Lecturer:

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Office hours: 9-10 AM Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday (or by appointment)

Course description:

This course stems from a number of orienting questions in political anthropology:

- Is ‘power’ a concept that must be understood as a manifestation of different cultural ‘logics’, or is it a concept that is thought of and practised in essentially the same way across every culture?

- What is politics? Is it a separate sphere, as assumed in most Western political science, or an ‘embedded’ aspect of all societies, not just those with ‘non-Western’ cultural traditions?

- How do people in different societies organise themselves politically? What range of possibilities has been tried out at different times and in different places? In particular, what forms of leadership have anthropologists and other social scientists investigated?

- Are women generally excluded from formal political leadership in the Pacific islands? If so, do they have access to other forms of power?

- Is ‘democracy’ a cross-culturally valid system? Does it translate well into non-Western terms? What is its future in the Pacific?

- Do Marxian and/or Weberian-style theories of class apply to small-scale and/or ‘traditional’ societies such as those of the Island Pacific? What about theories of elites?

- What is the role of language, ideology and symbolism in the construction and maintenance of systems of power in the Pacific and elsewhere?

- Which cultural ‘frames’ help or hinder outsiders to trying to understand alternative cultural logics of power, authority and identity?
We will address these and other questions with reference to some classic debates and depictions of Pacific political systems. The first part of the course will concentrate more on examples of more ‘traditional’ systems and topics; the second part of the course will focus more on issues of contemporary significance – but this separation is not clear-cut.

**Structure of the paper and teaching modes:**

ANTH300-05B is a half-year second semester paper. We will normally meet for three 50-minute lecture sessions (12.00-12.50) on Mondays (in K3.10), Wednesdays (K3.10) and Fridays (J1.10).

A tutorial has been scheduled for Mondays at 1.10 pm in I1.10. I hope to be able to book the Anthropology tutorial room K3.12 instead and will inform you as soon as possible if that is the case. We are unlikely to need more than one tutorial group but I realize that not everyone can attend the one scheduled so we can explore other options. If you cannot come to the one after the Monday lecture, please let me know as soon as possible.

*While there will be no marks for attendance as such at either lectures or tutorials, any pattern of consistent non-attendance without valid explanation can and will be taken into consideration where your overall grade is open to doubt.*

**Lecture schedule:**

*NOTE: This schedule of class sessions may be subject to minor changes.*

18/07 Introduction to the paper.

20/07 Framing ‘the Pacific’: colonial discourse is alive and well.

22/07 Framing ‘the Pacific’. Does size matter? What about location?

25/07 Framing ‘culture’ – and is there a Pacific political culture?

27/07 Framing ‘power’ – is it a universal?

29/07 Indigenous concepts of power: *mana* and its counterparts

01/08 Big men and chiefs – Sahlins as evolutionist.

03/08 Video: ‘A Death to Pay For’ (about PNG big men).

05/08 Enter the ‘great man’ – Godelier complicates things.

08/08 The ‘stranger king’ hypothesis – Sahlins as structuralist.

10/08 The visitor chief – insights from Tuvalu.

12/08 Political careers and biographies – is there a Pacific concept of personhood?

15/08 Language, symbolism and power (1): Overview/Tonga’s King goes to church.
17/08 Language, symbolism and power (2): The moral order in Tobi and elsewhere.
19/08 Language, symbolism and power (3): The 1987 Fijian coup.
22/08 Gender, culture & power (1) – Marilyn Strathern finds PNG women ‘in between’.
24/08 Gender, culture & power (2) – are Western frames of analysis appropriate?
26/08 FIRST IN-CLASS TEST

TWO-WEEK TEACHING RECESS
12/09 Politics of tradition (1) – the debate over invented traditions.
14/09 Politics of tradition (2) – tradition as a means of domination.
16/09 Politics of tradition (3) – tradition as a means of resistance.
19/09 The ‘Great Pacific Democracy Debate’ – is democracy indigenous or alien?
21/09 Consensus formation and ‘the Pacific Way’ – a modern invention of tradition?
23/09 Disputing – if Pacific islanders emphasise consensus, how do they argue?
26/09 Elites in the Pacific – is Western elite theory relevant?
28/09 Classes in the Pacific – do Pacific societies have class divisions?
30/09 Classes in the Pacific – if there is a ruling class, where do we find it?
03/10 Governance in the contemporary Pacific – breakthrough or buzzword?
05/10 Corruption or custom?
07/10 Logics of citizenship in the Pacific.
10/10 New and old styles of politics.
12/10 Media frames and Pacific politics
14/10 Reprise: is there a Pacific political culture? Are there more than one?
17/10 Culture and power in the Pacific: conclusions.
19/10 Revision and evaluation.
21/10 SECOND IN-CLASS TEST.

