


James Ferguson

Susan S. and William H. Hindle Professor in the School of Humanities and Sciences, Emeritus

Anthropology

 Curriculum Vitae available Online

Bio

BIO

James Ferguson is the Susan S. and William H. Hindle Professor in the School of Humanities and Sciences, and Professor in the Department of Anthropology. He previously taught for many years at the University of California, Irvine. His major publications include *The Anti-politics Machine: "Development", Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho* (Cambridge UP, 1990); *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt* (U. California Press, 1999); *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order* (Duke UP, 2006); and *Give a Man a Fish: Reflections on the New Politics of Distribution* (Duke UP, 2015).

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- Emeritus (Active) Professor, Anthropology

ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS

- Susan S. and William H. Hindle Professor, School of Humanities and Sciences, Stanford University, (2011- present)
- Professor, Department of Anthropology, Stanford University, (2007- present)
- Chair, Department of Anthropology, Stanford University, (2007- present)
- Chair, Department of Cultural and Social Anthropology, Stanford University, (2005-2007)
- Professor, Department of Cultural and Social Anthropology, Stanford University, (2003-2007)
- Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Irvine, (1999-2003)
- Chair, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Irvine, (1999-2003)
- Director, Critical Theory Institute, University of California, Irvine, (2001-2003)
- Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Irvine, (1992-1999)
- Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan, (1990-1991)
- Visiting Lecturer, Department of Anthropology, Harvard University, (1987-1988)
- Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Irvine, (1986-1992)

HONORS AND AWARDS

- Honorary Simon Visiting Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Manchester (1998)
- Fellow, Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford (2000/01)
- International Fellow, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (2008/10)
- Appointed "Professor Extraordinaire", University of Stellenbosch (2009)
- Appointed "Honorary Professor", University of Cape Town (2010)

- Ellen Andrew Wright Fellow, Stanford Humanities Center (2010/11)
- Susan S. and William H. Hindle Professor, School of Humanities and Sciences, Stanford (2011)

BOARDS, ADVISORY COMMITTEES, PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Member, Graduate Committee supervising the graduate program in Social Relations (1987 - 1987)
- Member, School of Social Sciences Student Honors Papers Committee (1987 - 1987)
- Member, Graduate Committee supervising the graduate program in Social Relations (1988 - 1989)
- Member, Graduate Committee supervising the graduate program in Social Relations (1989 - 1990)
- Member, Honors Program Curriculum Committee (1988 - 1989)
- Member, University Affirmative Action Committee (1989 - 1990)
- Chair, Ad-hoc Committee on the Ph.D. in Anthropology, Department of Anthropology (1992 - 1993)
- Chair, Search Committee for Social Anthropology position, Department of Anthropology (1992 - 1993)
- Chair, Anthropology Graduate Committee (1993 - 1994)
- Chair, Anthropology Graduate Committee (1994 - 1995)
- Member, School of Social Sciences Honors Papers Committee (1995 - 1995)
- Member, International Studies Major Committee, School of Social Sciences (1995 - 1996)
- Member, International Studies Major Committee, School of Social Sciences (1996 - 1997)
- Member, International Studies Major Committee, School of Social Sciences (1997 - 1998)
- Member, University Committee for Affirmative Action and Diversity (1996 - 1997)
- Member, University Committee for Affirmative Action and Diversity (1997 - 1998)
- Member, Editorial board, University of California Press (1996 - 2001)
- Member, Anthropology Graduate Committee (1997 - 1998)
- Member, Editorial Committee, California International and Area Studies (CIAS) Electronic Publication Program, University of California Press (2000 - 2003)
- Member, CASA Graduate Admissions Committee (2003 - 2004)
- Member, University Curriculum Committee (2004 - 2005)
- Member, Dept. Chairs Steering Committee (2007 - 2009)
- Member, American Ethnological Society
- Member, African Studies Association
- Member, Association for Political and Legal Anthropology
- Member, Association for Africanist Anthropology
- Member, Oxford Development Studies International Advisory Board
- Member, Progress in Development Studies Advisory Board
- Member, Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute Editorial Board
- Member, Cultural Anthropology Editorial Board
- Member, Editorial Committee, California International and Area Studies (CIAS) Electronic Publications Program, University of California Press
- Member, African Development Editorial Board
- Member, Political and Legal Anthropology Review, Editorial Board
- Member, Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding, International Advisory Board
- Member, Social Dynamics, International Advisory Board
- Member, Critical African Studies, Editorial Board

