

ENVIRONMENTAL ANTHROPOLOGY

070:350:01

MTh 1-2:20 pm, Hill Hall 101

Spring 2011

Professor Sodikoff

629 Hill Hall

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Office hours: M/Th 11:30am – 12:30 pm

Description:

This course offers an anthropological perspective of the human-environment relationship. We will trace how the discipline's interests have evolved over time, tracing trends in scholarship from an earlier interest by anthropology in human adaptation and the degree to which environments "determined" how societies behaved and perceived the world, to an interest in the ways unequal power relations shaped ecologies and ideologies, to an interest in environmental crises and strategies to mitigate them, to what one might consider a renewed interest in the determining force of the environment with respect to human-induced planetary changes. Human adaptation to the rapidly changing environment is hindered by the unprecedented rate of species extinctions and habitat loss, climate change caused by chemical pollutants in the atmosphere and rain forest loss, a build-up of poisonous levels of mercury and pesticides in freshwater and the ocean, air and water pollution, and regional epidemics of famine and obesity. How do human beings confront the changing environments in which they live? How are environmental problems framed, proven, denied, resolved, or worsened? How do they affect different populations differently?

The course will consist of lectures, readings, student presentations, films, and class discussions. The first part of the course will give a grounding in anthropological theories of the human-environment relationship, including the process of plant and animal domestication, modes of production, and the ideology of environmental determinism. The second part of the course addresses more contemporary approaches to human-environmental issues in anthropology, particularly the emphasis on how politics affect the natural environment as well as social constructions of environmental degradation.

Main objectives:

- 1) Students will gain an understanding of the major environmental problems confronted by societies around the world, as well as the structural, political, and cultural causes of these problems.
- 2) Students will learn key concepts and theoretical approaches in anthropology concerning the human-environment relationship, and will gain an understanding of how these approaches have changed over time.
- 3) Students will develop their skill in critical thinking by learning to recognize how data are shaped and delimited by theory.
- 4) Students will develop their oral communication skills by presenting their research before the class and getting immediate feedback. They will concentrate on clarity, volume, succinctness, eye-contact, as well as creating legible and appealing visual aids.

POLICIES:

Deadlines for emailed assignments, presentations, and the quizzes are fixed. If you foresee a problem with a deadline or attendance, you must email me in advance (not the day of class) to arrange a different deadline. In case a student misses a quiz, you must offer legitimate proof of illness or other emergency in order to take a make-up.

PLAGARISM and INDEPENDENT WORK: Missed exams, quizzes, or assignment require either that a student arranges a makeup date in advance with one of the professors, or that the student provides legitimate documentation for an illness or other emergency.

Students should re-read the university policies on Academic Integrity. Cheating, fabrication, and plagiarism (submitting someone else's written, fully or partially, as one's own) will not be tolerated, and this includes using or adapting someone else's work for a take-home exam or for course notes. It may result in a failing grade for the course. I am not assigning a research paper for this course, but the expectations here hold for your oral presentation. If you are unsure whether you are plagiarizing text, take precautions by always referencing the materials you have read. In other words, you must add a footnote, endnote, or cite your source text verbally during a presentation or in parenthesis. Citations show you have done serious research and have acknowledged the work of other scholars. However, it is not good to rely on one or two sources exclusively. Your presentations must include multiple sources of information (these sources may be in the form of books, journal and newspaper articles, magazines, internet resources, films, etc.).

Forms of plagiarism include the following scenarios:

- You find a research paper in the library or off the internet and submit it as your own paper.
- You pay a service or individual to write your paper for you submit it as your own work.
- You use a portion of an article, radio or TV show, book, internet paper, etcetera, without giving a citation for the work and therefore implying the text is your own.
- You find an article or research paper and paraphrase its argument or ideas in your own words without offering a citation, and then you submit ideas as your own.

ATTENDANCE: Regular attendance is required and I will call roll. Unexcused absences will harm your grade. After the third unexcused absence, the final grade will be docked no matter how well you did on other assignments and tests. For the fourth unexcused absence, you will be unable to get higher than a B+ in the course, all other work figured in. For the fifth unexcused absence, you will be unable to get higher than a B; for the sixth, no higher than a C+, and so on according to the grades that Rutgers-Newark recognizes (A, B+, B, C+, C, D, F).

