

The Politics of Global Complexity: Rethinking Governance, Power and Agency (2019-2020)

MA Module Code: 7PIRS025W (Level: 7, Credits: 20)

Semester 1

**Lecture and Seminar: Thursday 10.00am-1.00pm
Copland (Clipstone) Building 1.100A, 115 New Cavendish
Street**

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Module Summary

Today the biggest challenge facing policy-makers appears to be the growing awareness of complexity. In a complex world, it is seemingly much more difficult to govern, and to act instrumentally, in order to fulfil policy goals. The module introduces students to the theoretical frameworks and practices of the politics of complexity, the debates that have been triggered, and the way that complexity understandings have developed, especially in the 2000s and 2010s. Emphasis is placed upon introducing students to some of the conceptual frameworks deployed in understanding system effects on political, economic and social life and how these enable us to rethink governance, power and agency. However, this module is also very practically orientated, it engages with how complexity is reflected in new approaches to policy-making and understanding, particularly focusing on how problems are responded to and the distinctions between preventive policy-understandings, resilience/bouncing back approaches and more transformative understandings of how to engage with a complex world.

Module Aims

1. To introduce students to the theoretical frameworks and practices of the politics of complexity, the debates they have triggered, and the way that complexity approaches have developed, particularly over the last decade.
2. To consider the changing framework of discussions of governance in relation to questions of who governs, how governance is legitimated, the processes of governance and the objects of governance.
3. To trace discussion of policy-making in relation to agency and the politics of complexity, in particular the changing understandings of agency with more diversified ranges of actors and more circulatory, asymmetric and flatter concepts of agency.
4. To consider some of the contexts in which understandings of political power are expressed within the framework of complexity.
5. To analyse reflexive forms of governing, resilience and adaptivity as responses to the problem of governing complexity.
6. To examine the changing nature and dynamics of democratic practices, and to facilitate the development of analytical skills that enable students to understand different democratic initiatives within a wider framework of complexity approaches.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this module, students are expected to:

1. Critically evaluate a range of theories of complexity as they affect political understandings of the role and practices of government.
2. Demonstrate a sound critical and advanced understanding of the different ways in which complexity thinking is deployed as both a limit to political power and also as a way of enabling political change.
3. Analyse how different conceptualisations of politics and complexity developed in relation to different bodies of theory, such as pragmatism, neoliberalism, assemblage theory, complex adaptive systems, post-foundationalism, new institutionalism, actor-network-theory, new materialism and posthumanism.
4. Critically evaluate how the politics of complexity interrogates and challenges liberal modernist binaries of politics/economics, state/society, public/private, subject/object, mind/body, human/nature, threat/security referent, inside/outside, means/ends etc.
5. Rigorously evaluate the link between democracy as this is understood in terms of formal representation and in terms of social or societal processes.
6. Critically discuss understandings of complexity in relation to markets and market rationalities.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

One 3 hour seminar per week involving small group work and student led-discussions. Students are expected to prepare in advance as this involves discussion/interpretation of key readings.

Readings asterisked are available on Blackboard course materials.

The questions with each seminar presentation are to guide your thinking only; the readings will be at the centre of our discussion.

The 3 essential readings for each seminar will be discussed in groups or in class collectively, it is essential that you undertake at least your one group reading and preferably all three to make the most of the seminar discussion.

The assessment for this module is one book review of 1,500 words and one essay of 3,500 words.

[The books for review and the essay questions are available on pages 24-25 of this module guide.](#)

The deadline for the book review is 1.00pm Thursday 31 October 2019 and the deadline for the essay is 1.00pm 12 December 2019.

Name of assessment	Weighting %	Qualifying mark/set %
Essay (3,500 words)	80%	50%
Book Review (1,500 words)	20%	50%

Lecture Programme

Week One: 26 September	Introduction: What Do We Mean By Complexity? Discussion of Assessment Regime and Seminar Allocation
Week Two: 3 October	The End of Modernity? The Anthropocene
Week Three: 10 October	Complex Life as a Constraint: From Linear to Non-Linear Causality
Week Four: 17 October	Complex Life as Enabling & Creative: Emergent Causality
Week Five: 24 October	The Weather as Complexity (with Harshavardhan Bhat)
Week Six: 31 October	Student Engagement Week Activity TBC
31 October	Book Review Deadline 1.00pm
Week Seven: 7 November	Resilience, Adaptation and Vulnerability
Week Eight: 14 November	The Implications for International Intervention
Week Nine: 21 November	The Implications for Rights and Representation Discussion of essay questions and preparation
Week Ten: 28 November	The Implications for Knowledge: Is Sensing the new Knowing?
Week Eleven: 5 December	Implications for Research Methods: Actor-Network Theory, New Materialism, Posthumanism
Week Twelve 12 December	Conclusion: Beyond Complexity?
12 December	Essay Deadline 1.00pm

Essential Reading

David Chandler, *Resilience: The Governance of Complexity* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014).
David Chandler, *Ontopolitics in the Anthropocene: An Introduction to Mapping, Sensing and Hacking* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018)

Key Texts

John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems* (Ohio University Press, 1954).
Douglass North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* (London: Sage, 1992).
Anthony Giddens, *Beyond Left and Right: The Future of Radical Politics* (Polity Press, 1994).
Fritjof Capra, *Web of Life: A New Synthesis of Mind and Matter* (New York: Anchor Books, 1997)
James C. Scott, *Seeing Like A State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).
Paul Cilliers, *Complexity and Postmodernism: Understanding Complex Systems* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1998).
Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
John Law, *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004).
Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Duke University Press, 2010).
Michel Callon et al, *Acting in an Uncertain World: An Essay on Technical Democracy* (London: MIT Press, 2011).
William Connolly, *A World of Becoming* (Duke University Press, 2011).
Melanie Mitchell, *Complexity: A Guided Tour* (Oxford University Press, 2011).
Erika Cudworth and Stephen Hobden, *Posthuman International Relations: Complexity, Ecologism and Global Politics* (London: Zed Books, 2011).
Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013).
David Byrne and Gill Callaghan, *Complexity Theory and the Social Sciences: The State of the Art* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014).

Background Reading

Richard H. Jones, *Analysis and the Fullness of Reality: An Introduction to Reductionism and Emergence* (New York: Jackson Square Books, 2013).
Graham Room, *Complexity, Institutions and Public Policy: Agile Decision-Making in a Turbulent World* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2011).
John Smith and Chris Jenks, *Qualitative Complexity: Ecology, Cognitive Processes and the Re-emergence of Structures in Post-Humanist Social Theory* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006).
John Urry, *Global Complexity* (Cambridge: Polity, 2003).
Robert Jervis, *System Effects: Complexity in Political and Social Life* (Princeton University Press, 1997).
Steven Johnson, *Emergence: The Connected Lives of Ants, Brains, Cities and Software* (Penguin Books, 2002).
John H. Holland, *Emergence: From Chaos to Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).
M. Mitchell Waldrop, *Complexity: The Emerging Science at the Edge of Order and Chaos* (Viking, 1993).
C. S. Holling, 'Understanding the Complexity of Economic, Ecological and Social Systems', *Ecosystems*, Vol. 4 (2001), pp. 390-405.
Walter Lippmann, *The Phantom Public* (Transaction Publishers, 2009).

