Anthropological Inquiries: Cold War, Nuclear Testing, Energy, and Human Rights

Anthropology

General Information:
Instructor: Magdalena Stawkowski
Office Hours:
Email:
Tel.:  

Final Exam TBD (THERE ARE NO MAKE-UPS!)

Course Description: The atomic age has remade communities, public cultures, and the consciousness of individuals all across the globe. What are the political, social, cultural, and scientific legacies of nuclear testing and disasters? Think: Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Chernobyl, Fukushima and Soviet, French, and American nuclear weapons testing. But also think: nuclear energy production as a “forward thinking” solution to carbon emissions. Indeed, the military and peaceful use of the atom is a transnational phenomenon with local manifestations and consequences, but what are the social implications of the nuclear age? How do scientists and institutions attempt to manage and control risk? We will explore these questions by studying the aftermath of nuclear disasters through full-length ethnographies, journal articles, and film. In class, we will discern how relationships of power are structured and articulated through the process of disaster management, specifically, asking what sort of debates inform scientific, humanitarian, and state responses to nuclear disasters? How do local communities respond? From Japan, the United States, to the Bikini Islands, Kazakhstan and all the places in between, this course will examine and trace the socio-cultural fallout of the nuclear age. Each week we will investigate the contested nature of this topic through a diversity of perspectives, past and present. This is a survey course, designed for advanced placement high school, undergraduate, and graduate students.
Required Readings:

1. Required Books:
There are three (3) books that can be purchased at the CU bookstore as well as online. Although buying books through the CU bookstore will be easier, it might also be more expensive. As a result, you have some time to purchase your reading materials through any other means.


2. Required Articles On Reserve:
There will be many articles placed for you to download and print from e-reserve. These articles are an essential part of the course and for you to do well in the course. All of the readings closely follow the lectures, as well as in class discussions. Please make sure that you print the articles, as it will be easier to highlight essential sections for discussion and study purposes. Advice: I would do the entire reader during the first week of class.

How to download online reserve articles:
From the University Libraries home page, choose the Reserves tab. Course listings can be searched by instructor’s last name or course designation/number. Students must enter their own Identikit Username and Password as well as the course-specific password in order to access the electronic files. Auditors will enter their last name, ID number and PIN as well as the course-specific password. I will provide you with the course-specific password. Contact me if the course-specific password has not been supplied.

Expectations for the Course:

For you to do well in this course attendance is key. If you miss a class you will miss important lecture material, possible scheduling changes, discussions, films, and notes. But I do understand that sometimes, you may simply not be able to get to class. If for some reason you are unable to attend a class it is imperative that you 1) let me know as soon as possible either in person or via email, and 2) try to get notes from other students as many of the exam questions will come from lectures and films.

Class participation is an essential part of learning and will be a significant part of your grade. You are allowed to miss two (2) classes without penalty to you. For every absence afterward without a legitimate excuse (medical note, a family emergency, or another reason), your grade will drop half a grade.

This class is intended to be a safe and secure learning environment for all students. As a result, I expect you to respect each other’s views and engage in discussion in a professional manner. If you have any problems, concerns, or issues that you would like to address, please speak with me.

Lateness to Lecture:
This course has forty students. As a result, any disruption to class lecture makes it difficult for other students to learn, as well as makes it difficult for me to keep on top of the material. To make things easier for everyone, I expect that you come on time!

Grading and Evaluation:

The two take home exams are due February 16 and April 10. They will consist of essays that are 3-5 pages in length on a topic that I will provide one week before the take home exam due date. The questions will cover material from the course, including readings, documentary films, and discussions.

First Take Home Exam: 20%
Second Take Home Exam: 20%
Attendance and Participation: 20%
Rocky Flats Guest Lecture Summary/Response: 10%
Final Exam: 30%

Extra Credit: You may also get up to 2 extra points added to your FINAL grade by writing summary/reviews for any of the optional (mandatory for undergraduate and graduate students) reading assignments listed in the syllabus.

Note: Unless you have a legitimate emergency (medical note, family emergency, or another reason), for each day your take home exam is late, your grade will drop a whole grade (for example, if you received a B+ for your essay but turned it in one day late, your grade will be a C+).

Important Notes:

Note 1. If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Center for Community, N200, and http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices.

If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see guidelines at http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/go.cgi?select=temporary.html

Disability Services’ letters for students with disabilities indicate legally mandated reasonable accommodations. The syllabus statements and answers to Frequently Asked Questions can be found at http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices

Note 2. Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, please let me know as soon as you can if any class or exam dates conflict with your religious obligations. See full details at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html.
Note 3. Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran’s status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, and gender expression, age, disability, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student’s legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. See policies at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html and at http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code.

Note 4. The University of Colorado at Boulder Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures, the University of Colorado Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures, and the University of Colorado Conflict of Interest in Cases of Amorous Relationships Policy apply to all students, staff, and faculty. Any student, staff, or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of sexual harassment or discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127, or the Office of Student Conduct (OSC) at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at http://www.colorado.edu/odh.

Note 5. All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-735-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information on the Honor Code can be found at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html and at http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/

Note 6. This course is an exploration of ideas, concepts, and topics that many of you may or may not be familiar with. Some of these topics may provoke strong opinions that come into conflict with other points of view in the classroom. Knowing that, this course is designed to promote a lively discussion and provide a forum for intellectually stimulating conversations. I encourage debates because I see them as a way to encourage discussion about a very fascinating and quite timely topic.
Course Schedule

Part I: Broad Theoretical Overview

Week 1:

Tuesday, January 17
Introductions, discuss syllabus and requirements
Overview of Cold War, Nuclear Testing, and Human Rights

Thursday, January 19
What is ionizing radiation? Why should we care?
Guest Lecture: Jerry Peterson, professor of Physics, University of Colorado, Boulder.


