Anthropology & Sociology of Development
Academic year 2013 - 2014

Cultures of Expertise in Global Perspective
ANSO036 - Spring - 6 ECTS

Course Description
Experts are a dominant force in our societies. In the last century, they even carved a place for themselves in transnational politics, a realm traditionally left to the power struggles of nation-states and empires. In this course, we will take experts, their epistemic cultures and their influence on both transnational policies and domestic societies as our focus. We will ask the following questions: How do experts construct facts? How do they distinguish themselves from non-experts? How do experts participate in democratic decision-making? How do they influence transnational policies? We will learn about different cultures of expertise in colonial times, the Cold War and the “new globalization” era; topics will range from the role of experts in the management of colonial subjects, international security dilemmas, the creation and regulation of financial markets, health policies, etc. Rather than privileging one perspective on cultures of expertise, the course will draw on theoretical works from sociology, history, anthropology, and science and technology studies. Students will be encouraged to develop an original approach to the topic and to illustrate their approach by researching a case of interest to them.

Syllabus

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Students are required to read about 4-5 book chapters and articles per week. This course requires active participation from all members during class and every week. The assessment of students’ performance will be broken down into four criteria: participation in class (10% of the grade), 2 short memoranda (10% each), a presentation in class (10%), and a final paper (60%). The short memoranda will consist in discussing the main concepts in various articles/book chapters among the readings of the first part of the semester. During the second part of the semester, students will present their own
research ideas in relation to other readings during class (max. 10 minutes). The final paper will consist in the analysis of an issue related to the field of expertise and globalization, which the readings in class help illuminate. It will involve some research with primary and/or second-hand documents: archives, interviews, observations, press analysis, academic works. It will not be longer than 25 double-spaced pages.

PART 1
MAIN APPROACHES AND CONCEPTS

Each week, students are asked to read all the papers (except for the recommended readings, which are optional). Twice during this 6-week period, they must write a 1-page memorandum in which they define the main concepts in at least 2 readings, and comment upon these concepts.

WEEK 1   Cultures of Expertise: An Introduction   (February 20)


WEEK 2   The (Social) Construction of Scientific Facts   (February 27)


Recommended:


**WEEK 3  Professionals and Boundary Work  (March 6)**


**WEEK 4  The Bourdieuian Approach to Fields of Expertise  (March 13)**


Recommended:


WEEK 5 Can Experts Shape Policy? (March 20)


WEEK 6 Can Experts Shape Society? (March 27)


Recommended:


**WEEK 7  Can Society Resist the Hegemony of Experts?  (April 3)**


Recommended:


**PART 2  THEMES AND TOPICS**

Students must choose a week during which they will present their work and how it relates to specific themes covered in class.

**WEEK 8  Experts and Colonial Rule  (April 10)**


WEEK 9  Experts and International Security (April 17)


NO CLASS (April 24)

WEEK 10  Experts and Finance  (TBD as Th. is May 1)


Recommended:

WEEK 11  Experts and Ignorance  (May 8)


Recommended


WEEK 12  Experts and Statistics  (May 15)


Recommended

**WEEK 13  Experts and Contemporary Transnational Politics  (May 22)**


*Recommended:*


**WEEK 14  Normative Perspectives on the Politics of Expertise  (May 29)**