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Friedrich Hayek, *The Fatal Conceit: The Errors of Socialism* (University of Chicago Press, 1998).

Douglass North, 'Dealing with a Non-Ergodic World: Institutional Economics, Property Rights, and the Global Environment', *Duke Environmental Law and Policy Forum*, Vol. 10, No.1 (1999), pp.1-12.

Bob Jessop, 'The Governance of Complexity and the Complexity of Governance: Preliminary Remarks on some Problems and Limits of Economic Guidance', published by the Department of Sociology, Lancaster University (2003).

John Urry, 'The Complexities of the Global', *Theory Culture & Society*, Vol. 22 (2005).

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (Penguin Books, 2004).

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Harvard University Press, 2000).

Bruno Latour, *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy* (Harvard University Press, 2004).

Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993).

Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford University Press, 2005).

Manuel DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity* (2006).

Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Duke University Press, 2010).

William Connolly, *A World of Becoming* (Duke University Press, 2011).

Michael Crozier, 'Recursive Governance: Contemporary Political Communication and Public Policy', *Political Communication*, Vol. 24, No.1 (2007), pp. 1-18.

Luc Boltanski, *On Critique: A Sociology of Emancipation* (Polity Press, 2011).

Brian Walker and David Salt, *Resilience Thinking: Sustaining Ecosystems and People in a Changing World* (Island Press, 2006).

Periodicals and Other Sources

Resilience: Policies, Practices and Discourses

Security Dialogue

International Political Sociology

Constellations

Ecology and Society

Economy and Society

Theory, Culture and Society

Millennium: Journal of International Studies

Week One: 26 September 2019

Introduction: What Do We Mean By Complexity?

This session intends to introduce students to the module as a whole and to the problematic governing complexity. We will begin to engage with the problematic at the most general level, especially as most of the class will not have had the chance to do much of the readings and discuss what complexity might be, how it might be measured and what the implications of complexity might be for governing and for our understandings of power and agency and also for critical theorising.

Questions

How can things be made more complex? What needs to be added or taken away?

What is the relationship between complexity and causality?

What is the relationship between complexity and agency?

Is complexity a solution or a problem?

3 Essential readings

Danile Clausen, 'Crude Thinking — 7 Ways of Dealing with the Complex in IR', *E-IR*, 29 January 2016

<http://www.e-ir.info/2016/01/29/crude-thinking-7-ways-of-dealing-with-the-complex-in-ir/>

* Melanie Mitchell, *Complexity: A Guided Tour* (Oxford University Press, 2011), Chapter 1, 'What is Complexity?', pp.4-14.

* Volker Schneider, 'Governance and Complexity', *The Oxford Handbook of Governance* (Oxford University Press, 2013).

Readings

Anything on complexity or recent thinking in political theory, IR, philosophy, human geography and the social sciences more generally will be fine. There are some more specific suggestions below.

David Chandler, *Resilience: the Governance of Complexity* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014) chapters 1 and 2.

Ecologist Eric Berlow, 3 minute video 'Simplifying Complexity', 3 September 2013.

<http://www.allianceforpeacebuilding.org/2013/09/simplifying-complexity-ted-talk/>

Complexity, 'In Our Time' studio discussion with Melvyn Bragg, *Radio 4*, 19 December 2013.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03ls154>

Steven Johnson, *Emergence: The Connected Lives of Ants, Brains, Cities and Software* (Penguin Books, 2002).

M. Mitchell Waldrop, *Complexity: The Emerging Science at the Edge of Order and Chaos* (Viking, 1993)

* C. S. Holling, 'Understanding the Complexity of Economic, Ecological and Social Systems', *Ecosystems*, Vol. 4 (2001), pp. 390-405.

Melanie Mitchell, *Complexity: A Guided Tour* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems* (Ohio University Press, 1954).

Robert Jervis, *System Effects: Complexity in Political and Social Life* (Princeton University Press, 1997).

Bruno Latour, *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy* (Harvard University Press, 2004).

Week Two: 3 October 2019

The End of Modernity? The Anthropocene

This session will discuss whether complexity is new or not. You may have come across the term 'the Anthropocene', this is a term for a new geological epoch, one in which human activities can no longer be seen as separate from the Earth's ecosystems, heralding a paradigm shift in governance theory and practice. This understanding of the end of an 'outside' - that human understandings of progress have reached a limit is crucial for understanding complexity. The entanglements of human actions with environmental processes is captured well in the work of sociologists Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck. For these theorists the complex world is understood as 'late-modernity', the 'second modernity', 'risk society' or the 'globalised world' and is a relatively recent phenomenon. Another position, that these entanglements of complexity are not new but merely involve the recognition that modernist assumptions rested on a false, reductionist set of understandings is perhaps most boldly articulated by Bruno Latour. What does Bruno Latour mean when he says: 'Put quite simply, second modernity is first modernity plus its externalities: everything that had been externalized as irrelevant or impossible to calculate is back in – with a vengeance'? (Is Re-modernization Occurring', p. 37)

Questions

Is the Anthropocene a threat or an opportunity?

How does the linking of culture/environment; human/nature change modernist thinking?

It seems that stratigraphers are engaged in similar debates to social scientists on when the divide between culture/nature was breached, what is at stake in this debate?

3 Essential readings

* Bruno Latour, 'Is Re-modernization Occurring – And If So, How to Prove It? A Commentary on Ulrich Beck', *Theory, Culture & Society* 20:2 (2003), 35-48.

* Jeremy Baskin, The Ideology of the Anthropocene? *Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute (MSSI) Research Paper No. 3* May 2014.

http://sustainable.unimelb.edu.au/sites/default/files/docs/MSSI-ResearchPaper-3_Baskin_2014.pdf

* Bruno Latour, 'Agency at the time of the Anthropocene', *New Literary History*, Vol. 45, pp. 1-18, 2014.

Readings

Some awareness of the Anthropocene and any books or articles by Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck and/or Bruno Latour will be fine for this session. These are major social theorists and their work is easily accessible. Some suggestions are below.

Anthony Burke, Stefanie Fishel, Audra Mitchell, Simon Dalby, Daniel J. Levine, 'Planet Politics: A Manifesto from the End of IR', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Volume 44, Issue 3, June 2016, 499–523
<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0305829816636674>

David Chandler, Erika Cudworth and Steve Hobden, 'Anthropocene, Capitalocene and Liberal Cosmopolitan IR: A Response to Burke et al.'s "Planet Politics"', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* (Online First, 22 August 2017).

<http://www.davidchandler.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Millennium-Reply-to-Burke-PUBLISHED.pdf>.

Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'The Climate of History: Four Theses', *Critical Inquiry* 35 (Winter 2009).

<http://www.law.uvic.ca/demcon/2013%20readings/Chakrabarty%20-%20Climate%20of%20History.pdf>.

Stanley Finney and Lucy Edwards, 'The "Anthropocene" epoch: Scientific decision or political statement?', *GSA (Geological Society Of America) Today*, March/April 2016, Volume 26, Number 3–4.