ABOUT EXTRA CREDIT: I do not usually allow for extra credit. If, however, you are in good standing in the course and have received a borderline grade, I *may* allow it. This will be determined on a case by case basis. (A record of poor attendance and participation would make you ineligible.)

POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS: Powerpoint presentations used in class lectures will be made available to you a week prior to the exam dates but not before, so it is essential that you take notes and keep up with the readings.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE:

Tardiness

If you are more than 20 minutes late on a regular basis (that is, more than a couple of times), you will be marked absent for that day.

Cell phones and laptops

Be sure that your cell phones are turned off before you enter the classroom. If you answer a phone call, are texting or otherwise engaged in wireless technology, such as using the internet on either your lap top

or phone, you will be asked to put away the computer or phone. If you do not comply, you will get an unexcused absence and may be asked to leave the classroom. It's expected that you take class notes in your course notebooks by hand.

RUTGERS BLACKBOARD SYSTEM

All of the articles for this course can be accessed on, and downloaded from, the Rutgers' Blackboard Course site: <http://blackboard.newark.rutgers.edu/>. Your login information is the same username and password you use to access your Rutgers student information. If you use an email address that is different from the one that Rutgers assigns you, PLEASE CHANGE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS ON BLACKBOARD!! I will frequently send email announcements to the class through Blackboard, and expect students to be responsible for any messages sent via the Blackboard message system.

If your email address is incorrect in Blackboard, please update your official student record (<https://www.acs.rutgers.edu:8892/studentdir>) and the Blackboard address should update within 48 hours. If you cannot login to this page to update your official student record, please send an email to help@newark.rutgers.edu with your full name, Blackboard account name, and the email address you would like used for the system. Please note that if the account on Blackboard is your Pegasus account, you should setup forwarding so that emails sent to those accounts are forwarded to your current email address. Here is a helpful link for forwarding: <https://andromeda.rutgers.edu/cgi-bin/ncs-proj/webforward>. **If you have questions, please email directly at address above and NOT through Blackboard.**

GRADING

Weekly Reading Responses (collected each Thursday): 20%

Quiz: 10%

Midterm exam: 25%

Oral presentation: 15%

Final exam: 30%

Grade Schema for exams and quiz:

100-90% A

89-86% B+

85-79% B

78-75% C+

74-66% C

65-59% D

0-58% F

Following the Rutgers system, **final course grades** include only A, B+, B, C+, C, D, F. Final grades will be weighted according to the percentages for each category (quizzes, presentation, etc.).

All grades will be posted in Blackboard. The course grade will be curved.

There are no easy A's in this course. An 'A' is not the default grade for completing the assignments. If you do not prepare for and practice your presentation, you probably won't get an A. If you put in a bare minimum of effort, you will not get an A. If you miss numerous classes without documentation that excuses you, you will not get an A. **But if you do the work, study for tests, stay in communication with me, and make a real effort to engage the material, you will do well.**

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

WEEKLY READING RESPONSES: To ensure that students read the texts in a timely manner so that they can engage in discussions, students will be required to write up weekly responses that will be turned in at the beginning of Thursday's class. They will provide the basis of discussion (and they will become good study guides for exams):

1. What is the author's main argument or point?
2. What evidence does the author use to prove or elucidate the main argument or point?
3. How did the text change your knowledge base or understanding of a certain problem?
4. Do you accept or disagree with the author's claims and why?

QUIZ: We will have one quiz before the midterm consisting of identifications and fill in the blank questions. Materials covered will include lectures, films, and readings.

ORAL PRESENTATION: Each student will be required to offer an oral presentation to the class on an article provided by the professor which develops one of the weekly themes. The presenter can enhance the presentation with visuals and video clips (but these should be no more than 3 minutes long). Presenters should not let video clips speak for them, but must provide an analysis of the video or explain its significance. The oral presentations will be graded like they would for an exam, so it is essential all prepare and practice the presentations beforehand, and that presenters provide the professor with their powerpoint slideshows afterwards. The presentation is an *oral mode of communication*, which is very different from the written mode, and is reflected in language, volume, eye-contact, and clarity. The presentation should be practiced beforehand and timed so that it does not exceed 20 minutes. Slides should contain sparse text and/or relevant imagery. **Student presentations should be used as examples in short answers on exams (you will not need to know all details of presented materials, but you need to take notes and attempt to incorporate the material).**

EXAMS: Both the midterm and final exams will be in class consisting of a mix of identifications, True/False, and short answers. The final exam will emphasize material in the second half of the course.