- Member, Humanity, Editorial Board
- Member, Journal of Modern African Studies, Editorial Board
- Member, School of Advanced Research, Santa Fe, Board of Managers

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

- Ph.D., Harvard University , Social Anthropology (1985)
- M.A., Harvard University , Social Anthropology (1981)
- B.A., University of California, Santa Barbara , Cultural Anthropology (1979)

Research & Scholarship

CURRENT RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY INTERESTS

James's Ferguson's research has focused on southern Africa (especially Lesotho, Zambia, South Africa, and Namibia), and has engaged a broad range of theoretical and ethnographic issues. These include the politics of “development”, rural-urban migration, changing topographies of property and wealth, constructions of space and place, urban culture in mining towns, experiences of modernity, the spatialization of states, the place of “Africa” in a real and imagined world, and the theory and politics of ethnography. Running through much of this work is a concern with how discourses organized around concepts such as “development” and “modernity” intersect the lives of ordinary people.

Professor Ferguson's most recent work has explored the surprising creation and/or expansion (both in southern Africa and across the global South) of social welfare programs targeting the poor, anchored in schemes that directly transfer small amounts of cash to large numbers of low-income people. His work aims to situate these programs within a larger “politics of distribution,” and to show how they are linked to emergent forms of distributive politics in contexts where new masses of “working age” people are supported by means other than wage labor. In such settings of scarce and diminishing employment opportunities, distributive practices and distributive politics are acquiring a new centrality, with social protection, in particular, emerging as a key arena within which fundamental questions are addressed concerning how resources should be distributed, who is entitled to receive them, and why. In this context, new political possibilities and dangers are emerging, even as new analytical and critical strategies are required. A book on this topic (*Give a Man a Fish: Reflections on the New Politics of Distribution*) was recently published by Duke University Press.

Teaching

COURSES

2022-23

- Anthropology of Socialism: ANTHRO 196 (Aut)
- Foundations of Social Theory: ANTHRO 301A (Win)
- Introduction to Cultural and Social Anthropology: ANTHRO 1, ANTHRO 201 (Win)
- Political Anthropology: ANTHRO 324 (Aut)

2021-22

- Introduction to Cultural and Social Anthropology: ANTHRO 1, ANTHRO 201 (Spr)

2020-21

- Anthropology of Socialism: ANTHRO 196 (Win)
- Graduate Seminar in Economic Anthropology: ANTHRO 323 (Aut)
- History of Anthropological Theory, Culture and Society: ANTHRO 301 (Spr)
- Introduction to Cultural and Social Anthropology: ANTHRO 1, ANTHRO 201 (Spr)

STANFORD ADVISEES

Doctoral Dissertation Reader (AC)

Ben Baker, Emilia Groupp, Shantanu Nevrekar, Alexa Russo, Esteban Salmon Perrilliat, Isabel Salovaara, Adela Zhang

Doctoral Dissertation Advisor (AC)

Venolia Rabodiba, Elliott Reichardt

Doctoral Dissertation Co-Advisor (AC)

Shan Huang, Chun-Yu (Jo Ann) Wang

Master's Program Advisor

Venolia Rabodiba

Doctoral (Program)