Paper objectives:
This paper is designed to produce the following main learning outcomes: to introduce you to a wide range of descriptions and analyses of systems of power and hierarchy in Pacific island societies; to enable you to focus in some detail on a few select societies,
topics and debates within that wider setting; and to prepare you to read and discuss social science literature on such issues with a critical appreciation. In effect, this will be a paper in political anthropology illustrated with examples drawn almost exclusively from the Pacific region.

**Recommended reading:**

A block of course readings will be available for purchase. You will be expected to consult further readings, especially on essay topics. I can email reading lists as attachments to you individually.

Note that readings in the ‘required readings’ book will follow the order of topics quite closely (though some readings apply to more than one area). It is important that you follow the reading instructions issued from time to time in class. If you are unsure what you need to read from one session to the next, please check with the lecturer.

**Assessment**

(1) Assessment will consist of two essays (30 % each) and two in-class tests (20% each).

*Essay One is due on Friday 19 August and is worth 30% of the total grade.*

*Test One will be held in class on Friday 26 August and is worth 20% of the total grade.*

*Test Two will be held in class on Friday 21 October and is worth 20% of the total grade.*

*Essay Two is due on Friday 28 October and is worth 30% of the total grade.*

You will be expected to write clearly and succinctly, to proofread all work handed in for assessment, and to adhere to accepted standards and formats of academic referencing. (Copies of the Anthropology handout “Guidelines and Advice on Presentation of Written Assignments” are available from Janice Smith in K2.01.)

(2) The coursework/final examination ratio is 1:0.

(3) Assignments must be handed in to, and collected from, the Faculty Information Centre in J Block, Ground Floor.

(4) Penalties for lateness, procedures for requesting extensions and ways of appealing are discussed in the Anthropology “Guidelines” (see above) and in the *Calendar* (pp. 105-107).

(5) All components of assessment are compulsory.

**Essay topics:**
Essay One (due 19 August)  2000 words maximum  30% of course grade

Choose ONE of the following topics:

1. With respect to a particular example of ‘framing the Pacific’, say what frame or frames are being applied, and state why you think this frame is valid or invalid. (One of the examples referred to in lectures may be applied to this essay, or you may choose another.)

2. Is the concept of mana (or any similar concept from the Pacific) different from power in the ‘Western’ sense?

3. Examine Sahlins’ analysis of the distinction between ‘big men’ and ‘chiefs’ as contrasting political types in the Pacific. To what extent is his analysis still valid?

Essay Two (due 28 October)  2000 words maximum  30% of course grade

A detailed list of topics and questions follows. The choice is wide and, in addition, you have the option of formulating a topic of your own in consultation with me.

It is advisable to make an early choice of topic and stick with it. You are encouraged to supplement the course readings with material drawn from wider reading. I should be able to email you reading lists as attachments and I prefer to do so but, if necessary, I am prepared to make hard copies available.

Note that you are not allowed to use substantially similar reading material for your two essays. The two essays must cover significantly different topic areas or aspects of the literature.

1. What does Godelier’s formulation of ‘great man’ leadership systems add to the debate over political typologies in the Pacific?

2. Sahlins’ model of the ‘stranger-king’ treats power or rule as something external to Polynesian (and perhaps other) societies. How convincing is this model? (Your answer must draw on ethnographic evidence from Sahlins and/or others.)

3. What problems and/or advantages do contemporary Pacific nation-states have that result from the presence of ‘traditional’ leadership systems? (You may focus this topic on a particular nation-state and/or a particular type of leadership.)

4. Are big men systems and chiefly systems likely to lead to different political outcomes in states emerging from colonial administration?

5. With reference to one or more culture areas of the Pacific, what ideas make most sense, in your view, of ethnographic studies of power and hierarchy in gender relations?
6. Is male domination as complete as it is sometimes portrayed in some ethnographies of the Pacific, such as highland New Guinea? (Please focus on one case study or at most two case studies, if the intention is to show how anthropological analyses have changed over time.)

7. What forms of resistance have members of Pacific Island societies drawn on when opposing or enduring indigenous systems of oppression and exploitation?

8. What forms of resistance have members of Pacific Island societies drawn on when opposing or enduring colonial or post-colonial systems of oppression and exploitation?

9. How valid a notion is ‘democracy’ in the Pacific? What are some of the criticisms directed against it and some of the arguments in its favour?

10. What is the relationship between religion and politics (both broadly understood) in any Pacific society of your choice, past or present?

