

GEO 420 Geographies of Anarchism



Collectivized tram in Barcelona during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939)

DETAILS

Spring 2016
Mondays & Wednesdays 10:30 - 11:45
Building D Room 206

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DESCRIPTION

What is anarchism? A political philosophy and approach to social organization that arose simultaneous with other well known –isms such as communism, fascism and capitalism. Perhaps more than any other social philosophy, anarchism has been condensed into a vague set of often-contradictory caricatures such as bohemian communities of nihilists, punk rock and thrash metal gangs, individualist libertarians who walk in the ideological footsteps of Tea Party politicians, or most famously a murky underworld of conspiring bomb-throwers, held together less by bonds of solidarity than by a commitment to violence. This course provides relief from these uninformed perceptions by taking anarchism seriously. We will dispense with caricatures and explore anarchism as a powerful social force, one rooted largely in the left-wing critique of the liberal state and capitalism. Anarchism is simply the absence of any form of centralized top-down government, advocating instead grassroots, context-sensitive governance rooted in mutual aid and reciprocity, and expressed geographically as federalism. The class will explore contours of this surprisingly ubiquitous

form of governance in relation to place as it emerged with the dawning of hominids on the African Savanna some 3 million years ago and in caves during the Cognitive Revolution 70,000 years ago. Finally we will map the development of anarchism in Europe, Asia and North America alongside, within and in spite of powerful states.

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course students will:

1. Understand historical and contemporary anarchism.
2. Be conversant with dominant streams of anarchistic thought.
3. Be comfortable using geographic terminology in written and verbal communication.
4. Be able to identify and critically analyze relationships between the political geographies of the state, the economic geographies of the market and the social geographies they impinge upon.
5. Have gained a geographic perspective of the diffusion and impact of anarchistic thought.
6. Be able to think, write, and argue critically about specific problems of localized governance.
7. Have a developed geographic imagination, itself a comprehension of how people and places interact, conflict, and align in shaping the shared destinies that follow.

READING

Each week we will carefully read a journal article or excerpts from classic books on anarchism, community planning, and property. Most readings are part of the public domain, and can be downloaded from the Internet free of charge. Some are from my personal library and are available as PDFs on AIMS. A few are from books that students are required to purchase.

Required texts (available electronically in iBook or Kindle formats or in hardcover from Amazon.jp):

Albert Camus *The Rebel*

Noam Chomsky *On Anarchism*

Karl Polyani *The Great Transformation*

James C. Scott *Two Cheers for Anarchism*

ASSESSMENT

Class Format

This is an intensive reading, writing, and discussion class. Students will not be quizzed or tested. There is no final paper or project. The course is essentially a seminar, one dependent upon continual engagement of both professor and students. Each Monday will be a lecture by the instructor in

which ideas to be grappled with for the rest of the week. At the beginning of class each Wednesday students must submit response papers. Wednesday classes will be seminar discussions, weaving ideas presented in the lectures with the assigned reading. Each seminar discussion will be led by a student (all students are required to lead one seminar) who will give a brief synopsis of the reading and then begin a general debate. All students are expected to contribute to the ensuing discussion.

Response Papers

Length: each response paper must be between 500 and 750 words.

<u>Weekly Paper</u>	<u>5</u>
15 Weeks	75 points

When writing response papers students must accomplish two tasks. First, adequately summarize the main points and arguments presented by the author. Second, critically engage with the author's central argument. In other words, if you agree with the central tenants of the piece you must, using contemporary or historical examples, other scholarly literature, or journalism, state convincingly why you agree. If you disagree with the author, you must offer a convincing critical counter argument, one based on other scholarly literature, contemporary or historical examples, or journalism.

Each paper must have a solid introduction, a logically organized body and a conclusion summarizing the argument of assent or dissent.

The grading rubric used to assess response papers is posted on AIMS.

Participation

General Attendance	10
Engagement	10
<u>Leading Seminar</u>	<u>5</u>
Participation Points	25 points

Breakdown

Response Papers (15)	75
<u>Participation</u>	<u>25</u>
Total Possible	100 points

ASSESSMENT POLICIES

Format Requirements

All written assignments must include the following in the upper left corner of the first page: Student's name, student ID number, assignment name, and due date. All assignments must be formatted in the following manner: double spaced, font size of 11 or 12 point, standard margins, and an indented first line for each paragraph.

Submission Requirements

Unless otherwise instructed, students are expected to submit written assignments on the AIMS platform. I will only accept Word (.doc or .docx) or PDF (.pdf) formats. All files submitted must be saved in the following manner: Student Name_Assignment Name.docx. I expect assignments to be submitted via AIMS on time. Assignments due in class must be turned in at the beginning of class. I reserve the right to deduct points for late submissions and I reserve the right to determine the percentage to be deducted.

