Session 2
Defining Politics and Power
Assuming Power

→ power as the quality or a property of the state?
→ individual and collective power?

Power and Politics in Abstract Terms

→ Swartz, Turner, & Tuden

→ Politics was not intended to be a synonym of power—politics was not reducible to power alone

→ The relationship between politics and power

→ established definitions: capacity, ability, command, control
are conceptions of the political and power are universal?

John Gledhill:

“stateless societies may be structured in a way which inhibits the emergence of permanent centralized authority and social stratification, but how far can it be argued that they rest on consensual rather than coercive relations?” (p. 26)

“We should be wary of projecting our own value of ‘the political’ upon others” (Rapport & Overing, 2000, p. 149).

“chiefs were incapable of imposing their personal desires on a recalcitrant society and translating prestige acquired in warfare into permanent authoritative power. After all, ‘no society always wants to wage war’” (Gledhill, p. 28)
C. Wright Mills on Power

→ Power as decision-making

→ Blurring the lines between authority and power—power can manufacture consent

→ Three types of power: Coercion, Authority, Manipulation

→ Mills on differentials in power

→ Who holds power in American society?

→ Apathy plays a significant role in maintaining order

→ Shadow Government, Shadow Elites, Lobbies
Eric Wolf on Power

→ power as the attribute of the person

→ interactions and transactions

→ control over the settings/tactical or organizational power

→ resistance

→ power in signification