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Publications

PUBLICATIONS

- **Proletarian Politics Today: On the Perils and Possibilities of Historical Analogy** *COMPARATIVE STUDIES IN SOCIETY AND HISTORY*
Ferguson, J.
2019; 61 (1): 4–22
- **The Anthropology of Postindustrialism Ethnographies of Disconnection Foreword** *ANTHROPOLOGY OF POSTINDUSTRIALISM: ETHNOGRAPHIES OF DISCONNECTION*
Ferguson, J., Vaccaro, Harper, K., Murray, S.
2016; 27: XI–XIII
- **DEBATING 'THE REDISCOVERY OF LIBERALISM' IN ZAMBIA: RESPONSES TO HARRI ENGLUND** *AFRICA*
Gordon, D. M., Phiri, B. J., Macola, G., Ferguson, J.
2014; 84 (4): 658–667
- **Globalizing Africa? Observations from an inconvenient continent** *RELACIONES INTERNACIONALES-MADRID*
Ferguson, J.
2014: 105–27
- **Declarations of dependence: labour, personhood, and welfare in southern Africa** *JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE*
Ferguson, J.
2013; 19 (2): 223–242
- **Reply to comments on 'Declarations of dependence'** *JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE*
Ferguson, J.
2013; 19 (2): 258–260
- **How to Do Things with Land: A Distributive Perspective on Rural Livelihoods in Southern Africa** *JOURNAL OF AGRARIAN CHANGE*
Ferguson, J.
2013; 13 (1): 166–174
- **Cosmologies of Welfare: Two Conceptions of Social Assistance in Contemporary South Africa** *RADICAL EGALITARIANISM: LOCAL REALITIES, GLOBAL RELATIONS*
Ferguson, J., Aulino, F., Goheen, M., Tambiah, S. J.
2013: 111–+
- **The social life of 'cash payment': Money, markets, and the mutualities of poverty** *Cash on the Table: Markets, Values, and Moral Economies*
Ferguson, J.
edited by Fischer, E. F., Benson, P.

Santa Fe, NM: SAR Press.2013

- **Invisible Humanism: An African 1968 and its aftermaths** *The Long 1968: Revisions and New Perspectives*
Ferguson, J.
edited by Alinder, J., Aneesh, A., Sherman, D. J., Dijk, R. v.
Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press.2013
- **Structures of responsibility Afterword** *ETHNOGRAPHY*
Ferguson, J.
2012; 13 (4): 558-562
- **Cosmologies of welfare: Two conceptions of social assistance in contemporary South Africa** *Radical Egalitarianism: Local Realities. Global Relations*
Ferguson, J.
edited by Aulino, F., Goheen, M., Tambiah, S. J.
Fordham University Press.2012
- **What comes after the social? Historicizing the future of social assistance and identity registration in Africa** *Registration and Recognition: Documenting the Person in World History*
Ferguson, J.
edited by Breckenridge, K., Szreter, S.
Oxford: Oxford University Press.2012
- **Theory from the Comaroffs, or How to know the world up, down, backwards and forwards** *The Johannesburg Salon*
Ferguson, J.
2012; 5
- **Toward a left art of government: from 'Foucauldian critique' to Foucauldian politics** *HISTORY OF THE HUMAN SCIENCES*
Ferguson, J.
2011; 24 (4): 61-68
- **Novelty and method: Reflections on global fieldwork** *Multi-sited Ethnography: Problems and Possibilities in the Translocation of Research Methods*
Ferguson, J.
edited by Coleman, S., Hellermann, P. v.
2011
- **The Uses of Neoliberalism** *ANTIPODE*
Ferguson, J.
2010; 41: 166-184
- **Reply to the comments on Global Shadows** *SINGAPORE JOURNAL OF TROPICAL GEOGRAPHY*
Ferguson, J.
2008; 29 (3): 270-273
- **Formalities of poverty: Thinking about social assistance in neoliberal South Africa** *African Studies Review*
Ferguson, J.
2007; 50 (2): 71-86
- **Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order**
Ferguson, J.
Duke University Press.2006
- **Transnational topographies of power: beyond the state and civil society in the study of African politics** *Accelerating Possession: Global Futures of Property and Personhood*
Ferguson, J.
edited by Maurer, B., Schwab, G.
New York: Columbia University Press.2006
- **Seeing like an oil company: Space, security, and global capital in neoliberal Africa** *AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGIST*
Ferguson, J.
2005; 107 (3): 377-382