Week 2:

Tuesday, January 24
Structural violence, or why some people pay the price for radioactive pollution


Thursday, January 26
Defining Cold War mentalities, ideologies, and the “other”

Week 3:

Tuesday, January 31
The “Other,” hegemony, and the components of power


Thursday, February 2


Week 4:

Tuesday, February 7
Governmentality and the apparatus of security

*2. Tania Murray Li “Governmentality.” *Canadian Anthropology Society.* 2007. 49(2). p. 275-281. (*optional reading for high school students, makes Foucault easier to understand*)

Part II: Bare Life and Research on Human Subjects: The Case of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Thursday, February 9
Bare Life and sovereign power: survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Week 5:

Tuesday, February 14
Research on human subjects: Hiroshima/Nagasaki as a standard for understanding radiation


Thursday, February 16
Today we will screen: *White Light/Black Rain: The Destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.* (2007: 86 minutes)


****** TAKE HOME EXAM #1 DUE******

Part III: Geographies of Sacrifice

Week 6:

Tuesday, February 21
What are geographies of sacrifice?: Marshall Islands as a geography of sacrifice


Thursday, February 23

**READ BOOK: 1.** Holly Barker “Bravo for the Marshallese,” chapters 4 through 7. p. 50-114.

Week 7:

Tuesday, February 28
Discussion of Film and “Bravo for the Marshallese”

**READ BOOK: 1.** Holly Barker “Bravo for the Marshallese,” chapter 8, chapter 10, and chapter 11. p. 115-120; 140-158.


Part IV: Risk and the Biopolitics of Radiation: Chernobyl

Thursday, March 1

What is risk? Who takes risks? Why take risks? Who defines risks?


Week 8:

Tuesday, March 6

Revision of risk assessment and biological citizenship in Chernobyl


Thursday, March 8

Today we will screen: Chernobyl Heart and the Children of Chernobyl. (1991: 46 minutes)


Week 9:

Tuesday, March 13

Case Study: Rocky Flats Colorado: risk, clean up, and the making of a wildlife refuge.
Guest Lecture: Professor Len Ackland, professor of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Colorado, Boulder.


Thursday, March 15

Case Study Continued: Rocky Flats Colorado: risk, clean up, and the making of a wildlife refuge.
Guest Lecture: Dr. LeRoy Moore, founder of the Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center, Boulder Colorado.
**READ:** 1. LeRoy Moore “The Bait-and-Switch Cleanup.” *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists.* January 2005. p. 50-57. **There may be more of Moore’s readings assigned.**

2. **YOU SHOULD BEGIN READING “The Nuclear Peninsula.”**

---

**Week 10:**

Tuesday, March 20
Nuclear Zones East and West

**READ BOOK:** 1. Kate Brown *Plutopia.* Chapters 1-15 (pages 15-115).

Thursday, March 22
Radiation science and uncertainty or who are the victims of radiation accidents

**READ BOOK:** 1. Kate Brown *Plutopia.* Chapters 16-28 (pages 115-213).

---

*****ROCKY FLATS SUMMARY/RESPONSE PAPER DUE*****

---

**Week 11:**

Tuesday, March 27
Chelyabinsk, Russia

**READ BOOK:** 1. Kate Brown *Plutopia.* Chapters 29-43 (213-331)

Thursday, March 29

Film Screening: Chelyabinsk: The Most Contaminated Spot on the Planet (1995), 61 minutes

*Part V: Structural Violence, Race, Gender, and Health: The Case of Kazakhstan’s Largest Nuclear Test Site, a Laboratory, and a Geography of Sacrifice*

---

**Week 12:**

Tuesday, April 3
Overview of the Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site


Thursday, April 5
Effects of radiation
Today we will screen: *Silent Bombs: All for the Motherland* (50 minutes)

**READ: NO READINGS FOR TODAY**

**Week 13**

Tuesday, April 10
Running on empty: economic survival at the edges of the nuclear test site (Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site)


*******TAKE HOME EXAM #2 DUE*******

Thursday, April 12
Today we will screen: *After the Apocalypse* (2010: 65 minutes)


**Week 14:**

Tuesday, April 17
What now?: Semipalatinsk nuclear test site and scientific debates


*Part VI: Disaster Culture: The Case of Fukushima*

Thursday, April 19
What is disaster culture?: Contested knowledge in nuclear zones

**READ: 1.** Gregory Button “Disaster Culture,” Introduction, chapter 1, and chapter 2. p. 11-69.

**Week 15:**

Tuesday, April 24
Contested knowledge: Semipalatinsk, Chernobyl, and Nevada

**READ: 1.** Gregory Button “Disaster Culture,” chapter 7 and chapter 8. p. 149-175.
Thursday, April 26
Production of uncertainty: what happened in Fukushima?

**READ:** 1. Gregory Button “Disaster Culture,” chapter 9 and chapter 10. p. 177-208. 
2. NYT articles on Fukushima.

*Part VII: Coda: What’s Next?*

**Week 16:**

Tuesday, May 1
War making as a way of life.


Thursday, May 3
LAST DAY OF CLASS!!!!
Wrap-Up and Review!

*FINAL EXAM: Monday, May 7th from 4:30 pm to 7:00pm*