<ftp://rock.geosociety.org/pub/GSAToday/gt1603.pdf>

Damian Carrington, 'The Anthropocene epoch: scientists declare dawn of human-influenced age', *Guardian*, 29 August 2016.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/aug/29/declare-anthropocene-epoch-experts-urge-geological-congress-human-impact-earth>

Paul J. Crutzen, 'Geology of mankind', *Nature*, Vol. 415, 3 January 2002.

<http://www.geo.utexas.edu/courses/387h/PAPERS/Crutzen2002.pdf>

Richard Monastersky, 'Anthropocene: The human age: Momentum is building to establish a new geological epoch that recognizes humanity's impact on the planet. But there is fierce debate behind the scenes', *Nature*, 11 March 2015

<http://www.nature.com/news/anthropocene-the-human-age-1.17085>

Ian Sample, 'Anthropocene: is this the new epoch of humans?', *Guardian*, 16 October 2014.

<http://www.theguardian.com/science/2014/oct/16/-sp-scientists-gather-talks-rename-human-age-anthropocene-holocene>

The Anthropocene Project (website)

http://www.hkw.de/en/programm/projekte/2014/anthropozoen/anthropozoen_2013_2014.php

'The Anthropocene: A man-made world: Science is recognising humans as a geological force to be reckoned with', *The Economist*, 26 May 2011.

<http://www.economist.com/node/18741749>

Howard Falcon-Lang, 'Anthropocene: Have humans created a new geological age?', *BBC News*, 11 May 2011.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-13335683>

Welcome to the Anthropocene (website)

<http://www.anthropocene.info/en/home>

Roy Scranton, 'Learning How to Die in the Anthropocene', *New York Times*, 10 November 2013.

<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/11/10/learning-how-to-die-in-the-anthropocene/>

* J. K. Gibson-Graham and Gerda Roelvink, 'An Economic Ethics For The Anthropocene', forthcoming in the 40th Anniversary issue of *Antipode: A Radical Journal of Geography* 2009.

<http://t.co/ung1fOZcIP>

James Conca, 'The Anthropocene Part 1: Tracking Human-Induced Catastrophe On A Planetary Scale', *Forbes Magazine*, 16 August 2014.

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/jamesconca/2014/08/16/the-anthropocene-part-1-tracking-human-induced-catastrophe-on-a-planetary-scale/>

* Frank Biermann, 'The Anthropocene: A governance perspective', *The Anthropocene Review* 2014 1: 57.

<http://anr.sagepub.com/content/1/1/57.full.pdf>

* Andreas Malm and Alf Hornborg, 'The geology of mankind? A critique of the Anthropocene narrative', *The Anthropocene Review* 2014 62: 69.

<http://anr.sagepub.com/content/1/1/62.full.pdf+html>

David Chandler, *Resilience: the Governance of Complexity* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014) chapters 1, 2 and 3.

Anthony Giddens, *Beyond Left and Right: The Future of Radical Politics* (Polity Press, 1994).

Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* (London: Sage, 1992).

Ulrich Beck, *The Reinvention of Politics: Rethinking Modernity in the Global Social Order* (Polity Press, 1997).

Chrisophe Bonneuil and Jean-Baptiste Fressoz, *The Shock of the Anthropocene* (London: Verso, 2016).

* Bruno Latour, 'Telling friends from foes in the time of the Anthropocene', draft of the lecture prepared for "Thinking the Anthropocene", Paris, 14/15 November 2013.

<http://www.bruno-latour.fr/sites/default/files/131-FRIENDS-FOES.pdf>

Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993).

Bruno Latour, *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy* (Harvard University Press, 2004).

* Richard A. Slaughter, 'Welcome to the anthropocene', *Futures*, 44 (2012) 119–126.

* Antoine Bousquet, 'Post-Anthropocentrism in the Age of the Anthropocene', paper for Millennium: Journal of International Studies Annual Conference, 'Materialism in World Politics', October 2012.

<http://millenniumjournal.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/bousquet-post-anthropocentrism-in-the-age-of-the-anthropocene.doc>

Week Three: 10 October 2019

Complexity as a Limit: From Linear to Non-Linear Causality

In modernist understandings of governance, there was an assumption that certain sets of policies could be applied to achieve certain desired results. This was implied in the capacity to learn lessons from policy failures and the ability to export governance systems elsewhere in the world, from the spread of 'civilisation' under colonial rule to the contestation between liberal market economies and socialist state-based economic systems. However, these modernist views of linearity have been increasingly challenged by non-linear understandings of social causality which emphasise difference, plurality and social processes. For non-linear approaches, difference makes a difference. Firstly, differences in time, space, culture, law, politics, religion, economy etc mean that there is little 'linear' in the relation between cause and effect. Different contexts or states of affairs will be affected differently with different outcomes. Secondly, differences make a difference in terms of the direction of time, previous states of affairs, decisions etc impact on the responses to later events, this directionality of time is often called 'path dependency'. Non-linear approaches were associated from the late 1970s with new institutionalist and neoliberal understandings, particularly in the field of international development (where North develops and applies Hayek's approach). Non-linearity is at the heart of complexity understandings and is also associated with a radical or left critique of linear assumptions (see the Scott reading).

Questions

What is a 'linear' understanding? Why is it 'mechanistic' or 'reductionist'?

Why does North say that "every effort at producing change in the system has usually produced almost exactly the reverse consequences downstream"?

What conditions are necessary for linear cause-and-effect outcomes? What are the consequences of this?

3 Essential readings

* Douglass North, 'Dealing with a Non-Ergodic World: Institutional Economics, Property Rights, and the Global Environment', *Duke Environmental Law and Policy Forum*, Vol. 10, No.1 (1999), pp.1-12.

James C Scott, *Seeing Like A State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven, CT, USA: Yale University Press, 1998 Introduction

<http://home.ku.edu.tr/~mbaker/cshs522/JCScottIntro.pdf>

* Friedrich Hayek, 'The Theory of Complex Phenomena: A Precocious Play on the Epistemology of Complexity', in Hayek, *Studies in Philosophy, Politics and Economics* (London: Routledge, 1967), pp. 22-42.

Powerpoint Complex Life/Complexity

<http://www.davidchandler.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Complex-Life.pdf>

Readings

Brad DeLong, 'James Scott and Friedrich Hayek: Review of James Scott (1998), *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*

<https://delong.typepad.com/sdj/2007/10/james-scott-and.html>

* Christine Brachthäuser, 'Explaining global governance—a complexity perspective', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Volume 24, Number 2, June 2011, 221-244.

* Volker Schneider, 'Governance and Complexity', *The Oxford Handbook of Governance* (Oxford University Press, 2013).

* Bob Jessop, 'The Governance of Complexity and the Complexity of Governance: Preliminary Remarks on some Problems and Limits of Economic Guidance', published by the Department of Sociology, Lancaster University, 2003.

David Chandler, *Resilience: the Governance of Complexity* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014) chapters 1, 2 and 10.

John Dewey, *The Public and its Problems* (Swallow Press, 1954).