11. How do language and/or symbolism enact, express or reinforce domination in any Pacific society of your choice?

12. Are contemporary Pacific politics understood best in terms of an elite model of power, a class-based model of power, a pluralist model of power, a feminist model of power, a [fill in the space yourself] model of power...? (You may consider one, some or all of these models, but a clear focus is expected.)

13. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to conduct a social or environmental impact study (or any similar vehicle of social/cultural engineering and development) in the Pacific. How would you go about carrying out such a task in a society of your choice, taking into account the power structures of that society? (Your case study may be hypothetical but it should draw on ethnographic information.)

14. Compare and analyse the life histories or (auto)biographies of any two Pacific Island leaders (‘traditional’ or ‘modern’, male or female). They may be or have been prominent in any walk of life but must have had an impact on local or national politics. Include in your analysis such issues as how they became leaders, what advantages they had, what obstacles they faced, and what features of their society and culture, if any, had an influence on their rise and/or fall.

15. Discuss any aspect of the political system (or any current political crisis) in a Pacific Island nation in terms of the relevance of a ‘cultural explanation’ (as opposed to, say, an economic explanation or one couched in terms of universal human behaviour).

16. “Foreign news media do not understand the Pacific when covering political activities and political crises.” Discuss.

17. “Political corruption in the Pacific is usually just the expression of ‘custom’”. Discuss.
1. Map of ‘Culture Areas of the Pacific’

2. List of books and other readings on desk reserve in the University library.

FRAMING THE PACIFIC *(Extended reading lists available as email attachments)*

Utopian discourses

*Reading in course book:*

3. Taylor, Stephanie

Dystopian discourses

*Readings in course book:*

4. Callick, Rowan

5. Wong, Gilbert
   2003   The Street in Suva. Metro 261 (March): 78-86. ISSN: 0111-5618

You could also skip ahead to the essay by Simione Durutalo, ‘The Liberation of the Pacific Islands Intellectual’, reprinted below as selection # 32.
And for updates of the doomsday scenario as applied to PNG, the Centre for Independent Studies in Australia has published several reports that are downloadable from their website:

Hughes, Helen


Windybank, Susan and Mike Manning

Anti-dystopian and ‘realist’ discourses

Readings in coursebook:

6.  Dinnen, Sinclair

7.  Hau’ofoa, Epeli

On desk reserve:

Crocombe, Ron

FRAMING CULTURE and FRAMING POWER

No set readings but the course lecturer is happy to provide reading suggestions for anyone interested.

INDIGENOUS CONCEPTS OF POWER: MANA AND ITS COUNTERPARTS

Readings in coursebook:
8. Firth, Raymond

9. MacClancy, Jeremy
1986 Mana: An Anthropological Metaphor for Island Melanesia. Oceania 57(2): 142-53. ISSN: 0029-8077

**POLITICAL TYPOLOGIES IN THE PACIFIC**

10. For a general discussion, see the notes and reading suggestions that are included in this part of the course reader.

**BIG MEN AND CHIEFS**

*Readings in coursebook:*

11. Sahlins, Marshall

12. Bakel, Martin van

**ENTER THE GREAT MAN**

*Reading in coursebook:*

13. Godelier, Maurice

**VIDEO: ‘A DEATH TO PAY FOR’**

*Reading in course book:*

14. Strathern, Andrew and Pamela J. Stewart
On desk reserve:

Strathern, Andrew and Pamela J. Stewart

THE ‘STRANGER KING’ HYPOTHESIS

Reading in coursebook:

15. Sahlins, Marshall

THE ‘VISITOR CHIEF’

No set reading but Sahlins’ essay for the previous topic sets the scene. The session will be based on ethnographic material from my doctoral research.

POLITICAL CAREERS AND BIOGRAPHIES

Readings in coursebook:

16. Thaman, Konai Helu

And you could reread the essay by Strathern and Stewart ‘Further Twists of the Rope’ in this coursebook (selection # 14 above).

On desk reserve:

Rapaport, Moshe (ed.)

LANGUAGE AND SYMBOLISM IN POWER RELATIONS
Readings in coursebook:

17. Crocombe, Ron  

(Yes, this useful little paper is not available in English – but don’t panic. It’s very short and a good translation exercise for anyone with a bit of French, plus there will be a full précis provided in the lecture.)

18. Black, Peter W.  

19. Goldsmith, Michael  

GENDER, CULTURE AND POWER

Readings in coursebook:

20. Schoeffel, Penelope  

21. Jolly, Margaret  

On desk reserve:

Strathern, Marilyn  

THE POLITICS OF TRADITION

Readings in coursebook:

22. Jacka, Jerry  
23. Lawson, Stephanie  
1993   The Politics of Tradition: Problems for Political Legitimacy and Democracy in the South Pacific. Pacific Studies 16(2): 1-29. ISSN: 0275-3596

THE ‘GREAT PACIFIC DEMOCRACY DEBATE’

Readings in coursebook:

24. Koloamatangi, Malakai  

25. Lawson, Stephanie  

26. Larmour, Peter  

27. Rich, Roland  

On desk reserve:

Cromome, Ron et al. (eds)  
1992   Culture and Democracy in the South Pacific. Suva: IPS, USP.