Week 1 (1/20): Introduction and Orientation

Week 2 (1/24, 1/27): Human Adaptation to the Environment

1. Sutton, Mark O., and Anderson, E.N. 2004. "Cultural Ecology." In Introduction to Cultural Ecology. PP. 85-124. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.
2. Steward, Julian H. 1958. "Problems of Cultural Evolution." *Evolution*, Vol. 12, No. 2, pp. 206-210.

FILM: **Nanuk of the North** is a 1922 silent documentary film by Robert J. Flaherty. In the tradition of what would later be called salvage ethnography, Flaherty captured the struggles of the Inuk Nanook and his family in the Canadian arctic. (55 mins)

Week 3 (1/31 no class, 2/3): Domestication

1/31 (Monday): **NO CLASS**

READ:

1. Wilson, Peter J. "Agriculture or Architecture? The Beginnings of Domestication." In *Where the Wild Things Are Now: Domestication Reconsidered*, edited by Rebecca Cassidy and Molly Mullin. Pp. 101-121. Oxford: Berg.

Week 4 (2/7, 2/10): Modes of Production: Hunting and Gathering, Pastoralism

READ:

Ingold, Tim. 1974. "On Reindeer and Men." *Man*, New Series, Vol. 9, No. 4 (Dec., 1974), pp. 523-538.

FOR PRESENTATION:

1. Harris, Marvin. 1966. "The Cultural Ecology of India's Sacred Cattle." *Current Anthropology* 7(1): 511-66.
2. Evans-Pritchard, E. 1953. "The Sacrificial Role of Cattle among the Nuer." *Africa* 23(3): 181-197.
3. Lee, Richard B. and Hitchcock, Robert K. 2001. "African Hunter-Gatherers: Survival, History, and the Politics of Identity." *African Study Monographs* Suppl 26 257-280.

Week 5 (2/14, 2/17): Modes of Production: Horticulture, Industrial Agriculture

READ:

1. Diamond, Jared. 1997. "History's Haves and Have-Nots," and "To Farm or Not to Farm." In *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.

For Presentation:

1. Brown, Michael, and Van Bolt, Margaret. 1980. "Aguaruna Jivaro Gardening Magic in the Alto Rio Mayo, Peru." *Ethnology* 19(2): 169-
2. Lansing, J. Stephen, and Kremer, James N. 1993. "Emergent Properties of Balinese Water Temple Networks: Coadaptation on a Rugged Fitness Landscape." *American Anthropologist* 95(1): 97-114.
3. Kull, Christian A. 2002. "Madagascar aflame: landscape burning as peasant protest, resistance, or a resource management tool?" *Political Geography* 21: 927-953.
4. Milestad, Rebecka and Hadatsch, Sonja. 2003. "Organic Farming and Social-Ecological Resilience: the Alpine Valleys of Sölktäler, Austria." *Conservation Ecology* 8(1): 3.

Film: **Work** (video; 53 mins). This program examines work from the early egalitarian hunter/gatherer and agrarian societies to the modern world--a world of multinationals and child slavery, of leisure and hard labor. Noted anthropologists, such as Professor Herbert Applebaum of SUNY, offer insights into how work has evolved and the challenges faced today, when millions are unemployed, and the economic disparity between the First and Third Worlds is becoming ever greater. (Douglass **2-5943**)

Week 6 (2/21, 2/24): Population Pressure

READ

1. Harner, Michael. 1977. "The Ecological Basis for Aztec Sacrifice." *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 4, No. 1, Human Ecology. (Feb., 1977), pp. 117-135.

