Anthropology of Human Rights
Anth 70900
Graduate Center
City University of New York
T 4:15-6:15pm -Room 6494

Dr. Patricia Mathews-Salazar
Fall 2002
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This course brings the tools of anthropology to bear on the study of human rights. Where anthropology is committed to exploring the diversity of human experience the human rights movement seeks the recognition of universal norms that transcend political and cultural difference. To what extent can these two goals be reconciled? What can anthropology tell us about the limits of the human rights movement?

The seminar will briefly examine the source of the debate between universalism and relativism and discuss how anthropology and anthropologists have dealt with human rights issues in the places they have worked and what effects their positions and actions have had on the understanding of the human rights movement in the world today. The course surveys cases from various parts of the world with an emphasis on cases from Latin America.

FORMAT: The class will be run mainly on a seminar format with students responsible for leading weekly discussions. There will be some lectures by the instructor. Each student is required to lead one class discussion, presenting a reading from the course syllabus. The class meeting will end with a short student presentation.

GRADING:
Five short reaction papers 20%
One book review 20%
At least one individual class presentation (10-20 minutes) 20%
A research paper due December 10 20%
Class participation 20%

READINGS:

Additional (Suggested) Readings:
- Gouveitch, Philip. We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We will be killed with our families: Stories from Rwanda. 1998, Picador.

COURSE SYLLABUS:
9/3 Introduction
9/10 Human Rights and Anthropological Perspectives

9/17 No Classes
9/24 Colonialism and the Internationalization of Human Rights.

10/1 Indigenous Peoples and European Law
10/8 Nation-States and Human Rights


10/15 State Terror and Human Rights Abuses: Central America


10/22 People on the Move: Transnationalism, Globalization and Human Rights

- Gourevitch, Philip. We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We will be killed with our families: Stories from Rwanda. 1998, Picador.

10/29 Health and Human Rights


11/5 Race and Human Rights


11/12 Women and Human Rights & Children's Rights


11/19 Prisons

11/23 Death Penalty


12/3 Papers Due. Final presentations

12/10 Wrap-Up and Conclusions