Anthropology and History: Comparative Perspectives

In this course we will discuss key themes in the history and anthropology of Latin America. The course functions both as an introduction to the disciplines of anthropology and history for those who have not previously studied them, and as consolidation for those who have. The first term focuses on the Andes, while the second term takes a more comparative approach, expanding out to Latin America and covering topics that you choose. Although we will concentrate on the indigenous peoples of the Andes in Michaelmas term, we can only understand their specificity by examining their interaction with other social/ethnic sectors of society. Through an interdisciplinary approach, we will explore the extent and methods through which the disciplines of anthropology and history can frame and understand issues that involve the past and the present of the Andean region. These include processes of identity formation, the construction of discourses of exclusion, the making of individual and group politics, and the role of the state. The topics proposed for this course are predominantly cultural, social, and political.

Michaelmas Term Seminars:
Anthropology and History in the Andes

Wk 1 The oral and the written in Andean history: methodological and political problems. Gabriela Ramos.
Wk 2 Knowing the past. Sian Lazar.
Wk 3 Constructing the truth: memory and history in the Andes. Gabriela Ramos.
Wk 4 Ethnicity in the Andes. Sian Lazar.
Wk 5 Ethnicity in the Andes: a historical perspective. Gabriela Ramos.
Wk 6 Indigenous movements. Sian Lazar.
Wk. 8 Citizenship. Sian Lazar.

I. History Seminars: Gabriela Ramos (odd-numbered weeks)

For the history (or the more history-oriented) sessions, we will use both general/theoretical materials, which will be discussed through the analysis of primary sources. The topics and readings for the first two sessions are strongly connected.

1. The oral and the written in Andean history: methodological and political problems (Week 1)
This seminar will discuss the implications of the use of writing in the Andes. The interaction between oral and written historical discourses, and the political uses of the written word by different actors in Andean colonial history will be examined.

3. Constructing the truth: memory and history in the Andes (Week 3)
We will continue exploring the interaction between non-written and written historical records. Different understandings of memory will be discussed. The political meaning and uses of these differences will be explored.

Boone, Elizabeth Hill and Walter Mignolo. Writing Without Words: Alternative Literacies in Mesoamerica and the Andes.
Condori Mamani, Gregorio. Andean Lives
Connerton, Paul. How Societies Remember.
Hallbawchs, Maurice. On Collective Memory.

5. Ethnicity in the Andes: A historical perspective (Week 5)
How ethnicity was understood in pre-colonial Peru. The making of the Indian in the colonial Andes. Ideal vs. real Indians.

Cieza de Leon. Cronica del Peru (excerpts)
Cobo, Bernabe. Historia del Nuevo Mundo (excerpts)
Guaman Poma. Nueva coronica y buen gobierno.

6. Patrimonialism and the State in the Andes (Week 7)
The non-public character of the Andean colonial state, and the methods and discourses of social, economic, and political exclusion will be discussed in this seminar.

Solorzano y Pereyra on mestizos y castas: Politica Indiana (excerpt).
Guaman Poma de Ayala (excerpts).

II. Anthropology Seminars: Sian Lazar (even numbered weeks)

Ethnohistory has been a central tradition within anthropology of the Andes, and most scholars would argue that understanding the situation of indigenous peoples in particular requires a creative mix of anthropology and history. Contemporary indigenous politics are driven by a very strong sense of history and its injustices, and Andean anthropology has been unable to avoid politics in the way that anthropology of other regions of the world managed until relatively recently. As Olivia Harris argues,

‘the constitutive preoccupations of the region’s anthropology since its earliest development have been the history of the Andean region and the politics of ethnic stratification and the so-called ‘Indian question’ ... [I]n the Andean regions there has been a powerful sense of before and after, and continued debate on the relative merits of each for the future, which researchers have been unable to avoid” (2000: 1-2)

One of the aims of these seminars is therefore to explore the contributions that Andean anthropology can make to anthropology more generally.

Seminars

1. Knowing the past/history (week 2)

This seminar deals with the politics of history and anthropology in the Andean region, as well as different means of investigating how people remember history and know the past, for example through ethnography, archival history, ethnohistory.

Key Reading


Readings

2. Ethnicity (week 4)

Ethnicity is a key issue in the Andes, where there are large indigenous populations, and also different groups of ‘mixed’ ethnicity. We will look at how understandings of ethnicity are created as well as how ethnicity is implicated in issues of class and gender.

Key Readings


Readings


3. Indigenous movements (week 6)

Indigenous movements of the last couple of decades have been particularly strong in Bolivia and Ecuador, and we will be assessing some of the reasons for this. We will also look at some of the problems these movements face, and the proposals they have for ways forward, which necessitate a consideration of the politics of history.

Key Readings

PRADA ALCOREZA, R (2001) “La fuerza del acontecimiento”; and
QUISPE HUANCA, F (2001) “Organización y proyecto político de la rebelión indígena aymara-quechua”; both in GARCIA, A et al., Tiempos de rebelión, La Paz, Grupo Comuna and Muela del Diablo editores [P]
or, if you don’t read Spanish,

Readings

ALBÓ, X (1994) And from Kataristas to MNRistas? The Suprising and Bold Alliance Between Aymaras and Neoliberals in Bolivia Indigenous Peoples and Democracy in Latin America D L Van Cott (ed)
ALBÓ, X (2002) Pueblos indios en la política. La Paz, CIPCA [S]
HURTADO, J (1986) El Katarismo. La Paz, hisbol [S]


REINAGA, F (1969) La Revolución India, La Paz [S]

REINAGA, F (1971) Tesis India, La Paz [S]


4. Citizenship (week 8)

Citizenship is a concept under much discussion in contemporary political theory and politics world wide; and the study of citizenship is an incipient but growing concern for anthropology. Taking the previous seminar forward, this seminar primarily looks at the relationship between indigenous peoples and the state, through the theoretical optic of citizenship. The issues we will discuss in this seminar are relevant for any group claiming rights against the state in a collective way, but have been particularly acute for indigenous peoples in the Andes and in Latin America in general.

Key readings

or, if you don’t read Spanish,


Readings

Section 1: Indigenous peoples, citizenship and the state


[thing on 12/13 February 2003. Sian has]

Section II: either

History of citizenship: Liberalism, indigenous peoples and the nation


or Political philosophy of citizenship


**Lent Term Seminars**

The seminars during the Lent Term will be responsive to students' interests, but themes and topics could include:

- **Cities**: rural-urban migration and the informal economy, urban ethnicities, violence, political participation and the development of the public sphere.
- **Religion**: from syncretic religions to Catholic revivalism and Evangelical Protestantism
- **Urban social movements**
- **The state and civil society**
- **Transnationalism and Migration**
- **Gender and popular culture**