt-Rivers 1972 *The People of the Sierra* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

12 February—Rebels I: Stephen Ellis *The Mask of Anarchy*. 1999 New York: NYU Press.

'The Historical Significance of South Africa's Third Force', In *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 24, 2 (1998), pp.261-99.

'Africa and International Corruption: the Strange Case of South Africa and Seychelles', *African Affairs* 95 (1996), pp.165-96.

Recommended: ‘The Mutual Assimilation of Elites: The Development of Secret Societies in 20th c. Liberian Politics.’ **N.B.: This paper will be presented at the Order, Conflict, Violence seminar at 6pm Friday 8 February.**

‘Les prolongements du conflit israélo-arabe en Afrique noire: le cas du Sierra Léone’ In *Politique Africaine* No 30 juin 1988.

19 February--Rebels II: Paul Richards 1996 *Fighting for the Rainforest* Oxford: James Currey.

The RUF as "excluded intellectuals", "African lumpens", or monsters? The dramaturgical aspect of insurgency war.

Recommended: Abdullah, ed. 2004 *Between Democracy and Terror* Dakar: CODESRIA.

26 February--Rebels III: Sharon Hutchinson 1996 *Nuer Dilemmas* Berkeley: University of California Press.

The cattle complex meets the racist nation state.

Recommended: E. E. Evans-Pritchard 1969 (1944) *The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

You should choose the topic of your paper and clear it with me by e-mail or in person by 5pm Thursday 28 April.

4 March--Rebels IV: Begoña Aretxaga 1997 *Shattering Silence* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Gender and rebellion.

Recommended: Julie Peteet 1994 "Male Gender and Rituals of Resistance in the Palestinian Intifada: A Cultural Politics of Violence." In *American Ethnologist* 21(1):31-49.

Alan Feldman 1991 *Formations of Violence: The Narrative of the Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland*. Chicago: U. Chicago Press.

7-23 March: Spring Break

25 March--Freedom Fighters I: Charles Hale 1996 *Resistance and Contradiction: Miskitu Indians and the Nicaraguan State, 1894-1987* Palo Alto Stanford University Press.

Why do peasants sometimes reject their would-be saviors?

Film: *The Fog of War*

1 April--Freedom Fighters II: Mike McGovern *Making War in Côte d'Ivoire* London: Hurst.

The "second war of independence," deadly play, and the politics of resentment in an African postcolony.

Recommended: Ahmadou Kourouma 2002 *Allah n'est pas obligé*. Paris: Seuil.

You should send me an annotated bibliography of the sources to be used in your paper by 5pm Friday 4 April.

8 April--Insurgents I: Nandini Sundar *Subalterns and Sovereigns: An Anthropological History of Bastar (1854-2006)*. New Delhi: Oxford U. Press.

15 April--Insurgents II: Ranajit Guha 1988 "The Prose of Counterinsurgency" In *Selected Subaltern Studies* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lila Abu-Lughod 1990 'The Romance of Resistance: Tracing Transformations of Power Through Bedouin Women.' *American Ethnologist* vol 17(1):41-55.

The rhetorical construction of insurgency and the problem of agency.

Recommended: Gyan Pandey 2006 *Routine Violence: Nations, Fragments, Histories*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

You should send me a detailed outline of your paper by 5pm Friday 18 April.

Film: *The Battle of Algiers*.

22 April—Insurgents III: Abu Bakr Naji 2006 *The Management of Savagery*.

Al Qaeda in its own words. Translation of Al Qaeda strategic manual.

Recommended: Sayid Qutb 1964 *Milestones*.

29 April—[To be decided by the class at mid-semester]

Linking the local with the global: Clifford Bob 2005 *The Marketing of Rebellion: Insurgents, Media and International Activism*. New York: Cambridge U. Press.

Or

Georgi Derlugian 2005 *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus: A World-System Biography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Papers are due 5pm Friday 2 May.