Douglass North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

Douglass North, *Understanding the Process of Economic Change* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

* Friedrich Hayek, 'The Use of Knowledge in Society', *The American Economic Review*, 35:4 (1945), 519-530.

* Leonard Read, 'I, Pencil: My Family Tree' (New York: Foundation for Economic Education, 1999).

* Friedrich Hayek, *The Three Sources of Human Values* (London: London School of Economics, 1978).

* Friedrich Hayek, 'Lecture on a Master Mind: Dr Bernard Mandeville', British Academy 1996.

* Levi Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects* (Open Humanities Press, 2011) 'Grounds For a Realist Ontology' p.34

Week Four: 17 October 2019

Complex Life as Enabling & Creative: Emergent Causality

Last session, non-linear approaches introduced us to the problem of complexity as a problem of knowledge. Adding differences of time and space made causal understandings more difficult. But not necessarily impossible, instrumental policy interventions were still possible even though the emphasis shifted from the policy-maker to the object of policy itself. The key shift in complexity understandings over the last couple of decades have involved a shift from a problem of knowledge of complex determinations to a question of the 'emergent' nature of reality itself. This understands complexity in a more ontological way, as not a problem of knowledge of determinations but of a reality which emerges more contingently without hidden determinations. This view of complexity is seen as advancing scientific knowledge in some US approaches, particularly those based at the Santa Fe Institute which seeks to apply complexity understandings to social problems, and as less 'scientific' and more open and creative in more 'European' critical social thought.

Questions

How is complexity positive and enabling?

What is a complex adaptive system? What is an assemblage?

How does complexity open up new avenues for research and understanding?

3 Essential readings

* Thomas Nail, 'What is an Assemblage?', *Substance*, Vol. 46, No.1 (2017), pp.21-37.

* Antoine Bousquet and Simon Curtis, 'Beyond models and metaphors: complexity theory, systems thinking and international relations', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Volume 24, Number 1, (2011), 43-62.

* C. S. Holling, 'Understanding the Complexity of Economic, Ecological and Social Systems', *Ecosystems*, Vol. 4 (2001), pp. 390-405.

Video 'How Wolves Change Rivers' narrated by George Monbiot

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ysa5OBhXz-Q&app=desktop>

Readings

* Emilian Kavalski, 'The fifth debate and the emergence of complex international relations theory: notes on the application of complexity theory to the study of international life', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Volume 20, Number 3, (2007), 435-454.

* Andreas Duit and Victor Galaz, 'Governance and Complexity—Emerging Issues for Governance Theory', *Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions*, Vol. 21, No. 3, July 2008 (pp. 311–335).

* David K Campbell and Gottfried Mayer-Kress, 'Chaos and Politics: Applications of Nonlinear Dynamics to Socio- Political Issues', *Santa Fe Institute SFI Working Paper*, 1991-09-032.

* Robert Geyer and Steve Pickering, 'Applying the tools of complexity to the international realm: from fitness landscapes to complexity cascades', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Volume 24, Number 1, (2011), 5-26.

David Chandler, *Resilience: the Governance of Complexity* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014) chapters 2 and 3.

David Chandler, 'Beyond Neoliberalism: Resilience, the New Art of Governing Complexity', *Resilience: International Policies, Practices and Discourses*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (2014), pp.47-63.

<http://www.davidchandler.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Resilience-Governing-Complexity-PUBLISHED.pdf>

* Erika Cudworth and Stephen Hobden, 'The Foundations of Complexity, the Complexity of Foundations', *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 42(2) (2012), pp.163–187.

Manuel DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity* (Continuum, 2006).

* Michele Auto and Simon Curtis (eds) *Reassembling International Theory: Assemblage Thinking and International Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014).

* Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984).

Cudworth, E. and Hobden, S. (2011) *Posthuman International Relations: Complexity, Ecologism and Global Politics* (London: Zed Books).

Articles from the *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 41:3 (June 2013) special issue 'Materialism and World Politics'.

Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Duke University Press, 2010).

William Connolly, *A World of Becoming* (Duke University Press, 2011).

William Connolly, *The Fragility of Things: Self-Organizing Processes, Neoliberal Fantasies, and Democratic Activism* (London: Duke University Press, 2013).

Melanie Mitchell, *Complexity: A Guided Tour* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers, *Order Out of Chaos: Man's New Dialogue with Nature* (London: Flamingo, 1985).

Karen Barad, 'Posthumanist Performativity: Towards an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 2003, vol. 28, no. 3.

<http://humweb.ucsc.edu/feministstudies/faculty/barad/barad-posthumanist.pdf>.

* Fritjof Capra, *Web of Life: A New Synthesis of Mind and Matter* (New York: Anchor Books, 1997): Chapter 1 Deep Ecology – A New Paradigm; Chapter 7 A New Synthesis; Epilogue: Ecological Literacy

* Sylvia Walby, 'Complexity Theory, Systems Theory, and Multiple Intersecting Social Inequalities', *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, (2007) 37:4, 449-470.

David Byrne and Gill Callaghan, *Complexity Theory and the Social Sciences: The State of the Art* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014).

Steven Johnson, *Emergence: The Connected Lives of Ants, Brains, Cities and Software* (Penguin Books, 2002)

Week Five: 24 October 2019

The Weather as Complexity (with Harshavardhan Bhat)

Preceding week 6 which will discuss resilience, adaptation and vulnerability, this week we shall discuss the weather. Anthropogenic climate change, the warming and acidifying oceans, mass extinctions, ecological degradation and globalising toxicities are issues that occupy our increasingly violent and emergent present. Knowledge systems that investigate these processes inform us of an increasingly complex and entangled world of weather. Concepts such as resilience, adaptation and intervention that are being studied in this module are also concepts that are being deployed by governments, enterprises, communities and peoples in a variety of capacities to live with and within a changing weather. The weather in some sense teaches us the nature of complexity. At the same time, this session contends that complexity is also a methodology of understanding the weather. This means that materials and concepts in a world of complexity occupy particularly challenging entanglements, ruptures and accelerations that confront conventional understandings of the weather. As students of international relations, in this time and space of the Anthropocene - the weather is an informant of what we know and how we know. This session engages with literature that gives us a glimpse of ways of engaging the weather as a site of political discussion and learning.

Questions

Where does the concept of the weather come from?

How are weathers and international relations as materials and knowledge entangled?

Why should we think of the weather in a discussion on complexity?

3 Essential readings

* Barad, Karen. "After the End of the World: Entangled Nuclear Colonialisms, Matters of Force, and the Material Force of Justice." *Theory & Event*, vol. 22 no. 3, 2019, pp. 524-550. Project MUSE, muse.jhu.edu/article/729449.

* Neimanis, A. and Walker, R. L. (2014), *Weathering: Climate Change and the "Thick Time" of Transcorporeality*. *Hypatia*, 29: 558-575. doi:[10.1111/hypa.12064](https://doi.org/10.1111/hypa.12064)

* Coen, Deborah R. "Big is a Thing of the Past: Climate Change and Methodology in the History of Ideas." *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 77 no. 2, 2016, pp. 305-321. Project MUSE, [doi:10.1353/jhi.2016.0019](https://doi.org/10.1353/jhi.2016.0019)

Readings

Bubandt, Nils, et al., editors. "HAUNTED GEOLOGIES: SPIRITS, STONES, AND THE NECROPOLITICS OF THE ANTHROPOCENE." *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene*, University of Minnesota Press, MINNEAPOLIS; LONDON, 2017, pp. 121–141. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.ctt1qft070.11.

