Reading Group: Sovereignty, Governance and Environment

Where:
Mongolia and Inner Asia Studies Unit, Mond Seminar Room, New Museums Site, Free School Lane, Cambridge CB2 3RF.

When:
Michaelmas, Lent and Easter Terms 2019/20
Beginning on Thursday 14th November 2019 (17:00 – 18:00)

Convenor:
Dr Joseph Bristley  jb2329@cam.ac.uk

Two political issues loom large in today’s world. One is a transnationally voiced concern with environmental degradation, global warming and other manifestations of a deepening climate crisis. A second is an increasing valorization of the concept of sovereignty, and its mobilization to assert ideals of national self-sufficiency and independence of action. This reading group aims to interrogate new forms, notions and practices of sovereignty and governance emerging alongside the widespread adoption of international principles of environmental regulation (eg: Paris 2015). But rather than treat such processes as manifestations of an emerging global legal order or ‘nomos of the Earth’ (Schmitt 2003 [1950]), we interrogate how such adoptions may be grounded, inflected and modified through their emplacement in local hierarchies, power structures and systems of knowledge.

The ‘Sovereignty, Governance and Environment’ reading group interrogates these trends through the framework of six broad categories with an interdisciplinary appeal: Order, Sovereignty, Authority, (Il)legality, the Anthropocene, and Climate Justice. Readings include classic theoretical texts, and ethnographies (with a special emphasis on material from Mongolia). Two sessions will be held each term. The reading group is open to established scholars, new scholars and post-graduate students. Aside from discussing these readings, we welcome the inclusion and discussion of any papers members would like to propose and/or present themselves.

Session 1 – Order

Date: 14 November 2019 (17:00 – 18:00)


Session 2 - Sovereignty

Date: 30 January 2020 (17:00 – 18:00)


Session 3 – Authority

Date: TBC (Lent Term)


Session 4 – (Il)legality

Date: TBC (Lent Term)


Session 5 - The Anthropocene

Date: TBC (Easter Term)


Session 6 - Climate justice

Date: TBC (Easter Term)