

Fall 2017

POLITICAL ANTHROPOLOGY Victoria Bernal

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course explores anthropological approaches to the study of politics in the contemporary world. Among the themes considered are: theories of state power, law, and citizenship; approaches to media and the public sphere, gender, ethnicity, and youth cultures; social movements, protest, and civil society, and violence and war. We will read a different ethnography each week, each one addressing politics in a distinct setting, and employing different methods, theoretical perspectives, and writing styles. We will examine the ways anthropologists are experimenting with innovative practices of research and writing as they engage with the political. We will consider questions about the politics of ethnography such as: What are challenges faced by anthropologists in addressing controversial issues in their research? What are some of the issues that arise in the anthropologist's relation to her/his subjects in researching the political? What is the particular contribution that anthropology can make to the understanding of politics? The course is conducted as a seminar organized around the analysis and discussion of class readings and student research projects.