Makeup work

Aside from exceptional situations, there will be no chance to make up missed exams or quizzes or turn assignments in past their due day/time. Proof of an exceptional situation must be submitted to me in writing and signed by the appropriate authority within 24 hours of the beginning of the missed exam. I reserve the right to define an exceptional situation and furthermore to make all final decisions relating to amending, redoing, or making up late, incomplete, or not-completed work.

GENERAL POLICIES

Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and may lead to failure on an assignment, failing the class, and possibly dismissal from the University. Academic dishonesty consists of plagiarism, cheating, fabrication and falsification, multiple submission of the same work, misuse of academic materials, and complicity in academic dishonesty. Students are responsible for being observant of and attentive to Akita International University's policies about academic honesty.

Attendance

This course is not an online or distance course—being in class matters! Learning is an ongoing process; one that builds upon previously acquired insights and skills. Consistent and engaged attendance is vital for success in this and all college courses. I will sanction attendance by tracking assignments and random roll calls. I reserve the right to deal with or exceptional or extended absences, on a case-by-case basis.

Special Needs

If you require accommodations, please alert me of your needs on the first day of class so that I can work within Akita International University policies to adequately provide them.

Civility & Classroom Decorum

Silence all cell phones, beepers, etc. during class. Speaking on cell phones, texting, or using electronic equipment in any way that is not directly related to class (i.e. taking notes, using a translation program during lectures, etc.) is strictly prohibited.

Student Participation

Learning is a participatory process; therefore student contribution to class is important. This course is based in large measure on critical thinking and class discussion. Disagreement is part of these processes. Colleagues can disagree *and* maintain respect for each other and one another's views. I insist that we strive to learn from the differences that manifest while debating the merit of theoretical and empirical evidence by maintaining an atmosphere of civility during discussion. I will sanction participation by tracking of individual student contribution to the in-class learning environment.

SCHEDULE

Week 1	Mutual Aid I: The Prehistory of Anarchism
April 8	Lecture
April 10	Lecture
Reading	Kropotkin <i>Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution</i> (excerpts)
Week 2	Mutual Aid II: Native Americans & the Dawes Act
April 13	Lecture
April 15	Seminar
Reading	Kropotkin <i>Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution</i> (excerpts)
Week 3	Mutual Aid III: Craft Guilds & the Medieval City
April 20	Lecture
April 22	Seminar
Reading	Platt <i>Land Use and Society</i> (excerpts)
Week 4	Centralized Privilege I: The State
April 27	Lecture
April 29	Seminar
Reading	Scott <i>Two Cheers for Anarchism</i> (excerpts)
Week 5	Centralized Privilege II: The Church
May 4	Lecture
May 6	Seminar
Reading	Bakunin <i>God and the State</i> (excerpts)
Week 6	The Commons and its Enclosure
May 11	Lecture
May 13	Seminar
Reading	Polanyi <i>The Great Transformation</i> (excerpts)
Week 7	Whose Enlightenment?
May 18	Lecture
May 20	Seminar
Reading	Proudhon <i>Whose Property?</i> (excerpts)

Week 8	The French Revolution & the Napoleonic Wars
May 25	Lecture
May 27	Seminar
Reading	Jean Grave <i>Moribund Society and Anarchy</i> (excerpts)
Week 9	Abolitionism & Women's Suffrage
June 1	Lecture
June 3	Seminar
Reading	Thoreau <i>A Plea for Captain John Brown</i>
Week 10	The Paris Commune
June 8	Lecture
June 10	Seminar
Reading	Harvey <i>Monument and Myth</i> (journal article)
Week 11	Fin de Siècle Anarchism in Asia
June 15	Lecture
June 17	Seminar
Reading	Lenin TBA
Week 12	The Spanish Civil War
June 22	Lecture
June 24	Seminar
Reading	Chomsky <i>On Anarchy</i> (excerpts)
Week 13	French Geography & Regional Planning
June 29	Lecture
July 1	Seminar
Reading	Hall <i>Cities of Tomorrow</i> (excerpts)
Week 14	Anarchism in Urban Planning
July 6	Lecture
July 8	Seminar
Reading	Goodman <i>Communitas</i>
Week 15	Civil Disobedience: From Gandhi to MLK
July 13	Lecture
July 15	Seminar
Reading	Thoreau <i>Civil Disobedience</i>
Week 16	"Occupy", the Internet & Libertarianism
July 20	Lecture
July 22	Seminar
Reading	Camus <i>The Rebel</i> (excerpts)