Bremner, L. 2015. Technologies of uncertainty in the search for MH370. in: Davis, H. and Turpin, E. (ed.) *Art in the Anthropocene: encounters among aesthetics, politics, environments and epistemologies*. London Open Humanities Press. pp. 199-212

Zee, Jerry. 2017. "Holding Patterns: Sand and Political Time at China's Desert Shores". *Cultural Anthropology* 32 (2), 215-41. <https://doi.org/10.14506/ca32.2.06>.

Murphy, Michelle. 2017. "Alterlife and Decolonial Chemical Relations". *Cultural Anthropology* 32 (4), 494-503. <https://doi.org/10.14506/ca32.4.02>.

Vanessa Agard-Jones; What the Sands Remember. *GLQ* 1 June 2012; 18 (2-3): 325–346. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1215/10642684-1472917>

Addison, Courtney. 2019. "Compound 1080 (Sodium Monofluoroacetate)." *Theorizing the Contemporary, Fieldsights*, June 27. <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/compound-1080-sodium-monofluoroacetate>

Louise Hornby; Appropriating the Weather: Olafur Eliasson and Climate Control. *Environmental Humanities* 1 May 2017; 9 (1): 60–83. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1215/22011919-3829136>

Corry, O. (2017). The international politics of geoengineering: The feasibility of Plan B for tackling climate change. *Security Dialogue*, 48(4), 297 - 315 <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010617704142>

2016. "Playing String Figures with Companion Species", *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, Donna J. Haraway

Visvanthan, Shiv (2019) The Brahmaputra as a new model of democracy and development. *The Telegraph* <https://www.telegraphindia.com/opinion/the-brahmaputra-as-a-new-model-of-democracy-and-development/cid/1687260>

Amrith, Sunil S. "[Risk and the South Asian Monsoon.](https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10584-016-1629-x)" *Climatic Change* (2016). <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10584-016-1629-x>

Gabrys, Jennifer (2016). *Program Earth - Environmental Sensing Technology and the Making of a Computational Planet*, University of Minnesota Press https://www.upress.umn.edu/book-division/gabrys_pdf

Sharpe, Christina (2016). *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*, Duke University Press https://www.dukeupress.edu/Assets/PubMaterials/978-0-8223-6294-4_601.pdf

Week Six: 31 October 2019

No class - Student Engagement Week

Week Seven: 7 November 2019

Resilience, Adaptation and Vulnerability

In a more interconnected world, it is held there is less separation between governance policies and objects/subjects to be governed/secured. Often policy-making involves a greater understanding of our own relations/entanglements. Resilience has become a major field of policy-making through which these new, more relational understandings have been worked through. There are many possible examples, perhaps one useful one is that of resilience in relation to disasters. Disasters were once seen as external events or shocks, and which necessitated recovery and 'bouncing back', but now are increasingly understood rather differently. Disasters are part of a learning/developmental/governmental process in ways in which they were not before. Disasters are reinscribed as the final point of processes which were previously hidden to us, or which we lacked awareness of; processes (or assemblages, in current parlance) in which we were all the time and already embedded within as actors with agency. Thus, in reflexive resilience-thinking, disasters do not require 'bouncing back' to the *status quo ante*, but rather require self-reflexivity, in the awareness of how to bounce back differently: how to learn from the bad forms of governance that the disaster reveals and thus to prevent or limit such events in the future.

Questions

What happens when the security threat and the referent object of security are blurred?

What is the relationship between resilience and complexity?

What is coercive resilience?

3 Essential readings

* Ulrich Beck, 'Emancipatory catastrophism: What does it mean to climate change and risk society?', *Current Sociology* 2015, Vol. 63(1) (2014): 75–88.

* Lizzie Yarina, 'Your Sea Wall Won't Save You: Negotiating rhetorics and imaginaries of climate resilience', *Places*, March 2018. <https://placesjournal.org/article/your-sea-wall-wont-save-you/>

* L Rist et al, 'Applying resilience thinking to production ecosystems', *Ecosphere* (open access) (2014) <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1890/ES13-00330.1/abstract>

Readings

* Kathleen Tierney, 'Resilience and the Neoliberal Project: Discourses, Critiques, Practices—And Katrina', *American Behavioral Scientist* 2015, Vol. 59(10) 1327–1342.

Mark Neocleous, 'Resisting Resilience', *Radical Philosophy* 178 (March/April 2013): 2-7.

<https://www.radicalphilosophy.com/commentary/resisting-resilience>

David Chandler, 'Framings of Resilience - How to Think and Act in a Complex World', *MUN:Planet*, 8 April 2016.

<https://www.munplanet.com/articles/international-relations/framings-of-resilience-how-to-think-and-act-in-a-complex-world>

* Jeremy Walker and Melinda Cooper, 'Genealogies of resilience: From systems ecology to the political economy of crisis adaptation', *Security Dialogue* 42:2, (2011): 143–160.

* Jonathan Joseph, 'Resilience as embedded neoliberalism: a governmentality approach', *Resilience: International Policies, Practices and Discourses* 1:1, (2013): 38-52.

* Brad Evans and Julian Reid, 'Dangerously exposed: the life and death of the resilient subject' *Resilience: International Policies, Practices and Discourses* 1:2, (2013): 83-98.

Rockefeller Global Resilience Partnership

<http://www.globalresiliencepartnership.org/>.

David Chandler and Julian Reid, *The Neoliberal Subject: Resilience, Adaptation and Vulnerability* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).

Judith Rodin, *The Resilience Dividend: Managing Disruption, Avoiding Disaster, and Growing Stronger in an Unpredictable World* (London: Profile, 2015).

Kathleen Tierney, *The Social Roots of Risk: Producing Disasters, Promoting Resilience* (Stanford University Press, 2014).

Peter Rogers, *Resilience and the City: Change, (Dis)Order and Disaster* (Ashgate, 2012).

Julian Reid and Brad Evans, *Resilient Life: The Art of Living Dangerously* (Polity, 2014).

United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report, 2014: Sustaining Human Progress: Reducing Vulnerabilities and Building Resilience*.

<http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/HDR/2014HDR/HDR-2014-English.pdf>

David Chandler, *Resilience: the Governance of Complexity* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014) chapter 3.

David Chandler, 'Resilience and the Autotelic Subject: Towards a Critique of the Societalization of Security', *International Political Sociology*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (2013). <http://www.davidchandler.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/IPS-Resilience-and-the-Autotelic-Subject-of-Security-PUBLISHED.pdf>

David Chandler, 'Beyond Neoliberalism: Resilience, the New Art of Governing Complexity', *Resilience: International Policies, Practices and Discourses*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (2014), pp.47-63.

<http://www.davidchandler.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Resilience-Governing-Complexity-PUBLISHED.pdf>

Foucault, M. (2008) *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France 1978-1979* (Basingstoke: Palgrave).

