

Culture and Entitlement: A Psychology of the Experience of Rights

Most attempts to synthesize anthropology and psychology – whether through ethnopsychology, psychological anthropology, or cultural psychology – treat issues of politics, law, and economics as just another set of cultural values that provide meaningful content in people’s lives. This course will explore how we can think about the psychology of entitlement as a way of giving special attention to the person centered experience of one’s sense of “rights.” By considering the centrality of a “sense of entitlement” we will view this as a space in which to see the intersection of ego psychology, cultural norms, moral worlds, and the individual’s attempt to fight for one’s imagined place in the political, legal, and economic world of experience. A sense of entitlement becomes more than just another culturally-particular way of making sense of the place of the self in the world, but also becomes the engine through which we can explore why it is that people get so “worked up” by threats to what they see as their entitlement to their “piece of the social pie.” We will consider literature from psychology, psychoanalysis, anthropology, law, and public policy in this course.

Books

- Amy Shuman Other People’s Stories: Entitlement Claims and the Critique of Empathy
- Richard Ashby Wilson and Jon P. Mitchell, eds. Human Rights in Global Perspective: Anthropological Studies of Rights, Claims and Entitlements

Evaluation

Participation 10%

Unlike some courses where “participation” grades are simply “gimme grades” this is not the case in this course. You will be expected to actively engage in the discussions, debates, critical examinations, etc. in the classroom. This means (I am being repetitive here, but let there be no confusion) that you will need to be fully prepared for each class (in terms of the readings). In addition, excessive absences will doubly-impact your grade in terms of both of the attendance policy as well as your participation grade. I reserve the right to deal with participation “problems” via the dreaded “pop quiz.”

Reading Response Papers 40% (two at 20% each)

Twice during the quarter you will be assigned a particular reading or set of readings in the class on which to write a response paper. These response papers will be between 5-7 pages of which at least half of the paper must go beyond a simple summary of the reading and actually engage thoughtfully, comparatively, and critically with where the reading fits into the broader themes of this course. Details will be forthcoming.

Final Research Paper 50%

The core of this course’s grade will focus on a paper emerging from a research project. You will conduct research on the nature of entitlement using the themes that we examined in this course. Throughout the quarter we will meet individually to develop the topic of and structure of your research as well as to discuss rough drafts of your paper. Details will be forthcoming.

Class Dates and Readings

October 5

Political Economy of Entitlement: Legal Definitions and Their Social Foundations

Super, David “The Political Economy of Entitlement” *Columbia Law Review*, 104(3):655-729, 2004.

October 12

Entitlement as “Pathology”

Bishop, John and Robert Lane "The Dynamics and Dangers of Entitlement" *Psychoanalytic Psychology* 19(4):739-758, 2002.

Exline, J., R. Baumeister, B. Bushman, W. Campbell, E. Finkel, "Too Proud to Let Go: Narcissistic Entitlement as a Barrier to Forgiveness" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 87(6):894-912, 2004.

McCullough, Michael, R. Emmons, S. Kilpatrick, C. Mooney "Narcissists as 'Victims': The Role of Narcissism in the Perception of Transgressions" *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 29(7):885-893, 2003.

Attitudes of Entitlement: Theoretical and Clinical Issues (selections, on reserve)

October 19

Narratives and Entitlement

Assignment: Brainstorming Sheet due regarding final research project. Must be typed and single-spaced. Short student meetings will be conducted this week.

Amy Shuman Other People's Stories: Entitlement Claims and the Critique of Empathy (required book)

October 26

Entitlement and Deservingness

Assignment: Research outline for final research project. Must be typed and single-spaced.

Feather, Norman "Distinguishing between Deservingness and Entitlement: Earned Outcomes Versus Lawful Outcomes" *European Journal of Social Psychology* 33:367-385, 2003.

Feather, Norman "Values and Value Dilemmas in Relation to Judgments Concerning Outcomes of an Industrial Conflict" *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 28(4):446-459, 2002.

Feather, Norman and Charlotte Johnstone "Social Norms, Entitlement, and Deservingness: Differential Reactions to Aggressive Behavior of Schizophrenic and Personality Disorder Patients" *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 27(6):755-767, 2001.

Feather, Norman and Sara Dawson "Judging Deservingness and Affect in Relation to Another's Employment or Unemployment: A Test of a Justice Model" *European Journal of Social Psychology* 28:361-381, 1998.

November 2

Entitlement and Justice in Political Philosophy

Nozick, Robert "Distributive Justice" *In Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. Pp. 149-231. New York: Basic Books.

Shaw, William "'They Stole Our Land': Debating the Expropriation of White Farms in Zimbabwe" *Journal of Modern African Studies* 41(1):75-89, 2003.

Shaw, William "Nozick in Zimbabwe" *Journal of Social Philosophy* 34(2):215-227, 2003.

Wenzel, Michael "Justice and Identity: The Significance of Inclusion for Perceptions of Entitlement and the Justice Motive" *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 26(2):157-176, 2000

November 9

Human Rights: An Anthropological View - I

Assignment: Complete at least 3 interviews by this date. We will have student meetings this week during which you will need to tell me about your interviews and how it relates to your final research project.

Richard Ashby Wilson and Jon P. Mitchell, eds. Human Rights in Global Perspective: Anthropological Studies of Rights, Claims and Entitlements (required book, selections TBA)

November 16

Human Rights: An Anthropological View - II

Richard Ashby Wilson and Jon P. Mitchell, eds. Human Rights in Global Perspective: Anthropological Studies of Rights, Claims and Entitlements (required book, selections, TBA)

November 30

Entitlement and Primary Social Relations: Families and Children

Assignment: Turn in a rough draft of the final research project.

Desmarais, Serge and Melvin Lerner “Entitlement in Close Relationships: A Justice-Motive Analysis” *In Entitlement and the Affectional Bond: Justice in Close Relationships*. Melvin Lerner and Gerold Mikula, eds. Pp. 43-64. New York: Plenum Press.

Krisjansson, Kristjan “Children and the Belief in a Just World” *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 23:41-60, 2004.

Lewis, Suzan and Janet Smithson “Sense of Entitlement to Support for the Reconciliation of Employment and Family Life” *Human Relations* 54(11):1455-1481, 2001.

December 7

Assignment: Turn in final research project paper.

To be announced.