- **Decomposing modernity: history and hierarchy after development** *Postcolonial Studies and Beyond*
Ferguson, J.
edited by Loomba, A., Kaul, S., Bunzl, M., Burton, A., Esty, J.
Duke University Press.2005
- **Spatializing States: Toward an Ethnography of Neoliberal Governmentality** *ANTHROPOLOGIES OF MODERNITY: FOUCAULT, GOVERNMENTALITY, AND LIFE POLITICS*
Ferguson, J., Gupta, A., Inda, J. X.
2005: 105–31
- **Development after neoliberalism** *Codesria Bulletin*
Ferguson, J.
2005; 3-4: 44-45
- **Power topographies: beyond the state and civil society in the study of African politics** *A Companion to the Anthropology of Politics*
Ferguson, J.
edited by Nugent, D., Vincent, J.
2004
- **Stillborn chrysalis: reflections on the fate of national culture in neoliberal Zambia** *GLOBAL NETWORKS-A JOURNAL OF TRANSNATIONAL AFFAIRS*
Ferguson, J.
2003; 3 (3): 271-297
- **Spatializing states: toward an ethnography of neoliberal governmentality** *AMERICAN ETHNOLOGIST*
Ferguson, J., Gupta, A.
2002; 29 (4): 981-1002
- **Of mimicry and membership: Africans and the "new world society"** *CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY*
Ferguson, J. G.
2002; 17 (4): 551-569
- **Songs of the women migrants: Performance and identity in South Africa (Book Review)** *JOURNAL OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN STUDIES*
Book Review Authored by: Ferguson, J.
2001; 27 (4): 875-877
- **La reponse au critiques de James Ferguson** *Politique Africaine*
Ferguson, J.
2001; 81
- **Global disconnect: abjection and the aftermath of modernism** *The Anthropology of Globalization*
edited by Inda, J. X., Rosaldo, R.
2001
- **Economics and barbarism: An anthropological comment on Pearson's "Homo economicus"** *HISTORY OF POLITICAL ECONOMY*
Ferguson, J.
2000; 32 (4): 991-998
- **Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt**
Ferguson, J.
University of California Press.1999
- **Culture, power, place: ethnography at the end of an era** *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*
Ferguson, J., Gupta, A.
edited by Gupta, A., Ferguson, J.
Duke University Press.1997
- **Discipline and practice: 'the field' as site, method, and location in anthropology"** *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science*
Ferguson, J., Gupta, A.
edited by Gupta, A., Ferguson, J.

University of California Press.1997

- **Anthropology and its evil twin: development in the constitution of a discipline** *International Development and the Social Sciences*
Ferguson, J.
edited by Cooper, F., Packard, R.
University of California Press.1997
- **Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science**
edited by Ferguson, J., Gupta, A.
University of California Press.1997
- **Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology**
edited by Ferguson, J., Gupta, A.
Duke University Press.1997
- **Urban trends on the Zambian copperbelt: A short bibliographic note** *JOURNAL OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN STUDIES*
Ferguson, J.
1996; 22 (2): 313-313
- **Paradoxes of sovereignty and independence: 'real' and 'pseudo-' nation-states and the depoliticization of poverty** *Siting Culture: The Shifting Anthropological Object*
Ferguson, J.
edited by Olwig, K. F., Hastrup, K.
Routledge.1996
- **Development** *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology*
Ferguson, J.
edited by Spencer, J., Barnard, A.
Routledge.1996
- **From African socialism to scientific capitalism: reflections on the legitimation crisis in IMF-ruled Africa** *Debating Development Discourse: Institutional and Popular Perspectives*
Ferguson, J.
edited by Moore, D. B., Schmitz, G. R.
St. Martin's Press.1995
- **The Anti-politics Machine: "Development." Depoliticization and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho**
Ferguson, J.
Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.1994
- **The anti-politics machine: 'development' and bureaucratic power in Lesotho** *The Ecologist*
Ferguson, J., Lohmann, L.
1994; 24 (5): 176-181
- **Power or complexity?** *Transition*
Ferguson, J.
1994; 64: 132-138
- **Mobile workers, modernist narratives, and colonial liberalism: reply to a straw man** *Journal of Southern African Studies*
Ferguson, J.
1994; 20 (4): 633-640
- **THE POLITICS OF HARMONY - LAND DISPUTE STRATEGIES IN SWAZILAND - ROSE,LL (Book Review)** *AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGIST*
Book Review Authored by: Ferguson, J.
1993; 95 (1): 234-235
- **HISTORY, POWER, IDEOLOGY - CENTRAL ISSUES IN MARXISM AND ANTHROPOLOGY - DONHAM,DL (Book Review)** *ANTHROPOLOGICAL QUARTERLY*
Book Review Authored by: Ferguson, J.
1993; 66 (1): 52-54