Peter Walker, 'School of hard knocks: MPs seek to boost young people's "resilience"', *Guardian*, 6 February 2013.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2013/feb/06/school-young-people-resilience-failure>

Brian Walker and David Salt, *Resilience Thinking: Sustaining Ecosystems and People in a Changing World* (London: Island Press, 2006).

The Future of Disaster Risk Management, FLACSO/UNISDR, April 2013.

http://www.preventionweb.net/files/35715_thefutureofdisasterriskmanagement.pdf

Week Eight: 14 November 2019

The Implications for International Interventions

There are few areas where complexity and the awareness of nonlinearity (the gap between intentions and outcomes) is growing faster than that of foreign policy, particularly with regard to the difficulties of exporting Western norms or in terms of interventions in the cause of peace, development and democracy. In the 1990s universal approaches were popular, in the fields of humanitarian intervention, human rights promotion, international peacebuilding and statebuilding etc. Today, these approaches to international policy intervention are seen to be much more problematic. In this session we hope to discuss how our understandings have shifted so rapidly, perhaps leading to scepticism towards any attempt at international problem-solving.

Questions

Why might humanitarianism be problematic even if it could be objective and politically neutral?

Is it possible to separate the fields of peace, development and rights?

How can international interveners ensure that the unintended consequences don't undermine the intended ones?

3 Essential readings

* Cedric de Coning (2016) 'From peacebuilding to sustaining peace: Implications of complexity for resilience and sustainability', *Resilience*, 4(3), pages 166-181.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21693293.2016.1153773>

Overseas Development Institute (2016) *Time to let go: a three-point proposal to change the humanitarian system*.

<https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/10421.pdf>

Jonathan Marcus, 'An obituary for the age of intervention?', *BBCNews*, 17 September 2016.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-37372597>

Readings

Cedric de Coning (17 minute YouTube video) 'Coping With Peacebuilding Complexity'.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n9dNELJ-qc>

* Roger Mac Ginty, 'Indigenous Peace-Making versus the Liberal Peace', *Cooperation and Conflict* 43:2 (2008).

UN (2016) *One humanity: shared responsibility: Report of the Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit*. New York: United Nations.

David Chandler, *Resilience: the Governance of Complexity* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014) Chapter 4.

William Frej Ben Ramalingam, 'Foreign Policy and Complex Adaptive Systems: Exploring New Paradigms for Analysis and Action', Santa Fe Institute SFI Working Paper: 2011-06-022

<http://www.santafe.edu/media/workingpapers/11-06-022.pdf>

D. Körppen, N. Ropers & Hans J. Gießmann (eds.) *The Non-Linearity of Peace Processes – Theory and Practice of Systemic Conflict Transformation* (Opladen/Farmington Hills: Barbara Budrich Verlag, 2011).

Book chapters available here: <http://www.berghof-foundation.org/index.php?id=396>

Daniela Körppen and Norbert Ropers, 'Introduction: Addressing the Complex Dynamics of Conflict Transformation'.

[http://www.berghof-](http://www.berghof-foundation.org/fileadmin/redaktion/Publications/Books/Book_Nonlinearity_Chapters/sct_book_2011_Introduction.pdf)

[foundation.org/fileadmin/redaktion/Publications/Books/Book_Nonlinearity_Chapters/sct_book_2011_Introduction.pdf](http://www.berghof-foundation.org/fileadmin/redaktion/Publications/Books/Book_Nonlinearity_Chapters/sct_book_2011_Introduction.pdf)

David Chandler, 'Reconceptualising International Intervention: Statebuilding, 'Organic Processes' and the Limits of Causal Knowledge', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (2015), pp.70-88.

<http://www.davidchandler.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/JISB-Intervention-Governing-Causes-and-Effects-PUBLISHED2.pdf>

David Chandler, 'Intervention and Statebuilding Beyond the Human: From the 'Black Box' to the 'Great Outdoors'', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 2018 Vol. 12, No. 1, 80–97.

<http://www.davidchandler.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/JISB-Black-Box-to-Great-Outdoors-PUBLISHED2.pdf>

Cedric de Coning, 'Understanding Peacebuilding as Essentially Local', *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, 2(1):6 (2013).

<http://www.stabilityjournal.org/article/view/sta.as/39>

* Oliver Richmond, 'A post-liberal peace: Eirenism and the everyday', *Review of International Studies* (2009), 35, 557–580.

Oliver Richmond, *A Post-Liberal Peace* (London: Routledge, 2011).

Oliver Richmond and Audra Mitchell (eds) *Hybrid Forms of Peace: From Everyday Agency to Post-Liberalism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2012).

Roger Mac Ginty, *International Peacebuilding and Local Resistance: Hybrid Forms of Peace* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2011);

* Volker Schneider, 'Governance and Complexity', *The Oxford Handbook of Governance* (Oxford University Press, 2013).

* Christine Brachthäuser, 'Explaining global governance—a complexity perspective', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Volume 24, Number 2, June 2011, 221-244.

* Trevor Parfitt, 'Hylomorphism, Complexity and Development: planner, artisan, or modern prince?', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 3, (2006), pp 421 – 441.

* Bob Jessop, 'The Governance of Complexity and the Complexity of Governance: Preliminary Remarks on some Problems and Limits of Economic Guidance', published by the Department of Sociology, Lancaster University, 2003.

* John Urry, 'The Complexities of the Global', *Theory, Culture & Society*, Vol. 22 (2005).

Week Nine: 21 November 2019

The Implications for Rights and Representation

In Week 4, we have seen how approaches of complexity uphold an understanding of power as emergent and fluid. There, life is conceived as a productive, performative and enabling force, which is always in excess with regard to the rigid and constraining structures of the formal power of potestas. This week's session enquires what the implications of this conception of power are for ideas of politics, law and rights. How can the traditional modern tenets of constitutions, representation and decision-making be reformulated in order to attend to the relational complexities of a natural-and-social world? How can the universality of rights be reconciled with the assumption of life's infinite difference and plurality? How can the rigidity and generality of the law become responsive to the fluidity of emergent global processes? In a Spinozian fashion, some authors identify strategies of empowerment and development with the enhancement of individuals' self-fulfillment and freedom (Sen). Others discard a paradigm of representation built on identity and focus on beings' capacities of doing and becoming (Grosz, Sharp). In the domain of law, finally, there emerges a growing need to adjust existent normative frameworks to the fluidity and fleetingness of new global societal dynamics. Despite their variety, the many perspectives explored in the session seem to converge on a common trend. They express a move away from an understanding of politics as the constructed and artificial sphere of human institutions and concerted action towards one that is increasingly searched at the level of everyday interactions, relations and practices.

Questions

What is freedom? Is it a state of being or a process? Why does it matter?

What does liberation, emancipation or autonomy mean in an entangled world?

Are all forms of representation problematic? What is problematic about representation per se?