For Presentation:

1. "Reproductive Mishaps and Western Contraception: An African Challenge to Fertility Theory," by Caroline Bledsoe, Fatoumatta Banja, and Allan G. Hill. From Haenn and Wilk.
2. Fairhead, James and Leach, Melissa. 1996. "Enriching the Landscape: Social History and the Management of Transition Ecology in the Forest-Savanna Mosaic of the Republic of Guinea." *Africa* 66(1).
3. Kandeh, H.B.S. and Richards, Paul. 1996. "Rural People as Conservationists: Querying Neo-Malthusian Assumptions about Biodiversity in Sierra Leone." *Africa* 66(1).
4. Abruzzi, William. 1979. "Population Pressure and Subsistence Strategies among the Mbuti Pygmies." *Human Ecology* 7(2): 183-189.

Week 7 (2/28, 3/3 MIDTERM): The Tragedy of the Commons

READ:

Hardin, Garret. 1968. "The Tragedy of the Commons." *Science* 162: 1243-1248.

FOR PRESENTATION:

1. Merkes et al. 1989. "The Benefits of the Commons." *Nature* 340: 91-93.
2. Runge, Carlisle Ford. 1986. "Common property and collective action in economic development." *World Development* Volume 14, Issue 5: 623-635.
3. Ostrom, Elinor, et al. 1999. "Revisiting the commons: Local lessons, global challenges." *Science*, Vol. 284 Issue 5412, p278-

Week 8 (3/7; 3/10) Darwin's Nightmare

Robert Pringle. 2005. "The Nile Perch in Lake Victoria: Local Responses and Adaptations." *Africa* 75(4): 510-538.

Film: Darwin's Nightmare: A documentary on the effect of fishing the Nile perch in Tanzania's Lake Victoria. The predatory fish, which has wiped out the native species, is sold in European supermarkets, while starving Tanzanian families have to make do with the leftovers.

Week 9 (SPRING BREAK)

Week 10 (3/21, 3/24): Political Ecology

READ:

Kottak, Conrad P. 1999. "The New Ecological Anthropology." *American Anthropologist* 101(1): 23-25.

For Presentation:

1. Schmink, Marianne. 1982. "Land Conflicts in Amazonia." *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 9, No. 2: pp. 341-357.
2. Adams, William M and Hutton, Jon. 2007. "People, Parks and Poverty: Political Ecology and Biodiversity Conservation." *Conservation and Society* 5(2): 147-183.
3. "Gender and the Environment: A Feminist Political Ecology," Dianne Rocheleau, Barbara Thomas-Slayter, and Esther Wangari. From Haenn and Wilk.
4. Rocheleau, Dianne, and Edmunds, David. 1997. "Women, men and trees: Gender, power and property in forest and agrarian landscapes." *World Development* 25(8): 1351-1371.

Week 11 (3/28, 3/31): The Social Construction of Environmental Problems

Proctor, James D. "Solid Rock and Shifting Sands: The Moral Paradox of Saving a Socially-Constructed Nature." Social Nature Essay, Final Draft 8/30/00.

FOR PRESENTATION:

1. McCright, Aaron M., and Dunlap, Riley E. 2000. "Challenging Global Warming as a Social Problem: An Analysis of the Conservative Movement's Counter-Claims." *Social Problems*, Vol. 47, No. 4: 499-522.
2. Denevan, William M. 1992. "The Pristine Myth: The Landscape of the Americas in before and after 1492." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 82, No. 3: 369-385.
3. Hansen, Aaron. 1991. "The Media and the Social Construction of the Environment." *Media, Culture, and Society* 13: 443-458.
4. Braun, Bruce. 2002. "Colonialism's afterlife: vision and visuality on the Northwest Coast." *Cultural Geographies* 9: 202-247.

Week 12 (4/4, 4/7): The Politics of Oil

READ

Watts, Michael J. 2004. "Righteous Oil? Human Rights, The Oil Complex and Corporate Social Responsibility." *Annual Review of Environmental Resources* 2005. 30:9.1-9.35

FOR PRESENTATION

1. Shever, Elana. 2010. "Engendering the Company: Corporate Personhood and the "Face" of an Oil Company in Metropolitan Buenos Aires." *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 33(1):26-46.
2. Sawyer, Suzana. 2002. "Bobbittizing Texaco: Dis-Membering Corporate Capital and Re-Membering the Nation in Ecuador." *Source: Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 17, No. 2: 150-180.
3. Coronil, Fernando, and Skurski, Julie. 1991. "Dismembering and Remembering the Nation: The Semantics of Political Violence in Venezuela." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 33, No. 2: 288-337.