CONSENSUS FORMATION AND THE PACIFIC WAY

Readings in coursebook:

28. Crocombe, Ron  

29. Hau’ofa, Epeli  

30. Hau’ofa, Epeli

And you could skip ahead to the essay in this coursebook by Simione Durutalo, 'The Liberation of the Pacific Island Intellectual' (see selection # 32 below).

On desk reserve:

Crocombe, Ron
2001 The South Pacific. Suva: IPS, University of the South Pacific. (Chapter 17.)

DISPUTING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Reading in coursebook:

31. Filoialiʻi, Laʻauli A. and Lyle Knowles

On desk reserve (if there are enough requests):

Watson-Gegeo, Karen Ann and Geoffrey M. White (eds)

ELITES IN THE PACIFIC and CLASSES IN THE PACIFIC

Reading in coursebook:

32. Durutalo, Simione

33. Hauʻofa, Epeli

On desk reserve (Hauʻofa’s essay [see just above] is from this book but the whole work is useful):

Hooper, Antony et al. (eds)
1987 Class and Culture in the South Pacific. Auckland: CPS, University of Auckland / Suva: IPS, University of the South Pacific.
GOVERNANCE IN THE CONTEMPORARY PACIFIC

Readings in coursebook:


CORRUPTION OR CUSTOM?

Readings in coursebook:


And you could reread the essay by the Macphersons, ‘Where Theory Meets Practice’ (see selection # 35 above).

On desk reserve:

Crombone, Ron 2001 The South Pacific. Suva: IPS, University of the South Pacific. (Chapter 19.)

LOGICS OF CITIZENSHIP IN THE PACIFIC

No set reading. Lecture will be based on work in progress by the course lecturer.

NEW AND OLD STYLES OF POLITICS


On desk reserve:
Busch, Werner vom et al. (eds) 1994 New Politics in the South Pacific. Suva: IPS, USP. (Contains the essay by Futa Helu just listed but also many other useful papers.)

MEDIA FRAMES AND PACIFIC POLITICS

38. Goldsmith, Michael

IS THERE A PACIFIC POLITICAL CULTURE?

Readings in coursebook:

39. Ratuva, Steven

40. Mausio, Asinate

41. Toren, Christina
University of Waikato
Department of Societies and Cultures

ANTH300-05B CULTURE AND POWER IN THE PACIFIC

COURSE RESERVE READINGS IN THE LIBRARY

Colbert, Evelyn

(A straightforward overview of the region from a strategic perspective.)

Crocombe, Ron
2001 The South Pacific. Suva: IPS, University of the South Pacific. DU28.3.C76 2001

(Crocombe’s latest installment of a book that has been evolving since the 1970s. It’s now a monster of 790 pages so it no longer really qualifies as an ‘introduction’, but the information is in there if you want to dig.)

Crocombe, Ron et al. (eds)

(Many good essays, especially on the ‘democracy debate’.)

Feinberg, Richard and Karen Ann Watson-Gegeo (eds)

(A very good collection of case studies.)

Hooper, Antony et al. (eds)

(Not very recent but it contains some classic essays on power and change.)

Howard, Alan and Robert Borofsky (eds)

(Some good material overviewing the Pacific and George Marcus’s essay on ‘Chieftainship’ is directly relevant to this paper.)

Rapaport, Moshe (ed.)
(Another introductory volume covering history, geography, society, etc – but the essays by Lindstrom and Wesley-Smith are directly relevant to this paper.)

Robie, David (ed.)

(A set of staunchly progressive essays on power, oppression, militarism, etc.)

Shuster Donald, Peter Larmour and Karin von Strokirch (eds)

(An uneven but still useful collection in which the standout piece is by Goldsmith, on coverage of the Cook Islands leadership crisis of 1995-1996 That particular essay is in the book of course readings but there are some other good ones in the volume.)

Strathern, Andrew and Pamela J. Stewart

(This brief case study features some of the individuals in the video ‘A Death to Pay For’ screened on 3 August.)

Strathern, Marilyn

(A classic case study around which I base one of my lectures on gender and power.)

Vom Busch, Werner, et al. (eds)

(A collection of excellent forward-thinking essays – but go easy on the binding!)

White, Geoffrey M. and Lamont Lindstrom (eds)

(An essential collection.)