3 Essential Readings

* Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom*, Intro and Chapter 1

<https://www.uio.no/studier/emner/matnat/ifi/INF9200/v10/readings/papers/Sen.pdf>

* Elizabeth Grosz, 'Feminism, Materialism, Freedom' in Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics* (Duke University Press, 2010), 139-157.

http://my.ilstu.edu/~jkshapi/Grosz_freedom.pdf

* Mario Blaser and Marisol de la Cadena, 'Introduction: Pluriverse: Proposals for a World of Many Worlds', *A World Of Many Worlds* Edited By Marisol De La Cadena And Mario Blaser

Powerpoint What is Freedom?

<http://www.davidchandler.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/FREEDOM-1-1.pdf>

Readings

* Donna Haraway, 'Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective', *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Autumn, 1988), pp. 575-599.

Elizabeth Grosz, *Becoming undone: Darwinian Reflections on Life, Politics, and Art*. Duke University Press, 2011

Reza Banakar, "Law and Regulation in Late Modernity", in R. Banakar and M. Travers (eds) *Law and Social Theory* (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2013). Draft available at:

http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2229247

Elizabeth Grosz, *Time Travels: Feminism, Nature, Power* (Allen & Unwin, 2005) Chapter 5 'Drucilla Cornell, Identity and the "Evolution" of Politics' pp.71-89.

<http://projectlamar.com/media/grosztime.pdf>

Hasana Sharp. *Spinoza and the Politics of Renaturalization*. (University of Chicago Press, 2011)

Hasana Sharp. "The impersonal is political: Spinoza and a feminist politics of imperceptibility." *Hypatia* 24.4 (2009): 84-103.

David Chandler, *Resilience: the Governance of Complexity* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014) Chapters 5, 8 and 10.

David Chandler, "Democracy Unbound? Non-Linear Politics and the Politicisation of Everyday Life", *European Journal of Social Theory*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (2014), pp.42-59.

<http://www.davidchandler.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/EJST-Democracy-Unbound-PUBLISHED.pdf>

Leo Benedictus, "The nudge unit – has it worked so far?", *Guardian*, 2 May 2013.

<http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2013/may/02/nudge-unit-has-it-worked>

Zimmermann, A. "The Rule of Law as a Culture of Legality: Legal and Extra-legal Elements for the Realisation of the Rule of Law in Society", 2011: 10-31. Available at:

http://elaw.murdoch.edu.au/archives/issues/2007/1/eLaw_rule_law_culture_legality.pdf

For an application to the discourse of Human Rights you can look at

Joe Hoover, "Towards a politics for human rights: Ambiguous humanity and democratizing rights." *Philosophy & Social Criticism* (2013), available at

<http://psc.sagepub.com/content/early/2013/08/30/0191453713498390.abstract>

Joe Hoover, *Reconstructing Human Rights: A Pragmatist and Pluralist Inquiry into Global Ethics* (University of Oxford, 2016). A draft version is available at

http://etheses.lse.ac.uk/329/1/Hoover_Reconstructing%20human%20rights.pdf

Week Ten: 28 November 2019

The Implications for Knowledge: Is Sensing the new Knowing?

- We will also be discussing essay questions and preparation

How do we know things under complexity? What type of knowledge do we need? Many people argue that the type of knowledge needs to be context specific and real time. What is the difference between modernist forms of generating knowledge, through statistical generalisation and complexity approaches based upon 'drilling down'? Can knowledge ever be 'real time' and, if it was, would it make a difference?

Questions

Why is it argued that correlation can replace causation?

Why is the situated perspective more 'objective' than a 'God's eye' view?

Why is it argued that Big Data can resolve problems? How does this work?

3 Essential readings

* Kenneth Neil Cukier and Viktor Mayer-Schoenberger, 'The Rise of Big Data: How It's Changing the Way We Think About the World', *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2013.
<http://m.foreignaffairs.com/articles/139104/kenneth-neil-cukier-and-viktor-mayer-schoenberger/the-rise-of-big-data>

Evgeny Morozov, 'The rise of data and the death of politics', *The Observer*, 20 July 2014.
<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2014/jul/20/rise-of-data-death-of-politics-evgeny-morozov-algorithmic-regulation>

* Stephen L Roberts and Stefan Elbe, 'Catching the flu: Syndromic surveillance, algorithmic governmentality and global health security', *Security Dialogue* 2017, Vol. 48(1) 46–62

Powerpoint Knowing Differently

<http://www.davidchandler.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Knowing-Differently-2.pdf>

Readings

* David Chandler, 'Digital Governance in the Anthropocene: The Rise of the Correlational Machine', in *Digital Objects, Digital Subjects: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Capitalism, Labour and Politics in the Age of Big Data* (ed) Chandler and Fuchs (2019).

<http://www.davidchandler.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Correlational-Machine-chapter.pdf>

Chris Anderson, 'The End of Theory: The Data Deluge Makes the Scientific Method Obsolete', *Wired Magazine* 16(7), 23 June 2008. http://archive.wired.com/science/discoveries/magazine/16-07/pb_theory

* Bruno Latour, 'The Whole is Always Smaller Than Its Parts: A Digital Test of Gabriel Tarde's Monads' 2012, *British Journal of Sociology* Vol 63 n° 4 pp. 591-615.

* Bruno Latour and Tommaso Venturini, 'The Social Fabric: Digital Traces and Quali-quantitative Methods', médialab, Sciences Po Paris.

* David Ribes and Steven J. Jackson, 'Data Bite Man: The Work of Sustaining a Long-Term Study', Chapter 8, in Lisa Gitelman (ed) *"Raw Data" Is an Oxymoron* (MIT Press, 2013).

* Mike Savage and Roger Burrows, 'The Coming Crisis of Empirical Sociology', *Sociology*, January 2007 vol. 41 no. 5.

* Nick Couldry, 'A necessary disenchantment: myth, agency and injustice in a digital world', *The Sociological Review*, published on EarlyView 8 July 2014.

Ian Steadman, 'Big data and the death of the theorist', *Wired Magazine*, 25 January 2013.

<http://www.wired.co.uk/news/archive/2013-01/25/big-data-end-of-theory>

Rob Kitchin, 'Big Data, New Epistemologies and Paradigm Shifts', *Big Data and Society* 1(1) (2014) 1-12.

<http://bds.sagepub.com/content/1/1/2053951714528481>

Stefano Canali, 'Big Data, epistemology and causality: Knowledge in and knowledge out in EXPOsOMICS', *Big Data & Society*, 3(2), 2016: 1–11

<http://bds.sagepub.com/content/3/2/2053951716669530>

Aradau C and Blanke T (2015) 'The (Big) Data-Security Assemblage: Knowledge and Critique', *Big Data and Society* 2(2).

<https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/files/51103570/2053951715609066.full.pdf>

Tim O'Reilly, *Beyond Transparency*, Chapter 22, 'Open Data and Algorithmic Regulation'.

<http://beyondtransparency.org/chapters/part-5/open-data-and-algorithmic-regulation/>

Wolfgang Pietsch, 'Big Data: The New Science of Complexity', 6th Munich-Sydney-Tilburg Conference on Models and Decisions, Munich, 10-12 April 2013, Philsci Archive, University of Pittsburgh, 2.

<http://philsci-archive.pitt.edu/9944/>

David Chandler, 'A World without Causation: Big Data and the Coming of Age of Posthumanism', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (2015), pp.833-851.