4. Apter, Andrew. 1996. "The Pan-African Nation: Oil-Money and the Spectacle of Culture in Nigeria." *Public Culture* 1996, 8: 441-466.

Film: Crude: The Real Price of Oil. Joe Berlinger. 2009 (104 mins). the epic story of one of the largest and most controversial legal cases on the planet. An inside look at the infamous \$27 billion "Amazon Chernobyl" case, *Crude* is a real-life high stakes legal drama set against a backdrop of the environmental movement, global politics, celebrity activism, human rights advocacy, the media, multinational corporate power, and rapidly-disappearing indigenous cultures. Presenting a complex situation from multiple viewpoints, the film subverts the conventions of advocacy filmmaking as it examines a complicated situation from all angles while bringing an important story of environmental peril and human suffering into focus.

Week 13 (4/11, 4/14): Climate Change

READ

1. Rosen, Arlene Miller. 1995. "The Social Response to Environmental Change in Early Bronze Age Canaan." *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* Volume 14, Issue 1, March 1995, Pages 26-44.

For presentation:

1. Crate, Susan A. 2009. "Gone the Bill of Winter? Contemplating Climate Change's Cultural Implications in Northeastern Siberia, Russia." In *Anthropology and Climate Change*, edited by Susan A. Crate and Mark Nuttall. Pp. 139-152. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
2. Cruikshank, Julie. 2001. "Glaciers and Climate Change: Perspectives from Oral Tradition." *Arctic* 54(4): 377-393.
3. Bolin, Inge. 2009. "The Glaciers of the Andes are Melting: Indigenous and Anthropological Knowledge Merge in Restoring Water Resources. In *Anthropology and Climate Change*, edited by Susan A. Crate and Mark Nuttall. Pp. 228-239. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
4. Barnett, John. 2001. Adapting to climate change in Pacific Island Countries: The problem of uncertainty. *World Development* 29(6): 977-993.

Week 14 (4/18, 4/21): Mass Extinction

READ:

1. Sodikoff, Genese Marie. "Accumulating Absence: An Anthropology of the Sixth Extinction." In *The Anthropology of Extinction: Essays on Culture and Species Death*, edited by Genese Marie Sodikoff.

FOR PRESENTATION:

1. Constantino, Jill. Forthcoming. "Tortoise Soup for the Soul: Finding a Space for Human History in Evolution's Laboratory. In *The Anthropology of Extinction: Essays on Culture and Species Death*, edited by Genese Marie Sodikoff. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
2. West, Paige. 2008. "Tourism as Science and Science as Tourism." *Current Anthropology* 49 (4).

3. Igoe, James. "Seeing Conservation through the Global Lens." In *Conservation and Globalization: A Study of National Parks and Indigenous Communities from East Africa to South Dakota*. Pp. 1-35. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thompson.

4. Hill, Catherine M. 2008. "Primate Conservation and Local Communities: Ethical Issues and Debates." *American Anthropologist* 104(4): 1184-1194

5. Holly Jr., Donald H. 2000. "The Beothuk on the Eve of Their Extinction." *Arctic Anthropology* 37(1): 79-96.

FILM: Life After People (2008; 94 mins) If humans were suddenly to disappear, what would happen to our planet – the structures we've built, the everyday items we take for granted, domesticated and wild animals, plants, trees? What would become of the things that define our species and leave our mark on this Earth? Visit the ghostly villages surrounding Chernobyl (abandoned by humans after the 1986 nuclear disaster), travel to remote islands off the coast of Maine to search for abandoned towns that have vanished from view in only a few decades, then head beneath the streets of New York to see how subway tunnels may become watery canals. The film offers insights from experts in the fields of engineering, botany, ecology, biology, geology, climatology, and archeology to demonstrate how the very landscape of our planet will change in our absence.

Week 15 (4/25, 4/28, 5/2): Presentations, Review, Wrap-Up

Finish Film, Presentations, Review for Final