

Anthropology 456: War and Human Rights

Syllabus - Winter 2006

See also: [Assignments](#)

Dr. Kathleen Z. Young

Texts

1. *A Problem from Hell, America and the Age of Genocide*. Samantha Power, 2002
2. *Annihilating Difference. The Anthropology of Genocide*. Alexander L. Hinton, Ed. 2002
3. Selected texts, articles, reviews and subscription to the New York Times

The Course

Focuses on emic and etic perspectives of war and human rights. We will investigate cultural relativism and anthropology with regard to war and violence. Cultural constructions of war and definitions of human rights are fundamental to an understanding of what it means to be human. This quarter, there will be particular emphasis placed on anthropology and the concept of genocide.

Goals

An understanding of how the various aspects of war are institutionalized in culture and various ways war and the concept of human rights are central to anthropology. We will examine what constitutes war crimes and/or violation of human rights today and the ways in which war and structural violence are functional in everyday life in a variety of cultures. Students will have the opportunity to examine human violence at the interpersonal level and from the broadest perspective possible. We will investigate the relationship between war, nationalism, politics, the global economy, religion, gender and social change, socialization, and identity. There is no aspect of war beyond our purview. This quarter we will focus extensively on the present world situation and current culture.

Grades

The University mandates writing proficiency courses emphasizing research and writing. We will write and rewrite in order to explore various cultural constructions of war and human rights. The writing goals are two-fold: to further understanding of war and violence in culture and to help us learn to write more effectively. This quarter we will read and write extensively and critique ourselves through class discussion and writing assignments. Attendance, participation, and writing assignments will constitute your entire grade.