<http://www.davidchandler.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Millennium-Big-Data-Posthuman-PUBLISHED2.pdf>

David Chandler, 'How the World Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Failure: Big Data, Resilience and Emergent Causality', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (2016), pp.391–410.

<http://www.davidchandler.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Millennium-How-World-Stopped-Worrying-PUBLISHED-21.pdf>

UN Global Pulse 'Big Data for Development: Challenges & Opportunities', May 2012.

<http://www.unglobalpulse.org/sites/default/files/BigDataforDevelopment-UNGlobalPulseJune2012.pdf>

Evgeny Morozov, *The Observer*, 30 July 2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2014/jul/20/rise-of-data-death-of-politics-evgeny-morozov-algorithmic-regulation>

Michel Callon et al, *Acting in an Uncertain World: An Essay on Technical Democracy* (London: MIT Press, 2011).

Week Eleven: 5 December 2019

Implications for Research Methods: Actor-Network Theory, New Materialism, Posthumanism

For many thinkers today, complexity approaches have opened up new ways of thinking about the world that challenge some of the basic binaries of modernist thinking. What are the implications of the end of the nature/culture divide or the end of the subject/object divide? Is it important for us to experiment with how objects think and know the world? Why do some authors think that this is more important than understanding how people think about the world?

Questions

What is the difference between a 'mediator' and 'intermediary'? What does 'translation' do?

Is complexity about 'relations' or 'entities' or both?

What is a 'flat ontology'?

How can we learn 'to be affected' and why is this important?

Does the fact that we have more entanglements mean that our agency is increased?

Why does Latour counterpose 'composition' to 'critique'?

3 Essential readings

* J. K. Gibson-Graham and Gerda Roelvink, 'An Economic Ethics For The Anthropocene', forthcoming in the 40th Anniversary issue of *Antipode: A Radical Journal of Geography* 2009.

<http://t.co/ung1fOZcIP>

* Bruno Latour, 'An Attempt at a Compositionist Manifesto', *New Literary History*, 2010, 41: 471–490.

<http://www.bruno-latour.fr/sites/default/files/120-NLH-finalpdf.pdf>

* Michel Callon, 'Some elements of a sociology of translation: domestication of the scallops and the fishermen of St Brieuc Bay' (first published in J. Law, *Power, action and belief: a new sociology of knowledge?* London: Routledge, 1986, pp.196-223).

Readings

Michel Callon and Bruno Latour, 'Unscrewing the Big Leviathan: How Actors Micro-structure Reality and How Sociologists Help Them To Do So' in *Advances Social Theory and Methodology: Toward an Integration of Micro and Macro Sociologies* (eds. K. Knorr and A. Cicourel) Abingdon: Routledge, 1981, pages.277-303.

<http://www.bruno-latour.fr/sites/default/files/09-LEVIATHAN-GB.pdf>

Connolly, W. E. (2013). The 'new materialism' and the fragility of things. *Millennium*, 41(3), 399-412.

<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0305829813486849>.

* Graham Harman, 'DeLanda's ontology: assemblage and realism', *Continental Philosophical Review*, Vol. 41 (2008), pp. 367–383.

Bruno Latour, 'On Technical Mediation: Philosophy, Sociology, Genealogy', *Common Knowledge*, Fall 1994.

<http://www.bruno-latour.fr/sites/default/files/54-TECHNIQUES-GB.pdf>

Lucia Santaella and Tarcisio Cardoso, 'The baffling concept of technical mediation in Bruno Latour', *Matrizes*, 9(1) (2015)

<http://www.revistas.usp.br/matrizes/article/viewFile/100679/99414>

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* Ian Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology: Or What Its Like to be a Thing* (University of Minnesota Press, 2012).

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Week Twelve: 12 December 2019

Conclusion: Beyond Complexity?

In this concluding session we will reflect on the module as a whole and the implications of complexity for our understandings of governance, power and agency as well as considering whether the global world will continue to become more complex or whether complexity itself has limits and if so how these may be understood. Perhaps the fact that complexity now appears as something to be welcomed rather than feared indicates that the work of complexity is already achieved?

Assessment

Book review **Deadline 1.00pm Thursday 31 October 2019**

Choose one of the following ten books. Write a 1,500 word review on how the book relates to rethinking governance, power and agency today (do not just provide a summary of the book, treat it analytically).

1. Fritjof Capra, *Web of Life: A New Synthesis of Mind and Matter* (New York: Anchor Books, 1997).
2. James C. Scott, *Seeing Like A State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).
3. John Law, *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004).
4. Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford University Press, 2005).
5. Manuel DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity* (Continuum, 2006).
6. Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Duke University Press, 2010)
7. Michel Callon et al, *Acting in an Uncertain World: An Essay on Technical Democracy* (London: MIT Press, 2011).
8. Cudworth, E. and Hobden, S. (2011) *Posthuman International Relations: Complexity, Ecologism and Global Politics* (London: Zed Books).
9. William Connolly, *A World of Becoming* (Duke University Press, 2011).
10. Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013).

3,500 word Essay Deadline 1.00pm Thursday 12 December 2019

Choose one of the following six essay titles

1. What are the implications of complexity approaches for our understanding of how governance should operate?
2. How does complexity-thinking disrupt or challenge our understanding of the human?
3. What are the implications of complexity approaches for our understanding of power?
4. How are resilience and complexity-thinking linked?
5. Do we still need knowledge in a world of complexity? What sort of knowledge?
6. What are the implications of complexity-thinking for our understanding of democracy and agency?

Assessment Rationale

The assessment regime is designed to encourage research expertise in the area of politics and complexity. It aims to develop advanced understanding of the concepts, frameworks and approaches of complexity thinking as applied to the rethinking of governance, agency and power. The assessment by essay and book review enables students to develop a critical understanding and to apply key theoretical accounts to current debates and problems with regard to the impact of complexity.

In particular, the book review is designed to develop analytical skills and to ensure that basic concepts and frames of debate are understood at an early stage of the module. The review encourages students to focus on their capacity to digest, comprehend and contextualise concepts, theories and policies key to governance and complexity.

The research essay allows students to develop an extended analysis of key concepts, theories and/or policies, to engage in an in-depth evaluation of competing interpretations and theoretical approaches, and to explore the application of governance practices both domestically and internationally. The essay challenges students to critically engage with their chosen topic and demonstrate their critical and analytical ability.

Further Information Regarding Coursework

In addition to the information contained in this Handbook, which is specific to the assessment for this module, you need to be aware of PIR's general guidance and policies for coursework submission. The most up-to-date information is contained in the current version of the *PIR Course Handbook*, and includes guidance on:

- **Submitting your work**
- **Late submission**
- **Plagiarism and referencing**
- **Mitigating circumstances**
- **Word limits**

The current version of the PIR Course Handbook can be found on the [Politics and International Relations Blackboard site](#).

Other important sources of information. For information about academic progression, condoned credits, referral opportunities and the calculation of degree awards, see the [Handbook of Academic Regulations](#) (section 17). As these are the overarching regulations at Westminster, they are very detailed and quite technical. If you need help interpreting the regulations, please email your Course Leader.

Notes