- **De-moralizing economies: African socialism, scientific capitalism, and the moral politics of 'structural adjustment** *Moralizing States: The Ethnography of the Present*
Ferguson, J.
edited by Moore, S. F.
American Anthropological Association.1993
- **THE CULTURAL TOPOGRAPHY OF WEALTH - COMMODITY PATHS AND THE STRUCTURE OF PROPERTY IN RURAL LESOTHO** *AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGIST*
Ferguson, J.
1992; 94 (1): 55-73
- **BEYOND CULTURE - SPACE, IDENTITY, AND THE POLITICS OF DIFFERENCE** *MEETING OF THE AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASSOC*
Gupta, A., Ferguson, J.
AMER ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASSOC.1992: 6-23
- **THE COUNTRY AND THE CITY ON THE COPPERBELT** *MEETING OF THE AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASSOC*
Ferguson, J.
AMER ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASSOC.1992: 80-92
- **Reply to Comments on "The Anti-Politics Machine"** *The Journal of Research*
Ferguson, J.
1992: 141-159
- **Special issue on "Space and Place in Anthropology"** *Cultural Anthropology*
Ferguson, J.
1992; 7 (1)
- **Reply to Shanafelt** *American Anthropologist*
Ferguson, J.
1992; 94 (4): 935-937
- **Migrants No More - Johan Pottier** *Africa*
Ferguson, J.
1992; 61 (3): 429-431
- **BITTER MONEY - CULTURAL ECONOMY AND SOME AFRICAN MEANINGS OF FORBIDDEN COMMODITIES - SHIPTON,P** (Book Review)
AMERICAN ETHNOLOGIST
Book Review Authored by: Ferguson, J.
1991; 18 (3): 620-621
- **Machines as the Measure of Man - Michael Adas** *American Anthropologist*
Ferguson, J.
1991; 93 (1): 229-30
- **MOBILE WORKERS, MODERNIST NARRATIVES - A CRITIQUE OF THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF TRANSITION ON THE ZAMBIAN COPPERBELT .2.** *JOURNAL OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN STUDIES*
Ferguson, J.
1990; 16 (4): 603-621
- **MOBILE WORKERS, MODERNIST NARRATIVES - A CRITIQUE OF THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF TRANSITION ON THE ZAMBIAN COPPERBELT .1.** *JOURNAL OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN STUDIES*
Ferguson, J.
1990; 16 (3): 385-412
- **The Anti-politics Machine: "Development." Depoliticization and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho**
Ferguson, J.
Cambridge University Press.1990
- **The Anti-politics Machine: "Development." Depoliticization and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho**
Ferguson, J.

David Philip, Cape Town.1990

- **Cultural Exchange: New Developments in the Anthropology of Commodities** *Cultural Anthropology*
Ferguson, J.
1988; 3 (4): 488-513
- **THE BOVINE MYSTIQUE - POWER, PROPERTY AND LIVESTOCK IN RURAL LESOTHO** *MAN*
Ferguson, J.
1985; 20 (4): 647-674